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

THE UNIVERSAL CALL OF RELIGIONS

As oil in sesamum seeds, as butter in cream, as water in riverbeds, as fire in friction sticks, so is the Self seized in one's own soul! if one looks for Him with truthfulness and austerity.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad I.15

O Wise Lord! O Thou Most Beneficent of beings! In Thy grace and through Thy will may we be powerful! Mayest Thou lay hold on us, to help with salvation!

Yasna 41.4

By the complete destruction of lust, hatred and delusion, devout men are no longer liable to suffering, and are assured of final salvation.

Mahā-Parinibbana Sutta 2.7

My soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation.

Psalms 35.9

Whoso believe, and do things that are right,
and believe in what hath been sent down—
Their sins will He cancel,
and dispose their hearts aright.

Koran 47.2

ONWARD FOR EVER!

The best commentary on the life of a great teacher is his own life. 'The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' That is what Christ says as the only way to salvation; he lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth and ashes that we cannot do that. We still have fondness for 'me' and 'mine'. We have property, money, wealth. Woe unto us! Let us confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of Humanity! He had no family ties. But do you think that, that Man had any physical ideas in Him? ... And yet, people make him preach all sorts of things. He had no sex ideas. He was a soul! Nothing but a soul—just working a body, for the good of humanity; and that was all his relation to the body. In the soul there is no sex. The disembodied soul has no relationship to the animal, no relationship to the body. The ideal may be far away beyond us. But never mind, keep to the ideal. Let us confess that it is our ideal, but we cannot approach it yet. He had no other occupation in life, no other thought except that one, that he was a spirit. He was a disembodied, unfettered, unbound spirit.


SANCTIFICATION—THE
REAL REVOLUTION¹

I

The noblest tradition and the most sagacious strategy of religion impel mankind to keep sharp its revolutionary edge, for unlike any other human endeavour essential religion alone aims at complete transformation of one and all. Its identity must be clearly seen to be with truth and truth alone, and its sympathy must be indiscriminately for all, including its detractors. It must never be forgotten that every movement—whatever label may be tagged to it—toward human development everywhere in the world, belongs to religion.

Religion must have no fears of its own, for one of its first duties is to make every one fearless. Religion must grow and renew itself every day so that it may not be caught napping at any time. What is to bring awakening must not itself slumber. The revolution which constitutes lived religion is lasting and total in its effect, not sporadic or sectional. It identifies itself with all, the whole. It has no class preferences or class hatreds. It rejects none, because were it to exclude any it would be less than itself. Religion is for the dispossessed as much as for the possessed. The 'dispossessed' need one kind of ministration from it, and those who are 'possessed' of the things of the world, another kind. Both need salvation, but from two different kinds of bondage—the bondage of indigence and the bondage of affluence. Both need the healing touch of religion but in different ways. While the saint is religion's darling, the sinner is its special responsibility. Religion cannot reject any, for everyone is included in the all,

¹The word 'revolution' is used here in the sense of fundamental reconstruction.

the whole. So how can there be rejection? Upon what will one stand to say: this I do not want? Is not this too verily That?

Exclusive gospels based on partial understandings of history and designed to secure vindictive and sectional sovereignty over so-called wrongdoers are problematical deviations from the real millennial revolution for which mighty men worked in history. Revolutions have been fought and are being fought today taking man in his periphery, so to say, not in his essence, depth and height. Such revolutions always call for other revolutions to correct the inevitable initial mistakes. Thus rolls on the awesome fire-ball of revolutions down the vistas of history, burning and bursting, as it were, smothering and grinding fine the very people whom these revolutions are expected to benefit.

But essential religion goes forth in history with the most daring and challenging gospel of holding man at his highest, in his essence, and works to release those forces inside and outside him, which will conduce to the manifestation of the highest in him for the attainment of self-fulfilment. No one can stay this millennial revolution.

Every revolution which refuses to respect the essence of man, the imponderable in him, must fail because it does not face the real in its totality. In another sense nothing fails, for even the failure emphasizes the necessity for the millennial revolution of religion. But this revolution needs to be constantly carried on and the integrity of the motives inspiring it zealously guarded. This world corrupts everything, and it corrupts the finest thing in a most thoroughgoing manner. It must be seen that religion does not become frozen in the moulds of conventional respectability or superstition, but stays a dynamic power of surging upward movement spreading everywhere, raising everybody from his present state to a higher state,

With religion the goal is 'to be free'. All freedom movements everywhere in the world are movements of religion, as long as these movements truly seek the emancipation of man and not the ego-centric hegemony of a sect, party or creed.

It would be an achievement if everyone living in the world could be provided with food. But how would it be if everyone had food minus freedom? Man would then be like a well-fed animal in chains. Therefore food and freedom must be worked for together. The gospel which teaches that we should have food first, also implies that food must be sought and gotten in freedom, for otherwise it is death already. An awakened man does not know how freedom is less important than food. Even food going with freedom will not be enough for man unless wisdom is also ensured. Fat and free animals are not necessarily wise.

The greatest historic need of the world is to see the whole life process of the entire mankind in perspective, to correlate every effort of the movement toward ultimate freedom, and to order society *in freedom*, accordingly. If man becomes more and more bound by senses and matter through advancement, then his civilization has failed as far as he is concerned. The situation then calls for an inner revolution for the redemption of man.

The confrontations and encounters that sweep through the world today between old and new, east and west, head and heart, between rationalism and spirituality, money-capitalism and labour-capitalism, can be turned to creative account only by means of understanding-action which provides for everyone's progressive physical, mental and spiritual well-being leading to self-fulfilment. That indeed is the definition of Dharma itself. This Dharma is supra-creedal and entirely human, though transcendental at the apex. It will discard any dogma or system which desecrates, "insecti-

fies' or otherwise devalues man and thus harms him. It believes in the augmentation of man, of every man, and not the augmentation of any theory, however 'revolutionary' or sacrosanct, at the cost of man.

Man is the theme, not any creed or other. Graduated and all-round welfare is the means and freedom is the goal. The All is the concern. None is to be excluded, neglected or slighted on any plea. Political, economic and moral wrongdoers are specially to be taken care of.

By our thorough going assiduous wrong efforts we have peopled this fair earth with 'others'; hence we are afraid. Out of invisible fears have arisen many visible and concrete forms, institutions of ideas and of brick, steel and stone. Out of fear we have transformed the good earth into a bitter battle field. Out of fear we have poisoned our own minds and the body politic. And when fear was joined by hatred our imprisonment in the cells of our making was complete. Today a vast number of humans live in puny cells of pugnacious ideas, each trying to exclude the other and in the process excluding sanity, well-being and happiness also.

How can we come out of this imprisonment into the amplitude of life? Religion brings the answer:

God is, therefore be not afraid.² It is all He, who is going about. All that is, is He. And That you are. If you cannot forget your little self, remember that what you really face in the world is always your own greater self. There is no alien here,

For man, there is no escape from this great message. The more I fight my brother man, the more I wound my own body. If I stab the world in the back, my own chest bleeds.

The homogeneity and solidarity of mankind is such a powerful and fundamental

fact that no real advance in any direction is possible except on the basis of the acceptance of this fact. It is only when I accept the fact of my greater self with heartfelt loyalty that my world is on the way to being transformed. Short of this, we are groping for a light that smiles and shines only on our bandaged eyes.

