

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

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LXVIII

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No. 1



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:0:—

TO THE NATIVITY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(After a Bengali song by the late Sri Girish Chandra Ghosh)

A radiant star of luminous shine,
Illumining the heavens serene,
Enters the orb of the earth ;
To a lady of rare piety
Is born a jewel among men,
A *sañnyāsin* young, perfect, and self-absorbed.

As the sun stirs up the thick cloud-storms
To hide its lustrous rays behind,
So hath he, with his Māyā's aid,
Assumed the human form,
And this seeming cover of forgetfulness
Is but a sport.

Wonderful his adoration of the Guru's feet !
Wonderful his self-surrender to him !
A tumultuous river meeting a vast, calm lake ;
And the mighty current of compassion
That flows out of it
Washes the earth of its haplessness.

The humanity's mind is cleared of its dross,
And it finds the Peace sublime.

SPIRITUAL DISCOURSES OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj was one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and became the fourth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in 1937. He had established and organized the Ramakrishna Math at Allahabad, and was in charge of it from 1910 to 1938, when he entered *mahā-samādhi*. The following are the extracts from the Swami's discourses at different times during the early period of the year 1920 in the Allahabad monastery.

* * *

'God is all-pervading and all-powerful. There is nothing that cannot be granted by Him. Whatever people want from Him, He supplies like a servant, as it were. Therefore, one should not ask for anything from Him, but remain satisfied with whatever He is pleased to give. If you ask the gods for anything, they give you a gift which is like a double-edged sword. Real welfare lies in using things properly; wrong use of things brings misfortune.'

* * *

'One sign of great souls is that whatever they say proves to be true. Anything that comes out of their mouths is sure to happen. Another mark is that, even if you beat them right and left, they will suffer it uncomplainingly—that is the way of a *sādhu*. Don't you remember the incident of Bhṛgu? To find out whether Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the greatest among the gods, he gave a resounding kick on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's chest. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa behaved as if nothing had happened, and by His affectionate welcome, converted Bhṛgu into an obedient slave. It is very difficult, indeed, to become a *sādhū*. One has to have complete control over his body, mind, and speech, and be quiet, composed, and grave in demeanour. From Buddha's life and discourses, we find that action follows thought; as you think, so you act. As loving thoughts help in ex-

panding the consciousness, so do anger, jealousy, and envy lead to its contraction.

'I have seen many *sādhus*, but only in the Master did I see this speciality that he never spoke disparagingly about anybody.'

* * *

'One day, at Dakshineswar, the Master gave me a book in English and wanted me to read and explain it to him. It was said there that one should speak the truth, one should not covet others' goods, and one should control one's passions. The Master was very pleased to hear it and expressed his happiness like a child. I have still a vivid recollection of his joy on that day. I think the reason for his expression of delight in that manner was that it is just through those three things that one can attain God. Any talk on God would lead him into a trance.'

* * *

'Unless one can restrain one's passions, it is impossible to get anywhere near God. One's duty is to lead an honest and pious life, and above all, to conduct oneself as an humble servant of God. Help the afflicted, but without hoping for return. If you remain steadfast in your faith, entertaining no prejudice against other faiths, and hold fast to the truth in any and all circumstances, then the Divine Mother will come and guide you. For that, however, you have to exercise self-restraint and undergo mental training. The Hindus know perfectly well what this training means—to be pure in body, to be non-covetous, and not to accept gifts from anyone. Your body is built through the food you take, and if that is not clean and pure, how can you expect mental perfection? If there is something wrong at the very root, the result, too, is bound to be likewise.

'Accepting gifts from others makes one feel very small. Your own affairs are sufficiently exacting and getting involved in other people's

business is bound to be an additional burden. Thus, even if you have to raise money from the public, its expenditure should be exactly for the purpose for which it was collected. The Master always warned us against spending money on items for which it was not definitely earmarked.

‘Making compromises with evil leads only to self-deceit. You can satisfy your lower self, but your higher self will cry out one day for a satisfactory explanation. And failure to provide that will lead to certain retribution.’

* * *

‘The object of life is Self-realization. You should be satisfied with whatever you can secure for keeping the body fit, and then, go on working selflessly for God. There is a Hindi couplet which says that jewels, elephants, and houses, indeed, all wealth is just valueless compared to contentment. But once you are a householder, it is very difficult to follow these ideals. Even I myself had my own temptations to overcome. It is all so difficult; you cannot have contentment so long as you are subject to worldly desires. Once they disappear you are free.’

* * *

‘There is a Bengali song which runs like this: “You have brought me up and taken care of me. O Mother, I only know you are there, but I have never seen you.” It is an idea which very much appeals to me. The Mother is looking after us all the time, but does not appear before us. We cannot say it is a fault on Her part. She is always with us, only we ourselves refuse to see Her. How can we see Her, if we are slaves to our senses and passions? It is these senses and passions which, for their own sport, have kept us in the dark. The only way out is to think of Her night and day, to surrender ourselves to Her unreservedly, with the determination to free ourselves from passions, and to effect a complete suppression of them. It is, of course, a slow process, and who knows how many lives will pass before we attain the goal?’

‘We should hold fast to faith and never lose it. With all the strength of this faith, we should, in all simplicity, patiently pray to the Mother to make us pure in heart, and She will certainly grant our prayer. It is purity of heart that is required. Everyone will achieve truth in accordance with his temperament when there is purity of heart. Once that is attained, we shall get what we desire. Let us make our minds pure, the rest will be easy; and we shall attain spiritual happiness, comparable to nothing else in life. Our worldly pleasures are but a speck of dust, when weighed against that great mountain of joy. No earthly pleasures can have any attraction for us when we have once tasted of that happiness. When we have control over our passions, we shall succeed; we shall ourselves then feel that we are advancing towards God.’

* * *

‘After death, worldly desires continue in an intangible form. Death only destroys the body, but the senses, the mind and intelligence—all remain in a subtle form. In that subtle body, sensuous perceptions are still more acute. Even in the causal state, the “mind” exists in the form of “seed”. In the supra-mental state only, one attains the plenitude of knowledge. It is not enough, therefore, to try for physical development only; what is wanted is all-round advancement—physical, mental, and spiritual.

‘Everything in the world is a compound of many things; it is only God who is pure and simple. The Vedānta characterizes time, space, and causation as Illusion or Māyā. That Māyā is the “Mother”, the Primordial Energy. To know this Māyā is to conquer it, and one who has done so is a man of real strength. One who knows the uses of time and lives it properly in all respects will gain victory over time, i.e. over life and death.

‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna: “One who is able to discover inaction in action and action in inaction is the really wise man with true vision. Therefore, you have to be a soldier

as well as a *yogin*." The world is not a place where one can afford to be inactive and lazy. When one can work without any thought of self, then only, can one realize the joy of rest. "Work like a hero", Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "it ill becomes you to be overcome with doubt and diffidence. Shake off this weakness; be brave and get ready for the battle." The Western nations make good use of their time, and therein lies the secret of their strength in this world. If we, too, make proper use of our opportunities, we can achieve great things. God is behind us always; let us remember Him in everything we do. Every action leads to a certain result; we cannot afford to forget that.

'In the sphere in which we happen to be, we want to dismiss everything as *Māyā*, although we have never sought to understand what *Māyā* really is. The real *sādhu* is he who has gone beyond time, space, and causation, after having known them. When we know what time, space, and causation constitute, we come to know what lies beyond them, too. But this knowledge is rather very difficult to attain—knowledge means realization. We are the children of the Mother; so, what have we got to fear? Let us hold fast to the truth and pray to Her, and She will surely confer on us Her blessings.'

* * *

Hearing that a cat had spilt the milk in the kitchen, the Swami said: 'I have told Beni (the servant of the Allahabad Math) so often to keep the milk under that box and cover it well, but he always forgets it. And I can hardly blame him; it is not possible for a single person to look after so many things.' Then, laughingly, he added: 'And, if he had that much of intelligence and mental concentration, surely, he would not work as a domestic servant.' What a beautiful way of expressing annoyance!

* * *

Swami Vijnananandaji never divulged anything about his own spiritual visions. Questions about them would make him dismiss the

subject with light-hearted banter, as if curiosity about it was irrelevant. But, in those days, these visions came to him so profusely that little bits of them would come out in conversation, even somewhat involuntarily. He once said: 'I don't have dreams nowadays, but see Him actually in person, so I just quietly lie down. And, indeed, who can reveal Him? He reveals Himself. When the sun rises, one does not need to be told about it; by its own light the sun reveals itself.'

'The other day I saw myself spread across from one end of the horizon to the other. Call it a dream or anything else. But I felt a great joy, and a recollection of it gives me a thrill even now.'

* * *

Allahabad Math, February 8, 1920

The Swami was sitting at the Muthiganj Math, Allahabad, surrounded by a few devotees. The discussion was about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* at Vrindaban. A devotee said: 'The attitude of the *gopīs* seems rather queer and difficult to understand.' The Swami said: 'No, my friend, it is not that. It is very difficult, indeed, to understand these things. These cowherds of Vrindaban, both men and women, were not ordinary people. Each one of them could create a separate universe. To understand their motivations, one's self-consciousness has to be completely eliminated. We have to be completely selfless to dominate our base desires and believe in the all-pervasiveness of God.'

'You see, God is always inside us and also outside, telling us to shed our fears and worries. "You can't run away from me" says He. "You want to play about a little. Well, go on playing. But I am ever inside you; seek and ye shall find. The moment you attain complete mastery over your passions, you will get Me within you, effulgent and blissful."'

On another occasion. Maharajji said: 'Invoke the blessing of the Mother—morning, noon, and night. Pray to her: "O Mother,

give us that insight which enables one to realize Divinity." Make your prayer as you find it in the Gāyatrī.

'Our Mother is the embodiment of law. If you conduct yourself in accordance with this law, you will gain complete knowledge and understanding, and going against this law will only lead to inevitable disaster, and you will be pulverized into atoms. This law of God acts silently; it is great and all-powerful. This is what Christians call the Holy Ghost and Hindus call Śakti.

'For the sake of devotees, the Mother comes with ten arms, and says: "Shed your fears. You have made Me your sole refuge, and I am, therefore, protecting you with ten arms. Death will be powerless to come anywhere near you. It is for you that I hold a sword." I can tell you, that I have realized it in the very depth of my consciousness and I know from my own experience that I am always under the Mother's sheltering care. In all these fifty-three years, the Mother has never appeared before me in Her alluring form. Indeed, She warns me in time against any approaching danger and surrounds me on all sides. No harm can befall me.'

* * *

'The most remarkable phenomenon is that all men, all animals desire to live for ever. This shows the immortality of all created things. Yes, it is really so. The One that is within us all is without beginning and without end, without birth or death. There is nothing like death there. As you discard an old shirt, so does He discard the body and enters another.

'The mind is man's greatest and only treasure. God has fashioned this mind in such a way that it will always be subservient to you. If the mind were perverse and disobedient by nature, we would not have been responsible for any of our actions; in that case, man would neither be a free agent, nor would he be counted as the acme of creation. You are the complete master of your mind,

and you can shape it as you like. When the mind is completely under your control, it will have nothing to exist on, except noble thoughts. Just as we know that pure and wholesome food is necessary for our physical existence—impure and contaminated food will only injure the body—so is it necessary to nourish the mind with noble thoughts and high ideals, refusing to provide it with evil thoughts and bad associations, which are like poison to the mind.

'The man who has lost his character is really dead. Compared to this moral death, death in a physical sense is of little consequence. One who has lost his moral anchorage will suffer for it in many, many lives to come.

'When the mind vibrates in tune with the higher laws, you get a vision of your cherished deity or of gods and goddesses in all their radiance, in the spot between the eyebrows. You are the master of your mind and you have to keep it pure. Your responsibility ends there; the rest is God's business. He is all-knowing and will come to your assistance in every way. He is Providence, the wish-fulfilling tree, who provides everything. The Master used to narrate a beautiful story. A man had heard that God is the greatest of givers, and one gets from Him whatever one wants. So, this man prayed for all sorts of material and worldly possessions, which were granted to him as he went on asking for them. Then he thought: "If a tiger comes here now and devours me, I am done for." No sooner had he thought so, than a tiger came and devoured him. God had fulfilled every desire that arose in his mind. He acts like a valet to provide us with whatever we want. Is He to blame or are we? It is desire that is the root of all evil, and no one else is at fault. That is why a discriminating person says to God: "Your actions are your own. I am not the doer, I am but the instrument."

'What you require is hope, faith, and patience; and gradually, you will reach the goal. You have done the right thing in

making the Master your sheet-anchor. He came down to save people. You only pray to him and peace will be yours. Only a prolonged look at him will wash away all the sins and sorrows of your heart. He is all-pervading, he is within you all, and he knows everything. Confide in him, but you must be careful not to go to him with selfish desires. Why should you pray to him for

paltry things like worldly riches? You should pray to him that he may make you pure and unselfish, and give you strength to realize the ultimate Truth. If you hold fast to him, you are safe. The mind is full of perversity; and so long as it does not get a severe jolt, it does not properly knock at God's door. It turns to God only when it gets a serious knock.

A MONTH WITH A SIGNIFICANCE

Apart from being the first month of the sixty-eighth year of *Prabuddha Bharata*, this month of January of the year nineteen hundred and sixty-three comes to us with a special significance. In this month, just a hundred years ago, was born Swami Vivekananda, whose world-wide birth centenary celebrations will be inaugurated on the seventeenth day of this month, which, according to the Hindu almanac, is the auspicious birthday of the Swami this year. Swami Vivekananda's advent was not an ordinary event. The divine hand worked for it, and what India and the world have gained by this event is too well known to be explained.

The last century, in which the great Swami appeared, witnessed the end of the medieval age and the advent of the modern. There was a new wave of life all over the world. It was particularly a period of triumph for the West—specially Europe. Europe was no more confined within its geographical boundaries. With the force of its new scientific outlook and the impact of the Industrial Revolution, its immense power sought to engulf the entire face of the earth. Everything was, as it were, in a state of surge. India, also, did not escape its influence. Coming into contact with those strong currents of scientific and materialistic thought, she was almost deluged with those ideas. The age-old convictions of her national life

were shaking on their foundations, and it was a question of 'to be or not to be' for her. English education and European civilization, which were introduced in this ancient land during the nineteenth century, had created strong tendencies, leading to denationalization and Anglicization of its entire fabric of indigenous life. Modernization of India was, no doubt, a necessity for resuscitation of the national life of this land, but not in a way it threatened to come. The transitional process was rather fearful.

