

**VOL. LXXIII**

**DECEMBER 1968**

# **Prabuddha Bharata**

**OR  
AWAKENED INDIA**



**By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or  
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.**

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

DECEMBER 1968

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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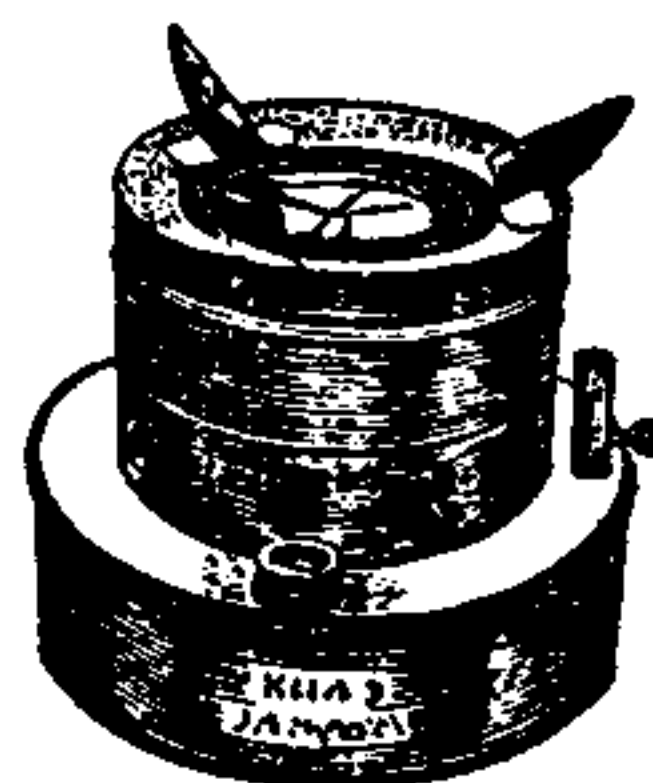
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXXIII

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No. 12



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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



## A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

### THE LORD MY REFUGE

My dear ...

I duly received your letter dated 19th Agrahayana. Earlier I received a letter from Swami Shivananda also. I have counselled him to stay at the Belur Math during the winter. I am glad to learn that after he has gone to the Math his health is much improved. It may be hoped that he will fully recover his health if he continues to rest there. I could not recognize — ; sometime I might have written him a letter. However, please convey my blessings to all at the Ashrama. By His grace may you all advance towards Him : this is my earnest prayer.

I am afraid you have not been able to grasp the inner import of my last letter. What I said was not intended to mean that you should not practise any spiritual discipline. What I indeed meant to say was that God is not realized because of practised disciplines but through His grace alone — this is the conclusion of all scriptures and saints—, so that the conceit of having practised spiritual disciplines might not occupy your mind. One must entirely depend on the Lord alone. There is no need to harbour the fear that due to disquiet of mind you will fall away from the path. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'the more you will advance towards the East the further you will recede from the West'. The more you will engage your mind in the devotional practices, the quicker will the other attitudes of the mind be removed. What is the need of imaginatively inviting that trouble which is not present on hand. Everyone will surely die one day in the future. But does any one for that reason commit suicide out of fear? If you stay worried with the thought of hypothetical impediments, the work on hand alone is impeded and no gain accrues. One

must have this faith : I have taken refuge in God. All my dangers and impediments will be removed. How can there be any dangers for me? No matter how one is, strong or weak or competent, there is no other way but to take refuge in the Lord. This is what I know ; if you know something else, you may very well try. If we advance one step towards God, God advances ten steps towards us—this is what I have heard all my life and also to some extent experienced.

But you have written contrary things, which are rather odd. The Lord knows our innermost feelings—if you do not have this faith, I do not understand how then you can practise spiritual disciplines. Let the mind be extremely restless for the sake of God ; but it must be observed that it does not become so in the expectation of anything else. The hereditary farmer earns his livelihood from his own cultivation ; he does not engage himself in any other business.

“Whom else should I call upon, O Shyama?  
The child calls upon the Mother alone.  
Of that kind of a Mother I am not a child  
Who will call Mother all and sundry.  
If the mother spans the child,  
The child cries, ‘mother, mother’,  
Even though he is shoved away  
He still cries, ‘mother, mother’.”

This is the attitude which appeals to me.

You have asked: does it lie within one's power to go on practising spiritual disciplines? My answer is: nothing is within one's power. When one understands this one finds that there is really no other way open but that of self-surrender and grace.

You have written very incoherently. Be thoughtful. The unfurling of sail means to go on practising spiritual disciplines and nothing else. If the mind refuses to look at His face, pull it by the ear or give it some more severe punishment. Abhyāsa or habituation means the repeated attempt of placing an idea or attitude in the mind. This attempt has, however, to be made with faith and love.

When one lives in a lonely place, one can understand the movements of one's mind, and so he then finds it convenient to adopt required measures.

Sannyāsa means perfect self-surrender to the Lord without any inner deceit. This is the supreme objective of human life.

Sri Turiyananda

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# GROW MORE CHARACTER

( EDITORIAL )

## I

If we produce enduring dams but brittle men, what is the economics of it?

If for slaving a theory we wreck a country, what then has politics made of man?

If men become like robots and robots more intelligent and capable than men, is it not civilization in reverse?

If prosperity is permitted to come only through exclusive ways of one's understanding for a section of people excluding others, what have we gained by way of sanity, notwithstanding 'progress'?

If we have established lines of communication connecting the entire physical world through which we are apt to scatter our inner venom all over the world, how have we covered distances?

If all our energies, skill, devotion, steadfastness, singlemindedness are harnessed for toppling our brothers from their positions, is it not truly amazing creativity?

If we are scientifically so able as to reach the moon on a space craft, and live on the earth like we do, are we not more under the lunar influence than scientific?

If when 'progress' is made, we ourselves decline, how far have we then advanced?

## II

Believe it or not, nature does not stint to give in her plenty food to man, but man hides it in some dark regions and will not give it to man. And why? He wants to make money! And one day with all his money in the bank he dies all the same like any insect. And yet he will not behave like a man!

Believe it or not, nature does not adulterate food. Man does it, before he eats, before he gives it to his children and fellow human

being. And why? He thinks it is good business!

Believe it or not, the cow is generous enough, moral enough to give pure milk. But man sees to it that you do not drink it pure!

Believe it or not, minerals and chemicals do not conspire and make those awesome weapons to devastate what man has made. Man does it!

Believe it or not, the sky has no arsenal of its own, it never threw one bomb on man's head. Man goes up there—in a very clever way, of course—and throws the bomb on his own head, and on what he has made. And he thinks he is conquering!

Believe it or not, the earth has provided all the land and wherewithal for all people. But man has kept man out in the wilderness, in destitution!

Believe it or not, man is identical with the Supreme Spirit, and yet what can he not reduce himself to!

## III

What then is the most crucial need of man today?

Before, after, and in the midst of everything man needs to know one formula, the formula for achieving true manhood.

What is that formula?

This saving formula according to the teachings<sup>1</sup> of Confucius is working to establish one's own character and helping others to do the same simultaneously, working to succeed oneself and also helping others to do the same in the same process.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide: *The Wisdom of China and India*, Edited by Lin Yutang, The Modern Library, New York, 1942, p. 830.

This indeed is the doctrine of *sarvodaya*, of simultaneous advancement of all.

There are varying needs of various individuals, societies, and nations—they are worked for in different ways, not unoften in indifferent ways, prejudicial to the advancement of 'others'. But there is one universal need of all individuals, societies and countries,—the need of enough character. Given enough character, man becomes true man. The true man alone can solve his own problems and help solve those of others.

Confucius said: 'One who is not a true man cannot long stand poverty, nor can he stand prosperity for long.'<sup>2</sup> How true!

Poverty brutalizes and affluence barbarizes man if he does not have enough character.

#### IV

Above all what we need is enough character to go round. Otherwise, no matter what we may do to solve our problems, our problems can only increase in all levels of our existence, personal, social, national or international.

Hence to do many things for solving problems and nothing to build up character is no sign of prudence and sanity.

When we do not have enough character, our weaknesses will be more than our strength, our misfortunes greater than our fortunes, our weal less available than our woes, our past more glorious than our future.

When we do not have enough character, our enemies will be more powerful than our friends, wars more than peace, killing more than healing.

When we do not have enough character, our trains will not run in time; factories will not produce goods to its full capacity;

industries will founder; fields will not yield the expected crop.

When we do not have enough character, our places of worship will become like commercial houses and temples of learning like factories.

When we do not have enough character, we will shun what will make us whole and enthusiastically do what will destroy us.

When we do not have enough character, our dams may not hold floods, our bridges may give way, our high roads may open up at odd places involving loss of life.

When we do not have enough character, our corporate bodies will be ridden with cliques, and roads full of filth, our offices heavens of procrastination.

When we do not have enough character, our leaders will become dealers in leadership, our political parties ridden with factions, our priests will be like merchants, and business men will delight in cutting throats.

When we do not have enough character, acts of crimes will be more than acts of piety, unsafe places more than safe places, people whom you can trust less than whom you cannot.

When we do not have enough character, young men and women will be without self-control, old men and women would behave as though they were vigorous and young, requiring governments to have more and more mental homes.

When we do not have enough character, our culture will be another name for lechery, our art will be dirt, our literature raw sensuality.

When we do not have enough character, in society there will be more quarrel and fight, agitation and unrest, corruption and nepotism than peace and harmony, concord and happiness, honesty and uprightness.

When we do not have enough character, we will corrupt the taste of people, nay of

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Chapter: Aphorisms of Confucius, p. 833.



our own children, in order to make money by selling goods which would pamper their low and vulgar tastes.

When we do not have enough character, religion will be reduced to soulless ritualism, ethical code will be perverted into sophistry, altruism will become self-aggrandising social work, our spirituality will be reduced to secularity, secularity to hedonism, hedonism to ruination, surer than death.

When we do not have enough character, as students we will not devote our time to hard study, we will be more interested in extra-curricular activity than curricular activity, and we will busy ourselves with thoughts and occupations which misshapen our budding lives and we will wither away before blossoming. When we have to face the struggle for existence we shall find that we are nowhere in the grade. Then we will shamelessly live on somebody else's earning and dream of the coming revolution.

When we do not have enough character, our knowledge will be used for the undoing of man in a sophisticated manner; we will use great intelligence for doing trivial things and our high endeavours will then produce low results.

When we do not have enough character, right thinking will be impossible for us. And from wrong thinking how can desirable results ensue?

When we do not have enough character, we will either live in the past or in the future and not in the living present. Our energies will be spent in endless negativist complaining about the rottenness of the world and not in heroic struggle for self-betterment or for social well-being.

When we do not have enough character, our marriages will be like dolls of sands, homes like holes of snakes, children like foxes, human relation a craft of selfishness, increasing the number of homeless

foundlings, delinquents, crooks, cranks, lunatics and misanthropes.

When we do not have enough character, in democracy such people will wield power that people will cry: ah, when shall we have a dictator!

When we do not have enough character, even after growing enough food calculation-wise, we will not have food enough for all to go round. Food will vanish by the way man's character has vanished.

When we do not have enough character, our overt progress will be true regress, our affluence will be our undoing and our highly complicated miseries will not see reasons for ending.

When we do not have enough character, ugliness will reign everywhere, our faces will lose lustre, there will be no light in our eyes, hope in our heart, power of conviction in our mind, and joy in our soul.

## V

If all this will be true in case of our not having enough character, equally true will be the opposite of these if we have enough character.

Granted enough character, our strength will be more than our weakness, fortunes greater than misfortunes, woes less than our weal, our present and future more glorious than our past.

Granted enough character, our friends will be more powerful than our enemies, peace more than wars, healing more than killing.

Granted enough character, our trains will run in time, factories will produce more goods than expected; industries will flourish in peace and plenty; fields will yield more crop than expected.

Granted enough character, our places of worship will be holy sanctuaries for refreshing the soul, our temples of learning like places of pilgrimage where man-making education is received.



Granted enough character, our dams will hold floods, our bridges will be like bonds of enduring friendship, and our high roads like durable conveyance taking you to your destination.

Granted enough character, our corporate bodies will work like single organisms, our roads will be like tidy courtyards, and offices like places of sacrifice.

Granted enough character, our leaders will be like what Rama was to Lakshmana, our priests will be like sages, and our businessmen like venerable trustees of society.

Granted enough character, as students we will have the intelligence to see that the real issue on hand as far as students are concerned is to conserve our energy, study well, build up our physical, mental and spiritual strength and fully equip ourselves for the struggles for existence. We will then easily see through the game of people trying to use us for their purpose at the cost of our life's interest.

Granted enough character, young men and women will be full of grace, dignity and self-control, staying youthful to advanced age, and old people will become things of beauty to see.

Granted enough character, our culture will be sweetness and light, art revelation of God the Beautiful, and literature a high endeavour for self-expression and transcendence.

Granted enough character, our secularity could not be distinguished from our spirituality, and our spirituality will be as spontaneous as our breathing.

Granted enough character, we will see the world as it is. We will not waste time in negativism but engage ourselves in heroic self-effort for self-lifting and for lifting of fellow human beings.

Granted enough character, in our society will prevail more amity and peace, concord and harmony than quarrel and agitation, unrest and violence.

Granted enough character, our homes will be like hermitages, our families like symphonies, and our children like flowers on the altar.

Granted enough character, our adversities will be seedbeds of prosperity, our outer affluence will be opportunities for gaining inner affluence, and our miseries will be givers of the boon of true education.