II

Religion in every age has to express itself through obtaining historical processes. It has to grapple with forces in operation and transform them in the ways of its vision and wisdom, or get deformed by them. Factually, religion, that is truth, always triumphs.

One of the dynamic forces in operation today is secularization as a historical process. It is a force of many strands forged by science, technology, materialistic positivism, pragmatic philosophies, and the empirical temper of the age. Secularization has won over many a human institution and endeavour. Even religion has not stayed uninfluenced by it.

The process of secularization has enfranchised man from the deep-going bondages of many ideas and institutions and set him free to do and undo. However, thus freed man has not discriminated much before undoing some helpful things also. One of the most noteworthy victims of secularization has been what goes by the name 'tradition', which is a strange amalgam of age old wisdom and ancient superstition. Secularization has tended to destroy ancient superstition—not without giving some new ones in their place—and along with that some ancient wisdom also.

Though secularism as an ideology is advertised as having many rare virtues like catholicity, tolerance etc., basically it has no deep-going spiritual commitment. It is based on the immature self-sufficiency of man and remains non-committal with regard to higher values. No doubt secular-

² Cf: '.... It is I; be not afraid.' St. John 6.20.

ism as a frozen ideology is to be differentiated from secularization as a historical process, but basically both are dominated by identical modes of thought and identical mores. Secularism is generally associated with some form of materialism, and this normally goes along with the exaltation of sense values. If man is more than a bundle of sensations how can sense values be adequate for him? And yet the theory of the self-sufficiency of man, when it ignores his higher dimensions, implies that.

Secularization is as much a product of science and technology as of the failure of religion to energize man inwardly. It is through the process of interiorization that man comes to grips with what is more than crass matter in himself. When he is severed from the inner springs of his being, the inevitable result is exteriorization. The external world and his own psycho-physical organism become the only realities that exist for him then; and he makes the most of these categories of the real in the light of his understanding, which is itself a product of this exteriorization.

By going about extensively in space we do not become independent of space but remain its prisoners. Secularization may add dynamism to man's movement in the world, but this cannot end his imprisonment in the world. Secularism as a closed ideology, and secularization as an open historical process—both serve man in many vital regards, but in the process tend to hinder the actualization of his supramaterial inner essence.

In point of fact there is no getting away from the process of secularization, because it is a world phenomenon. Being in the world, man is involved in that phenomenon. But he has the power to be externally involved in one process, yet at the same time to set going a different process within himself—like being in slavery, yet working for independence. This is a perfectly practicable pro-

position. A spiritual master like Sri Krishna has taught this in the *Gītā*. This process which may be called sanctification as distinguished from secularization brings God, as it were, into the life-process through whatever is thought or done or not done. Through this process, not only is the man transformed, divinized, but also his world. The world, his prison, becomes a temple, an expression of the inexpressible. No distinction then remains between the many and the one. There is no one apart from the many; there are no many apart from the one. So the true work can start and end with either. What is needed, however, is open-mindedness. In the language of Sister Nivedita:

'If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.'³

The end-point of secularization, which is a vigorous process of ingrowing egocentricity at all levels of life, is insanity. Sanctification of life is the final answer to numberless questions which equally torment the humanists, upheavalists, psychologists and sociologists of today.

The sanctification of life is a process of inclusion and enrichment, of growth and transcendence. It answers life's problems within and without in a manner in which nothing else does. If everybody is your concern then there is no answer to problems until God is brought into everything, and discovered everywhere. If factories are not transformed into places where the higher possibilities of man are worked out, temples

³ Vide: Swami Vivekananda: *Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Vol. I, 1965, p. xv.

or churches will become like factories, mere economic conveniences. you are and everybody also is. No greater message than this has ever come to man.

Existence is sacred, for it is one. That In this is salvation of all, self-fulfilment of one is He, the universal Spirit. And That all.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Kasi efficiency and neatness. ...
2.1.1913

Dear Sri—,

Just received your letter dated the 29th December. Holy Mother's birthday was celebrated here with great solemnity on the 30th December last. Everyone said that never before was so much joy experienced in this Ashrama. ... Truly speaking on that day it was felt as if waves of joy were flowing on here. Everything in regard to the celebrations was performed with great

This time in your letter you did not ask any question. You have rightly said: so long as one does not have samādhi, one's doubts are not fully set at rest. Without direct realization one cannot be truly free of doubt. Through discrimination, however, many spiritual experiences are attained. Study of scriptures with reverential faith is of great help, not to speak of holy company.

With my best wishes and love,

Sri Turiyananda

Kasi efforts there happens the dawning of knowl-
10.1.1913 edge or blossoming of devotion. Why should this not be happening right now—is the unthinking demand of all.

Dear Sri—,

... I am finding that men are generally very selfish. They want others to do things for them—no one is ready to put forth efforts for himself. Especially in regard to spiritual life all want to attain perfection right now without labouring for it. Consequently, they hardly ever take note of the trail of evil deeds done in the past which being like veils do not allow the true nature of the self to be realized. When these veils are removed with unremitting assiduous

However, this I am writing to you clearly: please do not bother me any more with such letters. May the Lord do you good. Know this for certain that what is to be said and done for you I have done to the best of my ability. Be sure I am telling you the truth, and that nothing is being said in annoyance.

With my best wishes,

Your well-wisher
Sri Turiyananda

A LETTER OF MISS J. MACLEOD TO SWAMI SARADANANDA

August 15th, 1920
Halls Croft
Stratford-On-Avon

Dearest II ;

First from dear Mrs. Sevier, other from Boshi after he returned from the cremation at the Math that have I heard of the Holy Mother's death on July 21st! And so that brave quiet strong soul has gone out, having left to modern Hindu womanhood the ideal of the great place that woman is to take in the next 3000 years! To me her

life is one of intense encouragement—gathering all of us under her sheltering and understanding life, creating new precedents, as new needs arise, self-reliant—direct—wise! Oh, what an example each of us can make of Her! She created new precedents—so must we—not Hers—but our own! In no other way can the world's problems be solved.

Yours in sincerity and affection

J. MACLEOD.

THE IDEAL OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Whether any particular religion is fit to assume the role of universal religion will be determined by first ascertaining the very concept of universality with respect to religions. The achievement of universal religion does not depend upon any particular religion assuming that status by eliminating or subordinating all other religions; this method has been tried, even through resort to wars and crusades, but without achieving the results aimed at, and even producing the contrary result of increasing popular revulsion against religion itself. It will be my endeavour to show that universality in religion will be achieved by every religion striving to express its universal, ever-present dimension centred in its essential core of spiritual insights, and soft-peddalling its non-essential peripheral aspects.

The subject of universal religion cannot be separated from the more basic subject of peoples' attitude toward religion itself; it

is an undeniable fact that during the last few decades we have been witnessing a steady erosion of mankind's faith in religion, more particularly in traditional organized religion. This has become accentuated during the last few years. In the West we can trace the beginnings of this decline of faith from the sixteenth century onwards; it became intensified in the seventeenth century as a reaction to the thirty years' war between Catholics and Protestants in Germany, when two denominations of one and the same world religion fought fiercely, decimating the population, without reaching any conclusion as to which particular specification of a kingdom of Heaven was the true one. The Western man's reaction to this experience was, in effect, to say 'hell to both denominations', silently first, and vociferously as the centuries rolled on. The erstwhile desire to strive for and establish a kingdom of Heaven was changed

into the more promising desire to establish a kingdom of man on earth. Faith in man began to replace faith in God; humanism began to replace religion.