But everything was not to be taken all lying down. Throughout the entire length and breadth of the country, from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and from Gujarat to Bengal, there came flashes of rational consciousness, and men sprang up to examine and challenge the onslaught that sought to overwhelm and win over the age-old institutions of the cultural life of the people of India. Various reform movements were started during the time as a historical necessity. But, more or less, they were working with almost apologetic psychology and did not possess the clear insight that was the great need for such movements. The influence of Europe had almost imperceptibly taken so deep roots in the mind of the nineteenth century India that, as the famous French thinker Romain Rolland says, 'almost all the reformers of the last century were Anglomaniacs, and oscillated

between the East and the West'. 'Their characters, also, were compounded of the incompatible elements of the East and the West.'

And this was nothing unnatural. History is replete with instances when the might and valour of the conquering nation have held almost complete sway over the mind and thought of the subject peoples. Whenever any novel ideology of life, social or political, nay, even cultural or religious, is held by an overpowering victor, the subject people grasp at that sparkling ideology, without even pausing to consider how far it will suit their cultural instincts, or how far it is conducive to their ultimate well-being. This has, oftener than not, been the unfortunate experience of history, in the life of most of the subject races of the world. India, too, was not very much an exception to this. The influx of the Western culture and social ideologies into the stream of Indian thought created a good deal of unsettlement and confusion, in the normal course of her life and thought process. And, it was in that period of confusion, more confounded by the political supremacy of the West, when the children of this ancient land were lured unwarily into a position of utter helplessness that Swami Vivekananda was ushered into the arena of our national life. He came as a powerful challenge to the crisis of the time. At his clarion call, the soul of India was stirred to its innermost depths and found her lost ground anew. The vital thought forces of the race compressed themselves, as it were, in the single unit of that noble personality who stood before his countrymen with the grace and vigour of grand Indian culture. At the same time, he did not overlook the needs of the modern times. He combined in himself the best that was in the East and the West. In this respect, Swami Vivekananda is not only an Indian of the highest order, but a world citizen at his best. What he did and said was not to save India alone, but to open up the concept of a new life for humanity at

large. Sister Nivedita, speaking about the contribution of the Swami to the thought treasure of humanity, truly says: 'The gift that has been here made to the world will remain and bear its fruit in East and West alike. What Hinduism had needed was the organizing and consolidating of its own idea. What the world had needed was a faith that had no fear of truth. Both these are found here.' She further says: 'Nor could any greater proof have been given of the eternal vigour of the Sanātana Dharma, of the fact that India is as great in the present as ever in the past, than this rise of the individual who, at the critical moment, gathers up and voices the communal consciousness.'

II

Swami Vivekananda was, first and foremost, a realized soul. He had experienced the great truths of the Vedānta and had touched the very core of Reality. The essential oneness of the Spirit, manifesting itself variously in different units of existence, was a fact of realization to him. He had achieved it at the feet of his great master Sri Ramakrishna, who appeared on the Indian scene as the 'consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people', and as the fulfilment of India's spiritual aspirations. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda stand out as the symbols of the rediscovery of the soul of India, which had been anaesthetized, as it were, for the time being by an overdose of materialistic dope and sceptic wind that came in the wake of Western impact of the last century. The heart of the nation was restored to its vitality once again and was to bloom forth in the eternal spiritual and moral values for which India has always stood. The experience of oneness in the midst of variety, of unity in the midst of diversity, and the perception of the innate divinity of all souls, which he had received from Sri Ramakrishna, the Swami treasured, and having realized the necessity of scattering these great ideas broadcast to humanity at

large, set out to preach them in India and the world outside. His personality, however, was not confined to the sphere of the Spirit alone. His was the conception of a dynamic religion. It comprised all life in its fold and various manifestations of it were only different modes of worship. 'It is in this', Sister Nivedita writes, 'which adds its crowning significance to our master's life. ... If the many and the one be, indeed, the same Reality, then, it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life itself is religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.'

'This is the realization which makes Vivekananda the great preacher of *karma*, not as divorced from, but as expressing *jñāna* and *bhakti*. To him, the workshop, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man, as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no difference between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality. All his words, from one point of view, read as a commentary upon this central conviction.' To make people all over the world understand this great truth of the oneness of all existence, to rouse the consciousness of men to realize this unifying truth to live as brothers in faith, and to see that it was not only an imagery of impractical and wishful thinking, was the key-note of the Swami's life and mission.

III

Swami Vivekananda, as he knew the pulse of his motherland, felt in the heart of his hearts that India, with her long tradition of liberal outlook and harmonizing spirit, was the land most suited to give a palpable shape to this theory of Vedānta in practice. Here, he was a patriot among the patriots. The

motherland was the reigning queen of his heart, and her he not only loved, but adored also. Sister Nivedita tells us: 'Like some delicately poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her (India). Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. 'There was no cry of fear, no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification that he had not known and understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness.'

India was to him 'the blessed *punyabhūmi*, the motherland of philosophy, of spirituality, of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness, and love'. This love for the motherland had made him one with the teeming millions of his brothers. He was a man of the people in this respect. As he was 'the proudest man ever born' to be a son of this great land, none was more concerned than he of her present degradation. The pitiful cry of sunken millions of India made an irresistible appeal to his compassionate heart which beat with each throb of all the hearts that ached, known and unknown. During his extensive sojourn through the length and breadth of India and his contact with all kinds of people at all levels, he was able to know the land through and through. Her greatness, her glory, her strength, her potentiality, her weakness, her failure, her misery, her sorrow, her poverty, her dependence—all had enabled him to live through with her in her glorious past, the miserable present, and the magnificent future. Romain Rolland, in his life of Vivekananda, says: 'He wandered free from plan, caste, home, constantly alone with God. And there was no single hour of his life when he was not brought into contact with the sorrows, the desires, the abuses, the misery, and the feverishness of living men, rich and poor, in town and field; he became one with their lives; the great Book of Life revealed to him what

all books in the libraries could not have done—the tragic face of the present day, the cry of the people of India and the world for help, and the heroic duty of the new Oedipus, whose task it was to deliver Thebes from the talons of the Sphinx or to perish with Thebes.' He instinctively, as if impelled by the Lord who resides in every soul, felt in his heart of hearts that a great mission awaited him. A mute appeal rising all around him from the oppressed, yet struggling, soul of India, the tragic contrast between her grand and glorious past and the present miserable degradation, the feeling of an anguish of death and an urge for resurrection, of despair and love of her children devoured his heart. And, at the end of his pilgrimage of this holy land, standing on her last stone at Kanya Kumari, the Swami laid the entire fund of his accumulated spiritual and intellectual powers at the feet of his motherland, for the uplift of her people and for the well-being of humanity at large.

IV

Swami Vivekananda was, indeed, a patriot and a saint in one. Patriotism to him lay in the very identification of one's personality with the joys and sorrows of the fellow beings and in their loving service—service raised to the status of worship. 'Three things', he said, 'are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart, my would-be patriots! Do you feel that the millions and millions of the descendents of gods and sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming constant with your heartbeats? Has it made you mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot—the very first

step. . . . Instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, some help instead of condemnation, some sweet words to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think right? Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these things, each one of you will work miracles.'

These are the words come out of the very depths of conviction, which realization brings, and the Swami was the very embodiment of what he said. Yet, his sense of patriotism was not narrow or parochial, that does not hesitate to rob others to swell its own coffers. It was in perfect harmony with his deep-seated saintly love for humanity, inasmuch as his genius spoke within him with the redeeming voice of a prophet that, in the regeneration of India, lay the safety of the modern civilization, bereft of spiritual content and the harmonizing sap of life. To him, an India regenerated in her true cultural heritage, seemed the best means of supplying the crying needs of the world. His reading of history revealed to him what India stood for and what India did for the world. 'India's gift to the world is the light spiritual' he said. 'The debt which the world owes to our motherland is immense. Taking country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much. . . . Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blasts of trumpets and the march of cohorts; gifts of secular knowledge and social knowledge can be made with fire and sword; but spiritual knowledge can only be given in silence, like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing into blossom masses of roses. This has been the gift of India to the world again and again.' His conviction was firm that India, though politically subjugated and economically strained, had the potential greatness of her inner life intact, and that, for her own good and for

the good of the world, she must rise—shaking off the bondage put around her and casting off the chains that bound her down to a position of subordination. Seventy years back, he, with the vision of a seer, saw his motherland rising out of the seeming mass of decay, 'more glorious than ever she was'. For he sincerely believed that 'for a complete civilization, the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race, which, through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast; the world is waiting for that treasure'. And with conviction and faith, he called forth: 'Up, up, the long night is passing, the day is approaching, the wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury. Believe, believe, the decree has gone forth, the fiat of the Lord has gone forth—India must rise, . . . none can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.'

V

And what did Swami Vivekananda do to regenerate this India of his dreams? Various assessments of the Swami's work in this respect have already been made and more will be made in time to come. It will be enough to say that he stands as the harbinger of the message of life to the renaissance India of the modern times. The imagination of the Swami embraced in its comprehensive sweep all the major problems of Indian life. Mass education, emancipation of women, economic and social uplift of the people, preservation of the grand cultural heritage of the land, and dissemination of the accumulated spiritual wisdom of the race to one and all, irrespective of race or nationality, engaged the keen attention of this patriot-saint. Circumstanced as he was in those days as the architect of a great organization which was to translate his ideas into action, he kept aloof from pol-

itics. But to one who reads between the lines of his utterances, this fact cannot be hidden that he always advocated freedom as the ultimate condition for any real growth, either of an individual or of a nation. But that was to be achieved after preparation and strengthening of character. The freedom movement that deluged the land in 1905 and after drew tremendous inspiration from the Swami's writings—a fact which has been admitted by all students of the history of Indian freedom movement. But the Swami, for valid reasons, wished that first things must come first. He knew that if the right chemicals were put in the right proportions, the correct reaction would take place by itself. The Swami, therefore, sought to reinvigorate the land with the basic strength of character—the national character founded on sound and solid grounds. He realized that, in a land where society had been transformed into a theatre for the devil's dance and the mute millions were rolling in the mud-puddle of crass superstition and crushing poverty, empty political shibboleths could hardly be of any avail, unless the actualities of life were boldly faced and works of social usefulness earnestly undertaken to prepare the ground for political redemption. The status of the common people was to be raised. He, therefore, wanted a band of heroic young men, fired with the zeal of service and strengthened by the spirit of renunciation, who would go throughout the length and breadth of the country and bring the message of hope and courage to the ignorant and fallen masses. In education—imparted in the right way—he saw the great magic power to awaken the people. It would not only be spiritual knowledge, but secular education also, comprising all aspects of human culture. 'The education', he said, 'which does not help the common masses of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on

one's own legs.' He wanted that women, also, should be encouraged to take their due share in national regeneration and for that, it was necessary that they, too, should be properly educated—spiritually as well as in other things. 'We shall bring to the need of India', he said, 'great fearless women—women worthy to continue the traditions of Saṅghamitrā, Līlā, Ahalyā Bāī, Mīrā Bāī—women fit to be mothers of heroes, because they are pure, selfless, strong with the strength that comes from touching the feet of God.' He believed that such a balanced character of men and women—properly educated and inspired by high ideals—would not only make every household an abode of peace and joy, but would enable the nation to enrich itself with citizens who would help as well the achievement of a nobler destiny in the collective life of humanity.

He was also awake to the necessity of economic welfare of the nation and it was his firm conviction that poverty was at the root of most of the evils. 'The root cause of all the miseries of India', the Swami said, 'is the poverty of the people.' He, time and again, advocated the great necessity of educating the Indian people in the various technical arts and sciences to solve the economic problems of the land and to make them worthy members of a great nation. 'What we should have', he said, 'is what we have not, perhaps, what our forefathers ever had not—that, impelled by the life-vibrations of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe the electric flow of that tremendous power, vivifying the whole world. We want that energy, that love of independence, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward.'

But we must not forget that though the Swami was an advocate of the material prosperity of the nation, he was always awake to the national genius of India, which lay in its

deep spiritual consciousness. He, therefore, held that religion should always be the bedrock of Indian national life. If that life current was kept pure and healthy, the whole fabric of the nation's life would go well.

The Swami was also alive to the evils that had crept into the life of the nation and was keen for their eradication. Wrong understanding of religion and perverted conception of right and wrong, artificial bondages of castes and creeds and narrowness of outlook, perpetuation of senseless superstitions and mistaking laziness for spiritual quietude, committing social injustice over the poor and the weak under the garb of false religion, and such other things came for bitter criticism at the Swami's hands. 'A country, the big leaders of which have, for the past two thousand years, been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or with the left, whether to take water from the right-hand side or the left, if such a country does not go to ruin, what else will?' he would ask.

VI

But, though a patriot of the first magnitude, Swami Vivekananda was not blind to the need of a harmonious blending of the best elements of the East and the West, and as we have already said, he did not fail to see that it would augur well for both. His love for his country did not isolate him from the rest of the world. He saw the inevitable writing of the time on the wall that the world was fast moving towards a synthesis of ideas and ideals, and the life of every race or nation was, as a matter of course, bound to be interlinked with that of the rest of the world. 'The Orient, he thought, would really be benefited by somewhat greater activity and energy of the West, as the latter would profit by sharing the Eastern introspection and meditative habit. In his opinion, science coupled with Vedānta was the ideal of future humanity. The advancement of science only strengthens, and not undermines, the foundations of philosophy. The two meet at a point

where the human being stands as one indivisible entity, and it is this basic unity which science and philosophy seek to find out from two different directions. 'Physically speaking', said Swami Vivekananda, 'you and I, the sun, the moon, and stars are but little wavelets in the one infinite ocean of matter, the *samasthi*.' The philosophy of Vedānta, he adds, goes a step further and says that, behind this idea of unity of all phenomena, there is a greater truth—which is the one soul—the Reality of one existence, without a second. This principle supplies the rationale for all morals, all ethics, all spirituality. The West wants today this great principle, which, consciously or unconsciously, is forming the basis of the latest political and social plans and aspirations—this idea of one world, this idea of co-existence and all that. As a great seer, Swami Vivekananda visualized the dawn of a new civilization, evolved out of a happy synthesis of Vedānta and science of the East and the West, and here, there would be blended in harmony the various types of cultures, at the same time, there would be adequate scope for their characteristic development and free play. He preached this idea not only for India, but for the world at large, pointing thereby to the bewildered humanity the real path it should follow to build up a

richer, a more perfect type of human society, which will not be cut up into small segments of narrow outlooks and selfish interests. 'Let us hope', he declared, 'that the entire human race may some day draw some of its spiritual inspiration from the ancient religion of this land, that the East and the West may then make their full contribution to the perfection of humanity, and the last civilization of the world, like her first, may be a civilization, not of struggle and warfare, but of peace and sympathy, charity and harmonious co-operation to a great end.'