Granted enough character, our faces will shine, eyes sparkle, our hearts will bubble forth with hope, our minds will be full of firm convictions, and soul scintillating with joy supreme.

## VI

If we want these things to happen to us—and who would not want?—we have to do one simple thing—build our characters.

Man himself is the central theme. He is the end. He is more valuable than any possession in the universe. He must be salvaged, augmented and liberated in his own being. The way is to build character.

Now what is character?

In truth character is what a person truly is, and his reputation is what he is supposed to be. When the character and reputation are the same that is the ideal state of being. The Greek word for *cháracter* means to engrave. Character is that generated force in man by which he does and undoes, engraves his mode of being in the world. History is made by characters.

Character is defined as qualities or features by which a person or a thing is distinguished from another; the aggregate of distinguishing mental and moral qualities belonging to an individual or a race as a whole; the stamp or individuality impressed by nature, education or habit; that which a person or a thing really is.

Swami Vivekananda says :

‘What you want is character, strengthening of the will. Continue to exercise your will and it will take you higher.

The will is almighty. It is character that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulties.'

And he proceeds to define character in this manner :

'The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. We are what our thoughts have made us. Thoughts live ; they travel far. And so take care of what you think. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, bears an impression on the mind stuff. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. Every man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad.'<sup>3</sup>

Character is that ensemble of actualized qualities of the head and the heart of an individual through the help of which he masters facts and forces of life in a creative manner and gradually reaches self-fulfilment in a way helpful to others as well.

The man of character develops upwards, the man without character develops downwards. The man of character makes history, the man without it is made by history. The man of character is the hope, solace, well-being, peace and inspiration of mankind ; the man without character causes trouble, strife, worry, misery and problems in society.

Character is so important for life, that to have to live without it will be worse than not living at all. We may have filled the whole world with so much food that everyone refuses to have more. We may have succeeded in family planning to the extent that only adults are found to saunter

around in the world. Gold-bars stocked on the road-sides for people to take home at will may not be any more lifted. We may have industrialized the whole world to the tune of choking everybody with smog. And our established world government may have been functioning on without one jarring note. Even then for want of one thing nobody is going to know how to cope with life's new and different problems of ennui. That one thing is character.

Character holds the key to any riddle of life. It can break each and every vicious circle. There is no mystery character cannot unravel. There is no wound it cannot heal, no want it cannot fill, and no loss it cannot make good. Hence, the most important thing among all creative endeavours of life is to know how to build character of one's own and help build characters of others with whom one associates.

As Hindu psychology would bear it out, the character of the child begins to get formed even in its prenatal state. Thoughts of the parents get in some way impressed on the yet unformed personality-stuff of the child.

According to the ancient law giver Manu, family is the most significant of social groups in which human beings are nurtured. Marriage culminates in a family, and child becomes the visible summation of parents, and symbol of their attained state of being.

The family—constituting the most basic social unit consisting of the trinity of father, mother, child—is the first training ground for building of character. The family, knowingly or unknowingly, moulds the character of the child by thoughts and actions. The child catches passively, to begin with, all behavioural contagion, good or bad, without being able to discriminate or resist. What kind of character the child will manifest when it is grown up almost entirely depends on the family.

<sup>3</sup> Swami Vivekananda on India and her Problems ; Advaita Ashrama, pages 55-56.



When the child is able to watch consciously it begins to build its own character by seeing, watching and imitating its parents. So if it has good, noble and worthy things to sense, watch and imitate, we can be more or less sure that in fullness of time the child will manifest a worthy character. Given the contrary situations in childhood, the character is likely to be otherwise. Character-building depends much on what kind of food for its mind parents supply to the growing child.

In the family again, mother's influence in moulding the character of the child is incalculable. This is why Manu says:

'The teacher of the Vedas is ten times more venerable than an ordinary teacher, a father hundred times more than the teacher, but a mother thousand times more than the father.'<sup>4</sup>

In a sense it is very true you cannot have better children than what you aspire and strive to be but you can have worse. Saints are born of men and women of great characters.

For building character the earlier we catch our children the better. And this catching can even start before the birth of the child through cultivation of a good mind and helpful thoughts.

Only those parents who throughout their life continue to gradually build up their own character, can truly build the character of their children.

Next to parents, come teachers' influence in moulding the character of children. If parents and teachers are persons of confirmed noble characters then their wards will most unmistakably bear the same stamp. This was why education in ancient India was entrusted in the hands of men of ideal character, the sages, to be instructed by whom was a benediction.

If parents and teachers are persons of

absent characters so will be their wards in all probability. But children who will be nurtured by parents of good character, but teachers of dubious character or *vice versa*, will get registered in their personalities the conflict between these two influences.

Besides influences unknowingly but surely exercised for good or bad on children by parents and teachers, there is the powerful influence of social environment. This influence can be creatively handled for character-building only through homes.

There are other materials for building character which can be knowingly cultivated. These materials are:

1. Acquiring knowledge and training of the physical and mental systems in an integrated manner.
2. Training in habituation of approved or ethical conduct.
3. Commitment to the higher scheme of values.
4. Developing the powers of discrimination, concentration, detachment and will-power.
5. Training in developing the five powers of the true learner.

Acquired character, practically speaking, is self-mastery. Self-mastery presupposes the knowledge and the mastery of the instruments, the body and mind.

Character in good part is conduct. You behave as you are. You cannot behave better for any length of time unless you are better. How do you become better than yourself? This can be done by deliberately practising approved or ethical conduct. What is to be considered approved conduct should not be decided impulsively according to one's fancy but learnt from scriptures. About ethical or approved conduct *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* (XII. 14) enjoins:

'Absence of anger, elation, indignation, avarice, delusion, vanity, and enmity; speaking truth; moderation in eating;

<sup>4</sup> *Manu Samhita*, II, 145.



refraining from exposing others' weak points; freedom from jealousy; sharing one's good things with others; sacrifice; straight-forwardness; gentleness; quietude; self-control; friendliness with all beings; absence of cruelty; contentment,—these form the approved conduct for men of all stations of life. By observing them duly one becomes universally benevolent.'

It is to be particularly noticed how disciplines of self-chastening and other-regard are dovetailed in approved or ethical conduct.

But ethical conduct cannot stand the strain of varying trying situations of life for any length of time unless we have a cultivated firm commitment to a sound scheme of values which takes care of the totality of the human personality and its fulfilment. Indian scheme of values name four in the list: pleasures of life, wealth, righteousness and attainment of spiritual illumination. Psychology of the person is to be so trained that he finds meaning in pursuing pleasures of life and wealth through righteousness and he discovers an increasing purpose of righteousness in spiritual illumination.

Creation of this psychology will much depend on how we have acted in our life according to approved conduct.

A man with a sound sense of values alone can find reason and meaning in building up a character. Others find little sense in it. But attainment of self-fulfilment is an ageless challenge from within, which no thinking man can bypass for all times in his life.

Character is the acquired dynamics of the self-chastening process within oneself through self-effort. This process is initiated through an unremitting but well-regulated struggle within oneself by way of habituating discrimination between the true and the untrue, discarding what is untrue and

concentrating with love and tenacity on truth. Cultivation of the powers of concentration and detachment must go hand in hand. The secret of succeeding in all worthwhile undertaking is the development of the will-power. By loving to do what we ought to do we can develop will-power.

In the *Anguttara Nikaya* Buddha teaches his disciples to cultivate five powers of the learner. Cultivation of these five powers—one has not to be an aspirant for nirvana to be benefited by this practice—will endow any one with a character which cannot be destroyed either from within or without. The text runs as follows:

'Once the Exalted One addressed the bhikkhus on the powers of a learner. He said:

There are five powers of a learner—

1. The power of faith: The true learner has faith in his teacher and believes in his enlightenment and his ability to teach the Supreme Truth.
2. The power of conscientiousness: The true learner is naturally conscientious and has qualms of conscience when acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
3. The power of fear: The true learner is afraid of the blame that comes from acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
4. The power of energy: The true learner has an abiding energy to discard all wrong things and adopt the right ones.
5. The power of insight: The true learner has an insight into the real nature of things and he sees the decay inherent in growth and thereby prepares himself to destroy the root cause of sorrow.

'Listen, bhikkhus, if you want to destroy sorrow and abide in the supreme truth, you must cultivate the powers of faith, conscientiousness, fear, energy and insight;

for these, O bhikkhus, are the five powers of a true learner.”<sup>5</sup>

What is perfection of character?

Confucius says:

“To find the central clue of our moral being which unites us to the universal order (or to attain central harmony), that indeed is the highest attainment.”<sup>6</sup>

In other words that indeed is the attaining of perfection in character development.

There are varying needs of various individuals, societies and nations. They are

worked for in various ways. But there is one universal need of all lands, of all mankind—that need is of character.

Mankind has come to a pass today when every thoughtful person everywhere in the world needs to have a fresh look at this desideratum—building of ampler character, growing in abundant character, and helping his members of family and society to do the same in any way he can, combining all the methods mentioned above or by devising other methods, but in any case becoming truer, and worthier human beings.

So Vivekananda taught: ‘Be and make. Let this be our motto.’<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Sermons and Sayings of the Buddha*, Compiled by Sudhakar Dikshit, Chetana Ltd., Bombay, pp. 66-67.

<sup>6</sup> *The Wisdom of China and India*, Edited by Lin Yutang. The Modern Library, New York, 1942, page 831.

<sup>7</sup> *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta-14, 1955, Vol. IV, p. 351.

## WHY HINDUS WORSHIP THEIR MOTHERS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

‘The ideal woman in India is the mother, the mother first, and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the mind of the Hindu, motherhood; and God is called Mother.

‘In the West, the woman is wife. The idea of womanhood is concentrated there—as the wife. To the ordinary man in India, the whole force of womanhood is concentrated in motherhood. In the Western home, the wife rules. In an Indian home, the mother rules. If a mother comes into a Western home, she has to be subordinate to the wife; to the wife belongs the home. A mother always lives in our homes; the wife must be subordinate to her. See all the difference of ideas.

‘Now, I only suggest comparisons; I would state facts so that we may compare

the two sides. Make this comparison. If you ask, “What is an Indian woman as wife?” the Indian asks, “Where is the American woman as mother? What is she, the all glorious, who gave me this body? What is she who kept me in her body for nine months? Where is she who would give me twenty times her life, if I had need? Where is she whose love never dies, however wicked, however vile I am? Where is she, in comparison with her, who goes to the divorce court the moment I treat her a little badly? Oh, American women, where is she?” I will not find her in your country. I have not found the son who thinks mother is first. When we die, even then, we do not want our wives and our children to take her place. Our mother!—we want to die with our head on



her lap once more, if we die before her. Where is she? Is woman a name to be coupled with the physical body only? Ay! the Hindu mind fears all those ideals which say that the flesh must cling unto the flesh. No, no! woman! thou shalt not be coupled with anything connected with the flesh. The name has been called holy once and for ever, for what name is there which no lust can ever approach, no carnality ever come near, than the one word mother? That is the ideal in India.

'I belong to an Order very much like what you have in the Mendicant Friars of the Catholic Church; that is to say, we have to go about without very much in the way of dress and beg from door to door, live thereby, preach to people when they want it, sleep where we can get a place—that way we have to follow. And the rule is that the members of this Order have to call every woman "mother"; to every woman and little girl we have to say "mother"; that is the custom. Coming to the West, that old habit remained and I would say to ladies, "Yes, mother", and they are horrified. Later on, I discovered the reason: because that would mean that they are old. The ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood—that marvellous, unselfish, all suffering, ever-forgiving mother. The wife walks behind—the shadow. She must imitate the life of the mother; that is her duty. But the mother is the ideal of love; she rules the family, she possesses the family. It is the father in India who thrashes the child and spansks when there is something done by the child, and always the mother puts herself between the father and the child. You see it is just the opposite here. It has become the mother's business to spank the children in this country and poor father comes in between. You see, ideals are different. I don't mean this as any criticism. It is all good—this what you do; but our way is what we have been

taught for ages. You never hear of a mother cursing the child; she is forgiving, always forgiving. Instead of "Our Father in Heaven", we say "Mother" all the time; that idea and that word are ever associated in the Hindu mind with Infinite Love, the mother's love being the nearest approach to God's love in this mortal world of ours. "Mother, O Mother, be merciful; I am wicked! Many children have been wicked, but there never was a wicked mother;" so says the great saint Ramprasad.

'There she is—the Hindu Mother. The son's wife comes in as her daughter; just as the mother's own daughter married and went out, so her son married and brought in another daughter, and she has to fall in line under the government of the queen of queens, of his mother. Even I, who never married, belonging to an Order that never marries, would be disgusted if my wife, supposing I had married, dared to displease my mother. I would be disgusted. Why? Don't I worship my mother? Why should not her daughter-in-law? Whom I worship, why not she? Who is she, then, that would try to ride over my head and govern my mother? She has to wait till her womanhood is fulfilled; and the one thing that fulfils womanhood, that is womanliness in woman, is motherhood. Wait till she becomes a mother; then she will have the same right. That, according to the Hindu mind, is the great mission of woman—to become a mother. But oh, how different! Oh, how different! My father and mother fasted and prayed, for years and years, so that I would be born. They pray for every child before it is born. Says our great law-giver, Manu, giving the definition of an Aryan, 'He is the Aryan, who is born through prayer'. Every child not born through prayer is illegitimate, according to the great law-giver. The child must be prayed for. Those children that come with curses, that slip into the world just in a moment



of inadvertence, because that could not be prevented—what can we expect of such progeny? Mothers of America, think of that! Think, in the heart of your hearts, are you ready to be women? Not any question of race or country, or that false sentiment of national pride. Who dares to be proud in this mortal life of ours, in this world of woes and miseries? What are we before this infinite force of God? But I ask you the question tonight: Do you all pray for the children to come? Are you thankful to be mothers, or not? Do you think that you are sanctified by motherhood, or not? Ask that of your minds. If you don't, your marriage is a lie, your womanhood is false, your education is superstition, and your children, if they come without prayer, will prove a curse to humanity.