This revolutionary change became intensified by the recurring conflicts of re-treating religion with advancing science in the next three centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century the triumph of modern science was complete, as was also the defeat of religion, its opponent. Reason and free critical inquiry won against passionately held dogmas and beliefs. Since that time, conviction as to truth and validity of religion and God became difficult to come by, so far as thinking people were concerned, though many of them continued to belong to a religion or a denomination by habit. Humanism, including scientific humanism, became the faith by which the thinking millions lived. But even this new faith, namely, humanism, received a severe jolt in the Second World War, which witnessed unprecedented cruelties on a vast scale practised by man on his fellowmen. The idol set up by humanism for worship was found to be as unsatisfactory as the one which this idol had earlier displaced. It was realized that man could no more be the focus of a passionate faith, man as one found in oneself and in others. When faith in man was blasted, how could humanism survive? Modern man still swears by humanism, more by habit, as in the case with religion earlier, and also for want of a better alternative. But how can it have dynamism when man is self-centred, does not trust man, and is largely incapable of loving and inspiring love? Today, therefore, we see man without a focus of faith in either God above or man around. This insufferable vacuum is being filled up by various *ad hoc* substitutes mostly of a harmful kind.

This is the tragedy of the human situation today. The horizon of his existence

has contracted for want of ideals and visions. He finds himself in a situation in which his past is irrecoverable, his present uncertain, and his future an interrogation. It is in this context that we have to discuss the place of religion in human life.

Already many thinkers, including scientists, are taking a second look at religion; they have the feeling that, in throwing away religion, they have thrown away something of vital value to man and his fulfilment. They have the feeling that they have thrown away, as it were, the child with the bath water. And the search is now on for the essential core of religion, for the vital truths which nourish the moral and the spiritual man; the search is on for that experience which confers meaning on all experiences and makes for life's fulfilment.

Modern world conditions and modern experiences are forcing young minds to turn the searchlight of reason on their religion. Much in religion as traditionally received cannot survive such scrutiny. This is the situation today in every religion, whether it is Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Judaism, or Zoroastrianism.

The experience of Hinduism in this regard holds a lesson to all her sister religions. For the past over a hundred years, the searchlight has been thrown on the Hindu religion not only by outsiders, friendly and hostile, but also by the Hindus themselves, by some of the finest minds in Hinduism. The net result of this searching scrutiny is the general acceptance of the need to winnow the chaff from the grain in the hoary Hindu tradition. The idea that whatever is traditional has to be accepted wholesale has completely vanished from the Hindu religion.

Christianity had the good fortune to be subjected to this self-searching earlier than any religion, by virtue of modern scientific thought having its origin and development

in Christian countries. But it was unfortunate that Christian religion itself did not initially gain from this scrutiny. This was, firstly, because the scrutiny was conducted not by committed Christians but by Christian 'drop-outs' of the modern scientific thought-group, and, secondly, because Christianity's worldly ambitions and programs, which had dominated her spiritual message and function for centuries, continued to be successful until the eclipse of western imperialism and colonialism at the end of the second world war. With that un-Christian world-function becoming out-of-date, after the war, sensitive Christians themselves became critics of their faith with a view to discovering the true face of their religion and its mission in the emerging post-war world. Starting as a gentle questioning, it has become a barrage in hardly two decades, throwing up and down many a passionately held dogma and belief. This is the arresting phenomenon of the developing conflict between its traditionalists and modernists.

From the Hindu point of view, this is a salutary experience for Christianity or for any other religion; if properly guided, out of the fire of crisis, a healthier and purer Christianity will emerge as a positive spiritual force. Such self-searching is going on in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism also, though with less force. But these also can be expected to experience its full force before long. Earlier or later, no religious tradition today can escape the prying and, sometimes, irreverent searching by its own youthful adherents, even if it escapes this treatment from outsiders.

The truth is that every religious tradition contains much that is non-essential and irrelevant to man in the modern age. Many of them still contain elements that nourished and sustained it in its tribal stage of evolution, or that nourished its earlier political

and social purposes which do not constitute contemporary realities.

A religious tradition, as developed in any of the higher religions of the world, discloses two aspects of itself: firstly, a pathway to God, the means to the deepening and expansion of the spiritual consciousness of the individual man; secondly, the fixing of a social *milieu* in which the individual man is to conduct life and achieve his destiny. Of the two, the second constitutes a variable element, being different from religion to religion, even varying within one and the same religion in the historic process, and forms the most irrelevant element in the context of the revolutionary social *milieu* of the modern age. But the first constitutes the invariable core element in every religion, unaffected, in its essential features, even by the revolutionary exigencies of history. Hinduism, among all religious traditions, has recognized the truth and significance of this two-fold classification. It refers to the invariable, timeless, and, therefore, universal elements of a tradition as the *Śruti*, and the variable, time-conditioned elements as the *Smṛti*. It also upholds the pre-eminence of the first over the second and the need to recast the second in response to the exigencies of historical changes. If this is not done, these *Smṛti* constituents will choke the religious tradition concerned, resulting either in making it obsolete and irrelevant, or in the twisting of the personalities of its followers by the Procrustean bed which it provides for them. These *Smṛti* elements are like the bark of a tree which protects the tree and grows along with it. If, however, it fails to grow with the tree, it chokes the tree to death; but a living tree will refuse to be choked to death; it will shed the dead bark and grow a new living one in its place. In the pithy words of Sri Ramakrishna on this subject, with respect to the Hindu tradition: 'The Moghul coins

have no *currency* under the East India Company's rule.'

It is this second element of the religious traditions that is proving a stumbling block to all thinking men and women in the modern age in their efforts to accept and live by religion. It is also the only factor that militates against the satisfaction of the deeply felt modern urge in every religion for inter-denominational and inter-religious unity. The universal dimensions of every religion, on the other hand, are moving it in the healthy direction of inter-religious understanding and co-operation in response to contemporary conditions of human life and thought.

Religions in the past tried to achieve universality by socio-political expansion, often by aggressive wars. They also resorted to the more insidious ideological war of misrepresentation of other religions. Today the first has become irrelevant and the second foolish. It is not easy or safe to continue to befool the world in an age when every educated adherent of a religion has access to all types of books on the world's religions, including critical, often sharp, ones on one's own. Also, many nations today are multi-religious, as also multi-racial and multi-lingual.

Society at the tribal stage is religiously and politically monolithic. When tribal societies evolved into the nation-states, the tribal mind did not side by side evolve into the nation-mind, but remained fragmented, particularly at the religious level. This explains the religious bigotry and intolerance practised by the nation-states and their persecution of religious minorities. These persecutions and the intolerant attitudes behind them ended in the very recent centuries not because of a genuine growth of the tribal religious mind into the national or the universal dimension, but because of the sheer evaporation of religious faith itself. As in the political field, so in the religious realm, there

cannot be the universal in expression if there is not the universal in intention. An international political order can be generated and sustained only by international minds, by men and women imbued with a mankind-awareness. Similarly, universal religion is the product of men and women reaching out to the universal in religion. Every religion has produced a few such even in the unpropitious times of the past, proving thereby its universal dimension behind the temporal and the parochial. Modern world conditions are highly propitious for the widest diffusion of this blessing from the heart of every religion. This demands that all religions stress their essential spiritual role as pathways to God, as means to the deepening and expansion of the spiritual consciousness of their adherents, and soft-pedal their erstwhile *Smṛti* role as socio-political disciplines, which are obviously irrelevant in the modern political context. It is thus only that the central spiritual values of religion will help in the forging of new *Smṛtis* relevant to the modern age. This alone will help to bring religions closer and closer to each other and to the millions of the alienated but spiritually hungry among modern humanity.