This is the great legacy Swami Vivekananda left with us. Much has been achieved in India, and the world has taken great strides forward during the time since the Swami left us. His vision has been realized to some extent. But much more has yet to be achieved and much more progress has yet to be made. And it is time that we made more earnest efforts to understand the import of Swami Vivekananda's message in fuller measure and actualize his noble ideas in all our actions, and in the different aspects and spheres of our life—individual and collective—for the well-being of India and the world at large. May this first month of the Birth Centenary year of Swami Vivekananda endow us with the effort, the resolution, and the energy to do so.

THE MOTHER-GODDESS IN THE SAPTAŚATĪ

BY PROFESSOR BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA

An integrated view of life and a way of realization, not parochial but all-embracing, are common features of many Indian cults. They provide an outlook which links up the individual and society, earth and heaven, here and hereafter. They present a spiritual map of our subcontinent, dotted with centres, fostering the special type of inner illumination, with shrines and holy seats of distinctive

discipline. Jaina temples and Buddhist *vihāras*, the four *dhāmas* of the Śāṅkara sects, Vaiṣṇava sacred cities, Śaiva pilgrim resorts, Śākta *pīthas*, etc. serve as focal centres of stimulus and cohesion. The fifty-two spots, where, according to Paurāṇika tradition, the limbs of the self-immolated Satī, whirled on Śiva's trident, fell disjointed, evidence the pre-eminence of Durgā among the manifesta-

tions of Śakti. As Puruṣottama signifies Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person, so Jaganmātā, the Universal Mother, designates this divine form. The all-India vogue of Her worship is evidenced by sculptured relics of antiquity which, in the South, go back to the sixth or seventh century. Tāntric devotion is said to pertain to four schools—Gāuda, Kerala, Klāśmīra, and Vilāsa, the first three belonging to the east, middle, and west, respectively, and the last being eclectic and found in all parts. The Āgamas, as the revealed sources, are designated after three zones—Viṣṇukrānta, Rathakrānta, and Aśvakrānta—to the east, south, and west of the Vindhya range, comprising, perhaps, the *terra cognita* of the ancients and extending up to Java and Mahāchīna. Tāntric worship, according to a verse, had its home in Bengal, from which it became fully manifested in Mithilā, and appearing in some places in Maharashtra, it faded away in Gujarat.

If Bengal be the stronghold of Tāntricism, the worship of Durgā as Supreme Mother should, naturally, reach its peak of splendour, as it does, in this eastern region. The litany of seven hundred stanzas—the *Durgā Saptaśatī* or *Caṇḍī*—found in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, may not date earlier than the fifth century, but the worship of the Goddess, like many other features of the Indian religious tradition, goes back to a remote Vedic age. In the *Caṇḍī*, the worship of the earthen image is related. The Goddess is hymned twice in the *Mahābhārata*, and again in its *khila* (appendix), and referred to in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, also. In the *Kena Upaniṣad* and in the *Devī-sūkta*, she is exalted as the Supreme Power behind all the forces and agencies of the universe—the aspect which is elaborated in the *Caṇḍī* in several episodes. Historic tradition traces the prevalent worship in Bengal, with the composite imagery, to Raja Danujamardana, a north Bengal chief, and the Mahāyānic phase of Buddhism, with its multi-form icons, may have suggested the panel of figures, but the Vedic inspiration as the

source is undoubted, as the prefatory recital of the *Devī-sūkta*, before the recital of the *Saptaśatī* text is a reminder at all times. Outside Bengal, and within also, in place of the special imagery, the worship is performed during the *Navarātra* or the 'nine nights' ritual, on a consecrated pitcher of water and a bunch of the nine herbs and roots—emblems of nine forms of the Goddess, which gives it the character of a vegetation celebration or autumn festival. The artistic grouping and the main and attendant divinities and the harmonic idea have been developed in Bengal, and are proving to have an irresistible power of appeal in all parts of India.

The centre piece is the supreme Goddess of Power—the united might of all the gods, the Mother of the universe with her offsprings—the goddesses of learning and wealth and the gods of success and prowess—the lion in deadly grapple with the demon, which, centaur-like, bursts from the fierce buffalo-form, the arched tablet at the top, displaying the primal deities and the divine incarnations—all, together, making up a presence of unique solemn grandeur.

The *Durgā-pūjā* strikingly illustrates what Rabindranath, on a visit to Bhubaneswar, discerned to be the message of pre-Buddhistic India. It is to enshrine Divinity in everyday life, to sense His movement in the joy and grief of every moment, the identity of the soul of the creation with the supreme Spirit. The divine presence, thus having been domesticated, so to say, its sanctity seems to pervade the social sphere in the preparations for this observance. In times not long gone by, it was the axis round which the family life and its year's routine revolved. The Mother Goddess evoked effusive sentiments like a married daughter on a periodical visit to her paternal home and the pāthos of the *āgamanī* and *visarjana* (welcome and farewell) songs wring the very chords of tender sensibility. A curious blending of the sanctity of godhead and homely affections, enriched and refined human relations, a discipline of humanity, now

fading away in the casual associations and formal affabilities of the *sarbajanīn* (public) pandal. The invocation or *boḥana* of the Deity at the feet of the bael-tree, the *adhivāsa* or the installation after lustration, the ablution of the image with waters, purporting to be from the springs and lakes and the seas and sacred rivers, the *pradakṣiṇa* or circumambulation of the panel, and the sombre midnight ritual of worship cause thrills and fervours among the functionaries and the laity as well. The grandeur of the conception in the rich elaborate ceremony and the sharpness of the conflict between the forces of good and evil are ideas that stand out from the worship and the accompanying song-recital—the *Candī*. This *Saptaśatī* text is a long-drawn lay of repeated battles between gods and demons. In the depiction of the clash between undoubted right and unmitigated wrong, and the ultimate triumph of good and absolute overthrow of evil, there is no touch of the moral indifferentism and lack of fibre, sometimes charged against the Oriental temperament.

In the story in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna*, demons wrest the sovereignty of heaven from the hierarchy of legitimate rulers, drive them out, and usurp all powers. And this happens on three occasions—under Madhu and Kaitabha, under Mahiṣāsura, and under the brothers Śumbha and Niśumbha. The supreme deities are moved, and the dispossessed gods cast off their helpless inertia, as the Mother Goddess, in whom the might of all the divinities unites, arises. In the first episode, she is hymned as *yoganidrā*—mystic slumber which overpowers Viṣṇu on his couch—the thousand-hooded serpent Śeṣa, lying on the ocean of cosmic dissolution. Two demons, born of Viṣṇu's earwax, threaten to devour Brahmā, seated on the lotus stemming from his navel. The mystic trance, then leaving the limbs of Viṣṇu, appears in a visible form before Brahmā. She is the incarnate spirit of the universe and the energy of all—now existent and now non-existent. She tran-

scends the power of speech to describe her, as it is she who makes the supreme trinity—creator, protector, and destroyer—assume form and lulls even Viṣṇu to sleep. Under her power, the two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, swell with pride, and for five millennia, wrestle with Viṣṇu and even tell the Supreme One to ask a boon of them. 'If you are pleased, be you both my victims' is the reply to which they agree, but add that He might slay them only where the waste of waters did not cover the earth. And so, they were stretched on Viṣṇu's thigh and beheaded by His flaming discus.

In the second episode, the gods are defeated and exiled from heaven by the buffalo-demon, Mahiṣāsura; the heavenly hosts are routed and the celestials roam the earth like mortals. In their distress, headed by Brahmā, they repair to the presence of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The relation of their plight kindles the wrath of all the gods, and their energies, issuing in forms and outfit distinctive of each, unite in a blaze rising like a peak and assume a woman's likeness which overspreads the three worlds. Śiva's energy makes her face, Viṣṇu's her arms, Indra's her middle, Varuṇa's her thighs, Earth's her lower waist, Brahmā's her feet. The sun's light forms her toes, Fire her three eyes, the two twilights her eyebrows, Wind her ears. Thus compact of all the divine potentialities, She shines, and the gods exult to behold her might and splendour. They severally give her their weapons—trident, discus, noose, mace, bow and quiver of arrows, and thunder, as also conch, rosary, and water-bowl. The sun, the lord of the day, gives his rays to issue from her pores, and Yama gives his scimitar and buckler of hide. The ocean endows her with jewels for her crest and all limbs, a lotus and a never-fading garland; the Himalaya gives a lion for her mount and the serpent-king Śeṣa, a wreath of jewel-crested snakes. Thus armed and honoured, she breaks forth into a peal of laughter which rends the skies and shocks the orbs in outer space, as well as the

earth and hills below. A fight begins on a cosmic scale. The lion under her rages like a forest-fire, and fighting legions spring forth from her very breath. The beastly and ogreish demon chiefs Chikṣura and Cāmara fall one after the other, whereupon the infuriated buffalo-form of Mahiṣāsura, by its wild hideous pranks, spreads terror, as its feet dig into the earth which shrinks underneath; its horns dislodge the high hill tops and scatter the clouds; and the buffalo-form churns the ocean by its hoofs so as to flood the shores. And as Mahiṣāsura dashes against the Goddess, she binds it fast in her net. Thereupon, the beast assumes many changes of form, human, leonine, elephantine, and again, takes its proper shape and roars fearfully. Then, after a cheering cup, she sets her foot on the demon's shoulder, when it has half-emerged man-like from the buffalo-form, and spearing its heart, severs its head. The image of Durgā familiarly set up shows her in this posture, dealing the death-blow to the monstrous demon, sword-point and spear-thrust, the serpent's coil and the lion's fangs joining to make the end inevitable.

In the third and longest episode, the Goddess vanquishes the twin usurpers of heavenly powers—the brother-demons Śumbha and Niśumbha and their retinue. Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, their servants, find Pārvatī in resplendent beauty, riding a lion on a Himalayan peak, and bring word to their master. Returning, they demand of her to be the spouse of one of the brothers, lords as they are of all the world's choicest treasures. 'Whoever defeats me in battle and humbles my pride will be my master—that is my vow', she replies. 'We will rue this vaunt', they tell her, 'for who in the three worlds can stand against we two, vanquishers of heaven?' A long-drawn fight begins, and Dhūmrālocana falls. Pārvatī, hard-pressed, her face darkened, then storms with rage, and from her knitted brows emerges Kālī, the Black One, terrible-faced and blood-bedraggled, wildly

brandishing her scimitar, slays Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, whence her name Cāmuṇḍā. Then Caṇḍikā, emanating from the person of Durgā, and reinforced by the Śaktis or powers of all the gods in their distinctive forms and equipment, rushes against the two chiefs. She first sends Śiva himself as her emissary to demand the surrender of the enemy. Then Kālī and the consorts of the gods, the powers maternal, together fall upon the demon hordes and the havoc they make brings to the fore Rakta-bīja—the demon called 'Blood-seed'—whose every drop of blood touching the earth shoots up into another like him. The field teems with countless doubles of the demoniac form, like the armed figures springing from the dragon's teeth when sown. To put an end to this, at last, every ominous drop that falls at the blows of Caṇḍikā is drunk up by Kālī or Cāmuṇḍā. The Devī's sword then severs Niśumbha's head. Losing his lieutenants, and himself hard pressed, Śumbha twits the Goddess as backed by a host against a single foe. Thereupon, she stands out alone in her invincible might, the mother-deities, her emanations, all merging in her person. Pierced by her spear, the demon Śumbha sinks to the earth which, with its isles, seas, and hills, quakes and heavens rejoice.

The *Devī-Māhātmya* or the song recital of the Goddess's glory, has in it four litanies—superb hymns of invocation and thanksgiving uttered by Brahmā and the gods led by Indra, as also by the whole celestial host. These contain the root ideas of her being and attributes and the manifestations of her grace. She is Yoganidrā—the divine trance of self-communion, Viṣṇu-māyā, Mahāmāyā,—the supreme cosmic illusion. She is Caṇḍikā—the unrelenting, unrecoiling, awful destiny, through whose fear the cosmic powers perform their functions. She is Ambikā, the great Mother, who holds within her all the ranks of the gods and their śaktis, energies or consorts. In the last analysis, she is alone and supreme; like Viṣṇu's incarnations, she appears from age to age to redeem the world

from the dead weight of evil and unrighteous power. Her meshes are the earthly attachments, the entanglements, which weaken and disable the spirit of man. Release comes from them through her grace, won by implicit surrender. She is the primal source of the forces that work in nature, the impulses that shape humanity. She is grace and terror, support of the universe she is. In all creatures, she is sentience (*cetanā*) and intelligence (*buddhi*), hunger and sleep, appearance (*chāyā*) and power, thirst and forbearance (*kṣānti*), the types or categories (*jāti*), sense of shame and love of peace, steadfast devotion and glowing beauty (*kānti*), fortune and prosperity, memory, compassion, vocation (*vṛtti*) contentment, motherly instinct, delusion (*bhrānti*), permeation or inclusiveness (*vyāpti*), and mind-energy (*citi*), pervading all that is. The invisible, yet inexorable, urges and indissoluble ties that hold society together emanate from her. She is the Creatress, Mistress, and the Protectress of the universe.

In magnifying and elevating her above all, Tāntricism continues the Vedic line of monistic thought—the one and only divine substance—everything proceeding from the same supernal source. Says the *Devī-sūkta*: 'I move about at will like the wind wrapping all the worlds—beyond heaven, beyond this earth—such is my majesty. I sustain the Creator, the Fosterer, and the Enricher. I originated heaven and the Father at the head of all. My home is in the waters of the ocean. Then I pervaded all the worlds, and with my form, touched the yonder heaven. I am the queen of all the worlds, the provider of all wealth, the knower of myself as the Supreme Brahman, and therefore, the sacrificer's foremost object of adoration.' The *devas* have been installed in many places with many bodies (life-forms) to enter and abide in. In the *Kena Upaniṣad*, Umā Haimavatī, without whose impulse, Fire and Wind and Indra cannot function, is affirmed as the ultimate Power of all the divinities. Passages from

the *Saptaśatī* may be easily cited as expanding the germinal thought. This idea of a single primal principle behind the phenomenal world is the one golden vein in the rich lore of Indian tradition. The Devī is addressed in *Śrī Candī* thus: 'Thou art Viṣṇu's power of infinite potency, the seed of the cosmos, the supreme illusion, all creation is under Thy spell; and again, Thou art *natura naturans* of all and workest through the three primal qualities or functional modes.' Brahman and Śakti are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin of thought. Reality, worshipped under the aspect of wisdom, is the male principle Śiva; under the power aspect, it is the female principle or Śakti. Viṣṇu is the pervasive aspect of Reality which predominates in the *Saptaśatī*. Hence, perhaps, Śiva is less conspicuous as her associate and she is called Viṣṇu Māyā—Vaiṣṇavī Śakti. Brahman, the Absolute, and Śakti, the relative, are not apart from each other. This non-duality is conveyed also by the Śiva-Śakti relationship. If Śiva is Brahman, she is Brahmamayī. If he is Sat, she is Satī—Being in itself and the power to be such. If he is Cit, she is Citī, pure consciousness and consciousness as power. If he is Ānanda, she is Ānandamayī or Paramānandalaharī—perfect bliss and the blissful wave of absolute play. If he is Mahākāla, she is Mahākālī, the formless Absolute and the great Power, respectively. It has been remarked that, after having been overshadowed by the male divinities of the patriarchal Aryan pantheon, the non-Aryan or pre-Aryan Dravidian matriarchal tradition resurged in the later Upaniṣads, under the many names of Śakti. But, it may be pointed out that in the realm of the Spirit, Indian thought has owned no sex-division. And the *Śvetāśvatara* text says: 'Thou art the female and thou art the male, thou art the boy and the maid, decayed through age, thou totterest with a staff, thou art born multifaced.' If, in the concepts of godhead, man is incorrigibly anthropomorphic, the Indian tradition of the Mother Goddess effaces the narrow limitation

of exclusive maleness in the divine idea, and associates sanctity and succour and solace with Deus as Pater and Mater. In words like the *Gītā's*, *Śrī Candī* also assures the Mother's protection whenever the world is afflicted by evil powers. In one of these incarnations, she says that, when drought and famine will last a century, she will sustain the people with herbs grown on her person and slay the demon Durgama, and hence be known as Durgā.