'See the different ideals now coming before us. From motherhood comes tremendous responsibility. There is the basis, start from that. Well, why is mother to be worshipped so much? Because our books teach that it is the pre-natal influence that gives the impetus to the child for good or evil. Go to a hundred thousand colleges, read a million books, associate with all the learned men of the world—better off you are when born with the right stamp. You are born for good or evil. The child is a born god or a born demon; that is what the books say. Education and all these things come afterwards—are a mere bagatelle. You are what you are born. Born unhealthful, how many drug stores, swallowed wholesale, will keep you well all through your life? How many people of good, healthy lives were born

of weak parents, were born of sickly, blood-poisoned parents? How many? None—None. We come with a tremendous impetus for good or evil: born demons or born gods. Education or other things are a bagatelle.

'Thus say our books: direct the pre-natal influence. Why should mother be worshipped? Because she made herself pure. She underwent harsh penances sometimes to keep herself as pure as purity can be. For, mind you, no woman in India thinks of giving up her body to any man; it is her own. The English, as a reform, have introduced at present what they call "Restitution of conjugal rights", but no Indian would take advantage of it. When a man comes in physical contact with his wife, the circumstances she controls, through what prayers and through what vows! For that which brings forth the child is the holiest symbol of God himself. It is the greatest prayer between man and wife, the prayer that is going to bring into the world another soul fraught with a tremendous power for good or for evil. Is it a joke? Is it a simple nervous satisfaction? Is it a brute enjoyment of the body? Says the Hindu: no, a thousand times, no!

'But then, following that, there comes in another idea. The idea we started with was that the ideal is the love for the mother—herself all suffering, all forbearing. The worship that is accorded to the mother has its fountain-head there. She was a saint to bring me into the world; she kept her body pure, her mind pure, her food pure, her clothes pure, her imagination pure, for years, because I would be born. Because she did that she deserves worship.'

# QUESTIONS OF SPIRITUAL SEEKERS ANSWERED

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

Q: Why do realized souls, such as Kapila, Sankaracharya, Ramanuja and saints of other religions give such different views of Reality?

A: It is a common thing because, as one knows, so one speaks and expresses. These persons named Kapila, Sankaracharya, Ramanuja and saints of other religions, as far as they reached in Reality, in the experience of Reality, they express those very things. And in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, we find that he realized so many facets of the Divinity; therefore, we find him expressing that all paths, all religions, are so many paths to Godhead. So it is according to what is one's practical experience that the views are different. It may not necessarily be so. This room, for instance, can be seen from different angles and be photographed also from different angles, and no two pictures will be alike or identical. But we know that all these pictures represent this room and nothing but this room. Similarly, the one God may be there, one and indivisible, but the presentations received of Him from different angles, by different minds, will be various. So these great souls attain different degrees of realization and from whatever stage they realized, they viewed the Supreme Divinity. So they expressed what they had experienced in different ways. And it is up to everyone to choose his particular teacher and follow his guidance in spiritual life.

Q: Most saints that we read about seem to retain their personal emotions and are not always calm and unattached. Has anyone ever attained the Gita ideal of perfect non-attachment?

A: That one is a question of having to find out whether in actual records that we have of the history of different religions,

anyone measures up to this particular type of non-attachment, mentioned in the scripture. The ideal is there, one must be as unattached as possible to things, but whether these saints actually are attached or not, we cannot really judge. Sometimes they probably make a show of some kind of attachment. When a person does something wrong before one's eyes, well, he has to be chastised, he has to be rebuked. But these great saints, if they are really great saints, they will never be affected by anger, but they will just make a show of anger.

Q: Vivekananda says, 'Think you are free and you will become free'. Will you please explain this.

A: The whole universe, according to Vedanta, is a projection of our own mind; as we think, so we see, so we feel, so we become. Naturally, we are thinking of ourselves now at this moment, as human beings, limited, confined to our body, living in space, time and under causality, and so on. Therefore, we think we are entirely different from God. But if we think differently, if we believe that we are essentially one with God, that God is playing hide seek with us, He is inside us and outside us, and we are advancing towards Him by every kind of experience that we are having, well, then, really, we are approaching freedom. God is free, and by thinking that we are really free, in proportion that we succeed in thinking that we are free, free we shall surely become. Because, after all, the mind has a tremendous influence over the physical body, even, and of course, over our actions. Instead of thinking we are weak, we are down-trodden, we are infirm, and so on, the opposite fact, which is the real fact—but at present we are not aware of it—that thought has to be kept in mind:



that is all Swami Vivekananda says. That is, by thinking wrongly we have become human beings, puny, cribbed, confined, and so on, but by thinking in the correct way, that we are chips of Divinity or, even better still, we are always one with Divinity, by holding that thought, as far as possible before our mind, certainly we are on the way to freedom.

Q : When we read "*The Eternal Companion*",<sup>1</sup> in that book, we find that Maharaj, Swami Brahmananda, emphasized meditation. When we read Swami Vivekananda we find most emphasis on dynamism and public service. What do you say to this?

A : It simply means that there are different ways of attaining realization. It is not that only one way is there, and that must be followed by everybody. Maharaj and Swami Vivekananda had different temperaments and though their realization was of the same Divinity, but still one believed more in the practice that he followed would help the generality of mankind. And oftentimes, Maharaj addressed people whose temperament would suit this type of thing, this meditation, and Swamiji spoke for the general body of people. He lectured to people, to big audiences which Maharaj seldom, if ever, did. So, naturally, there may be a difference. For ordinary people, for people in a group, in a large group, one can speak of these things, dynamism and public service. And as to public service also, Maharaj never said : 'don't do it', but he laid more emphasis on meditation. On this ground, he explained it also, that with a mind that is purified by meditation a larger amount of work can be done. Otherwise, the person who does work, he

simply gets lost in the world. In coming in contact with so many forces, with so many persons and so many situations one loses oneself. One loses, almost, the spirit of the work. In that way, to help us in doing the work properly, doing the service properly, he asked us to purify our mind, to sharpen our mind through meditation, because in meditation we see where and how far we have advanced. It is no use only claiming supernatural powers or very high spiritual powers ; there we take stock, as it were, of how far we are advanced, how far yet we have to go, and in that way we are better prepared for the next day's duty. So, really, there should not be seen any contradiction between the two. We may say, that dynamic public service is one way to Realization of God, similarly meditation is another way to Realization of God. But those works, those services that Swami Vivekananda advocated, they would be better performed by a person of meditation; no doubt about that. But those who cannot really meditate, for them, naturally, serving God in so many human forms without actually concentrating one's mind deeply within oneself, is helpful.

Q : What is your impression of the effectiveness of the work of the Vedanta Centers in America?

A : They are doing work, good work, in their own way. Different situations and environments are there, different problems arise ; the Swamis are also differently equipped. So, taking all things together, my impression is quite happy, and every one of the Centers is doing quite good work in the way of dissemination of ideals and if persisted in, they will produce more and more good to larger and larger sections of the people. Here, between those who give the teachings out and those who imbibe the teachings, and in all the Centers that we have visited, it has been our pleasure to see that there is a large

<sup>1</sup> (Being life and teachings of Swami Brahmananda) by Swami Prabhavananda The Vedanta Society of Southern California, 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, Calif. 90028 U.S.A.



amount of co-operation present. So, the future certainly is very bright.

Q: India has many advantages spiritually in her great traditions, etc. Can one live a serious spiritual life in America?

A: Spiritual life can be lived everywhere. Of course, as the questioner says, probably for attaining spirituality, the conditions in India are more propitious, just as some fields are fertile and with a little effort, much produce can be had; or, conversely, in an arid land much effort has to be spent for irrigation and other things; then only results are obtained. One certainly can live a serious spiritual life in America, but the efforts required may be a little more. One must be prepared for that.

In this connection, I am reminded of an illustration our great Swami Turiyananda, one of the disciples of Ramakrishna mentioned. He said,—somewhere he must have heard it—, the young Alexander the Great, when he was quite young, asked his father for a larger sword. He had been given a small sword, but he wanted a big sword like his father's.

Then the father said, 'Add a step to it.' That is, the sword was small, but if the boy advanced one step further with that small sword, he would reach the enemy.

That means more self-exertion is necessary in America, taking it for granted, I mean, for argument's sake, that the advantages, the spiritual advantages here are fewer than in India. But with additional effort one can make up for these disadvantages, and for that, everywhere we have to be prepared. And the result will be better, not less, because after all, one improves oneself by added effort.

Q: Can an ordinary person really realize God, or is it simply a vague fancy?

A: It cannot be a vague fancy. Realization is actual. It is not a new thing, and it is not only in recent times that we hear of Realization. Centuries ago, thou-

sands of years ago, great men in different religions, in different times have realized the Lord directly. So, even an ordinary person can really realize God if he is sincere enough and if he is eager to pursue unto the last. It will not do merely to pursue the ideal only for a short time and then leave it off. After all it is not our servant whom we are calling and wanting him to do certain things. We are equating our endeavour with the highest things that one can aspire after. We are wanting God by our own exertions. We are trying to have an infinite thing by means of something finite. It is only when this surrender is complete, when the dedication is total, when the devotion is perfect, then the Lord is pleased and He rewards our efforts by appearing before us, by revealing Himself to us. So, of course, an ordinary person also can realize but he must be very sincere. That is the only qualification, that is necessary. He must not profess one thing and inwardly be something else. If there is an imperfection, he or she should try to remove that to the best of their ability and God will certainly help. Realization is possible, and that is what Ramakrishna came to teach. All the great teachers in every season, every age, every epoch have said like that, and Sri Ramakrishna especially said God is a God to everybody. He is our near and dear to everyone of us. In proportion as we feel that we must have Him, He comes to us, He reveals Himself to us. So, all that is necessary, is our exertion. There may be other things, but unless we exert ourselves we cannot also demand that God be propitious, that God be helpful and gracious, and so on. It is not a vague fancy.

Q: What is the role of miracle in belief and religion? Can it be dispensed with?

A: Miracle is no part of religion at all. They are accidents. Just as if we go on a

journey, there are milestones on the way. Miracles simply mark the miles, as it were; they are milestones on the way to progress. If you proceed, if you advance, certain things automatically you see here and there on both sides, as it were. They only mark the stage to which you have arrived. There is no necessity of it; even if there are no milestones the road will be just the same and your journey will not have been in vain; if you are advancing, you will be advancing, you have advanced. The miracles are rather hindrances. If we pay our attention to miracles and think they are also part of the spiritual life, they are more a hindrance than a help. Of course, they can be dispensed with, and they should be dispensed with. We must do our part of the thing, irrespective of what side-effects may come. Seeing some light, this or that, or hearing something, knowing what is happening at a distance, these are all unnecessary things; they come just in the wake, and we must not allow ourselves to be caught in their meshes.

Q: In order to practise renunciation must one believe in reincarnation or on after-life?

A: It is not necessary. It is not a compulsory doctrine that one must believe in. If one argues sufficiently well, one is convinced whether there must be reincarnation or there must be an after-life, but it is not necessary. Just for practising renunciation absolutely one has not to believe in reincarnation or after-life. Renunciation means not being subject to those ordinary temptations to which we are prone, and renouncing something lower in order to achieve something higher. That can always be practised, irrespective of our faith in reincarnation, after-life or any

other thing, because it is a way of life, not a question of belief only. If we are imbued with renunciation, if for a higher and nobler ideal we just sacrifice our lower cravings, that is renunciation. And that does not go hand in hand with any kind of belief in a future life or past life or any other thing.

Q: One of the greatest obstacles to development in the spiritual life is sloth. How can one overcome it?

A: Sloth is also part of human nature, as it were. You have heard of the three ingredients: sattwa, rajas and tamas. Sattwa is serenity, balance; rajas is activity and tamas is inertia or sloth. So, sloth comes under the lowest element in our nature that has to be overcome by increasing the active side of our nature and the serene side of our nature. In the *Vivekachudamani* of Śankarāchārya there is a verse which says tamas has to be overcome by rajas and sattwa, and rajas has to be overcome by sattwa and sattwa, when it is improved, when it is heightened, automatically dies. That is, it does not leave its bad effects altogether; we go beyond the gunas, the three ingredients of which our constitution is made. I shall not be slow; I shall not be procrastinating, I shall not be dilatory, because my objective is to realize the Lord in this very life, and life is not unlimited. At best it is only a number of years, and if I can pay my attention to so many other things, why not struggle a little more so that the thing I most desire will be achieved within a short time, rather than so many other things coming to me first and making the highest Realization more and more remote. So, by discrimination,—by drilling the fact into one's mind that as a spiritual person I owe it to myself to be up and doing and not let things drift,—one is helped.



# WHAT INSPIRES ME MOST IN HOLY MOTHER'S LIFE

## IV

IDA DERBY

Holy Mother accepted the world completely. Whatever and whomever the world sent to her, she met with equanimity, saying only, 'I have to adjust according to time and circumstances.' These are words I can understand.