This brings us to the subject of the spiritual crisis of the modern age. Modern man abandoned religion and followed modern science in the hope of finding life's fulfilment. Modern technology has undoubtedly brought him comfort and pleasure, but, as to fulfilment, it has been receding from his horizon all the time. If the sensate man is all that is of man, modern sensate civilization should have conferred on him the highest happiness and fulfilment; modern social security measures should have achieved for him the maximum of security and welfare. But in spite of all the comforts and sensate satisfactions provided by modern technology and the modern state, modern man is unhappy, tense, and unful-

filled, and a prey to various ailments, whose origins lie not outside but deep within himself. What Schopenhauer said a hundred years ago applies fully to modern man (*The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 404):

'All men who are secure from want and care, now that, at last, they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'

All modern welfare state philosophies, based as they are on the exclusive concept of man as sense-bound and as a seeker of sensate satisfactions, are faced with this challenge of modern man's inner impoverishment in the context of external enrichment, inner insecurity in the context of external social security, and inner boredom in the context of an exciting external social environment. This challenge, which has slowly developed into a sharp critique of all modern social security philosophies voiced by several modern thinkers, including Bertrand Russell, their erstwhile advocate, has not found a better formulation and a more convincing answer than in the following testament of Swami Vivekananda, voicing the spiritual message of religion as understood in the Indian tradition (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, p. 53):

'The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's nature changes, these physical needs will always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all the misery we have. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist until man's character changes.'

Many modern scientists agree that science can only create *conditions* for man's happiness, but *cannot ensure* that he *is* happy. It can build a fine house for him, equip it with

all modern gadgets, and provide instant communication with the rest of the world or even with the neighbouring planets. But it cannot ensure that he will live in that house peaceful, happy, and fulfilled. 'Science can denature plutonium, but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man', says Einstein. This is the contribution of another discipline which India calls the science of religion, the science of the inner nature of man, the science of man in depth, the science of God imbedded in the very heart of experience. Discussing the aim of evolution at the human stage as 'greater fulfilment', Julian Huxley says (*Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. I, p. 20):

'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

And pleading for a scientific study of the scope of this concept of 'fulfilment', Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, p. 21):

'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psycho-social evolution that lies ahead.'

It is this 'science of human possibilities' that the Indian tradition upholds as religion and that was elaborated and developed by the sages of the Upaniṣads in their Vedānta. The mystery of man is a greater mystery than the mystery of the external universe, and overshadows it. The Upaniṣads register the stirrings of this mystery in the minds of the sages of ancient India and the insights gained by them through their confrontation with it, with their science of human possibilities. They discovered the truth that infinite powers are lodged behind the finite human personality; manifestation of a small part of these powers

has made man achieve science and technology, culture and civilization; but the highest power that he is heir to, is the power of spirituality, which will take him above the gravitational pulls of his sensate nature and the sensory world around him, make him moral and ethical in a spontaneous way without external inducements and restraints, and give him an experience of his infinite divine dimension.

This is the spiritual message of every religion; it is also the universal dimension of every religion. It is a message of spiritual growth, development, and realization. Religion does not consist in dogmas and creeds, temples and churches, rituals and ceremonies; it is being and becoming, it is realization. 'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man', says Swami Vivekananda. Formal and conventional religion centred only in creeds and dogmas, churches and rituals, have lost all relevance in the modern age which offers more exciting external experiences than these. They have, however, a value if subordinated to the central core of religion, namely, the spiritual growth of man. Then they become useful aids to that growth. But what is essential is this spiritual growth of man, at every step of which he experiences a deepening of his spiritual consciousness, an expansion of his sympathy, and an elevating sense of his true freedom. Here is finite and trivial man growing into his infinite dimension which, Vedānta affirms, is his true nature. This is the meaning of the teaching of religion that man is a child of God; he is born heir to the infinite and the immortal. Religion alone makes him aware of this birth-right of his and puts him on the road to its realization. This is the only means of enriching him in a fundamental way. With this enrichment gained, other external enrichments become significant; without this, they become burdensome, often harmful. First God, then the world, says Sri Rama-

krishna and adds that, all the wealth and power and pleasure of the world are so many zeros; they have no value until the figure one is placed before them. That One is God. Then every additional zero adds to the value of the figure.

Thus the universal dimension of every religion constitutes its contribution to the 'science of human possibilities', to the science and art of the spiritual growth of man apart from the two more obvious growths of his, namely physical and intellectual. A baby weighs about seven pounds at birth; and we ensure his physical growth and development by appropriate food and nourishment until he or she becomes fit and strong weighing 150 or 200 pounds. Similarly, the baby grows in a second dimension namely, the mental, as it gains increasing knowledge, with the help of others, first, and by its own efforts, later. Physical growth is stimulated by physical food, behind which is the fact of physical hunger. Mental growth is stimulated by mental food, behind which is the fact of intellectual hunger. Each is a distinct kind of growth conditioned by a distinct type of hunger and its corresponding type of food. Just as intellectual food cannot satisfy physical hunger and ensure physical growth, similarly physical food has no meaning when the hunger that is experienced and the growth that is desired is of the mental kind.

Do these two types of growth constitute the entire gamut of human growth? Yes, says modern civilization; no, says religion; no, says the philosophy of Vedānta. These latter proclaim the truth of the growth of man also in a third dimension, namely, the spiritual. And that is the supremely specific dimension of human growth, says Vedānta. This is echoed by some of the scientists of this century also. Sir Julian Huxley speaks of evolution at the human stage rising from the biological or organic

level to the psycho-social level. Psycho-social evolution means the growth of the human psyche from its thralldom to the physical organism, as in the case of all sub-human species, to freedom to identify itself with millions of other psyches in society through the growth of the moral sense and expansion of ethical awareness. This signifies the growth of man in a new dimension over and above his physical and mental dimension. This is the spiritual dimension of man. Vedānta proclaims that man's moral sense, ethical awareness, and artistic creativity are the by-products of his growth in the spiritual dimension. This is the most vital field of human growth and development in the absence of which all growth in the two other fields will stultify themselves and leave man more and more unfulfilled, more and more impoverished within, in spite of all his wealth and power outside.

This is the crisis of modern man; it is essentially a spiritual crisis; his immense life-energy is dammed up at the finite and trivial sensate level at the behest of a shallow materialistic philosophy, which astrophysicist R. A. Millikan characterizes as 'the height of unintelligence'. He is essentially self-centred, without the capacity to

dig his affections in others' hearts. His spiritual hunger is arrested and thwarted, and it seeks satisfactions in hundreds of devious and harmful ways. His physical stamina is immense and his intellectual sweep is vast; but morally he is a pigmy; and his vast knowledge and vaster powers have become his enemy and not his friend. 'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow,' says Bertrand Russell.

Knowledge matures into wisdom only when it rises from the sensate to the spiritual level, when it becomes suffused with the awareness of the eternal and pure spiritual dimension of the human personality.