The boons that are solicited of the Mother Goddess, it is generally commented, are the goods of this world—beauty and wealth, fame and destruction of enemies. They are frankly temporal, material in values. In the *Śrī Candī*, the exiled king Suratha and Samādhi, the Vaiśya, forsaken by their kin, respectively ask for the restoration of the kingdom and the inner illumination to loosen worldly attachments—the sense of me and mine. But, unlike Samādhi, the Tāntric devotee's most stressed attitude is reflected in a verse: 'They are esteemed in society, theirs is riches, they have high repute of all kinds, and their sum of pious deeds never lessens, they are the worthy people with wife and children and servants devoted to them—they, to whom Thou, ever the giver of prosperity, art gracious.' Adored, she is, no doubt, said to be the giver of enjoyment, heavenly bliss, and emancipation; but the special grace that the gods invoke on mortals from her ensures increase of worldly prosperity—affluence and power and happiness on earth. Stress is not laid on the unreality of life and the ascetic manner of living, but acceptance of the common values that mankind, since the dawn of history, has cherished and will strenuously seek, till wholly transformed from within. The world, as it is, is affirmed, neither denied nor forsaken, nor sought to be reformed. Not turning away from the allure of the world and seeking isolation (*kaivalya*) like an ascetic or *yogin*, the Śākta devotee, as the normal child of the world, is truly a child of his Great Mother—the supreme divine

Force, and is content to accept from her whatever gifts she chooses to grant. Supplanted, she gives realization; pleased, she gives prosperity; when she is gracious, she grants the boon of deliverance. The attachments which ensnare are her meshes, and release therefrom comes through her grace; she binds and she alone loosens. Resignation to her will is man's whole duty; hence the recurrent chimes of reverent submission, the reiterated salutations which ring throughout the *Saptaśatī*—*namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namaḥ*.

Immanence and omnipresence of the Divinity and unreserved surrender to her dispensation are the ideas that stand out in the worship of the Mother Goddess in the setting of the *Candī*. She animates all and interpenetrates the panorama and evolutions of nature; and has at once animated and entered the field or matter of nature; she animates, inhabits, and is the manifested universe and all its forms. 'Thou art the sole support of the world, for Thou abidest in the form of the earth, by Thee, in the form of water, is everything refreshed, for Thy power is inviolable.' Acquiescence in her pleasure is a virtue of necessity. In time of weal, she is the Goddess of fortune, ensuring increase, in time of privation, she is ill-fortune, leading to extinction. The communing spirit should think 'I do nought', knowing as he does the verity, says the *Gītā*. And the *Devī-sūkta* has the verse: 'By my agency, one who sees, who breathes, or who hears what is spoken eats his food. Unwittingly, they have their being in me. Harken to what I tell you, for it is verily the truth.' Whatsoever the creature does is therefore her doing. She is the agent, he is the instrument. Devotion is the sum of this knowledge, and the worshipper exclaims: 'O Universal Mother, whatever I do is Thy adoration.' This attitude of acceptance is an ancient and main thread in the web of Indian religious thought, and it lifts human interests and desires to the status of sacrificial ritual. Ghora Āngirasa, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

(III.17.1-6), sets out this interpretation of life to Kṛṣṇa : 'When he hungers and thirsts and is unsatisfied, that is his initiation. When he eats and drinks and takes his pleasure, that is his participation in the sacrificial session ; when he laughs and feasts and consorts with a woman, that is his officiating in the ceremony ; when he devotes himself to austerity or penance or makes gifts or does right or does not hurt or speaks the truth, these are fees to the priest ; wherefore, they say, he will beget and he has begotten, and that is his rebirth. And Death is the final ablution.' Similarly, in the *Ānandalaharī* of Śaṅkarācārya, occurs the stanza : 'May speech be repetition of thy name, all crafts hand-postures of worship, walking wheeling round thy presence, eating and the like the rite of offering oblations, slumber obeisance, all kinds of pleasure the act of self-resignation, and all my doings forms of service to Thee.'

In the development of Indian thought, three phases are often marked off—Aryan or Vedic, pre-Aryan or Dravidian, and the medieval or Hindu. They stand for frank and zestful joy of life, ascetic renunciation and self-effacement, and a return to the first attitude—the Aryan pull of life. It is a sort of ethical dialectics—world and life affirmation jostling with world and life negation, and leading ultimately to a fuller resurgence of the former attitude in the Vaiṣṇava and Śākta Tāntricism. How far these attitudes—love

of life and ascetic discipline and dedication of all experience—can be chronologically separated and shown to be exclusive cults will, perhaps, be always a point in the tangled skein of Indian culture. Perhaps, the Indian tradition, at its start, is best likened to the elderly mistress of the house with her pot of sundry miscellany, its content never failing at the hour of need, as pictured by Sri Ramakrishna in his dialogues. Without wading through these deeper waters here and now, the devotional approach to the Mother Goddess may, in conclusion, be best touched up in the Paramahamsadeva's words on the beatitude of the knowledge of omnipresence : 'The perfect devotee does not suffer ; for he can both visualize and experience life and the universe as the revelation of that supreme Divine Force, the all-comprehensive living Being in its cosmic aspect of playful, aimless display (*līlā*)—which brings pain as well as joy, but in its bliss, transcends them both' (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 139). She is both *avidyā*, *mahāmāyā*, *mahāmoha* (the illusion which enmeshes the world-cycle), and *vidyā*—the perfect knowledge which liberates—*vidyāśīsā bhagavatī paramā hi devī*. Through her is gained the end of all Śāstra—happy life on earth, heaven thereafter, and in the end, liberation—the realization of the Upaniṣadic assurance : '*Avidyayā mṛtyum tīrtvā vidyayā'mṛtam aśnute*—One crosses death through *avidyā*, and through *vidyā*, attains immortality.'

THE VEDĀNTA AND ITS FUNDAMENTALS

BY ŚWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

As a philosophic term, the Vedānta denotes the idea of the culmination of knowledge in wisdom and stands for that comprehensive *weltanschauung* or world-view, which has been the inspiration behind the movements of India's mind and soul these five thousand

years. Let us cast a brief glance at the way ancient India raised this enduring structure of thought, and at the nature and content of that thought.

The Vedic age of ancient Indian history was drawing to a close. The atmosphere was

charged with a mood of questioning and enquiry; the spirit of freedom was in the air. The interest of the Indian mind was shifting from the study of the external world to the study of the internal world, from external physical nature to the inner nature of man. The previous study could not give conclusive answers to the pressing problems of thought—the nature of the universe, of man, and of his destiny. Perhaps, the study of man, it was felt, might help to unravel the mystery of existence; even otherwise, it offered a new and mysterious field of investigation. This phenomenon in the history of ancient India is paralleled by a similar interest in the subject of man and in his inner life being evinced by thinkers in the modern age. The inner world, constituted by the mind of man with its facts of consciousness, the moral sense, the feeling of individuality, logical and rational powers, the states of waking, dream, and sleep, and a vague sense of deathlessness and survival, offered a challenge to the gifted thinkers of the day; and they accepted this challenge and wrestled with it, individually and in groups, with a persistence and objectivity rare in the history of philosophic thought. The impressive record of these endeavours and the truths and insights gained therefrom have been preserved for humanity in the immortal literature, the Upaniṣads, which form the closing portions of the vast and varied Vedic literature. Since they contain the philosophy, the quintessence of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads are also known as the Vedānta.

The Vedānta is the product of a fearless quest of truth by minds which were 'undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease' as Max Müller terms it. And the search was thoroughly objective and detached; free from the moods and predilections of personality, thought forged ahead, step by step, under the stimulus of a passion for truth and in a perfect atmosphere of freedom; diverse facts of the world of internal nature were noted and classified; theories were advanced, challenged, subjected

to verification, and finally accepted or rejected, unhampered by fear of authority or love of dogma; accepted beliefs were questioned, sometimes ridiculed, often rejected without a tear; and there emerged the beautiful edifice of thought known as the Vedānta, impersonal in approach, and therefore universal in spirit, whose rationality and spirituality have made it a synthesis of philosophy, religion, and ethics in one.

This was the fruit of the intellectual and spiritual ferment which swept over a portion of India at that time—the regions comprised in modern Eastern Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Western Bihar. The best minds of the age were involved in it, sages and kings, men and women and youths. The Upaniṣads give us a picture of a dynamic age: an arresting procession of students and teachers in quest of truth and wisdom, an impressive record of their dialogues in small groups and large assemblies, a flight now and then into the regions of the sublime caught in snatches of poetry, vigorous and graceful, an array of beautiful metaphors and telling imageries serving as feathers to their arrows of thought in flight—these varied features of the Upaniṣads invest them with the beauty and charm of enduring literature and the loftiness and vigour of lived philosophy.

The *ṛsis* or sages of the Upaniṣads discovered the laws that govern the inner world much as physical scientists discover the laws of external physical nature. The laws, or the facts which they seek to explain, are not 'created' by the scientists; they are as beginningless as the universe itself, but they were unknown to man till he gave himself a discipline in detachment, objectivity, and precision, born of a passion for truth, which constitutes the scientific mind and temper. The scientist is but the 'discoverer' of the laws of nature; and knowledge of these laws enables him to control the forces and workings of nature. The same is the position which Indian thought accords to these sages or *ṛsis* who discovered the spiritual truths recorded

in the Vedas, aided as they were by minds sharpened by intellectual, moral, and spiritual discipline.

'By the Vedas no books are meant', says Swami Vivekananda in his address to the Chicago Parliament of Religions. 'They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so it is with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forget them.'

'The discoverers of these laws are called *r̥sis* (sages), and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women.'

This R̥sihood, this capacity to discover spiritual truths, is not a national Indian monopoly; Indian thought holds that it is a universal phenomenon. In fact, the Vedānta holds that it is this very effort and its culmination that constitute religion; religion is *anubhava*, realization, and not a matter of mere belief or conformity, creed or dogma. The Vedānta has taught India to recognize in non-Indian sages like Christ or Lao Tse, St. Francis or Eckhart authentic expressions of man's highest spiritual experience. One of the enduring fruits of Vedānta has been peace and harmony, tolerance and acceptance.

This flows from its teaching of the non-duality of the ultimate Reality and the possibility of different approaches to it. The *R̥g-Veda* gave eloquent expression to this great idea in its famous line: '*Ekam Sat, Viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti*'—Truth is one, sages call it by various names. This sentiment was taken up and amplified by every subsequent age of Indian thought—from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*, through Buddha and Aśoka, Śaṅkara and Akbar, down to Śrī Ramakrishna in our

own age—until it has become a most distinguishing mark of the Indian religious and cultural outlook.

Another important teaching of the Vedānta is the innate Divinity of man. To the purified vision of the Vedāntic sages, man appeared as Divinity, struggling for expression through the psycho-physical organism. Purity, knowledge, and freedom are his essential nature. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you', assures Jesus. The story of evolution is the story of the manifestation of this Divinity through suitable changes in the environment and in the organism. This evolution is thwarted or helped by adverse or favourable natural conditions in the early stages, and by social and personal factors in the later ones. The spirit in man, in the march of evolution, overcomes all obstacles to its free expression and achieves civilization, culture, and spiritual enlightenment stage by stage. Christs and Buddhas represent the final goal of this long travail of evolution.

And that introduces us to the third significant idea of the Vedānta that the goal of life is spiritual realization, the fullest manifestation of the Divine within, in life and conduct. Food and clothing, shelter and security, power and knowledge, politics and society are not ends in themselves, says the Vedānta. They are but the means, while the end is the fullest development of man, the complete manifestation of the perfection already in him. The exhortation of Jesus expresses this idea and this hope: 'Be ye therefore perfect even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

The Vedānta views the life of man in its wholeness. Its theme is Man—Man in search of the fulness of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Part of this search is in the external world; but the most significant part of this search lies in the internal world; the first gives social welfare through the applications of the physical and social sciences; the second gives spiritual freedom through the disciplines of morality and religion. There can be no conflict between the two—the secular as against

the sacred—as they both refer only to different stages in the growth of the same individual. And the Vedānta emphasizes this idea of growth, development, and realization as the central characteristic of life at all levels—physical, mental, moral, or spiritual. Its absence constitutes stagnation and death at every level. Hence its constant refrain is : ‘Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.’

The Vedānta arose out of the literature of the Upaniṣads. At a later age, it found its best and most dynamic expression as a comprehensive spirituality through Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*. Still later, it found another significant development as the spirituality of renunciation and compassion in the great Buddha ; twelve hundred years later still, ap-

peared the brilliant philosopher Śaṅkara, in whom the Vedānta achieved its most rational formulation, with the widest intellectual sweep. And in our own time, in the last century, the Vedānta found two dynamic representatives in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda who gathered up all the past developments of this ancient thought to produce a sweeping synthesis of all human thought, by joining to it the dynamic affirmations of modern scientific and social thought as well. In spite of its hoary antiquity, the Vedānta has been young and dynamic in every past epoch of history. But its most fascinating story is only just opening up in the context of modern world conditions created by science and technology, in which the thinking humanity of the whole world has become its audience.