In a constant stream, life came to Holy Mother in the form of never-ending, demanding chores; yet through graciousness, humour, compassion, and tenderness, she transformed every move of her quiet round into a sadhana to be understood and practised by women the world over. Once, by rescuing a broom that a woman had carelessly thrown aside after cleaning a courtyard, Holy Mother demonstrated that even simple working tools should be treated with consideration, and the smallest work detail should be done with proper attention and respect. Again, when a pot of rice burst and the gruel fell to the ground at a time too late to cook more, Holy Mother imperturbably scooped the rice from the fallen heap, and offered it to Sri Ramakrishna, saying, 'This is how you have ordained it today. Now take some warm food without delay.'

Life also came to Holy Mother in the form of people. She, who had no children of her own, instead took all people into her heart. The demands made upon her by her family never withered her compassion; rather, she willingly took upon herself the further exacting care of Radhu and her child. She excluded no one. When she was waylaid by the Bagdi robber, she responded,

'I am your daughter Sarada,' and from that moment they became as her own parents. She accepted Amzad, the mulberry robber, as her own. 'Amzad,' she said, 'is as truly my son as my Sarat is.' As the Order expanded, her own circle of spiritual influence widened to the point where she once remonstrated. 'But why should they all wish to be initiated here? There are my sons at the Belur Math.... They keep on sending all to me.' Yet her compassionate heart, though full to overflowing, and unable to refuse anyone, would feel keenly the loss of a single friend, and she would weep: 'I am in this world and have to taste the fruit of this tree. That is why I cry.'

But Holy Mother's capacity for acceptance was not limited to the outer world. From the beginning, she had accepted the infinite, inner way of life, and that made it possible for her to meet calmly the multitudinous chores of the world. The gentle woman who now gave consideration to a broom, was the same person who had sat at Sri Ramakrishna's feet, and who had accepted with equanimity the greatest consideration and worship he had to offer. One night he prayed, 'Do Thou open the gates of perfection. Sanctifying her mind and body, do Thou manifest Thyself through her and ordain all good.' Calling forth the Divine in her, he laid the fruits of all his spiritual labours at her feet. Her quiet acceptance, which made her long years of service possible, is what inspires me most in Holy Mother's life.

## V

JANE BROWN

Her inseparability from God.

Holy Mother said: '... Sri Ramakrishna,

though absolutely pure and of divine origin, suffered for the sake of others and



yet did not miss even for a moment his ecstatic joy and blissful contemplation of the Divine Mother.'

What Holy Mother said of Sri Ramakrishna applies equally to herself. Inseparability from her blissful Lord is the story of the Holy Mother's life. From the days at Dakshineswar to her pilgrimage to Vrindaban after the Master's Mahasamadhi, it grows deeper and steadier until it is a flawless expression of divine inseparability. To me, this is inspiring beyond all else in her simple and tremendous life. It gives lustre to her highest teaching and to vegetable peeling, and it is a model for living in the world with uninterrupted consciousness of God.

At Dakshineswar the Holy Mother was always aware of her divine consort. Swami Nirvedananda expresses this so well that I shall use his words: 'Her mind would hover about him so closely and constantly as to enable her to hear from a distance what he said even very softly in his own room. When one of his young devotees went to the music-tower, as directed by him, to get his fare for his return trip to Calcutta, he found, to his surprise, the required money already deposited by her outside the entrance. On another occasion, when the Master, asking Naren to take his food there, came to the music-tower to inform Sarada Devi about this, he was astonished to see that she had already started preparing Naren's favourite dishes. This shows the potency of immaculate love that made her live very close to the Master on the mental plane, though physically she was away in her anchorite's cell.'

When Sri Ramakrishna entered Mahasamadhi, Holy Mother cried: 'Mother! O Divine Mother! for what fault of mine have you departed leaving me here?' After his departure Holy Mother suffered from the alternation of *samsṛeṣa* and *visṛeṣa*. The

physical separation was almost more than she could endure. She said later 'When the Master passed away, I also wanted to go.' In Vrindaban she wept for her Lord as Radha had wept for Sri Krishna. But even this grief at physical separation was itself a kind of non-separation. Sri Ramakrishna reassured her: 'Why are you weeping so much? Where have I gone? Here I am.' Then in Vrindaban, where she had suffered so much, a change occurred; the grief at physical separation was gone and she was immersed in the bliss of God. From that time, one may judge from her life and from her teaching that the presence of Sri Ramakrishna was steady and deep.

Holy Mother's inseparability from Sri Ramakrishna is mirrored in her teaching. 'He is your very own.' 'Repeat His Name always.' Such is the property of love that it delights unceasingly in the Beloved and in His Name. Again she says: 'Even in the midst of the most intense activities, one should at least remember God and salute Him.' So her smallest act became an adoration.

This preservation of attention is conveyed so simply by the Holy Mother that the most elusive and desirable One is made accessible through her teaching. For thirty four years she ministered to those who sought God, and this ministration 'took' because of her inseparability from Him whom devotees sought.

I think of her love as the relation of unity in duality, not as self-identity. As Sri Sarada Devi, she lived a life inseparable from Sri Ramakrishna, and this we can to some extent understand and follow. As the Divine Mother Herself, Holy Mother has ever known that Siva and Sakti are One and inseparable. This is perhaps beyond understanding.

# THE TRUE WELFARE OF STUDENTS

SRI SURAJ BHAN

The true welfare of students lies in the acquirement of attitudes and formation of habits which could equip them for membership of a civilized society.

The highest priority should go to tolerance. The greatest attribute of western civilization is intolerance. It is true science and technology have made a phenomenal progress, but ideological fanaticism has been a serious blot on this wonderful record of progress. In medieval ages religious fanaticism had led to persecution and the terrors of inquisition but in modern times conflict of isms is leading to disastrous consequences. The story of Vietnam is a glaring example of such a conflict. It is a duel between communism and democratic forces. The salvation of mankind lies in acquiring attitude of tolerance. This involves an austere discipline. It is the most important feature of a civilized society. If this is ignored the result would be extermination.

Another thing which the students should acquire is self-restraint. I do not believe that a human being should be a prey to all types of instincts and impulses. Some psychologists advocate a type of 'unchartered freedom'. I feel that this is suicidal. The process of civilization does involve some type of self-restraint. Sometimes some impulses have to be repressed. If these are allowed to have a free outlet then the result would be chaos. Self-restraint is the greatest attribute of culture. Sometimes it is very painful and difficult to practise self-restraint and tolerance. But these attitudes are most essential in the development of a balanced personality.

Then the students should acquire the habit of critical objectivity. It has to be recognized that the essence of intellectual

progress is critical discussion and willingness to submit all propositions to whatever objective tests are available. Without this attitude one can never develop intellectuality. All learning experiences should be tested and examined critically. The habit of accepting everything without proper appraisal is likely to lead to intellectual stagnation.

Another useful attitude which the students should acquire is that of adjustment. If we enter life with pre-conceived notions, our prejudices will dominate the scene and it will not be possible for us to have a dispassionate assessment of any situation. It is, therefore, desirable that we should be objective in our outlook and should be prepared to see if adjustment is possible. Unbending rigidity leads to emotional tension and causes a heavy damage. It is, therefore, necessary to be flexible. The habit of social adjustment is very necessary and therefore an earnest effort should be made to acquire it.

Another thing which is very desirable is that our philosophy of life should be permeated with the idea of universal love. Some countries and some nations thrive on animus and hatred and their leaders always sing a hymn of hatred. Whenever they speak they spout out venom and ire. Such a philosophy causes tension and ultimately culminates in war and bloodshed. If we want peace on earth and we do not want our young people to be slaughtered in this or that war we have to take every care that all young men are reared in a philosophy of love. No nation can dominate over another and no people can be subjugated. If we have to co-exist then we should do so without any feeling of hatred or animosity and therefore the philosophy of



love is the best guarantee for the future welfare of our young people. It does not mean that if the country is in danger then we should shirk our responsibility and join 'refuse draft movement'. It is our duty to dedicate our life to the defence and betterment of our country. But if all the young men in all countries adopt the philosophy of love, perhaps it may be possible to taboo wars.

It is, therefore, desirable that students should apply their mind to the problem of their own welfare. Acquirement of degrees will not take them anywhere. Let the students sit quietly and think. Let every one ask a question—Whither is this world drifting? What is the probable future of

mankind? Answers to these questions contain the key to what is the true welfare of students. Slogans and shibboleths will lead them nowhere. Let them face reality, for they can be the architect not only of their own destiny but of the future of this world. If we allow ourselves to be actuated by petty motives, we may achieve temporary success but in ultimate analysis we would be contributing to the ultimate deterioration in values. Students can be a bulwark against the various cults emerging out of mutual hatred and misunderstanding and they can show a new way to the world. But will they respond to the call of the times? Yes—if they really understand what constitutes their true welfare.

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## THE NAUGHTY LITTLE GIRL AND THE HOLY MOTHER

"There was a child in Calcutta who gave a great deal of trouble to her family and always demanded attention. She used to visit Holy Mother with her own mother. Whenever she entered the Mother's room she clung to her. The Mother always gave her plenty of sweets to eat. Once Holy Mother was about to leave for Jayrambati and said to the little girl: "Darling, you have been visiting me a long time. Do you love me?"

"Yes, I love you very much."

"How much?"

The girl stretched her arms as wide as she could and said: "That much". The Mother asked: "Will you still love me when I am away at Jayrambati?"

"Yes, I will love you just the same. I shall not forget you."

"How shall I know it?"

"What should I do to make you know?"

"I shall be sure of your love for me if you can love everyone at home."

"All right, I will love all of them. I will not be naughty anymore."

"That's very good. But how shall I know that you will love all equally, and not some more and some less?"

"What should I do to love all equally?"

"Let me tell you how to love all equally. Do not demand anything of those you love. If you make demands, some will give you more and some less. In that case you will love more those who give you more and less those who give you less. Thus your love will not be the same for all. You will not be able to love all impartially." The little girl promised to love all without demanding any return. And, indeed, it was reported that from that time her behaviour in the family was exemplary."

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# MUSINGS OF THE MUSAFIR

## STRUGGLING MILLIONS AND ONLOOKING DHARMA

Sometimes you are faced with a moral issue in life for which the extent of your wisdom may have no answer. Where do you go then for an answer? The Indian mind will almost involuntarily say: to Dharma. But then is it easy to understand Dharma? So it has been said: The essence of Dharma is a hidden mystery. That is the way by which the spiritual masters have travelled.

To one such ancient spiritual masters you may turn seeking answers even for modern problems afflicting mankind, and you will return perfectly satisfied. This spiritual master is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the finest strategist of life and wisdom.

You feel particularly thankful that the Lord chose to give the message of the *Gītā* in a battle-field and that He cared to deal with the intricacies of demanding life-situations. What is more significant is that the gospel was addressed to a full-blooded man of the world. Still more significant is the little-stressed mandate of the Lord, given unequivocally to man to conquer his foes and enjoy the world. He said in clear terms: conquer the enemy; enjoy the kingdom and affluence.

If the Gita were spoken one cloudy winter evening to an aging monk sitting with a torn blanket around him before a collapsing temple and contained only talks on renunciation and the other world it could not have the meaning it does have for all mankind across dividing lines of nationality, religion, race, politics or philosophy.

Life is fundamentally a battle field. No gospel can have universal appeal unless this fundamental fact of life is clearly acknowledged. One of the reasons of universal acceptance of the Gita as a sacred

book of supreme wisdom is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa squarely acknowledged this fact. And what adds to its popularity in terms of helpfulness is the fact that the Lord puts premium on victory over the inimical foes of life, inner and outer; and what is more, he clearly asks man to enjoy the world.

But then—and here comes his supreme excellence as a world teacher—he taught how man could do this not only without degrading himself, without being defeated by his victory and devoured by what he enjoyed, but also how in trying to do so he could grow in spirituality and expanding freedom, which alone provide the true measure of man.

Unfortunately, by and large, clever modern men of today know precious little about how to enjoy the world without getting degraded, eat without being devoured and win victories without in effect being defeated.

Victory to be real and enjoyment to be true, taught the master-strategist Śrī Kṛṣṇa, you must first of all conquer that implacable foe, which wrecks your rampart of strength from within, your lustful desires which are '*jñāna-vijñāna nāśanam*', destructive of knowledge and wisdom.

No victory, no enjoyment will be worth a straw if it is not based on first controlling the senses. Therefore the Lord asks: at the outset curb and conquer your senses.

This is the first condition of becoming a qualitative man as distinguished from quantitative man and building a qualitative society and civilization. You may or may not care to do this. The choice is yours. If you care to do this, movement of your progress will be upwards. If you do not care to do this you will release within



yourself and around you forces which will be destructive of the wherewithal of victory and enjoyment, which are knowledge and wisdom, with the result that the movement of your progress will be downwards.

After telling you most carefully about the laws that govern life, about Dharma and its ways, and ways of attaining self-fulfilment and abiding victory in life, he most respectfully leaves you entirely free to choose freely at your own unqualified responsibility the course of your own action. So he says: Think carefully what I have said and do as you please. Such is the sagacity of the supreme teacher.

He did not bind your hand and foot or deaden your sensibilities to make you religious. And of course you know what goes with every action, the *karmaphala*, the binding fruit of the action, which you cannot escape taking.

Dharma of the hoary Indian concept does not force you to act in a definitive way of its own choice against your own choice. It indicates, it instructs, it shows the existing cause and effect relationship between what being done and what will follow. It initiates within you a responsible and responsive liberating process. And then leaves you entirely free to choose your course of action. Dharma does not even hesitate to acknowledge your fundamental right (not mentioned in the U.N. Charter!) to create a private little hell for yourself if you are so enthusiastic about it, but softly and wistfully whispers into your ears: you really have not to be so foolish! But if you are particular, you are free to degrade yourself. Meanwhile Dharma stays your all time friend. Even without your having to call after it, Dharma is with you even unto the end of creation.