This spiritual knowledge is the one source of strength for man—*Ātmanā vindate vīryam*—say the *Upaniṣads*. All religions have this strength of spirituality as their common universal dimension; and they can do no higher service to man in the modern age than by imparting to him this strength through which he may experience true life fulfilment and, purified by which, all his strength and achievements in other fields may also be made constructive and creative.

The wise man is one who understands that the essence of Brahman and of Atman is Pure Consciousness, and who realizes their absolute identity. The identity of Brahman and Atman is affirmed in hundreds of sacred texts

Caste, creed, family and lineage do not exist in Brahman. Brahman has neither name nor form, transcends merit and demerit, is beyond time, space and the objects of sense-experience. Such is Brahman, and "thou art That." Meditate upon this truth within your consciousness.



The Good Christian

Death on the battlefield, death during revolutions or death for any mass-supported cause usually invests a person with a halo of greatness, whatever be his other virtues or failures.

But real greatness is an intrinsic quality revealing itself in life as well as in death. It needs no bolstering up by the presence of demonstrating admirers. It is but the natural result of the innate nobility and worth in a man. When a man is true to himself, when he cannot help being his true and good self, irrespective of any other consequences, then is greatness manifested spontaneously. Even when subjected to poignant persecution and dreadful death, such a one diffuses the sweet fragrance of nobility through humble heroism.

Thomas Bilney of England bore witness to this through his life and death. A sincere Christian of the sixteenth century, he got into trouble with the Church which declared him guilty of heresy. He recanted, but could not help 'relapsing'. And the Church would show no mercy to a 'relapsed heretic'. Bilney was condemned by the Bishop of Norwich to be burnt at the stake and was handed over to the 'secular arm' for carrying out the sentence.

Clad in a layman's gown, as he was going forth in the streets to the place of execution,

he was accompanied by Dr. Warner, a parson of Winterton, chosen by him as his companion for spiritual comfort, and a few other friends. On the way he had alms distributed generously through one of the friends. At the time of his degradation his hair had been mangled and he was slight of physical body, but this in no way affected his countenance itself which was good and upright.

He drew near to the prepared stake. Signing the executors to delay slightly the building up of the fire, he desired to speak some words to the people gathered there.

'Good people! I have come here to die. Death is but natural to one who has been born a mortal. But I want you to know that I depart from this present life a good Christian man. Please permit me to reaffirm my creed which I hold on to with a firm faith.'

And that he did in a most reverential mood and prayerful posture. Coming to the word 'crucified' he humbly bowed down and made great reverence.

Resuming, he declared, 'Friends! I must confess to have offended the Church, in preaching once against its prohibition. But I could not help it. I was in a humble place, a parish where the people had no sermon for a long time. When the parson

as well as the people of the parish most eagerly entreated me to preach, I could not bring myself to refuse. It was thus that I came to disobey the Church's prohibition. But I am at peace in my heart, convinced that I did the right thing so far as I was concerned. I have no doubt the Lord knows my heart and His mercy would be upon me.'

No words of recantation! Neither any charge against any one as being responsible for his trial and death!

Then he put off the gown and went to the stake. Kneeling there he offered his private prayer. So quiet, serene and kindly was he all through that death seemed to hold no terror at all for him.

Prayer over, he turned to the officers and asked them if they were ready. When they replied in the affirmative, Bilney took off his outer garments. Just then Dr. Warner came to bid him farewell; but all that he could do was to weep and weep and so could speak few words. Bilney, on the other hand, smiled in a most gentle way and spoke to him a few words of thanks. He ended his parting message to his friend saying, 'O Master Doctor! Take care of your "flock" and feed them well so that "when the Lord comes He may find you so doing". Farewell—and pray for me.'

Warner departed without any answer, sobbing and weeping.

Meanwhile some priests and monks, who had been present at the time of his trial and degradation, became concerned about themselves—about their physical maintenance—and approaching him made an appeal: 'O Master Bilney! The people may believe that *we* have been the cause of your death and it is likely that they will withdraw their charitable alms to us unless you forbid them to do so. So please declare your charity to us, absolving us of any responsibility in this.'

Bilney's response was prompt, unhesitant. In a loud voice he spoke to the people, 'My good people! I pray to you; never ill-treat these men, on my account, as if they were responsible for my death. They are not.'

After that the officer put reeds and faggots about his body and set fire to the reeds. It was as though nature too was reluctant to participate in the act. Strong winds blew and it took some time for the fire to become fully ablaze. But Bilney was ready and firm in his faith, all the while exclaiming 'Jesus' and 'Faith'.

That was how the good man was martyred. His body lay smouldering in the fire; but his soul rose triumphant, the soul of a true saint, upright, good and charitable to the last.

EXPLORER

Adapted from: E. E. Kellett: *A Pageant of History*.

REALITY OF THE PAST

DR. G. SRINIVASAN

The basic 'truth' of man's existence in the world is his temporality. He always discovers himself in a state of 'movement' from the past to the future through the present. Since man is basically a temporal being, any truth with which he is concerned in the world

must have a temporal setting. The truth he perceives is necessarily in time and not outside it. In fact, the very distinction between truth and error becomes possible because of time; anything which is contradicted by a later experience in time is regarded as an

error while anything which is not so contradicted is believed to be true. This is a test of truth which is to be invariably recognized in any comprehensive theory of knowledge.

However, the significance of the statement that all empirical truth is *temporal* does not limit itself to the epistemological distinction of truth and error. It has a wider range of application which is ontological. For error is as much an event of experience as the later contradiction of it and hence both epistemological error and truth are equally ontologically 'real' as events of experience. Every event that occurs in human life occurs in a temporal situation and is in this sense a temporal-real. Human life is a series of such events or acts which happen in the present but soon recede into the past. Man is hence constantly in a state of 'becoming' and no experience of his is permanent but soon vanishes from the present and gives place to some other experience. Each experience is actual and 'real' as long as it lasts but is soon turned into a past experience.

This is a perpetual phenomenon taking place in human existence and hence the question would legitimately arise whether the past experience of a man is *still* 'real' for him, and if so, in what sense? In a sense, it is most 'real' for him, since what has happened has become a part and parcel of his personal history and hence can never be obliterated. But, for the same reason, it may be regarded as no longer 'real' since it is no longer actually present. Hence, if the past experience is to remain 'real', it must be somehow brought back into the present. One way of bringing it into the present is by repetition. But repetition may not always be possible, and even in cases where it is possible, a repeated experience can only be *similar* to the past experience but not the same as the past one. In fact, our life is full of such *similar* experiences, but each

experience has its own temporal fixation and is hence distinct from others.

Another way of reproducing a past experience is by means of memory. But what is thus reproduced in memory is not the event as such but only an image of it. Hence, here again the past experience is no longer 'real' but has vanished into the past.

Still another way in which the past experience can be drawn into the present is by allowing it to bear upon the present. This may not be done by the individual always deliberately, but all the same this is a phenomenon which pertains to the very structure of man's existence and is hence true of all his experiences. All his experiences form a 'continuity' and no experience of his is really 'discrete'; the continuity of experiences is such that in it each experience is 'carried over' to the subsequent one so as to 'determine' it. The past is thus 'extended over' the present and is 'shaping' it; the past which has 'entered' the present is no longer actually present but is present functionally or efficiently; the truth which it *now* possesses is not that of the present actuality but of the *efficient* past.