THE DYNAMIC ETHICS OF JOHN DEWEY

BY DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

John Dewey, the noted American philosopher, educationist, and thinker, propounds a dynamic view of ethics, which does not admit the existence of any fixed ideal or fixed principles. In his ethics, he maintains the same point of view he does in his theory of knowledge. He is well known as an advocate of the Instrumentalist Theory of knowledge, according to which there is no absolute truth. Truth never *is*, it is what *happens* to events. Thought is not a process of reduplication or copying of an external determinate object, but a process of experimenting with it, changing it, moulding it to suit one's vital demands. Ideas are plans of actions, taking into account future consequences, with reference to the weal or woe of the organism. The ethics of Dewey is in perfect consonance with this theory of knowledge.

We propose to give in this article a brief

account of the point of view and cardinal principles of John Dewey's ethics and consider them critically.

JOHN DEWEY'S APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF MORALS

Initially, it would be important to remember that Dewey advocates a new approach in understanding human nature. Instead of giving a scientific account of human nature, as it is made and developed by its interaction with the environment, moralists, says Dewey, have hitherto been condemning it as something evil and debased, to be subjugated and changed by an effort of the will. The moral ideal has been regarded as being wholly alien to human nature, and the whole business of morality has been conceived as consisting in the curbing and pruning of this rebellious human nature. Dewey advocates a radical departure from this point of view.

In the very Introduction to his important work, *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey has thus explained the genesis of the above-mentioned approach to the problem of morals: "Give a dog a bad name and hang him." Human nature has been the dog of professional moralists, and consequences accord with the proverb. Man's nature has been regarded with suspicion, with fear, with sour looks, sometimes with enthusiasm for its possibilities, but only when these were placed in contrast with its actualities. It has appeared to be so evilly disposed that the business of morality was to prune and curb it; it would be thought better if it could be replaced by something else. It has been supposed that morality would be quite superfluous, were it not for the weakness, bordering on depravity, of human nature. Some writers with a more genial conception have attributed the current blackening to theologians who have thought to honour the divine by disparaging the human. Theologians have, doubtless, taken a gloomier view of man than have pagans and secularists. But this explanation doesn't take us far. For, after all, these theologians are themselves human, and they would have been without influence, if the human audience had not somehow responded to them.

'Morality is largely concerned with controlling human nature. When we are controlling anything, we are acutely aware of what resists us. So moralists were led, perhaps, to think of human nature as evil, because of its reluctance to yield to control, its rebelliousness under the yoke. But this explanation only raises another question. Why did morality set up rules so foreign to human nature? The ends it insisted upon, the regulations it imposed were, after all, outgrowths of human nature. Why, then, was human nature so averse to them? Moreover, rules can be obeyed, and ideals realized, only as they appeal to something in human nature and awaken in it an active response. Moral principles that exalt themselves by

degrading human nature are, in effect, committing suicide. Or else, they involve human nature in unending civil war, and treat it as a hopeless mess of contradictory forces.'¹

Thus the initial error of most moralists and theologians, Dewey holds, consists in their over-condemnation of human nature and their failure to understand it in a scientific manner.

Let us then turn to Dewey's own explanation of human nature. In explaining human nature in a thoroughly scientific manner, Dewey has succeeded admirably. Indeed, the right way of dealing with human nature depends on our right understanding of it. We make a faulty approach towards understanding human nature when we try to understand it as something subjective and self-closed, abstracted from nature and the social environment. 'The intelligent acknowledgment of the continuity of nature, man, and society will, alone, secure a growth of morals, which will be serious without being fanatical, aspiring without sentimentality, adapted to reality without conventionality, sensible without taking the form of calculation of profits, idealistic without being romantic.'² 'A morals based on study of human nature, instead of upon disregard for it, would find the facts of man continuous with those of the rest of nature and would, thereby, ally ethics with physics and biology. It would find nature and the activities of one person co-terminous with those of other human beings, and therefore, link ethics with the study of history, sociology, law, and economics.'³

The base from which Dewey's ethical thinking starts is the fact of man's continuity with nature and other human beings or the social environment. Once we lose sight of this fact, we shall go astray in our attempt to understand human nature correctly. The individual's habits, by which term Dewey means

¹ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (The Modern Library Series), introduction.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

'moral dispositions', are formed in interaction with nature and the social environment. They do not belong exclusively to a self, isolated from natural and social surroundings. 'Honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces. All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate environing forces. They are interactions of elements constituted by the make-up of an individual with elements supplied by the out-door world. They can be studied as objectively as physiological functions, and can be modified by change of either personal or social elements.

'If an individual were alone in the world, he would form his habits (assuming the impossible, namely, that he would be able to form them) in a moral vacuum.'⁴

Before we proceed further, it would be desirable to understand very clearly what Dewey means by habits, since 'habit' is a key conception in Dewey's account of conduct. By 'habit', we usually mean a sensory-motor habit, a physiological process, such as the habit of cycling or type-writing. But Dewey uses the word 'habit' in a deeper sense. By 'habit', Dewey means a permanent or a standing disposition to respond to particular situations of a type, in a particular way. It is not response to any *one* particular case, but to a type. The formation of these habits depends on the individual's natural endowments of physiological make-up and his instinctual and emotional urges, but these again are modified by social influences, the approbations, and disapprobations of society. To quote Dewey: 'Some activity proceeds from a man; then it sets up reactions in the surroundings. Others approve, disapprove, protest, encourage, share, and resist. Even letting a man alone is a definite response. Envy, admiration, and imitation are complications. Neutrality is non-existent. Conduct

is always shared; this is the difference between it and a physiological process. It is not an ethical 'ought' that conduct *should* be social. It *is* social whether good or bad.'⁵

In the following passage, Dewey admirably brings out the dependence of man's morals on nature and the social environment: 'Morals is as much a matter of interaction with his social environment, as walking is an interaction of legs with a physical environment. The character of walking depends upon the strength and competency of legs. But it, also, depends upon whether a man is walking in a bog or a paved street, upon whether there is a safeguarded path set aside or whether he has to walk amid dangerous vehicles. If the standard of morals is low, it is because the education given by the interaction of the individual with his social environment is defective. Of what avail is it to preach simplicity and contentment of life when communal admiration goes to the man who 'succeeds'—who makes himself conspicuous and envied because of command of money and other forms of power? If a child gets on by peevishness or intrigues, then others are his accomplices who assist in the habits which are built up. The notion that an abstract ready-made conscience exists in individuals and that it is only necessary to make an occasional appeal to it and to indulge in occasional crude rebukes and punishments, is associated with causes of lack of definitive and orderly moral advance. For it is associated with lack of attention to social forces.'⁶

Moral improvement of individuals cannot be brought about merely by preachings and exhortations. Objective conditions should also be changed. So long as conditions exist which are conducive to a bad result, no amount of appeal to an effort of the will to change it can be of any avail. To quote Dewey's words: 'Conditions have been formed for producing a bad result and the bad results

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 318-19.

will occur as long as those conditions exist. They can no more be dismissed by a direct effort of the will than the conditions which create drought can be dispelled by whistling for the wind.⁷

Again: 'We may desire abolition of war, industrial justice, greater equality of opportunity for all. But no amount of preaching goodwill or the golden rule or the cultivation of the sentiments of love and equity will accomplish the results. There must be change in objective arrangements and institutions. We must work on the environment, not merely on the hearts of men. To think otherwise is to suppose that flowers can be raised in a desert or motor cars run in a jungle. Both things can happen and without a miracle. But only by first changing jungle and desert.'⁸

Dewey is perfectly right in insisting upon change in objective conditions as a means to the moral improvement of the individuals, for the social environment, undoubtedly, goes a long way in shaping the habits or moral dispositions of individuals. But how can changes in objective circumstances be brought about except by a change in ideas? Who would change the jungle and the desert, unless the ideas of growing flowers and running motor cars commended themselves to him? The Instrumentalist contends that events change ideas; our contention is that ideas change events. And our ideas themselves change under the stress of the ideals and values present to our consciousness. Unless beauty and happiness of our fellow beings commended themselves to us as intrinsic values, we would not think of turning deserts into flower gardens and cutting jungles for making roads. If external conditions conducive to bad results continue to exist, it is because men's minds have not become sufficiently alive to the necessity of changing them. Change in external conditions will necessarily

follow change in the inner realm of ideas. And our ideas change in proportion as we become growingly aware of the moral ideal present in our consciousness.

But Dewey does not admit the presence of any *a priori* ideal in human consciousness. In fact, he does not admit the existence of any ideal as such. There are no ends or goals according to him to which activity is directed. Ends or goals are turning points in activity. They are not the termini of deliberations. 'Having an end or aim is thus a characteristic of present activity. It is the means by which an activity becomes adapted when, otherwise, it would be blind and disorderly, or by which it gets meaning when, otherwise, it would be mechanical. In a strict sense an end-in-view is a *means* in present action; present action is not a means to remote end. Men do not shoot because targets exist, but they set up targets in order that throwing and shooting may be more effective and significant.

'A mariner does not sail towards the stars, but by noting the stars, he is aided in conducting his present activity of sailing. A port or harbour is his objective, but only in the sense of *reaching* it, not of taking possession of it. The harbour stands in his thought as a significant point at which his activity will not cease when his will needs re-direction. Activity will not cease when the port is attained, but merely the *present direction* of activity. The port is as truly the beginning of another mode of activity, as it is the terminus of the present one.'⁹ 'When ends are regarded literally as ends to action rather than as directive stimuli to present choice, they are frozen and isolated.'¹⁰

Why, then, do men attach themselves to fixed and final ends? Because, says Dewey, of their fixed habits of thought and their timidity to adventure and experiment. 'Ignoring the fact that truth can be bought

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

only by the adventure of experiment, dogmatism turns truth into an insurance company. Fixed ends upon one side and fixed 'principles'—that is, authoritative rules—on the other, are props for a feeling of safety, the refuge of the timid and the means by which the bold prey upon the timid.¹¹

Are the moral principles developed in past ages to be completely thrown away? No, says Dewey. 'The choice is not between throwing away rules previously developed and sticking obstinately by them. The intelligent alternative is to revise, adapt, expand, and alter them. The problem is one of continuous vital readaptation.'¹²

Now, when it is said that the old moral principles are not to be completely thrown away and substituted by *altogether new ones*, but have to be revised and readapted, it is tacitly assumed that there are elements of *permanent* and universal value in them, an inner core of truth which deserves to be preserved in a new cover. The question then arises: What is it which is of permanent value in them or what is that essential inner core of truth which they contain?

'This brings us to a consideration of the meaning of moral values according to Dewey. 'Morality', according to Dewey, 'is a continuing process, not a fixed achievement. Morals means growth of conduct in meaning; at least, it means that kind of expansion in meaning which is consequent upon observations of the conditions and outcome of conduct. . . . It is learning the meaning of what we are about and employing that meaning in action.'¹³ Progress in morality is not to be measured by reference to a remote goal. It is 'present reconstruction, adding fullness and distinctness of meaning'. Moral progress is reconstructing the present, passing from the worse *into* the better, and not simply *towards* it. Progress is recurrent. A fixed and final perfection would mean going to sleep or dying.

Dewey's categorical imperative is: 'So act as to increase the meaning of present experience.'

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT OF DEWEY'S CONTRIBUTION TO ETHICAL THOUGHT

We agree with John Dewey to the extent of holding that morality is its own end and there is no end exterior to morality. But the question arises: What gives the *moral* quality to an action? In other words, how do we distinguish between action as such, action as a mere manipulation of energy, and 'moral' action, action with a moral significance? Our contention is that we cannot make a judgement about morality at all, except in the light of an *ideal* of morality already present in our consciousness. Moral judgement, as distinguished from factual judgement, is valuational; and no evaluation of a conduct is possible, except with reference to a 'norm' resident *a priori* in the evaluating consciousness. If moral progress, as Dewey interprets it, is reconstructing the present, passing from the worse into the better, it does involve judgement of moral quality which is impossible, except in reference to a moral ideal. The moral 'ideal' is not a future event to be realized; it is ever present in our consciousness. Our action is moral in proportion as it is in accord with it. From the fact that our actual conduct ever falls short of the moral ideal in its fullness and progresses towards it only asymptotically, it by no means follows that the ideal in its fullness does not exist or is ever in the making. Our contention is that it is not the ideal which progresses or is adapted or modified, but conduct, empirically realized in the world of space and time, individually and collectively, and progressing often falteringly and with set-backs. Just as there is no progress in the ideal of knowledge, but only in an increasing accumulation of ever new facts, so also there is no progress in the ideal of morality, but only in the adaptations of our conduct to it. The necessity of ever new adaptations does not

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

nonsuit the reality of an ideal. What is adapted, modified, changed, experimented with is *conduct*, not the *ideal* of conduct. Ethical principles and values do not emerge *from* or are derived *from* conduct. Nicolai Hartmann has rightly observed: 'Ethical values are not to be discovered in the conduct of man. On the contrary, one must have knowledge of them, in order to distinguish whether his conduct accords with them or violates them. On this point, ethical research cannot reckon upon any datum by the mere analysis of which moral principles can be made manifest. This is the basis of the fundamental difficulty in ethics. The discovery of values must take another route. The mere actuality of instances cannot be our guide.'¹⁴

John Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* is a work of considerable importance. It would be no exaggeration to say that it is a classic of our times. It is a remarkable and original contribution to the analysis of human nature and conduct. It has indicated the right approach to the understanding and study of human nature. Dewey has rightly pointed out that the age-old tradition of the moralists in condemning human nature as something innately evil and perverse and envisaging the moral task as consisting chiefly in its complete suppression or annihilation is a fundamentally faulty approach. The moral ideal of man could not be something utterly alien to human nature. It must be essentially related to it.

The first step towards the right understanding of human nature, Dewey has rightly pointed out, is to realize that man is not a self-closed 'self' or entity, but is continuous with nature and other persons in the social environment. His habits, or dispositions to act, are formed largely by the reactions of the social environment on him. Traditional moralists have laid undue emphasis on the effort of the will to change and reform human nature. They have failed to recognize in a

measure in which they should have done that, without altering objective conditions in the social environment, individual natures cannot be changed.

There is another fallacy of the old moralists and psychologists to which Dewey has called our attention. These old moralists and psychologists have complacently gone on thinking that human conduct is the outcome of a certain number of fixed instincts which must have their own inevitable consequences, and nothing can interfere with them. Conduct is explained solely in terms of these instincts. 'Man has been resolved into a definite collection of primary instincts which may be numbered, catalogued, and exhaustively described one by one. Theorists differ only, or chiefly, as to their number and ranking. Some say one, self-love; some two, egoism and altruism; some three, greed, fear, and glory; while, today, writers of a more empirical turn run the number upto fifty and sixty.'¹⁵ Again: 'Just now another simplification is current. All instincts go back to the sexual, so that *cherchez la femme* (under multitudinous symbolic disguises) is the last word of science with respect to the analysis of conduct.'¹⁶

In this account of conduct, Dewey finds the fallacy of over-simplification. It is forgotten how much these instincts are modified by objective social institutions. The mistake of regarding certain instincts as 'psychic forces' is analogous to the mistake of the scientists of the last generation who regarded gravitation and combustion etc. as 'physical forces'.