A curious thing has been happening in the world for quite a while. Struggling millions swamped by the fruits of their

own acts of desires, have been frantically seeking the sanction of religion for adopting such measures for stopping population explosion as has never been considered unquestionable by the prevailing traditions.

So far, this wanderer has not succeeded in finding in any religion any sanction in support of the technology of artificial termination of birth the cause of which has already been released. The reason for this could be that this involves violence on one of the deepest issues of life itself, and the journey of a soul in the process of transmigration.

Every religion has the duty, authority and competence to place before its votaries the evil consequences of such action even though widely supported for reasons of their own, by society and the government. The religion which fails to point this out in clear terms fails in its fundamental duty to the people.

All the religions should also earnestly call upon man to acknowledge his higher nature and challenge him to manifest it in his life for mastering the problems of living, so that he may not first gleefully submit to his lower nature and then seek a questionable means for getting out of the situation.

In his much criticized encyclical 'On Regulation of Birth' dated July 25, 1968 Pope Paul VI has refused, to the extent it lies in his power, to give sanction of his Church to artificial termination of birth. So a large number of people in the world, —many among his followers—are disappointed, nay seem to be even angry with him.

In the encyclical, true to his salt, the Pope said a few urgent things which this lust-seared world badly needed to hear and learn about, 'mastery of self', 'creating an atmosphere favourable for chastity'.

But what he did not succeed in saying

was that after knowing what act leads to what result, people were free to act according to their own judgement.

One may be pretty sure that driven as they are by certain excruciating logic of life's prevailing and demanding situations, millions of Catholics all over the world will not listen to the Pope's direction.<sup>1</sup> Even then what Pope Paul said would remain substantially true: that responsibility of marriage calls for austerity because union should be sanctifying for the perpetuation of the wonder of life, and not for cleverly avoiding the consequences of biological registration of the facts of unions. With the burden of his cross of truth and disobedience—truth from his side and disobedience from the side of the people—the Pope will no doubt be a sad man at the Vatican, but not a man who did not say what he ought to have said. Only after saying everything he could have pensively smiled a little and added: Your Pope has said what he had to, now ask your God and do what He says from your conscience!

In religious duress more hypocrisy is bred than holiness. At every step, step by step, religious life ought to be an exercise of growing in inner and outer freedom.

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<sup>1</sup> Even before this goes into printing already there is a report in the press (Vide: *Northern India Patrika*, September 21, 1968) that Catholics were ignoring Pope Paul's ban on the contraceptive pills.

This was the finding of an agency called IDOC. Information Documentation On the Conciliar Church, founded by Roman Catholic Theologians and researchers during the 1962-65 Vatican Council—based on survey of eight countries including Belgium, West Germany, Holland, Spain and Italy.

The IDOC Vice-President is reported to have said in a press conference (Rome, September 19, 1968) 'Sociological surveys carried out after the Pope's birth control encyclical show there has been no clear change of behaviour among the rank and file of Christians'.

To help open right understanding is all that religion can and need do.

Along with teaching and preaching, religious teachers need always continue to extend the healing sympathy of understanding to struggling multitudes. It is not as if the creator has no responsibility in man's discomfiture, and failure to rise to demanded heights. The sage of the Upanishad acknowledges this fact with great courtesy and says:

'The self-existent Supreme Lord inflicted an injury upon the sense-organs in creating them with outgoing tendencies; therefore a man perceives only outer objects with them, and not the inner Self. But a calm person wishing for immortality, beholds his inner Self with his eyes closed.'  
(*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. 1. 1)

We read in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, one day when questioned by a devotee about the baffling situation of the bound men in the world:

'...Sri Ramakrishna, taking upon himself, as it were, the agonies of all householders, sang a song (of Ramprasad) complaining to the Divine Mother:

'Mother, this is the grief that sorely grieves my heart,  
'That even with Thee for Mother, and though I am wide awake,  
There should be robbery in my house.  
Many and many a time I vow to call on Thee  
But when the time for prayer comes round, I have forgotten,  
Now I see it is all Thy trick.  
As Thou hast never given, so Thou receivest naught;  
Am I to blame for this O Mother?  
Hadst Thou but given,  
Surely then Thou hadst received;  
Out of Thine own gifts I should have given to Thee.  
Glory and shame, bitter and sweet,



are Thine alone ;  
 'This world is nothing but Thy play.  
 Then why, O Blissful One, dost Thou  
 cause a rift in it ?  
 Says Ramprasad : Thou has bestowed  
 on me this mind,  
 And with a knowing wink of Thine  
 eye  
 Bidden it, at the same time, to go and  
 enjoy the world.  
 And so I wander here forlorn through  
 Thy creation,  
 Blasted, as it were, by someone's evil  
 glance,  
 'Taking the bitter for the sweet,  
 Taking the unreal for the Real.' "

This situation of mankind should be understood by teachers of religion with utmost sympathy, so that the struggling people may feel that Dharma is not more interested in its own glory than in helping mankind. In fact Dharma has no other glory to call its own than the manifest glory of God and potential glory of man. Dharma travels with man as far as he may glide and stays by his side as an inalienable friend that it is truly of all, from everlasting to everlasting.

Yet Dharma cannot abdicate the responsibility of calling a spade, a spade, for there is no other way of calling attention of man to the in-built challenge within himself for his salvation.

Indeed, this is the time to preach essential principles of religions most earnestly so that a new dark age may not engulf humanity. Religion must vigorously explain the principles of Dharma with enthusiasm, sincerity, simplicity, clarity and without any ambiguity, but must also acknowledge facts of human psychology which was underscored so vividly by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Gita (III 33). He said : 'Even a wise man acts in accordance with his own nature ; beings follow nature ; what can restraint do ?'

Religion must educate people, accentuate their power of discrimination and help develop their will-power and then leave them entirely free to act and take the fruits thereof. Religions must be unequivocal in rationally expounding moral codes. But religions should not try to imprison people in a moral gaol. People must be free to set their own pace on the way to liberation. It is not given to one man to fix it for another.

It is absurd for religion in effect to say : you are bound to be religious. That defeats the very purpose of religion which is to make man free. If the man senses that you are trying to bind him, the hidden imp in him is roused and he says in your face, exercising his freedom in a spacious manner : I am going to be irreligious. Let me see what you can do, be you anybody ! And really you cannot do anything to help the man until you discover the wisdom of saying and meaning it too : You are really free to be religious and not bound !

Is it not revealing that the Lord grants the son his right to be a prodigal ? The prodigal son is given to go away and dissipate himself. In the law of return the given dissipation had a contribution of much spiritual value, to make and a redeeming meaning to impart. To prevent it from happening might not have been as helpful for the man concerned as allowing it to happen, if the law of his life, by his own free choice, demanded it. All true learning involves a process of getting burnt—that is called experience, the only real educator of man.

Prodigal modern man may take a while, —a century or more—to learn that the law of life does not brook irreverent tampering without asking for a very heavy price.

But he must be given the time to acquire experiential ground to have a more sober and saner view of life.

Until the prodigal son returns father must keep on waiting and watching. And when he returns—and sure he must one day—there will be much rejoicing.

Let the light of Dharma shine bright on the path of life and not on the eyes of the

people so that they may not be driven either to blindly follow, or blindly revolt. What is needed for man is seeing through and going ahead.

Dharma serves, waits, watches and perchance smiles, but does not compel.

## WHERE RELIGIONS MEET

### THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHICAGO PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS OF 1893 IN CHICAGO

Under the auspices of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago, a Symposium of Religions was held in the auditorium of the Lutheran School of Theology on Sunday, September 15, 1968. The Symposium was held in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the historic Chicago Parliament of Religions of 1893 at which Swami Vivekananda, representing Hinduism, had made a powerful impact and laid the enduring foundation of the bridge of understanding between India and the United States. The morning and afternoon sessions were attended by a large cosmopolitan audience that had come from far and near and filled the auditorium.

Opening the proceedings at 10-00 a.m. with a Vedic prayer and welcoming the speakers and the audience in a felicitous speech, Swami Bhashyananda, Minister-in-charge of the Society, said :

'On this auspicious occasion we have assembled here to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the World Parliament of Religions which was a gathering representing the world's best religious knowledge and wisdom. Much water has flowed down the river of human life since that event. We need to evaluate the changes in human life and in the world's religions that have taken place since then. We have to test them in the light of reason and the scientific

spirit of the modern age. We have met here for this purpose.'

The Swami then read three messages out of many that he had received for the occasion. The first was from His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur Math, Calcutta. The President said :

'I am glad the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago is celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. To this Parliament Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk, carried the message of peace and goodwill, the solidarity of man based on his inherent divinity, and the harmony of all religions. These ideals are still needed greatly today to establish peace and brotherhood in the world. I hope the celebrations will stress once more these great ideals held before the Parliament in 1893 by the Swami and other speakers. I wish the celebrations all success.'

The second message was from His Eminence Cardinal Cody of the Roman Catholic Church, U.S.A. His Eminence said :

'I am delighted to know that a symposium is being held by the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago to bring about an interfaith understanding. I am glad to convey my best wishes for the success of this interfaith undertaking.'



The third message was from His Excellency U. Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General said :

'I am happy to know that the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago is holding a symposium of Religions to bring about harmony and understanding among the principal faiths of the world and thus helping to foster a bond of friendship and brotherhood which is most needed at the present hour. I am glad to convey my good wishes for a most successful celebration of this anniversary.'

After invocational music, Eastern and Western, by Mr. R. Bhatodekar and friends and Miss Eleanor Paschal respectively, Professor E. A. Burtt, author, and Previously Sage Professor of Cornell University, and President of the Symposium, gave his introductory speech. In his speech he narrated some of the significant developments that led up to the convening of the Parliament of Religions as an integral part of the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893 to commemorate the fourth Centenary of the discovery of America. He pointed out that the President of the Parliament of Religions had ventured to say :

'It is my conviction that within a hundred years people from many lands will flock to the scenes of the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago to receive inspiration, as they have for centuries flocked to Westminster Abbey in London, to St. Peter's Church in Rome, and to the holy shrines of Jerusalem.'

The next speaker, Rabbi Asher Block, Head of the Jewish Center, Little Neck, delineated the spirit of interfaith tolerance to be found in Judaism by citing from scripture, history, injunctions for spiritual practice, and the lives of mystics. He pointed out that Micah, the prophet of the Old Testament, voiced that spirit when he declared :

'Let all the peoples walk each in the name of the Lord his God, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever'; and that the prophet Malachi widened the concept of

universal tolerance when he asked : 'Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?'

The Rabbi then gave a bird's-eye view of the spiritual injunctions of Judaism, which are, mainly, scriptural study, devotional practices, and moral conduct. After summarizing these basic teachings, he asked :

'Is this a partisan faith or a world outlook? The amazing thing about any of the outstanding scriptures, be it the Gita, the Sermon on the Mount, the Eight-fold Path, or the Ten Commandments, is that there is hardly a word in them that is esoteric or parochial in nature. If we could for a moment detach ourselves from the particular origins and historical associations that have clustered around these teachings, it would be impossible to differentiate one from another. God, prayer, and morality, these are the universal and perennial themes that underlie them all.'

Historically, the 'Jews not only refrained from forcible conversions, they even refrained from missionary activity.' Rabbi Block pointed out that, with but a few exceptions, Judaism kept to the policy that each faith walked in the name of God as it understood Him.

Coming to what he deemed the most important element in the spirit of religious tolerance, the Rabbi turned to the mystical aspect of religion :

'I use the term "mystical" in the sense in which the mystics themselves like to use it, namely, experiential, that which pertains to the actual experience or realization of religious truth. At the stage of realization, the mystics of all religions speak exactly the same language. In the lives of Moses and Isaiah, Jesus and St. Francis, Krishna and Buddha, Zoroaster and Mohammed, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, we find reflected that spiritual reality we call God.'

Concluding, on the way to religious harmony, the Rabbi rejected religious eclecticism as well as unity based on political, social and economic considerations. He said :

'Let each religious community cultivate its own garden intensively. For only in that way

can we be certain to produce fruit and then, when the fruit is produced, it shall be evident to all how nourishing and sustaining that fruit is to everyone's spiritual life.'

Professor Michio Kushi, of the Department of Comparative Religions, Boston University, speaking next on Buddhism, said that Buddhism was the religion of enlightenment which Buddha achieved in his two-fold knowledge of the impermanence of all things including the ego, and the immortality of truth. He stressed that many people follow Buddhism together with their own beliefs and do not fear any contradiction as they accept a universal life built on the foundation of the highest human qualities.

Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, India, who had specially come to Chicago to participate in the Symposium and to undertake a year-long lecture tour of the United States at the invitation of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago, speaking on Hinduism, referred to those salient features which had imparted strength and steadiness to this most ancient and yet most modern among the world's religions. By its stress on experience as the criterion of religion instead of creed or dogma, and by the thoroughness of its study of the entire range of religious phenomena, Hinduism has acquired a philosophic and spiritual comprehensiveness which has made it not *a* religion but a *federation* of religions, held together by the cord of love and finding expression in active toleration and acceptance. In the words of Swami Vivekananda uttered during his speech at the Chicago Parliament of Religions :

'From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low idea of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, all have a place in the Hindu's religion.' On Hinduism, the Swami said :

'The Hindu religion is derived from the Vedas, and from later scriptures which follow in the wake of the Vedas. By the Vedas the Hindu means primarily, not the books, but the accumulated treasury of knowledge in the form of spiritual truths discovered at different times by different sages, some of whom were women. The most central of such truths are those of the essential divinity of man, the spiritual solidarity of the universe, religion as the realization of this divinity, the diversity of the paths leading to such realization, and harmony and concord between the different paths. "To the Hindu, then," said Swami Vivekananda in his speech at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, "the whole world of religions is only a traveling, a coming up, of different men and women through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a god out of the material man and the same god is inspiring all of them." From the five-thousand year-old Rg Veda, with its message of *Ekam sat; viprā bahudhā vadanti*. "Truth is one; sages call it by various names", to Sri Ramakrishna in our own age, with his message of *yato mat tato path*—"as many religions so many paths", through the contributions of Krishna in the fourteenth century B.C. and the Mauryan Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C., Hinduism has consistently manifested a mother-heart of comprehension and compassion in its dealings with all other religions. Ever since Swami Vivekananda brought the pulsations of that mother-heart to the Western world through the Parliament of 1893, the world's religions have been steadily moving in the direction of both intra-religious and inter-religious unity and harmony. This is making possible the steady pooling of the spiritual resources of the great religions with a view to feeding the spiritual hunger of man in the modern age.'

Speaking next on Zoroastrianism, Mr. Keki Bhote of India, Founder-President of the Zoroastrian Association of America, referred to the fundamental moral and spiritual teachings of his ancient religion, its extreme smallness as to number of adherents, its close kinship with India's ancient Vedic religion, and its influence on all the Middle Eastern religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.



The afternoon session began at 2-00 p.m. with the speech of Father Robert Campbell, Professor of Theology, DePaul (Catholic) University, Chicago, on Christianity. Dwelling mainly on the conflict of the traditionalist versus modernist in modern Christianity, with special reference to Catholicism, Father Campbell said:

'Had I been giving this talk ten years ago, I would have given an optimistic picture of Christianity, a Christianity in its ascendancy with its adherents constituting one-third of the human race. But in the ensuing years it seems to me that there has developed a crisis in Christianity, the worst crisis in its history. I shall take my own denomination, Roman Catholicism, as an example. You are all familiar with the adverse reception given to the Pope's encyclical on birth control by Catholic priests and laymen alike. This is just one example of the breakdown of authority which is endemic in present-day Christianity. The Pope's recent statement as to the nature of the Catholic credo represented the traditional view of Catholicism. Yet it also met with a resentful reception from many directions. So here are two different currents in Catholic Christianity, the traditionalist and modernist. As a speaker on Christianity, if I were to present just one aspect of it, many would say, "Well, that is not Christianity as I know it." Every Christian denomination shows this division; it is no longer Catholic versus Protestant; rather, this new alignment is between conservative versus liberal. The traditionalist group holds that God has revealed the truth to us as to the nature of Himself, as to how man should live, and as to the after-life. These truths are eternal and unchanging. It is our duty to find out His will in these matters. But the modernist, or call it the liberal or the humanist or the secularist, group does not agree with this. It believes that truth is a relative thing, that these doctrines and dogmas are not fixed things, they change, and that we are coming to the point where we deny some things that we formerly affirmed as sacred truths. The traditionalist group affirms that Jesus is God and is unique. No other person can be mentioned in the same breath with him. But the modernistic group takes issue with this and says that Jesus is divine, true, but any one of us can be divine.

And of course this strikes a very responsive chord with the Hindu outlook that the divine is in all of us. This liberal Christian outlook is sympathetic to a great extent to the Hindu outlook. As a matter of fact, on many points, I think, you will find the liberal Christian outlook moving in the direction of the East in much of its philosophy—both in its concept of an impersonal God and in the concept that we are all divine. The same obtains in the attitude toward man: traditional Christianity, according to the liberal group, was charged with a pessimistic outlook arising from its dogmas such as original sin. This concept is very offensive to liberal Christianity which holds that man is perfectable by training and proper education. In attitude to the world also there is a cleavage between the two groups. Whereas the traditionalist group considers the world a danger and an enemy, the liberal group considers this a very wrong view and affirms that it can be improved and that we should devote ourselves to building a more humane society instead of pinning to go to a heaven.

'In the Roman Catholic Church, for the last five or six years, the rebellion against authority has been a move in the direction of challenging the infallibility of the Pope, the ideas of heaven and hell, and many other traditional doctrines. The liberal group says: "Don't worry about the old-fashioned things such as seeking converts, etc., but let us develop ecumenism, develop better relations with other religions." In my own university, surveys taken of Catholic student's attitudes show a great swing toward the liberal views within the last five or six years.

'I know that the great Swami Vivekananda would himself be in favour of most of the trends in the direction of liberal Christianity; because his teaching was: "Don't be concerned about doctrines or dogmas or churches or temples," and the liberal Christian would echo these sentiments one hundred per cent. Swami told us that the old religions /said he was an atheist who did not believe in God, that the new religion tells us that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself and in mankind. Now this attitude will be echoed wholeheartedly by the humanistic, modernistic Christian approach. Although the Swami would not endorse all the modernistic attitudes—perhaps its moral code he would not endorse one hundred per cent—still I think he would



be in favour of its central trends which seem to be moving in the direction of the unity of religion which he was hoping for. I think this trend in the direction of humanism would be applauded by Swami Vivekananda if he were here today... We can all agree on this: that this Symposium, whose purpose is to develop fuller understanding of each others' religions, is a good thing.'

Speaking on Islam next, Mr. Wadi' Haddad, Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Princeton University, New Jersey, said:

'To discover the universal aspects in any one religion is to discover the universal aspects in all religions. We must be open-minded. There are in every religion men of faith; as these get closer and closer to God, they become more and more inclusive in their outlook. Islam has produced such men and women; and they represent its universal dimension.'

Speaking next on the special theme of 'The Ideal of Universal Religion,' Swami Ranganathananda referred to the problem of the conflict between the traditional and the liberal, posed by Father Campbell, as the basic problem of all religions today.

'During the seventy-five years that have passed since the Chicago Parliament of Religions,' said the Swami, 'there has been a steady erosion of peoples' faith in religion as traditionally understood. This process had its beginnings in the sixteenth century but has become accelerated during the past few decades. The acrimonious theological debates of that century and the thirty years war between Catholics and Protestants during the next century initiated the process of shifting western man's allegiance from a striving for a kingdom of God in heaven to a striving for a kingdom of man on earth. Humanism became the watchword of Western development. But this new faith—the faith in man—received a severe jolt from the second world war from which it has not as yet been able to recover. Man's inhumanity to man on a colossal scale, which was practised before and during that war, made man lose faith in himself also. Today, therefore, he has no focus of faith, neither God

above nor man in and around him. He lives for the moment; and science has provided him with exciting pleasures of senses to fill his every moment. But his movements are wobbly and aimless; his spiritual malnutrition finds expression, in his individual and collective life, in an inner restlessness and tension, a constant search for worldly substitutes, mostly harmful, and a general sense of meaninglessness.

'It is in the context of this dilemma that we have to reassess the place of religion in human life and human fulfilment, and the changes the religions of the world have to undergo to be able to contribute to that end. Father Campbell vividly placed before us in his lecture the crisis that is facing Christianity, specially Catholic Christianity, during the past few years. It is obvious that such a crisis is facing every religion today. Modern world conditions and modern education are forcing all religions to justify themselves at the bar of reason. No religion can escape the critical scrutiny of its own youthful followers. Hinduism has been experiencing this scrutiny, reverent as well as irreverent, for over a hundred years; it had, however, the inestimable advantage of the most progressive and enlightened spiritual leadership in the modern age in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Christianity is passing through such scrutiny today in a more intense fashion. Religions like Islam will experience it to vast dimensions in due course. Swami Vivekananda taught Hinduism to welcome such rational scrutiny so that all its deadwood may be removed, allowing its tested truths to shine and inspire the modern Hindu to acquire the necessary spiritual strength to face the challenge of modern materialism. He exhorted all other religions to respond to the modern challenge in the same way and, uniting their spiritual energies, throw a counter-challenge to modern materialism and worldliness, and thus help restore to modern man his spiritual integrity and true dignity.

'It is when religions undergo this process that they bring out the central truths that form their spiritual core and reveal their ever-present universal dimension. This, and not religious uniformity nor religious eclecticism, is what Hinduism understands by universal religion, the ideal and reality of which it manifested gloriously in the modern age in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Long before the first Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda had witnessed



a living Parliament of Religions in his master, Sri Ramakrishna. In the light of his life and message, Christians will discover the ideal of universal religion in Christianity, Mohammedans in their Islam, and all others in their respective religions. And the confluence today of the spiritual energies of the world's religions with the kindred energies of modern science, Swami Vivekananda held, will alone be capable of leading man, individually and collectively, to life fulfilment.'

Professor Burtt, in his concluding speech, referred to the common stress on universality in all the speeches of the day and suggested that this was a happy augury for the future. He concluded by expressing his hope that the first Centenary of the Chicago Parliament of

Religions, to be celebrated twenty-five years hence, may well see Vivekananda's message and mankind's hopes, of inter-religious unity being realized.

John Pickens, President of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago, then proposed a vote of thanks to all participants. Closing prayers were said by Swami Bhashyananda and Father Campbell, and a closing song was sung by Mrs. Dipika Kripalani. It was that Muslim Sufi song in Hindi, beginning with the line, 'All that exists art Thou, O Lord', used to be sung often by Swami Vivekananda to Sri Ramakrishna. The Symposium came to a close at 5-00 p.m.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

In the Letter of Swami Turiyananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, we have an illumined soul's abundant spiritual inspiration, and intimate guidance to earnest seekers. The letter published in this issue is translated from original Bengali.

Through having one thing we can make good in all situations of life, however trying or baffling. That one thing is character. The editorial captioned 'Grow More Character' calls on mankind to attend to this all-important aspect of life's universal requirement.

'Why Hindus Worship Their Mothers' are excerpts from Swami Vivekananda's lecture of 'Women of India' published in Volume VIII of his *Complete Works*. In these excerpts there are some urgent teach-

ings for struggling millions all over the world.

'Questions of Spiritual Seekers Answered' by Swami Madhavananda, the then General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at the Vedanta Society in New York in 1956, continues from the October, 1968 issue of the Journal.

Holy Mother's life inspires all, but not for the same reason. When you know what in her life inspires others, you wonder why that did not inspire you too before. This unique feature makes possible for you to discover the mother anew every now and then. This will be testified by the contributions of Jane Brown and Ida Derby, both Vedanta students from California, U.S.A.

Sri Suraj Bhan, Vice-Chancellor of Punjab (India) University makes here a valu-

able contribution in our thought-work on 'The True Welfare of Students'. In this brief article is succinctly presented the outcome of seasoned thinking of years of a life-long educationist who has been directly involved in working for the welfare of thousands of students.

In 'The Naughty Little Girl and the Holy Mother' we find a great world teacher imparting to a child one of the profoundest and most difficult lessons of spiritual life—how to love all equally. This piece is reproduced from the chapter 'In a Domestic Setting' of *Holy Mother* by Swami Nikhilananda, published by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, 1962, p. 128.

The report of the 75th anniversary of the Parliament of Religions of Chicago in 1893 will indicate to the discerning reader an important aspect of human trends obtaining today in the West, viz. religion ferment, in ushering which Swami Vivekananda made a significant contribution.

Musafir writes on a vital issue that affects entire mankind and incidentally comments on Pope Paul's encyclical on 'Regulation of Birth'.

#### THE COMING NEW YEAR OF THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA.

In January 1969 the *Prabuddha Bharata*, founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1896, will enter into its 74th year of publication. With shining heritage of supreme blessings surrounded, while looking forward with quiet confidence to the yet unfolded potential of the Journal for ministering to all-round welfare of entire mankind, we offer our heartfelt thanks to all our writers, subscribers, reviewers, readers, advertisers, printers, friends and well-

wishers for one more year's valued companionship, co-operation and help.

We take this opportunity to announce that we are planning to introduce in the new volume some new reading features which will be found refreshing and helpful.

We earnestly request all our friends to joyously share and spread the message of this Journal to ever growing number of people by kindly enlisting new subscribers, readers and sympathisers in their own areas of influence.

#### IF YOU WANT TO STAY TRULY INDEPENDENT

The short bonanza of the upsurge of liberty which spread quickly like wild fire over the colonized part of the world with the gaining of independence by India in 1947, seems to be over. It appeared for a while as though the world community was forging ahead towards enlightened interdependence, a step ahead of exclusive independence. But no, it was only a deceptive dream.

Let every nation stay grateful for any kindly help received from any other nation. But let no nation be so naive as not to see in the face of enormous hard-hitting proofs that new and more pernicious fetters were all the time being forged for again enslaving mankind in a new way. The call of the times to whichever nation cares to listen is: beware of scientific enslavement and enslavement to help. Remember that weakness anywhere is a very tempting capital of any power which is not spiritually regenerate. And which power is spiritually regenerate in the world of today? When your weakness is the field of power play of a nation, then that nation wants and helps you to grow in weakness for its own self-expression and enjoyment. In fairness to all we may, however,



theoretically admit that this may not be deliberately done. In due respect to proven facts we have to acknowledge that this may be deliberately done also. If you value the inner content of true independence there is need to stay clear-eyed and see facts as they are in the crucible of experience without annoyance and without romanticism and formulate national thought patterns and policies of actions accordingly.