Since a man's present is thus basically a continuity of his past, it is possible for him to select a few of his past experiences and re-live them in the present. Re-living the past, however, means much more than mechanically reproducing it in memory; it means the cultivation of an 'awareness' of the past which keeps him 'resourceful' in meeting the challenge of the present. The past which thus prepares him 'to take hold' of the present comes to be related to the present deliberately and in such cases, the continuity of the past with the present is more 'consciously felt' by him than in those when he *chooses* to be forgetful of the past in his reaction to the present.

But whatever be the influence of the past on the present, a past event as such can never come back into the present since that

will mean a reversal of the temporal order of events. Any event has its own temporal limitation beyond which it ceases to be; it recedes into the past once it occurs and is hence neither reproducible in its *originality* nor is destructible for the same reason. These then are the two characteristics of the reality of a past experience: it has become solidified into the 'past' and hence can no longer be 'present' for the individual; and for the same reason, it remains factually indestructible, whatever be the variation in significance that is put on it by the individual from the standpoint of his present.

This brings us to a crucial question regarding the right attitude to be taken by a man to his past experiences. The answer to this question seems obvious; it is to remember and re-live only such experiences of the past as would give the individual a better hold over the present and to discard or ignore the contrary ones which would enfeeble his reaction to the present. This selective approach has no doubt a practical utility; but practical utility need not always be the criterion of selection. For, human experiences are varied and there may be such facts of experience as would be of little significance for the present acts of the individual, but as would be in themselves precious and hence are to be preserved in the living memory of the individual.

Death of persons whom we hold dear to ourselves provides the best example of such facts. For, this is a phenomenon which poses the question whether the dead person is to be forgotten (because the memory might affect the present practical efficiency of the individual to the worse) or to be remembered despite the possible practical inconvenience. This is not, in fact, a question which relates to the realm of practical utility. For in raising this question and seeking an answer to it, we have entered the realm of human sentiments. Hence the basic question would now hinge upon the

philosophical validity of such sentiments.

One alternative is to regard any sentiment for the dead person as philosophically invalid. This is a view based on the assumption that the dead person has permanently 'disappeared' into the past, and since there are no chances of his reappearance in the present, any sentiment for him is 'irrational' and pointless. 'Out of sight is out of mind' is the rational rule to be practised according to this materialist view and this has its own ontological and ethical implications. For, to say that the dead *present* no-longer-being-in-the-world beyond the possibility of reappearance but affects his *past reality* as well, since it would reduce all my past personal relations with him to 'nothing', as good as not-being-there-at-all. My relations of trust and love with him would thus become 'insignificant', if his death is said to 'wipe out' his past reality. My own present life becomes impoverished to that extent since all my commitments would come to be limited to the living. In fact, even *these* commitments come to be 'undermined' by the inevitability of my own death and *thus are 'already' reduced to 'nothing' or insignificance, even while they still exist.* This is the consequence which follows from our limiting the 'real' to the present actuality and thereby regarding the dead person as no-longer-real.

There is perhaps no rational way of disproving this view, but the truth of the fact remains that human mind finds it hard to reconcile itself with it because of its conative and emotive longings to the contrary. Hence the alternative view which extends the definition of the 'real' to the past and regards it as real as the present, is proposed. This is a view based on human life as a whole which necessarily includes human sentiments. Sentiments are no doubt non-logical and subjective but still they have their own philosophical and ethical justification. For sentiments are as constitutive of human

existence as human thoughts, and moreover, it is the sentiments which give human life a richness and profundity, stability and purpose without which life would be barren. This is, in fact, the philosophical justification for man's fostering the sentiments of love and trust not merely in relation to those who are still alive but also in relation to those who are no more. Man's commitment is to the living and the dead alike and the death of the other person makes no difference to his prior commitment to him. In living up to his commitment to the dead

person, he not only grants a personal reality to the dead person, but acquires it for himself since otherwise his own personal reality becomes poorer to that extent.

Thus we find in the human relations of love and trust, the distinction of the past and the present seems to make no difference to our view of the 'real', and the principle, once real always real, becomes most conspicuous in this realm of personal relations. Human relations are acts *in time*, but they enjoy a 'permanence' as long as a man's heart can hold them within itself.

CONTRIBUTION OF JUDAISM TO RELIGIOUS HARMONY

RABBI ASHER BLOCK

There are essentially four ways in which one may judge the attitude of any particular religion toward other faiths.

One: by what it says specifically on this subject.

Two: by what it teaches regarding the essence of its doctrine, which can then be compared with the essence of other religions and of all religion.

Three: by the manner in which it has historically acted toward other faiths when it came into contact with them.

Four: by the lives of its true representatives—namely, its prophets and its saints—as they are related to the pattern of spirituality as a whole.

One may note that the first two pertain to theory and preachment, and therefore have only limited value. The second two pertain to actual behaviour, and therefore are a much better barometer of interfaith relations.

First, what does Judaism specifically and authentically say on the matter of interfaith

and universal relations? In the Book of Leviticus it says: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; I am the Lord.' In the Book of Isaiah we find: 'If any foreigners should wish to serve the Lord... their offerings shall be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.' The Prophet Micah preached: 'Let every people walk, each one, in the name of its God, even as we walk in the name of the Lord our God.' The Prophet Malachi declared in God's name: 'From the rising of the sun unto its going down, My name is great among the nations; in every place offerings are presented to My name, pure gifts.' And then the prophet significantly adds, 'Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal faithlessly, a man against his brother?'

In later Rabbinic writings, we find expressions such as these: 'The righteous ones, from among all nations, have a share in the world to come.' 'The duties of

justice, truthfulness, peacefulness and charity, are to be fulfilled toward non-Jew as well as Jew.' 'Let heaven and earth be witness, that whether one be Jew or non-Jew, man or woman, free man or slave—according to their deeds does the Divine Spirit rest upon them.'

Now though all these teachings are from authoritative sources, some may feel that they are more in the nature of 'window dressing', and are not quite typical of the tradition. Therefore, we move on to the second question, namely: What, traditionally, is considered the essence of Judaism, and how does this relate to the essence of other religions and of religion as a whole?

Among the adherents of all major religious groups, there is a level of thought and practice that—in the phrase of Aldous Huxley—might be called 'the highest common factor' of that religion. In Christianity, for example, the Sermon on the Mount represents that 'highest common factor'. That does not mean that Christians, by and large, are earnestly desirous—or even capable—of living up to that Sermon. Nonetheless, most Christians will gladly subscribe to that as a token of their highest aspiration. In the case of Hinduism, or Vedanta, the Bhagavad-Gītā serves that purpose. For Buddhists, it might be the Eightfold Path; for Moslems, parts of the Koran; and other religions have similar sacred texts of their own.

In Judaism, the one text that preeminently serves this purpose is the Pirke Avot—commonly known as 'the Ethics of the Fathers', but which may be literally rendered as 'Chapters on Essentials'. Most often it is referred to simply as Avot ('Fathers', 'Head-Teachings' or 'Essentials'). What distinguishes this little book is the fact that it has been used traditionally both for study and for prayer. On the one hand, it is an integral part of the Mishnah and

Talmud, the academic heritage of Judaism; and on the other hand, it is prescribed devotional reading for synagogue and home. Probably more commentaries have been written on this treatise than upon any other single treatise (barring the Bible itself). The Jewish Encyclopedia describes it as 'the most popular of all rabbinic writings' and states that 'its ethical content exercised the most beneficial influence on the Jewish masses'.