Instinctual operations are modified by environmental conditions: 'Even in the cases of hunger and sex, where the channels of action are fairly demarcated by antecedent conditions (or 'nature'), the actual content and feel of hunger and sex, are indefinitely varied according to their social contexts. . . . The treatment of sex by psycho-analysts is most instructive, for it flagrantly exhibits

¹⁴ Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethics*, Vol. I., pp. 99-160.

¹⁵ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 132.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

both the consequences of artificial simplification and the transformation of social results into psychic causes. Writers, usually male, hold forth on the psychology of woman, as if they were dealing with a Platonic universal entity, although they habitually treat men as individuals, varying with structure and environment.¹⁷

What does morality consist in? Dewey's answer to this question is that it consists in reasonable deliberation and moral failure in unreasonable deliberation. This is how Dewey explains the process of deliberation: 'We are always biassed beings, tending in one direction rather than in another. The occasion of deliberation is an *excess* of preferences, not natural antipathy or an absence of likings. We want things that are incompatible with one another; therefore, we have to make a choice of what we *really* want, of the course of action, that is, which most fully releases activities. Choice is not the emergence of preference out of indifference. It is the emergence of a unified preference out of competing preferences. Biases that had held one another in check now, temporarily at least, reinforce one another, and constitute a unified attitude. The moment arrives when imagination pictures an objective consequence of action which supplies an adequate stimulus and releases definitive action. All deliberation is a search for a *way* to act, not for a final terminus. Its office is to facilitate stimulation.'¹⁸

Having thus explained the process of deliberation, Dewey goes on to say that the chances are of deliberation being both reasonable and unreasonable. It is reasonable, in so far as it succeeds in harmonizing and reconciling the various competing impulses; unreasonable, in so far as it is dominated or swept away by one single impulse, without effecting a harmony with the others. Impulse starts the deliberation, but thought

must modulate and control it. In Dewey's words: 'There is reasonable and unreasonable choice. The object thought of may simply stimulate some impulse or habit to a pitch of intensity, where it is temporarily irresistible. It, then, overrides all competitors and secures for itself the sole right of way. The object looms large in imagination; it swells to fill the field. It allows no room for alternatives; it absorbs us, enraptures, carries us away, sweeps us off our feet by its own attractive force. Then choice is arbitrary, unreasonable. But the object thought of may be one which stimulates by unifying, harmonizing, different competing tendencies. It may release an activity in which all are fulfilled, not indeed, in their original form, but in a 'sublimated' fashion, that is, in a way which modifies the original direction of each by reducing it to a component along with others, in an action of transformed quality. Nothing is more extraordinary than the delicacy, promptness, and ingenuity with which deliberation is capable of making eliminations and recombinations in projecting the course of a possible activity. To every shade of imagined circumstance, there is a vibrating response; and to every complex situation, a sensitiveness as to its integrity, a feeling of whether it does justice to all facts, or overrides some to the advantage of others. Decision is reasonable when deliberation is so conducted.'¹⁹

Now, has not Dewey elaborated, in his above account of the process of deliberation and the nature of reasonable and unreasonable deliberation, an *ideal* of the moral life, a fixed and unalterable principle of morality as consisting in the harmonization of all competing impulses into a new, transformed and sublimated form? Can *this ideal* be ever denied as an ideal of the moral life? Surely, Dewey would not answer this question in the affirmative. Situations and the influx of competing impulses in the mind can change

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-94.

endlessly, but the *ideal* of harmonizing them and sublimating them is an ideal of conduct, which Dewey would commend on *all* occasions, and for all times. That is a *fixed and permanent ideal* which he has formulated, an unalterable principle of the moral life; and this takes away much of the sting of his invectives against permanent ideals and universal principles. The case of Dewey, in denying fixed and permanent principles of morality, is analogous to the case of modern logical positivists who deny metaphysics in so many words and by so many ingenious arguments, and yet, what they leave over as the net result of all their efforts is a *meta-*

physics, from their own perspective, in so far as it is a statement applicable to all reality and existence. Of course, the moral ideal in the sense of a fixed event lying *outside* activity may be denied, but an ideal which 'regulates' activity cannot be denied, and it is the task of every moral philosophy to formulate it. Dewey has himself formulated one—the modulation and control of all impulses by thought and the harmonization of all competing impulses, without being swept off our feet by any one of them—the ideal of reasonable deliberation. What else but this has been the pith and kernel of the best moral teachings all down the ages?

SAGE VĀLMĪKI

BY SRI M. V. SRIDATTA SARMA

*Kūjantam Rāma-Rāmeti madhuram madhurākṣaram
Āruhya kavitāśākhām vande Vālmīki-kokilam.*

'I offer my prostrations to that cuckoo in the form of Vālmīki, which coos, as it were, the pleasing notes "Rāma, Rāma", perching itself upon the lofty boughs of the tree of poesy.'

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the story of that illustrious ruler of the house of Ikṣvākus, who was the very incarnation of Viṣṇu, and is sung by that immortal bard Vālmīki in twenty-four thousand couplets. For ages, it has been held in many a Hindu home as the first and foremost poem to be recited with great veneration as part of one's religious duties performed daily. Later poets of India took the theme, as also the episodes from this classical epic, as the material for their compositions and admired in no small measure the greatness of this first and foremost poet. Thus we see that Bhavabhūti in his *Uttarānāma-charita* (Act VI. 20) sings the glory of Vālmīki: 'Ah, what a form to make men's minds settle down in quietude! Indeed, the bard of the *Rāmāyaṇa* embellished (enriched)

the sacred language through a personality, who is equally held sacred (divine).' Murāri Miśra, a poet who flourished between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries took fillip from Vālmīki and selected the theme for his inestimable *Rāghava* (*Anargha-Rāghava*), a seven act play. He says thus: 'Even if sages like Vālmīki and other poets have described Thee excellently, Oh, Rāma, it does in no way preclude me from making such an attempt' (Act I).

According to the accounts given in the *Tattvasaṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa*, this great soul that was to be Vālmīki was in earlier life a lost child (discarded by the parents). He was picked up by some mountebanks who trained him in the art of thieving. He soon became an adept in that art and waylaid

many a traveller and pursued his business of plundering and killing, if such course was found expedient. One day, it so happened that the seven sages (*saptarṣis*) were passing through a jungle track when the marauder demanded them on pain of death all their belongings. Consequently, one of the sages advised the robber thus: 'As you have been committing sins for the maintenance of your family and children, go home and ascertain from your dependents if they are agreeable to become your copartners in the innumerable iniquities committed by you.' At these words of *dharma*, the cruel marauder was cooled down. He went home and consulted his people. They replied thus: 'As you are performing an obligatory duty as a householder in maintaining your children, wife, and relations, it is but necessary for you to bear the consequences thereof in the form of suffering, distress, and sin.'

The effects of association with the virtuous are always wonderful. Mere approach, touch, or conversation will, like the *bhramara kīta nyāya* (the maxim of the hornet and the insect), transform even the wicked into righteous persons. Vālmīki, the mountaineer, also perceived that there was a turning point in his life. In distress, he sought asylum with the ascetics and expressed his desire to get himself rid of all evil. Sage Vaśiṣṭa looked at the tranquil surroundings. To him, the entire forest as also the sylvia appeared part and parcel of the supreme Spirit. By intuition, he saw everywhere the divine presence of Rāma, the Absolute. A sound was caused by the fall of the leaves which were scattered by the breeze of the gentle and soft zephyr. This sound was heard everywhere. In short, there was no other sound except the echo and the re-echo of the two syllables *ma* and *rā* (reversing the name 'Rāma') which pervaded even the spacial regions. The penitent mountebank with folded hands said to the sage thus: 'Oh great sage, now that the sound of the two syllables *marā* have been heard by you, I beseech you to kindly initiate

me in them only, so that this sinner may get himself absolved.'

The sage Vaśiṣṭa fulfilled his request. The mountaineer entered into austerities reciting the *mantra* for many a year without break. He was completely absorbed in contemplation. Indra commissioned the celestial damsels to disturb his penance. But their efforts proved futile. Instead, they were also attracted by the sound of the divine name 'Rāma' (inverted) and they also participated in chanting that name and in indulging in a dance in ecstasy in the same manner as they did before Indra. As he remained unperturbed, the sage Vaśiṣṭa, at the instance of Brhaspati, came to the spot where the mountaineer was practising austerities. He observed the thick growth of shrubs around him who, besides, was completely covered by an ant-hill. The sage then said to him thus: 'Child, may fortune crown you. I am your preceptor. Get up from your penance. I have come to receive your hospitality.' Immediately, the emaciated form came out of the ant-hill and treated the sage with respect. At this juncture, Viṣṇu, the Lord of lords accompanied by Lakṣmī, gave him audience and blessed him thus: 'Let this devotee of mine, by virtue of his having issued from the *Valmīka* (ant-hill) be hereafter known as Vālmīki and attain the eminent position of a *brahmarṣi* (the Brāhmaṇical sage). Let his fame extend over the three worlds. Let the Goddess of speech dance at the tip of his tongue. Let his speech always become sweet and mellifluous. This clever-minded one (*mahāmati*) will be the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. When I descend down as Rāma, the Vedas will flow out from his lips in the form of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, every word of which will be efficacious in destroying all evil and sin.'

While Vālmīki was performing the daily ablutions on a certain day in his hermitage, he saw a fowler killing one of a pair of herons (*krauñca* birds). Filled with grief for the dead bird and sympathy for the bereaved

one, the sage inflicted a curse on the wretch in words, which unconsciously took the form of a verse in the *anuṣṭubh* metre. At the divine command, the first poem was thus composed. This, in short, is the story of the genesis of poetry, the *Rāmāyaṇa* being the first book written in it.

Once, while all sages and ascetics (lovers of piety and duty) held a convention at Naimiṣāranya on the banks of the Gautamī and engaged themselves in discussions connected with the quest of Truth or Reality, in accordance with their own revelations and mystical experiences, this eminent sage of a Vālmīki entered into the assembly with his entourage singing the greatness of Rāma. To all those present, it looked as though he had immersed himself deep into the bliss of Rāma and had become one with Rāma Himself. Indirectly, this was a hint given to the sages, the solution to their problem to know that Rāma was the Reality. (Cf. *Tattvasaṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa Bāla-kāṇḍa*).

In the *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa* of the same work quoted above, there is an interesting account of sage Vālmīki, to whose hermitage at Citrakūṭa, Rāma, accompanied by his spouse Sītā and brother Lakṣmaṇa, pays a visit. The sage entertains the Lord with fruits, bulbs, and edible nuts. Rāma asks the sage for a suitable place where he could stay with comfort for some time: 'If there should be a spot that could be pleasing to me, please tell me, so that I could fix it up as my dwelling.' The sage replies thus: 'Oh Lord, now that you have signified your intention to stay here with Sītā, I could only say this much. The hearts of those who are peaceful and even-minded, and are indifferent towards things mundane, being set up in meditation after Thee, would serve as fit places for your abode. The mind of one, who casts off all considerations of *dharma* or *adharma* and is continuously devoted in contemplation after Thee, would be an appropriate place for Thee. The mind of that devotee, who always takes pleasure in singing your glory and who seeks

refuge in Thee alone, is unaffected by the pairs of opposites (comfort and distress) and is sincere, will always serve as your citadel. That great soul, who is free from ego, is serene, dispassionate, devoid of desire or hatred, and does not make any distinction between a lump of gold and a clod of earth, will always make a reservation for Thee in his mind. One who has surrendered his mind and intellect, as also his actions to Thee and remains always contented, would be the most worthy person to be frequented by Thy visits. The mind of one who does not feel distressed when he gets what is unpleasant, does not jubilate or rejoice when he is in favourable circumstances, but on the other hand, holds the view that all these conditions are illusory, would befittingly serve as your abode. Oh Lord, the Ocean of compassion, words fail me to describe your greatness. Even though your name was incorrectly repeated (in the inverted form), a sinner, like myself, was conferred a position of eminence (*brahmarṣitva*). Who is competent to describe your greatness? On considerations of love towards me, be pleased to stay with your spouse on this hillock of Citrakūṭa.'

Even today, tradition holds that Śrī Rāma has fixed His abode permanently at Citrakūṭa with a view to give audience and bless the devotees (canto 22).

When Sītā was abandoned by Rāma, sage Vālmīki gave her shelter under his roof and brought up her two sons. When Rāma was engaged in the solemn rite of the horse sacrifice, he was led to listen to the recitation of the poems, composed by Vālmīki, narrating the great deeds of Rāma, by the two gallant boys Lava and Kuśa. The great monarch was charmed and overwhelmed at what he had heard. On enquiry from the boys, when he came to know that the great Vālmīki was the composer of the poem and also their teacher, he, accompanied by his brothers, went to the sage and offered him the entire kingdom. Vālmīki, moved by the generosity of Rāma and full of sympathy for him, told him

all about Sītā and requested him to accept her back, along with his own sons, Lava and Kuśa. To this, Rāma said: 'Venerable sir, though your daughter-in-law has proved her purity before us through the fire ordeal, these subjects have not yet shed their doubts regarding her stay at the home of the atrocious Rāvaṇa. I shall, therefore, obey your orders and accept Sītā, if only she does something to gain the confidence of the subjects.' Having got this consent from Rāma, the sage, at the appointed hour, brought Sītā before the monarch and his subjects and asked her to remove the doubts of the subjects in front of her husband. Sītā, who was clad in red and had her eyes fixed at her toes, looked the very embodiment of purity. She, without speaking a word, stepped forward to obey the orders of the sage, and taking the holy water from the hands of one of the disciples

of Vālmīki, sipped a bit of it and solemnly said: 'If it be true that I have never, in thought, word, or deed, swerved from my duties as a devoted wife to my husband, then do thou, O mother Earth, take me to thy bosom and give peace to this ever-suffering daughter of thine.' Immediately, the earth opened and the goddess appeared on her shining snake throne. And, in spite of Rāma's protestations, she grasped Sītā in her arms and disappeared into the nether world (Cf. *Raghuvamśa*).

Vālmīki, the affectionate old man, must have been sad at it; but Vālmīki, the wise seer, must have laughed at this divine sport.