The other day the Prime Minister of India is reported to have pointedly drawn the attention of her countrymen to the fact that 'none of the friendly nations wanted India to become strong'. (Vide : Speech at Allahabad on Sept. 14, '68, reported in the *Northern India Patrika* dated September 16, 1968) She surely knew what she was speaking about, and she did not surely make such a serious statement without reason.

And be it realized that no nation can really be blamed for such turn out of facts. It is the outcome of human nature as it happens to be.

Is it not also truly pathetic to even complain that no nation wants India to be strong? Indians will do well to ask themselves why should it be for others to want them to be strong. Have the Indians themselves really wanted to be strong? Where is the convincing proof for this? Why should it be for others to want you to be strong before you manifested an indomitable will to be so? And if you had an indomitable will to be strong and done the needful to be so, who could have prevented you from being strong? The crucial question is not who wanted or not wanted you to become strong. The precise and urgent question is: do you want to be strong? Are you ready to fulfil all the conditions of being strong? If you do, you have not to ask any one's sanction to be so. You just go ahead, shed

all your weaknesses and be strong, as strong as you require to be.

If such are prevailing facts in India, such are likely to be facts in regard to many other developing nations. And the logic of these facts should be studied and understood by the people, for that will help their growth, may be in a painful way, towards self-development and self-fulfilment.

Theoretically speaking, why should not a powerful nation want another nation, even with immense potentiality to become powerful? The answer is simple: they need to have a continuing market for their goods, both consumers and military. It is their need. And their politics and economics, for the matter of that, even their humanism, are bound to proliferate the logic of that need through their home and foreign affairs as pragmatism is almost every nation's accepted if not declared philosophy of action and relation. If such are prevailing facts, they should be understood as such. It is no use being sentimental or cynical about this. What is helpful is to be even-minded, clear-eyed and hard-headed. What is needful is to do everything required to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the content of true independence by all the developing nations. This alone can help over-all progress of human civilization in the desired direction.

Every nation has its fullest right to enjoy its well-earned affluence. But no nation has any right to perpetuate its affluence through commercially or diplomatically using the underdevelopment of any country. No affluent nation will cease from doing so out of generosity if human nature is what it is to this day. So every nation will have to work for its growth in liberty, liberty in growth. If you do not have liberty you cannot have power, if you are not powerful you will not have liberty.

Liberty is the most precious thing and

power is no less. Growth of any nation is possible only in liberty. And liberty can be protected only by power. But this responsibility of liberty and power is not easy to bear. It will test every human quality and call for enormous individual and collective discipline, skill and sacrifice. But it will be heroic and self-chastening to respond to this call. After all what every country needs for its self-development in right lines is qualitative men, men of character.

In any case, if 'help' tends to become in effect a 'horror', this also should be accepted with gratitude as a precious boon for this must be a most precious lesson to receive, more precious than any help so far.

When you will have ultimately irrevocably returned to yourself for the discovery of all the strength you need and mine out from your own resources, all the where-withal of life, you will start seeing life as a new adventure, and others too will discover you anew as worthy of respect.

As long as any nation depends willy-nilly on foreign help, that long, that nation cannot be a strong country.

Imported prosperity is exported freedom. Exported freedom is inducted slavery again, be it economic or scientific or military. The logic of these facts needs to be understood by all developing nations.

It will be sooner than feared discovered in India that national planning is never better done than when it is based entirely on national resources and without any expectations from without. National *apari-graha*, non-receiving of gifts will then be understood as the first step to national regeneration and not help from without.

If the prevailing power play in the world has brought any nation to this realization, then it has reasons to be thankful, for without this experience true self-lifting through self-efforts could not have been possible.

Indian wisdom in effect teaches that no liberty can be deserved, maintained, augmented and enriched except through practice of self-discipline. And fruits of this self-discipline are bright and sweet. People will respond to the call for austerity when their self-respect is helped to be awakened.

Whichever nation will have had such experience as voiced by the Prime Minister of India in regard to her country will be in a better position to understand today the great importance and efficacy of this teaching of the ancient law-giver Manu : 'Whatever is dependent on others is misery ; whatever rests on oneself is happiness ; this in brief is the definition of happiness and misery.' (*Manu samhita* IV. 160).

Says Swami Vivekananda :

'...You must not depend on any foreign help. Nations, like individuals must help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time has not yet come. It must wait.' (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, p. 108-9).

He further says :

'I am convinced that India is to be saved by Indians themselves.' (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, 1962, p. 359)

'I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from anyone anything he really deserves'. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 366)

These words of power are saving mantras for India which should be meditated upon by the leaders of the land. Indians should get their consciousness soaked with the spirit of these words. Then illusions will vanish and inner strength will flow vigorously in the national veins.

A new necessity has arisen in the world today for all the developing nations, particularly India, to make these words of Manu and Vivekananda directive princi-



ples for shaping their home and foreign affairs.

With goodwill for all at heart and enmity towards none, every individual or nation, at this point of coming up of human history, need become fully aware of the worth and might of one's inner resources.

For standing squarely on, there is no substitute of your own legs. If you are seeking real strength which will never fail you then discipline yourself, exercise your own will, muscles and energy. Your best defence is in the shedding of all your inner weakness. Learn how to cultivate your own mind and brain and that is the greatest know-how in the world. Your own courageous sanity of thought, action and unity of purpose is your greatest security. None could be your greater helper in bringing about progress and prosperity than your own enthusiasm, perseverance and self-application. Your own fear of anything, despondency, cynicism and lack of faith in yourself are your greatest enemies. If you do not want to have enemies, wish every-

body well and be afraid of fear and nothing else. Your own fearlessness is your greatest liberator. Your good deeds at home are your best ambassadors and image makers abroad. Your self-possession is your inalienable empire. Your cultivated strength within is your most effective foreign policy. Detonate your own potential if you want to see the greatest of wonders. Your own skilful work, and careful husbandry constitute the soundest economics and most paying investment. Than peace in your own heart and your sincerity of purpose there is no greater conciliator and peace-maker. Self-chastening is the safest family planning. The most dependable giver of food is the well-cultivated lands you own. And nothing works better than doing it yourself. If you want to live with honour and dignity, then always give more than ask.

It has not been easy to attain independence. Harder it ought to be to deserve to stay truly independent. And you have all the strength needed and more. To have enduring faith in this is abiding affluence.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

### MAN IN SEARCH OF IMMORTALITY:

Testimonials from the Hindu Scriptures BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Pp. 107. Price 25s net.

Man has an innate desire for immortality. He does not wish to feel that his life on earth ends with death. If nothing else, he immortalises himself in his progeny, in the enduring acts of public benefit that he does, in the empires that he carves, in the books that he writes, and in such other innumerable ways. The Phoenicians, the Egyptians and others believed in and sought for such immortality. But is immortality a fact? Obviously, it cannot be immortality of the body. For those who believe in its existence, it must be immortality of the soul. This belief in the immortality of

the soul should not be a mere faith, a matter of wishful thinking; but it must be a reasoned metaphysical fact.

Swami Nikhilananda elaborates in this book the 'scriptural evidence for this doctrine supported by reason and finally experienced in the depth of meditation' by the Hindu seers. The first chapter deals with the idea of rebirth peculiar to the Hindu and allied religions. The materialistic doctrine of complete annihilation of the soul at death, the creationist view of the soul which denies previous births, the doctrine of a monotonous happiness in heaven and of eternal damnation in hell are all criticised and the adequacy of Hindu doctrine of rebirth based on the operation of Karma is clearly brought out. The author brings



out the crux of the Hindu doctrine of immortality of the soul arising out of the knowledge and realisation of its true nature as unattached to and unaffected by its bodily entanglements and of its sole and serene oneness with the Universal Over-soul. One who has had this experience lives for ever in the spirit though he may be dead in the body. To him the cycle of rebirth is arrested. He is not born again after he is dead. Death itself being dead, for him there is no dying thereafter. 'From the doctrine of reincarnation and immortality', says the Swami, 'man will certainly derive courage and inspiration to face the many baffling problems of life'.

The Second chapter entitled '*Is Death the End?*' is an exhaustive recital of the contents of the *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* in which this problem of immortality of the soul is posed by the boy Nachiketas to the God of Death. This is one of the most delightful of the upanishads which throws great light on the problem of the Atman and, in the Swami's deft hands, it acquires the character of an entrancing tale. Chapters III and IV relate episodes from the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*. The former deals with Virochana and Indra going to Prajapati seeking knowledge of Atman, and the latter is the exposition of the mahavakya *Tattva-masi*. Both are concerned with dilating on the nature of the Atman and its inherent immortality. In between, the author deals with the three states of man, the jāgrat (waking), svapna (dream) and sushupti (dreamless sleep) and takes the reader on to the nature of the turiya (the fourth state) in which the Atman is in enjoyment of its unalloyed bliss. The last Chapter on '*What is Man?*' deals with the five sheaths of the atman and the need to transcend them all to have the plenial experience which emerges from Self-knowledge with an immeasurably enriched personality. 'One who has realised this state of Self-Knowledge during his life-time, or has experienced it even in the hour of death, attains final liberation in Brahman. This is Immortality', concludes the author.

Swami Nikhilananda is, to borrow an expression from music, a maestro in the art of exposition of philosophical and religious subjects. He writes profound truths in a fascinating style which carries the reader with ease and understanding through his pages. This is a book which will be extremely useful to every student of Hindu thought.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

**THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF:** BY KAMALA ROY, M.A., D.Phil. Published by Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1966, Pp. 305. Price Rs. 20/-.

This book is a revised version of a Doctorial thesis submitted by the author to the Calcutta University. It deals with one of the fundamental ideas both of Eastern and Western thought, namely the *Concept of the Self*. The author examines at length the various theories of the self held by the thinkers since the beginning of speculative thought. She reviews the psychological, the epistemological and metaphysical theories and goes to show their inadequacy for the reason that they are all objectivity oriented and do not deal with the subjective experience of the soul which alone gives the certificate of certainty to the concept. To this, says the author, one must turn to Indian Philosophy. In the latter part of the book, she deals at length with the idea of the Self held by various Schools starting with the Cārvāka and concludes that the 'Sankarite conception of Self as the inner reality beyond the evanescent conscious states' is the most satisfactory, which is known only by felt experience (*anubhavaika vedyam*) shorn of the adventitious external coverings which impede its realization. The author's attempt to reconcile the Self as the dynamic unconscious of Psychology with Śankara's view of the atman is interesting though not quite convincing.

Dr. Kamala Roy's survey is as encyclopaedic as it is clear and brings together all the available material on this subject. The book carries a Foreword by Dr. Kalidas Bhattacharya and deserves to be in the hands of all advanced students of philosophy.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS:** BY PAUL DEUSSEN. Dover Publications, Inc. New York. Pp. 429.

Writing his Preface, A. S. Geden who translated Dr. Deussen's original German into English says: 'Dr. Deussen's treatise on the Upanishads needs no formal introduction or commendation to students of Indian thought.' Dr. Deussen's was the earliest exposition of Upanishadic philosophy by a foreign scholar. This work has remained a classic on the subject for the past over six decades and it has been used with great profit alike by teachers and students of Indian Philosophy. For an analytical, exhaustive and lucid exposition of



upanishadic system unbiassed by affiliation to any particular school of thought, one cannot have a better book than this. This re-issue of the original work between paper cover at a cheaper price will be greatly appreciated by all students of philosophy.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

CLASSICS IN EDUCATION BY WADE BASKIN.  
Philosophical Library, New York, 1966. Pp. 728.  
Price \$ 12.00.

It is indeed ambitious to attempt an anthology of the writings of the world's greatest thinkers on a vast and comprehensive subject like education ranging from Quintilian to Pestalozzi, from Erasmus to John Dewey and from Confucious to Conant. Dr. Wade Baskin must be congratulated for attempting such an ambitious and at the same time useful venture.

It is a comprehensive and wise selection of some 83 essays from the writings of 58 eminent scholars, thinkers and writers, and it is certainly useful and

worth our while to know what they have to say about education. Dr. Baskin has thus rendered great service by collecting their views and placing them before us in a single volume.

It is, however, regrettable and inconceivable how in a work of such magnitude and range in which writers from Europe America and China have all been included, there is no place for Indian system of education or the views of any Indian educationist. Certainly the Indian system of education (especially in ancient India) is worth consideration in any treatise on education and certainly eminent Indian thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore have something to say on education not less useful or deep than what their counterparts have to say in other countries. We hope that this serious drawback shall be removed in a future edition of this otherwise very useful and well-written book. Also a proper index shall add immensely to the worth and utility of the book. We recommend it to the reading public as a useful work on education.

DR. P. N. MUKHERJEE

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE GENERAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

FOR APRIL 1966 TO MARCH 1967

We are presenting here a brief summary of the latest report of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission which will give our readers some information about the activities of these twin organizations. The report is issued by the General Secretary from Headquarters at Belur Math P.O., Dist. Howrah, West Bengal, India.

—Ed.

Except in East Pakistan and Burma the activities of the Math and Mission showed a general progress during the period under review. Our generous countrymen and the Government, as also friends abroad, have been taking an increasing interest in our movement, which is recognized as one of the nation-building forces in India.

One important development during the year had been the starting of a new centre at Along in NEFA. The centre at Cherrapunji in the Khasi Hills added some more primary schools. Thus the Mission's work in the tribal areas is slowly spreading and is being highly appreciated. The Deoghar Vidyapith started a primary school for the local children. At Jamshedpur, a new science building was finished. The Vrindaban Sevashrama put up its Swami Vivekananda Memorial building. The Rahara Boys' Home opened its Senior Basic School building, while the Purulia Vidyapith opened its Junior Basic School building and the Ranchi T. B. Sanatorium completed a guest house.