Well, now, having established the centrality of Avot in the Jewish consciousness, let us turn to the teaching itself. The opening words are: 'Moses received Torah from Sinai (through God's Revelation), and he bequeathed it to Joshua, then Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue.' (The men of the Great Synagogue were a learned or judicial body that guided Jewish life from about 500 to 200 B.C. The teachings of Avot begin with this epoch and continue with various generations of teachers up until about the year 200 of the current era.)

Now what is that Torah with which Moses was inspired at Sinai and which then was passed on from teacher to disciple down the ages? Fundamentally, it is the revelation of God's existence: I am the Eternal thy God. And, with that sense of God's presence, comes also an awareness of the key spiritual and moral laws of life. Traditionally, the revelation of God to Moses embraced a Decalogue—Ten Divine Words, Principles or Commandments.

In the pages of Avot we find great stress upon the need for Torah-learning, but, along with it, the constant reminder that academic study alone is not sufficient. What is also needed to attain spirituality is Avodah, devotional practice. And even these two together are inadequate if they are not buttressed by ethical behaviour. These, then, are the vital elements in reli-

religious life—divine knowledge, spiritual practice, and moral conduct—which form the heart and substance of the Ten Commandments, and which are here, in Avot, given emphatic and repeated reinforcement.

A few representative selections may be cited. Simeon the Righteous was one of the last teachers of the Great Synagogue. He would often say, 'The world stands upon these three things: upon Torah-Wisdom, upon Avodah-Worship, and upon Gemilut-Hasadim, Deeds of Loving-kindness.' The Sage Hillel said, 'Aspire to be like the disciples of Aaron (in these three things): Love peace, strive for it diligently, and love mankind by bringing them near to Torah.' Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel summed up the essentials by declaring, 'The very endurance of the world depends upon these three things: upon Truth, upon Lawfulness (or Discipline), and upon Peace.'

Along with this threefold formulation, there are many notable passages which, individually, reinforce one or another of the 'Three Pillars of the World'. First, in the area of Torah—'Let your house be a meeting-place for wise men; cling to the dust of their feet, and drink in their words with thirst.' 'Let the reverence for your teacher be as the reverence for Heaven!' 'In acquiring Torah, take no credit to yourself since for this very purpose were you created!' 'God's Presence abides with anyone who is preoccupied with Torah, as it is written in Scripture, "In every place where I have My Name remembered, I come unto thee and bless thee."' 'He who acquires Torah, acquires Eternal Life.'

'However—and here is the second Pillar—it is not the studying which is the chief thing, but rather the doing.' 'He only whose practice exceeds his knowledge his knowledge endures... for then he is like a tree with strong roots, so that even all the winds of the world cannot blow it over.' 'Be not as slaves who serve their master for

the sake of material reward.' 'Let all your strivings be for God!' 'This world is like a foyer leading into the world to come. Prepare yourself in the foyer so that you may enter the inner chamber.' 'Be strong as a leopard, swift as an eagle, fleet as a deer, and brave as a lion, to do the will of your Heavenly Father!'

Lastly, the Pillar of good deeds—'Run to fulfil even the slightest good deed, and flee from any transgression, for one good deed leads to another, even as each misdeed brings on another. Every religious act is its own reward, and every wrongdoing is its own penalty.' 'Who is truly strong? He who controls his passions, as it is taught in Scripture, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than the conqueror of a city."' 'Hatred of mankind destroys a man's life.' 'Also envy, lust, and the harkening after glory drive a man out of the world.' 'Judge not your fellowman until you have put yourself in his place.' 'Let your house be open wide, and let the poor be as members of your own household.' 'Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth.' 'Let the honour of your fellowman be as dear to you as your own.'

Having summarized these basic, representative teachings of Judaism, we ask ourselves. Is this a partisan faith or a world outlook? The amazing thing about any of the outstanding Scriptures—be it the Gītā, the Sermon on the Mount, the Eightfold Path, the Ten Commandments, or this Avot—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 or 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. Of course, the conceptions of God, the methods

of prayer, and the applications of morality will inevitably differ according to the capacities and temperaments of the individuals involved, and according to varying social circumstances. But the essentials remain the same.

Swami Vivekananda expressed this truth in these words :

'No one form of religion will do for all. Each is a pearl on a string....Any system which seeks to destroy individuality is in the long run disastrous... The end and aim of all religions is to realize God. The greatest of all training is to worship God alone. If each man chose his own ideal and stuck to it, all religious controversy would vanish.'

Let us now move from the realm of ideology to the field of actual experience, in order to gauge what happens there. The third question we put to ourselves is, How did the Jewish community act toward other religious communities, when it had the power to act freely? The last phrase is important, because much of Jewish history took place under conditions of duress, conditions of minority status and oppression. Majority religions of various countries and eras tried to compel Jews to give up their faith in favour of the ruling bodies. In almost all instances, Jews resisted this process with all their strength and with their very lives. But what about the times when the Jewish people had some measure of social or political autonomy? There is one case on record during the days of the Second Commonwealth, when a Jewish ruler attempted to impose Judaism by force on a neighbouring community. This is considered a shameful page in our history. However, the fact that it is the only known instance in a span of 4,000 years is certainly significant. Jews not only refrained from forcible conversions, they even refrained from missionary activity. Here too, there are a few exceptions, but in the main, the assumption was : 'Let each walk in the

Name of the Lord his God, and we shall walk in the Name of the Lord our God.'

We now come to the last, and in many ways the most important, criterion of all—what may be called the mystical element in 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. It is one thing to say—intellectually to affirm—that the 'three Pillars of the World' are the knowledge of God, communion with Him, and the love of fellowman. It is quite another to realize these Pillars as tangible facts of spiritual life.

At the stage of realization the mystics of all religions speak exactly the same language—if, indeed, they speak at all. It is truly astounding how the seers and prophets of different traditions and cultures, of diverse times and places, come forth with essentially identical spiritual results! Moses and Isaiah, Jesus and St. Francis, Krishna and Buddha, Zoroaster and Mohammed, Hillel and Baal Shem Tov, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda—in each of their lives we find clearly reflected that Spiritual Reality we call God ; in each of their lives is that inner yearning and unfoldment we call prayer ; and in each of their lives is that outpouring of service and compassion we call love. If there is any distinction at all, it is rather in the emphasis that they, or their followers, may place on one or another of these manifestations or, what is more likely, in the misapprehensions and distortions that are attributed to them by later generations who do not themselves fulfil the conditions of spiritual life but only philosophize and argue about them.

In Jewish history there were at least three distinct movements that might be termed 'mystical' in the sense here considered. The first was that of the Essenes just before the beginning of the Christian era. There is good

reason to suppose that John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth may have been members of this group since there are significant points of identity between this community and pristine Christianity.

During the Middle Ages there was the movement centering about the Kabbalah which literally means 'Tradition'. The Kabbalists intensively focused attention on the central Jewish tradition of knowing God. 'Who is God, and how does one know Him?' It is most enlightening that here, too—even in an age of rigid orthodoxy and separation—there is no difficulty in establishing links of communication and exchange among Jewish and Christian and Eastern mystics.

And most recently, there has been the Hasidic movement beginning with the towering spiritual personality of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. Again, it is highly instructive that, though for a while there was a sharp, hostile reaction among some Jewish elements to this new manifestation, there is now almost universal respect for the basic tenets and attitudes associated with Hasidism. There are very few things upon which all Jews will agree, but this seems to be one of them. It is surprising and gratifying to see how in the writings of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews—and even in the literary works and music and art expressions of the secular-minded Jews—there is recurrent reference to the stories and parables, the teachings and teachers of Hasidic life. Even in the non-Jewish community, there has been a growing interest in this aspect of Judaism, especially since the writings of Martin Buber and others have appeared.