'Who will not attain the highest end by listening to the melody of the Rāma episode, sung by that great sage Vālmīki, who always roams about in the grove of poesy?'

THE YOGA AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

BY PROFESSOR RAMESH CHANDRA SHAH

The problem of knowledge has been an eternal challenge to human psyche, and the wise men of all ages and climes have endeavoured to meet it in various ways. The East and the West have both tried to solve the enigma according to their own peculiar genius. It is now an established truth that all human activity is conditional and, to some extent, determined by the type of individual or racial mind. Thus, it has become a commonplace saying that the Indian mind is predominantly introvert while the Greek and the Western mind have evinced a markedly extrovert approach to life and knowledge. One need not be dogmatic on this point. Still the fact remains that the pursuit of knowledge has taken very different routes in Europe and Asia. It is usual in academic circles to characterize the Western attitude as life and

world affirmation and the Indian attitude as life and world negation. This, obviously, is an over-simplification of the truth.

Hindu thought involves a profound acceptance of life at all levels, and if, on the one hand, it has soared highest into the realms of metaphysics, it has also evolved a highly elaborate and comprehensive ethical structure to meet the work-a-day problems of life. Indeed, what is too often held to be its weakness is its peculiar strength and glory. In its lofty speculative detachment and by its rigid insistence on psychic purity and self-submergence, it gave recognition to the highly mysterious and elusive nature of knowledge and realized the infinite difficulty of attaining to it. Indian tradition viewed philosophy or the love of knowledge as the surest measure of the worth and grandeur of human spirit.

What is this knowledge—this all absorbing preoccupation of the Indian mind? Is it a process or a result? If the former, how can we be ever sure of the validity of our perceptions? If it is the latter, in what can Reality be said to reside? How are we to reconcile the relative claims of objectivity and subjectivity? Here are some of the problems confronting man in his timeless quest for truth. What relation does the knower bear to the thing to be known? The emphasis of the West has been on the empirical and the objective. Socrates had put reason above all things else. He discovered the analytical method of exploring truths. The Socratic reason was something altogether higher, deeper, and subtler than what is commonly understood by the term intellect. Plato imbibed his master's inspired sense of the mystery of things. But later Western thought came to be dominated by Aristotelian logic and cold analysis. Materialistic theories of universe and knowledge developed side by side with less dogmatic and more subtle, yet incoherent, systems like those of Descartes and Kant.

The seers of India, on the other hand, reveal a rarer and intenser passion for unifying human experience. The three systems of Sāṅkhya, Vedānta and Pātañjala Yoga present human soul as a vehicle of divine light and power. Their special and distinctive disciplines seek to enlarge and enrich the same.

Amongst these three systems, that of Yoga is by far the most richly rewarding. Its basic tenet is that the profound knowledge is that which results from a damming up of all psychic activities, an inward turning. It maintains that the only sure and infallible means of knowing a thing is through contemplation. It calls for nothing less than a total immersion of the knowing consciousness in that experience. Only and solely in such a state of mind—where the knower almost becomes the thing to be known and loses the awareness of himself as a knowing agent—is perfect and flawless knowledge of the thing rendered

possible. In the terminology of *yoga*, this is called *samāpatti* or *savikalpādi samādhi*. Under such trance-like states, the total available psychic energy operates on the subject and lays bare its whole meaning and significance. The *yogin*, alone, thus becomes the proud possessor of true knowledge—the real Enlightenment for which mere intellectuals or systematizers aspire in vain. All the speculative richness of Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Bergson appears diffuse and ambiguous before the powerful philosophy of Yoga.

However, the *yoga* aspirant has to pass through many stages of self-purification and austere practices before he can have his 'doors of perception' clear and ready to receive knowledge. As a matter of fact, our normal daily perception of things is quite hazy and distorted, because the perceiving mind is darkened and clogged by film after film of familiarity adhering to it. It has long ceased to retain its pristine state of purity. Now, the most important prerequisite of Yogic vision is the purification of our mind. The highly scientific and elaborate method which has been evolved to achieve this end is called *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, comprising eight practices of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*. The Pātañjala-Yoga recognizes another five principles under *yama*, and five under *niyama*. The whole system is thus, in reality, a system of sixteen, and not eight disciplines—as the term '*aṣṭāṅgayoga*' would seem to convey. All these exercises have been designed to bring about a rejuvenation, a transformation of the whole man—body, heart, mind, and spirit alike. They constitute a ladder of spiritual aspiration, each step of which marks a distinct progress towards the final fulfilment. To have acquired any of these disciplines is to have a new source of psychic energy released within oneself and a new door of perception cleared for the admission of more 'light'. When the aspirant has mastered all these and reached the highest possible stage of purity, then the final state of '*samādhi*' comes to him.

In *samādhi* comes that state which is unper-
turbed by the 'opposites', and yields knowl-
edge of the self and the Absolute Self.

To sum up, the philosophy of Yoga solves
the problem of knowledge by placing its faith
in the upward urging will of man, in its
instinctive yearning towards the Holy, the
Divine, and the Perfect. It seeks to exploit
this deep-seated longing by certain disciplines
of body, mind, and spirit. By means of these
systematic and gradual sublimations, tremen-
dous psychic energy is released from the Un-
conscious, which enables the aspirant to tran-
scend his human limitations of the senses and
intellect, and finally, attain to clear beatific
visions and knowledge of Reality. The

founders of modern psycho-analysis, too, have
been deeply impressed by the teachings of
Yoga. The great Carl Jung, for example—a
devoted student of Indian religion and philo-
sophy—has some fine things to say on this
subject.

'Indian practice', Jung says, 'seeks to accom-
plish this state of damming of libido by syste-
matically withdrawing the attention, alike
from objects and from psychic states. This
leads, inevitably, to a lowering of conscious-
ness, whereby the unconscious contents, i.e.
the primordial images which possess a cosmic
and superhuman character on account of their
universality and immense antiquity, become
activated.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON MASS EDUCATION

BY SRI NARAYAN BOSE

In mass education, Swami Vivekananda
was concerned with the development of the
individual in society. He was in this regard
quite consistent with his social interpretation
of the Vedānta. To him, man is potentially
divine; so the individuality of man is to be
respected. According to Swami Vivekananda,
we should have an education which is meant
to give strength of character, and which helps
development of will-power and expansion of
intellect. His travels in India and abroad
convinced him that such an education can
only be possible if we pay proper attention
to the relationship between the teacher and
the taught and the use of correct methods in
educational work.

In this matter, he exhorted his countrymen
to have a feeling for the people and a knowl-
edge of their needs first, and then, try to in-
form them with the affairs of the world
around. Education, to him, appeared to be
the most cogent medium of developing man.
He said that in Western countries the people

have risen to their present social and economic
awareness only through education. In India,
also, if people's lot is to be improved, it is
education that should answer the need of the
moment. But what kind of education would
this be? He said that this would be the
education for the betterment of the common
man.

In this connection, he said that man should
be given ideas along with the gifts of their
cultural heritage. But he, at the same time,
was duly conscious of the need of scientific
knowledge in the present technological age
and clearly stated that education should have
to enable a person to stand on his own feet.
Here we find Swami Vivekananda strongly
supporting an educational method which can
arouse confidence in the individual. At the
same time, he said that education should
reach the common man also. This can be
better expressed in his own words: 'By
telling stories about different nations, they
can give the poor a hundred times more in-

formation through the ear than they can get in a life time through books. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature, and along with them, the profound truths of religion through these.'

Thus he was in favour of audio-visual aid as a means to education. He realized that until and unless the masses are educated, and their economic condition improved, there cannot be real welfare of the nation. Today, quite in tune with the ideas of Swami Vivekananda, we see throughout India quite a number of educational endeavours which aim at the development of the individual in a changing society. While endorsing the basic objectives of Swami Vivekananda's ideas of man-making education, the point of emphasis given by these educational efforts rests on social solidarity and levelling up of economic conditions. In social education, fundamental education, and workers' education, we have the clear perspective of man-making training, though they do make a marked departure from the ideals of education preached by Swami Vivekananda, inasmuch as he wanted all education to be put on the basic foundation of spirituality.

The necessity of this kind of educational concept can be understood if we examine the changing scene of Asian conditions in the course of the last decade. Since the time the last world war ended and Asian countries got freedom, we find a widespread surge of nationalist spirit and various efforts towards educational reconstruction. Although democratic governments have been installed in these countries, the soul of democracy cries under the pressure of various autocratic trends. Consequently disruptive forces have been released on the Asian scene making the life of the common man miserably unhappy. In the context of this state of affairs, it is essential that education is pitched on the ideal of releasing genuine democratic forces. In Asian countries, if democracy is to be stabilized and its influence spread through educa-

tional reconstruction, efforts should be so geared up as to build up self-confidence in the people, based on balanced human relationship.

In this task, the teacher, as Swami Vivekananda points out, has a great role to play. The teacher shall have to understand the needs of the taught and give him help in guiding his activities. *Gurugrhavāsa*, according to Swami Vivekananda, can help a lot in this regard. In this system of education, the teacher and the taught live together and the information and knowledge that are imparted by the teacher go deep into the mind of the student and help his desired development. In these days of educational planning, we can profitably derive useful lessons from the educational scheme envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. He said: 'The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work.'

Opening of adequate opportunities has been suggested in these pregnant words for the development of human personality. Personality development was the centre of attention in the ancient system of education in the East and the West, particularly in Plato. But that was exclusively meant to create a special class of people who could rule over others by dint of their superior intelligence. But today, mass education has taken the place of class education, obviously to mean that the common man should intelligently participate in the affairs of the country.

Looked at intensively, we find that a co-operative system of education with due emphasis on the character-building of the teacher, for transmission of knowledge into the taught, has been held out by Swami Vivekananda as a practical way of mass education. But the awakening of spirituality in society was to be preceded by elaborate arrangements of secular education in order to

prepare the people for a better standard of life. Spirituality in social matters should mean the development of the spirit of fellow-feeling, sympathy, understanding, and sharing of common problems between people themselves. He thought, therefore, that even this secular education should be imparted through religion only, for it was only through religion that these noble traits of character could be developed and the efforts for political or social advancement could take firm roots in India.

Here, religion is understood to be the cultivation of virtues through self-control and canalization of man's potentialities. Every form of human behaviour, even secular, must be an ethical pursuit of life for the consummation of Dharma, the code of behaviour in India's age-long tradition and culture.

Swami Vivekananda said: 'I only ask you to work to realize more and more the Vedāntic ideal of the solidarity of man and his inborn nature. These conceptions of the Vedānta must come out from the forest and the cave, they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish, and with students that are studying. If the fisherman thinks that

he is the Spirit he will be better fisherman, if the student thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be better student, and so on. And that is what we want, no privilege for any one, equal chances for all.' Today, our educational workers and social thinkers should attempt to introduce this grand Vedāntic spirit in education, in social reform movements, and in democratic institutions, all of which are meant to improve the lot of the common man and strengthen the nation. In this, mass education has an important role to play. Swami Vivekananda, again and again, emphatically said that our country will advance in proportion to the spread of education and the development of intelligence among the masses. Swami Vivekananda's concept of mass education is a strong case for development of courage, fearlessness, and physical stamina to face the problems of life. It should also endow us with a synthetic outlook and consciousness of fundamental unity of man. That is the need of the hour. In its last analysis, education should go to the common man with the world of gifts it has to offer, namely, the gift of spirituality, the gift of secular knowledge, and the gift of food. That is the living image of Swami Vivekananda's concept of mass education.

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

Human life needs a faith to live by, and without it, life has no meaning or peace. Inner peace and harmony are impossible without the integration of one's personality. If man has to grow to his full stature, he must avoid and overcome the inner conflict and the attrition resulting from the environment and the age in which he lives. To secure this end, he needs a living rational faith. Whether we like it or not, we are all

children of science and reason. We are also aware of the serious limitations of science and its power as the absolute instruments for man's progress. Science gives us the mechanics of life. But life is not pure mechanism. Knowledge and power are not ends in themselves. They must become means to a higher end. They must be grounded in love and the good life. The ends of knowledge and power are beyond the truth of knowledge and the

naked glory of power. The ends are the values of life, are the outcome of human faith.

In the words of William James, our moral and religious values are erected as hypotheses, not absolutely clear nor on sufficient evidence. They are the acts of belief or faith.

We have the robust assurance that good life, in the long run, provides the deepest and most lasting satisfaction for us. This is an act of faith in the moral value. We have the unconquerable hope that, when we struggle for a right cause, God's hands will reach out to us and bring us success.

Faith is the belief in a chosen way of life. It is an attitude of mind that brings relief to man's mind. It makes life smooth sailing. 'The man who has no faith, who is ignorant, and who doubts everything perishes', says the *Gītā* (IV.40). Faith is hidden in man. All have it in them. It is a specific form of religious reason. It is essentially intuitive, and not assumptive. It is that certain knowledge of ultimate Reality which cannot justify itself under scientific criticism. 'Faith is the inner sense of truth.' The *Gītā* describes that the nature of a man is determined by the nature of his faith. 'Man is of the nature of his faith; what his faith is, that verily, he is' (XVII.3). Plato observes: 'Such as are the trends of our desires and the nature of our souls, just such each of us become' (*Laws*, 904 c). The German writer Goethe writes: 'Earnestness alone makes for eternity.' Referring to the nature of faith, Tagore observes: 'It is the birds' song of the dawn in the thick night.'

Faith enables us to step out of, and break from, what is purely empirical. It releases us from the tyranny of the world of things in space and time.

By faith, we do not mean the swallowing of a body of doctrines to save ourselves the trouble of thinking. The doctrines must burn themselves into us and must not merely be repeated parrot-like. Faith accepts things

with the assent of the entire being. It is not a conditional, partial, or hesitant acceptance of things. Faith is the result of our authentic personal experience, arising from our unique intense personal striving. It is not a blind adherence or a blank acceptance. It has its own logic. Pascal declared: 'The heart has its own logic which the head knows not.' Faith is not blind; it looks at all current creeds and enquires into things with the strength of its entire of being. 'Faith is the precondition of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing, and decent living.' Faith is a powerful sentiment. It keeps us away and gives us the strength to fight all the temptations that assail us.

Faith moves mountains. It alone inspires the inextinguishable hope and the feeling of the certainty of the victory of the ideal, even in the most forlorn stage of our fight. It does not give quarter to despair. It shuns sloth. Faith feels that there is cosmic backing for its cause. Faith assures us that a righteous cause is ordained to be victorious. Faith is not a vague attitude to things. Faith requires strength to believe. Faith is not a superstition for rationalists and agnostics to laugh at us. It is a tower of strength. The wise psychiatrist Erich Fromm writes that man cannot live without faith; he says: 'Can man live without faith? Must not the nursing have faith in the mother's breast? Must we all not have faith in our fellowmen; in those whom we love and in ourselves? Can we live without faith in the validity of our life? Indeed, without faith, man becomes sterile, hopeless, and afraid to the very core of his being' (*Man for Himself*, p. 198). Jesus, speaking about the power of faith, told his disciples: 'If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea", it shall be done. And all this, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.'