As reported earlier, our connection with the East Pakistan centres had been very tenuous. There are at present only four monastic workers with Pakistan nationality, who along with the help of lay friends are somehow carrying on the work there.

The same picture comes to view when we look at Burma. The Society, which is the

only surviving centre in Rangoon, is being managed now by some local friends, constituted into a Managing Committee by the Headquarters.

### CENTRES

Excluding the Headquarters at Belur, there were in March, 1967, 112 branch centres in all, of which 50 were Mission centres, 21 combined Math and Mission centres, and 41 Math centres. These were regionally distributed as follows: 2 Mission centres, 5 combined Math and Mission centres and 3 Math centres in East Pakistan; 1 Mission centre each in Burma, France, Ceylon, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius; 1 Math centre each in Switzerland, England and Argentina; 10 Math centres in the United States of America; and the remaining 42 Mission centres, 16 combined Math and Mission centres and 25 Math centres (83 in all) in India. The Indian centres were distributed as follows: 29 in West Bengal, 11 in Uttar Pradesh, 11 in Madras, 7 in Bihar, 5 in Kerala, 4 each in Assam and Mysore, 3 in Orissa, 2 each in Maharashtra and Andhra, and one each in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, NEFA and Chandigarh. Moreover, attached to the branch centres there were over 23 sub-centres, where monastic workers resided more or less permanently.

### TYPE OF WORK

*Medical Service*: Most of the Math and the Mission centres in India and Pakistan conducted various activities ministering to the physical needs of the public in general, irrespective of creed, colour or nationality. Typical of these are the Sevashrama at Varanasi, Vrindaban, Kankhal and Trivandrum, the T. B. Sanatorium at Ranchi and the Seva Pratisthan of Calcutta. In 1966-67 there were 10 Indoor Hospitals with 1,186 beds, which accommodated 26,158 patients and 66 Outdoor Dispensaries, which treated 30,78,412 cases, including old ones. Besides, the centres at Salem, Bombay, Kanpur, New Delhi, etc., had provision for emergency or observation indoor wards attached to their dispensaries. The Veterinary section of the Shyamala Tal Ashrama treated 2,299 animals.

*Educational Work*: The twin organizations ran during the period 4 Degree Colleges at Madras, Rahara (24 Parganas), Belur (Howrah), and Narendrapur (24 Parganas)—the last two residential—with 3,005 students on rolls. An Arts College at Perianaickenpalayam (Coimbatore) with Pre-University classes only with 184 students, 2 B. T. Colleges at Belur and Perianaickenpalayam with 229 students, 2 Basic Training Schools at Perianaickenpalayam and Madras with 234 students, one Post-Graduate Basic Training College at Rahara, one Senior Basic Training College at Sarisha, and 3 Junior Basic Training Colleges at Rahara, Sarisha and Sargachi with 400 students, a College for Physical Education, another for Rural Higher Education, and a School of Agriculture with 105, 175 and 100 students respectively at Perianaickenpalayam, one Social Education Organisers' Training Centre at Belur with 77 students, one Gram Sevak Training Centre at Narendrapur with 48 trainees, 4 Engineering Schools at Belur, Belgharia, Madras and Perianaickenpalayam with 1,649 students, 14 Junior Technical or Industrial Schools with 720 boys and 704 girls, 90 Students' Homes or Hostels, including some Orphanages, with 8,260 boys and 722 girls, 4 Chatuspathis with 62 students, 15 Multi-purpose Higher Secondary Schools with 6,376 boys and 402 girls, 8 Higher Secondary Schools with 3,116 boys and 1,517 girls, 16 High and Secondary Schools with 6,408 boys and 4,446 girls, 36 Senior Basic and M.E. Schools with 5,049 boys and 3,798 girls, 42 Junior Basic, U.P. and Elementary Schools with 6,338 boys and 2,777 girls and 106 L.P. and other grades of Schools with 7,053 boys and 3,096 girls. The Seva Pratisthan in Calcutta and the Math Hospital at Trivandrum trained nurses and midwives, the number of trainees being 184. Thus there were altogether 47,189 boys and 16,946 girls in the educational institutions run by the Math and the Mission in India, Pakistan, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius. Besides these, the Institute of Culture in Calcutta conducted a Day Hostel for 800 students, a School of Humanistic and Cultural Studies and a School of Languages for teaching different Indian and foreign languages with 145 and 1,095 students respectively. The Ashrama at Narendrapur also conducted a Blind Boys' Academy with 100 blind students.



*Recreational Activities:* Some of the Math and the Mission centres have been providing scope for recreational, cultural, and spiritual activities to young boys at stated periods outside their school hours. The Balaka-sangha of the Bangalore Ashrama has a fine building of its own. At the Mysore Ashrama also a considerable number of boys take advantage of the various kinds of facilities provided for them. Some activities of this kind are also being organized under the auspices of the Advaita Ashrama of Calcutta.

*Work for Women:* The Mission has ever been conscious of its duties to the women of India. Typical of the work done for them are the Maternity Sections of the Seva Pratisthan in Calcutta and the Math Hospital at Trivandrum, the Domiciliary and Maternity Clinics at Jalpaiguri and Khetri, the women's sections of the hospitals at Varanasi and Vrindaban, the attached Invalid Women's Home at Varanasi, the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras, the Girls' High School at Jamshedpur and the Sarada Mandir at Sarisha (24 Parganas). Besides, there are special arrangements for women in other hospitals, dispensaries and schools, and some institutions are conducted particularly for them.

*Rural Uplift and Work Among the Labouring and Backward Classes:* The Math and the Mission have all along tried their best to serve their unfortunate countrymen who have fallen back culturally or otherwise. In addition to the more prominent village Ashramas like those at Cherrapunji, Sarisha, Ramharipur, Manasadwip, Jayrambati, Kamarpukur, Sargachi, Taki, Perianaickenpalayam, Kalady, and the Gurukula at Trichur, quite a number of rural sub-centres—both permanent and semi-permanent—are run under Mission at Belur, Tiruvalla, Sarisha, Narendrapur and Cherrapunji. Of these special mention may be made of the numerous village sub-centres started for educating the hill tribes in Assam. Steps have been taken to spread the Mission activity in NEFA also. In addition to such numerous activities, preaching and educative tours with magic lanterns, films and so on are also undertaken frequently. For the labouring classes in industrial areas the Mission conducted a number of Night Schools, etc.

*Mass Contact:* From the foregoing account it will be evident that the organization's activity is not concentrated in urban areas alone; it is spread over other fields as well. Through such work the organization is in real contact with the masses. As a matter of fact, the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda is spreading steadily in all parts of India, which fact is evident from the participation of innumerable people during the annual celebrations. The temples and Ashramas also draw thousands of people throughout the year. Besides these, there are a number of medical institutions where millions get free medicines, and thousands are treated in the indoor departments. In the educational institutions also a considerable number of poor students get free education, board or lodging. The publication centres sometimes sell booklets at nominal prices to suit the pockets of the masses.

*Relief Work:* Since 1897 the Ramakrishna Mission continued to do organised relief work whenever the country was faced with calamities of any kind. The Mission conducted extensive relief work in the year under review.

Flood relief work started on 29th June in the Cachar district of Assam was closed in December 1966. The total amount spent for this was Rs. 72,631.88 besides distribution of articles received as gift worth Rs. 74,500/-.

Drought relief work in the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh and Monghyr, Santhal Parganas and Hazaribagh districts of Bihar was started in December, 1966. The work was carried on in all the above districts except Banda beyond the financial year under report. The condition in the Banda district in U.P. having improved, the centre was closed at the end of March, '67 and a new centre was opened in April '67 at Kanhara, an inaccessible part of the Mirzapur district. The total expenditure for work in U.P. upto March, 1967, came to Rs. 57,817.13 inclusive of Rs. 15,105/- as value of articles received as gift. In Bihar the expenditure for the same period came to Rs. 2,56,934.08 inclusive of contribution in kind worth Rs. 24,014/-. This work was continued on a large scale up to September, 1967.

In both these relief works the Mission got substantial help from the various State Governments concerned, as also from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. The co-operation

of the public with money as well as volunteers was remarkable, for all of which the Mission is highly thankful.

*Work Outside India:* The monks of the Ramakrishna Math took upon themselves the task of carrying the message of India to distant lands. The various centres in North and South America, Europe, Africa and the neighbouring countries of Asia bear ample evidence of their labour of love carried on through preaching, publications, etc., as also medical or educational work where necessary.

*Spiritual and Cultural Work:* Both the Math and the Mission centres laid emphasis on the dissemination of the spiritual and cultural ideals of India, and through various types of activity tried to give a practical shape to the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna that all religions are true. The centres established real points of contact between people of different faiths through public celebrations, meetings, classes, publications, etc. They also conducted Libraries and Reading Rooms. A number of Sanskrit Chatuspathis too were run. At least ten centres published books on religious subjects and eleven magazines in different languages. The Math centres at Mayavati, Baghbazar (Calcutta), Madras, Nagpur, Mysore, Rajkot, Bhubaneswar and Trichur in particular, have to their credit a considerable number of useful publications. Special mention should also be made of the Institute of Culture in Calcutta, which has been trying to bring together eminent men and women of India and other lands in cultural fellowship.

*Annual Celebrations:* Most of the Math and the Mission centres ceremonially observe the days sanctified by the advent of great saints and prophets. The general features of the celebrations of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda are: Special Worship, Homa (making offerings in the sacred fire), chanting of scriptural texts, Bhajan and Sankirtan (devotional music, often in chorus), distribution of Prasad (sacramental food) to the devotees, feeding of the poor in large number, and lectures on the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda by eminent speakers, including capable Swamis of the Order. Thus the message of Sri Ramakrishna and his associates is steadily spreading and many young and ardent souls are coming into closer touch with the ideals of the Math and the Mission. In co-operation with the local public some centres celebrate the more popular festivals, accounts for these being maintained separately.

### OUR THANKS AND APPEAL

We express our deep sense of gratitude to all those kind contributors, friends and sympathisers in India and other countries who by their ready assistance, financial or other, have helped us to carry on our different activities. Our thanks are also due to the editors of various newspapers for kindly publishing our appeals and reports, and also to the gentry, official or non-official, in the relief areas for their timely help. We also express our gratefulness to these local physicians, engineers, lawyers and other gentlemen who kindly volunteered their services to the different centres.

We hope the generous public all over India and abroad will continue to help the Math and the Mission unstintedly, to enable us to respond to the cry of distress, from whichever quarter it may come. All well-wishers of India and friends of the afflicted may find here a golden opportunity to earn the eternal blessings of the Lord by trying to alleviate the suffering of their less fortunate sisters and brothers.

Our appeal is also to intelligent, high-minded youngmen who understand and appreciate the life-giving message of Swami Vivekananda, to respond to his clarion call by dedicating themselves to the service of their fellow beings, who are grovelling in ignorance and misery.



## MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR 1966-67

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital forms a part of the activities of the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati in the district of Almora. Since 1903 this centre has been engaged in rendering medical aid to the people of this part of the Himalayas most of whom are very poor. A large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 or 60 miles taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

A qualified monastic member with the assistance of a doctor and a compounder attends to the patients. There are 23 beds in the hospital. But sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much higher number of indoor patients. The operation room is fitted with up-to-date equipments and there is also a small clinical laboratory.

Through the generous help of the U.P. Government the hospital gets the electricity supply. We are thankful to the same Government for their continued help in maintaining the hospital.

The hospital provides some recreational facilities to the patients.

In the Indoor department 638 patients were admitted during the year. In the Outdoor department 10,375 new and 5,800 old cases were treated.

We appeal to the generous public to help us by their charities to keep up these very helpful services to the poorest among our countrymen.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA,  
VRINDABAN

REPORT FOR 1966-1967

This medical centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, started sixty years back on an humble scale with provisions for a small number of patients, has grown into an up-to-date hospital furnished with the most modern equipments. The eye department of this hospital is the prominent one. The

activities of the various departments of the Sevashrama during the period under review were the following:

*Indoor:* There are 103 beds. Number of cases admitted during the year were 2,182. Surgical operation cases were 684.

*Outdoor:* Besides the old cases of 1,80,602; 34,885 new cases were attended to during the year. The number of surgical operation was 932. Nearly 590 patients were treated daily on an average.

*Homoeopathy Department:* In this department 25,476 cases including the old ones, were treated.

*Eye Department:* The figures relating to Indoor and Outdoor cases treated came to 572 and 7,541 respectively. 485 operations were performed during the year.

*Clinical Laboratory:* Pathological investigations of 10,465 samples of blood, urine, stool, sputum etc. were done.

*X-Ray:* X-Ray exposures taken during the year were 733.

*Physio-therapy:* 80 cases were treated in this department. Recreation facilities are provided to patients through Reading Room and Library, Radio and Audio-visual display on health and hygiene.

*General Relief and Welfare Activities:* A sum of Rs. 1,772.13 was spent to help the needy patients, helpless students and poor people.

*Urgent Requirements:* The ever-increasing costs of food-stuffs, medicines, appliances and essential services required to maintain the needed standard in the hospital, the Sevashrama is facing great financial difficulties. Some of the urgent needs of the Sevashrama are: One Water Softening Plant, Road Construction, Building Maintenance Fund, Goseva Fund; apart from the need to clear off the accumulated loans and annual deficit. Donations for this noble cause will be thankfully received.

## A CORRECTION

The November 1968 issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*

'The True Welfare of Students', page 455, para 2, line 6:

Please read '—having full inner assurance—' in place of '—having full inner resistance—'.