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE NEW YEAR

With this issue, *Prabuddha Bharata* enters the sixty-eighth year of its useful existence. Started in 1896 with the blessings of Swami Vivekananda, whose birth centenary celebrations will be observed this year throughout the world, this journal has ever since been contributing its humble quota towards the realization of that 'Awakened India'—whose glorious vision the great Swami had seen and whose consummation, he thought, would not only make India 'greater than ever she was', but also would help humanity at large to make for a better social order and a richer life of spirit. On this occasion, we take the opportunity to remember with gratitude all who have helped us during these long years and thank those kind friends who are helping us now.

This year comes to us in the midst of a national crisis. Our beloved motherland is in the grip of a grim struggle for defending itself against the unwarranted and barbarous invasion of its northern borders by a ruthless neighbour, whose welfare and friendship India had always sought with its characteristic earnestness and affection. None could think that this peaceful country, which has never looked beyond its borders with the slightest of greed, through the thousands of years of its history, should have to face such an emergency. But God's ways are inscrutable, and events do not always happen to one's liking. In the face, therefore, of this grim reality that stares at us, we only pray to God to give us strength and courage to do all that can be done and to make the supreme sacrifice that would be needed to hold aloft the banner of our hard-won freedom and save the honour of our dear motherland. May God grant us success and may that peace and prosperity come to humanity, for which India has always tried and for which it is even now trying.

* * *

TO OUR READERS.

From this month, we have the privilege to start publishing the 'Spiritual Discourses of Swami Vijnanananda', which, we believe, will be found as revealing and beneficial as the 'Spiritual Talks of Swami Shivananda', published during the last three years. We are thankful to Swami Apurvananda of the Ramakrishna Order for compiling these discourses, and also, translating them into English. . . .

The *Durgā Saptasatī*, commonly known as *Śrī Candī*, which forms a part of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna*, is as honoured and adored as the *Gītā* by the Hindus, specially by the followers of Tantra. It is the 'Supreme Mother'—the all-powerful deity, creating, preserving, and ultimately destroying the entire creation—whose glory is sung in this book. Professor Batuknath Bhattacharya, M.A., formerly of Surendranath College, Calcutta, treats beautifully the exploits of the 'Mother Goddess', as described in the *Saptaśatī*, and explains the nature of the Divine Mother and her cosmic sports. This nice article is as interesting as it is helpful in understanding the deeper meaning of the text of the *Saptaśatī*. . . .

'The Vedānta and Its Fundamentals' is the text of a talk by Swami Ranganathananda, a senior member of the Ramakrishna Order. The talk was broadcasted over the Delhi Radio. In it, he deals with the history of the growth of the Vedāntic thought in India, and shows how it holds a great message of hope and courage for the bewildered human society of the modern times. . . .

Dr. S. N. L. Srivastava, M.A., D.Litt., Head of the Department of Philosophy, Vikram University, Ujjain, with whom our readers are acquainted, writes in this month on 'The Dynamic Ethics of John Dewey'. This learned article clearly brings out the new approach to the understanding of human values, as ad-

vocated by the famous American education-ist, who has, as it were, brought about a revolution in the philosophy and psychology of education. We hope the article will be read with interest and benefit by our readers. . . .

Sri M. V. Sridatta Sarma, M.A., of Mysore, writes about 'Sage Vālmīki', collecting his data about the great poet from the very meagre sources available. He has based his study mainly on the accounts of the sage in the *Tattvasaṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa*, which is more popular in South India than in the North. The account, though short, will be found interesting and informative. . . .

'The Yoga and the Problem of Knowledge' is from the pen of Professor Ramesh Chandra Shah of Bhopal, one of our new contributors. He says in his article that the Indian system of Yoga, through a process of sublimation, enables the aspirant to transcend his human limitations of the senses and the intellect and

helps him to attain the knowledge of Reality. . . .

Swami Vivekananda laid great stress on the necessity of the spread of education among the common people. According to him, the cure for many of the evils with which we suffer could be found in the propagation of the right type of education on a popular scale. Sri Narayan Bose, of the Ramakrishna Mission Social Education Organizers' Training Centre, Belur, discusses in brief the ideas that Swamiji held in regard to mass education. . . .

In his article, Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., of Karnatak College, Dharwar, writes about 'The Role of Faith in Religion and Philosophy', as a matter of fact, in human life itself. He says: 'Faith enables us to step out of, and break from, what is purely empirical. It releases us from the tyranny of the world of things in space and time. . . . It is a tower of strength.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MY NON-VIOLENCE. COMPILED AND EDITED BY SAILESH KUMAR BANDOPADHYAYA. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. 1960. Pages 373. Price Rs. 5.

This is a compilation of the speeches and writings of Gandhiji during 1921-48 on the subject of non-violence and its application at various times. It makes inspiring reading, and one has to agree with the editor that the Navajivan Publishing House has rendered a unique service to the cause of non-violence by publishing this valuable book.

Ahimsā has had various interpretations and applications even before Gandhiji, and each of those interpretations are valuable to humanity. The great Buddha, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Mahāvīra were all votaries of non-violence, and each of them as successfully revolutionized the thinking of the times as Gandhiji has done in his own. Each of them gave an inspiring message to the world, torn by violence, and awakened the conscience of the millions against the prevailing practice. Our ancient history is not very clear to the editor, who holds that before Gandhiji, saints practised it for individual *mokṣa*. But the value of this book lies not so much in its presentation of history, nor even in the

various applications of *ahimsā* in different, and often trying, situations, although to the devotee of personalities, this is its only, and perhaps, the greatest use. Its value lies in that echo of inspiration in the heart of the readers, which dominated Gandhiji all through his life. If one goes through his speeches and writings, one is filled with admiration for the man who bore no ill-will against his opponent and yet fought them firmly and unflinchingly for the cause that he held right. He viewed non-violence as a conscious suffering and taught us not to submit to the will of the evil-doer.

He had an indomitable will to fight against what he considered to be evil, and he fought according to the laws of suffering and self-sacrifice, so that he could quicken the conscience of the people and make them rise. He considered the then existing system of Government to be wholly bad and requiring special national effort to end or to mend it; and it must be admitted to his credit that he was able to do it and achieve his objective.

Never was his gospel of non-violence put to as severe a test as in his last days. Communal riots broke out in India. He had no answer to give to the Muslim friends who saw him from day to day to enquire as to

what they should do. He exhorted people to curb their anger but no one listened. A challenge was thrown at him, and he resolved to undertake a fast to awaken the people to their duty and to cool contemplation. Communal frenzy did die down, and the innate goodness of the common man asserted itself. But the disgruntled believers in communal discord took his life. The grand old man died fighting.

It is not possible for everyone to accept every word of his. Even his best disciples have differed from time to time. There are Bolsheviks who will not see eye to eye with him on his interpretation of class struggle and social revolution. They do not have the belief that they are citizens of this great empire of capital, and rather think that they are pariahs or untouchables. They will prescribe the same special national effort to end or mend this wholly bad social system and will claim a socialist revolution to be the supreme expression of non-violent action. Yet even they will draw inspiration from this book and fill themselves with the same unselfish urge for action and indomitable will to fight and suffer as Gandhiji had. Devotees will find more. They will find application of the doctrine of *ahimsā* useful in all circumstances.

It is no use having devotees of this great votary of non-violence, ready with quotations for every odd situation, standing in awe and wonder at his achievements, and yet standing apart. We need men of action who can fill his place, even if their interpretation of non-violence is as original as his has been. We need men who cannot be accused of bearing ill-will or malice even against opponents, and yet who are as firm and unflinching as Gandhiji was. If the speeches and the writings of Gandhiji, as compiled in this small and cheap edition, can inspire even one man to the path of righteousness, the editor and the publisher will be amply rewarded. We wish the book a very wide reading.

RAJ NARAIN ARYA

FRENCH

QUESTES DU SACRE. BY SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA. *Published by La Colombe, Éditions du Vieux Colombier, 5 rue Rousselet, 5 Paris. 1962. Pages 145. Price 8fr.*

The title of the book means 'Quest of the Sacred'. Its nine chapters present a lucid exposition of the true nature of the Sacred and the quest for it, which is equally helpful to scholars and laymen.

Beginning with 'On Anguish and the Sacred', the author passes on to 'The Religious and Extra-Religious Sense of the Sacred in the Vedānta'. Anguish prevents the realization of the Sacred. Our mistaken division of life into life and death is 'a treason against the dynamism of life'. Vedānta regards man as sacred. But our egotistic thoughts and acts 'break the unity of the Cosmic Will' and take us away from the Sacred.

'The Sacred in Buddhism' is an illuminating chapter. It tells how, even without admitting the existence of

God, soul, or Self, the Buddha put the greatest emphasis on 'sacredness' and accomplished a 'holy revolution' through 'love and knowledge'.

The chapter entitled 'The Sacred—the Base of Hindu Religion' is an eloquent plea for realizing the 'Sacred in our heart and in our interiority' by treating man as an 'integral unity'.

'The Search of the Sacred by the Practice of Truth: Sri Rāma'—this chapter insists that the practice of truth more than anything else brings out the Sacred in us.

The chapter on 'The Search of the Sacred by the Practice of Non-Violence: Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave' shows the great powers of non-violence, a creed for the really strong and not for the weak.

In 'The Search of the Sacred according to Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo', the author shows that, for the former, the best *sādhanā* was to be 'in the normal state'; whereas Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a 'synthesis of Viśiṣṭādvaita, Śāktaism, and Yoga'.

The chapter, 'Ignorance which separates us from the Sacred', extends the hope that 'at the heart of positive ignorance' or *Māyā*, is Brahman, who, by destroying ignorance, will help us ultimately to realize the Sacred.

The last chapter is 'The Search of the Sacred in the Forms'. Having discussed the '*Śrī-yantra*' and the significance of forms, the author ends the book with the prayer of the devotee that he may adore God 'without the help of any form', but solely with his intuition.

We congratulate Swami Nityabodhananda for this thought-provoking and remarkable work and wholeheartedly recommend it to the public and the scholarly world.

DR. P. N. MUKHERJEE

SANSKRIT

ŚAKTI SĀRADAM (A DRAMA). BY DR. J. B. CHAUDHURI. *Published by Prachya Vani Mandir, 3 Federation Street, Calcutta-9. Price not mentioned.*

Śakti Sāradam is one of the few dramas written in easy Sanskrit by Dr. J. B. Chaudhuri. The theme of the drama deals with some of the incidents in the life of Sri Sarada Devi, the holy consort of Sri Ramakrishna. The language is easy and can be followed by even those who do not know Sanskrit very well. The dramatic technique is also good, as this drama, like some others by Dr. Chaudhuri, has been successfully staged in many parts of India, and such performances have been highly appreciated by the scholars and the spectators. Dr. Chaudhuri's efforts towards popularization of Sanskrit through his Prachya Vani Mandir's activities, specially by staging of such Sanskrit dramas as the one under review, are praiseworthy. We wish that *Śakti Sāradam* is read by Sanskrit loving people and staged publicly oftener than now, to make the people Sanskrit-minded and thus help in the advancement and the study of Sanskrit. We heartily commend Dr. Chaudhuri's painstaking efforts in this laudable direction.

S. C.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATION

The celebrations in connection with the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda will be inaugurated at the Belur Math, headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, on 17th January 1963, the 101st birthday of the Swami, and will be observed, throughout the year until the next birthday, in different centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India and abroad, as well as in different colleges, schools, and other institutions in the country.

To organize the Centenary all over the world in a befitting manner, a Central Celebration Committee was formed at Calcutta, with the most eminent men of the East and the West as its members. The Committee has drawn up a comprehensive scheme which includes publication, preaching, permanent memorial, procession, exhibition, different kinds of conferences, etc., with an estimated cost of about rupees fifty lakhs.

Publications :

(i) A Memorial Volume on 'Swami Vivekananda's Contribution to World-thought', with an introductory chapter on 'India's Influence on the Thought and Culture of the World through the Ages'.

(ii) Graded literature on the Swami's life and teachings, suited to different educational levels of the reading public.

(iii) The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda are being translated in nine different languages of India, namely, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil, and Telugu. All these, and a cheaper edition of the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in English, are being published during the Centenary year by the different centres of the Ramakrishna Math.

(iv) The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, will publish an album of Swami Vivekananda on this occasion; the materials will be supplied by the Centenary Committee.

(v) The Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will produce a documentary film on the life of Swami Vivekananda. The Centenary Committee has supplied them with a synopsis.

(vi) The Ministry of Transport and Communication will print postal stamps with the autographed pictures of Swami Vivekananda in two different postures.

Permanent Memorials :

(i) To take necessary steps for the preservation of the ancestral house and the birth place of the Swami and the conversion of the same into a suitable memorial.

(ii) To found Swami Vivekananda Lectureships in universities, and other learned societies.

Conventions and Conferences :

(i) A Convention at the Belur Math of the *sañnyāsins* and *brahmacārins* of the Ramakrishna Order and lay members and associates of the Mission, to which admirers of Sri Ramakrishna and sympathizers of the Mission will also be invited.

(ii) A Parliament of Religions and a Parliament of Man in Calcutta, in which the people of different faiths from different parts of the world will participate.

(iii) A Conference of women devotees and admirers in Calcutta and at other places.

(iv) All India Students' Conference in Calcutta.

(v) All India Classical and Devotional Music Conference in Calcutta.

Exhibition :

To hold a cultural exhibition with special emphasis on the life and works of Swami Vivekananda.

Pilgrimage and Procession :

(i) To undertake pilgrimages to important places associated with the Swami.

(ii) To organize processions on this occasion.

Miscellaneous :

(i) Medallions of Swami Vivekananda.

(ii) With the help of the State Governments, the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has decided to organize the Centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda in all the five and a half lakhs villages of the Indian Union.

(iii) Under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, London, Centenary Celebrations will be held in the principal cities of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Besides the erection of an auditorium, altar, and an Ashrama, for which the sum of £1,00,000 has been received from a donor, there will be essay competitions, foundation of a lectureship at the London University, publication of books and leaflets in English and other languages, a convention of religions, etc., during the Centenary year.

(iv) The Centenary celebration will be held in all the foreign Centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and in the following countries by the devotees and admirers of the Swami: Berlin, Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Japan, Poland, Rumania, Spain, Switzerland, U.S.S.R., and in some parts of Africa and Australia.

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