As a final point, it is worthy of note that the three mystical movements in Jewish life were preceded by, or accompanied with, the works of three mystical writers whose outlook was preeminently universal and comprehensive. The first was Philo who lived

in the first century and who served as a link between Greek, and possibly Oriental thought, on the one hand, and Judaism on the other. Interestingly enough, it is he who is one of our authoritative sources for our knowledge about the Essenes.

The second personality is Ibn Gabirol of the eleventh century. He, perhaps even more than Saadia who preceded him and the great Maimonides who followed him, was the bridge-builder of his day. His aim was to blend and harmonize neo-Platonism and Judaism. He apparently succeeded quite well, for his poetry was eagerly taken into Jewish liturgy while his philosophy was absorbed by Christian scholastic thought. The latter happened in a curious way. One of his books, *Mekor Hayim* (Fountain of Life) was translated into Latin as *Fons Vitae* and, by a strange quirk, his name was misspelled. Subsequently, by that name, he was regarded as one of the authorities of Christian circles for several centuries. Jewishly, much of the thought of Ibn Gabirol was assimilated into the Kabbalah which also, in later centuries, had adherents among Christians as well as Jews.

A relatively recent manifestation of this type of phenomenon came through the person of Baruch Spinoza (of the 17th century). He was well versed in Jewish religious sources and was also a follower of the French secular philosopher, Descartes. He, in his own way, strove to harmonize these two worlds for our time. Because of his unorthodox views, he (as, to some extent, his predecessors also) aroused opposition on the part of certain Jewish leaders. What is noteworthy is, that even in the opposition, there was 'interfaith co-operation,' inasmuch as certain Christian leaders were no less adamant in their attacks upon him. However, as the New Jewish Encyclopedia points out, 'despite earlier indifference or opposition, modern Jewish and Christian philosophers and religious thinkers have shown intense

interest in his works and a reappraisal of his philosophical ideas has gradually taken place.'

Let it be noted, before concluding, that, though we have chosen to single out only three main currents, mysticism was always present in Jewish life, at least on the part of some individuals or smaller circles. Abraham's ascent on Mt. Moriah, Moses at the Burning Bush, Isaiah's vision in the Temple, Elijah's inspiration in the cave—what are these but mystical experiences? In addition, there are numerous references in the Bible, and in post-Biblical literature, to particular groups who sought to practise their Judaism more intensively.

In sum, it is well for those who are genuinely interested in the harmony of religions, to dedicate themselves to the firm foundation of religious truth. Eclecticism will not do, and the 'lowest common denominator' will not do. So often, interfaith relations are made to depend upon temporal extraneous factors and, as a result, are buffeted about by all kinds of political, eco-

nomic, and social considerations. Religious harmony is too precious a thing to depend upon the blowing of historical winds.

If the world faiths are to *lead*, and not be led, their individual validity and their mutual relationships must be built upon the solid rock of experience. Therefore, let each group, each religious communion, 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.

A few lines from a poem by Solomon Ibn Gabirol seem to sum up the spirit of religious harmony :

'Thou art God, and all things formed are Thy servants and worshippers. Verily Thy Glory is not diminished by reason of those that seem to worship aught beside Thee...

Thou art God...upholding in Thy Unity all creatures.

Thou art God...and although the name of each be different,

They are all proceeding to Thy One Place.'

TRUE WELFARE OF STUDENTS

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

Time there was when the students' welfare was safe in the hands of their teachers. And the great educational institutions—the sacred forest Āśramas in the days of the Upaniṣads, and the Viśva Vidyālayas such as Nalanda and Taxila in later times—were impregnable fortresses of security, peace and prosperity for both teachers and students. If that was the state of affairs, why then, has the present become so topsyturvy that we are forced to speak of the welfare of students? Answers to this question are numerous as given by educationists

and public men who have been troubled by the conditions prevailing in schools, colleges and universities. It is not the welfare of students alone, but the welfare of their teachers that has been receiving the attention of our public men. What are the reasons for the deplorable conditions prevailing in educational institutions in our country? Let us answer first the basic question, who is a student? A student is one who has devoted his entire life—so long as he is a student—to the pursuit of knowledge and to the assimilation of the

higher values of life. He is a 'disciple' and a disciple or Śiṣya is one who is under the strictest discipline. He is a Brahmācārī in thought, word and deed. He has renounced lust and lucre and has taken a vow of truth, non-violence and service to fellow human beings. This is the image of the 'student' that has come down to us through the ages. Such a student has no rights, he has only duties; he has no privileges, but only responsibilities; he has no claims, but only obligations. His is to serve and study and obey his teacher; his is not to defy, disobey and challenge authority. If we accept this as the most complete description of a student, then we do not need to speak of his welfare at all. His welfare lies in implicit obedience to his teacher who has taken him unto himself as a son.

But now, at the present day, the image has changed. The student now is one who is out to acquire some skills—maybe mental, maybe manual. He is a kind of apprentice to a technician. With co-education being the fashion of the day, brahmācārya has gone out of fashion. The one great value accepted by him is 'making money'. 'What is truth?' he asks, as Pilate did long ago at the time of the trial of Christ. As for non-violence, he questions, 'Has not India been ruined by ahimsa?' and further 'Does not the *Gītā* preach violence?' 'Well, service—yes, social service is something worth-while—let us preach to the villager cleanliness, food-values, sanitation and democracy' says our 'modern' student. So he goes about strutting, smoking, shouting slogans and destroying the institution which shelters him, destroying academic life and destroying all the higher values of life. He is climbing down step by step and he does not know what he is doing. He is no longer a student. He is a trade unionist, political agitator and an anarchist, all rolled into one. It is but right that serious minded persons should speak of the welfare of

this modern student-cum-politician-cum-trade unionist. How best could we bring him back to the fold from which he has strayed?

To me it seems that two major causes have contributed to the downfall of student life in educational institutions. In the first instance, unfortunately in our country, education has been poisoned by the political virus. This is a phenomenon peculiar to our country. With the advent of the British, education was politically oriented. That, however, is not surprising—but what is surprising is that the political virus has continued to thrive even after 1947. The Wardha scheme of basic education had a large element of politics in it. In addition it was inspired by the economic considerations.

Secondly educational institutions were made the arena for political wrangling. Students were taught to go on strike, boycott classes, shout slogans, be across classroom doors, defy teachers and even parents and to disrupt academic life in every conceivable manner. Political leaders little realized that the evil forces let loose by them would come back and hit them like a boomerang when Independence came. Timely warning was given by such eminent leaders as Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastriar and Mrs. Annie Besant. They spoke in grave tones against the ill-advised policy of tampering with educational institutions and against using students as cat's-paw in the political game. 'When once evil tendencies are released they cannot be controlled', they said, and they prophesied that all the technique of violence and destruction taught to the students now in 1921, would be used against the leaders in later years. Every word of what these patriots said forty-five years ago has come true today.

Now what is the remedy? Frankly speaking, I think there is no remedy. The evil

forces released half a century ago will work out to the bitter end. One extreme remedy has been suggested by someone who was commenting on the Metropolitan University. 'Give the students a long rope,' he said, 'let the present authorities abdicate and hand over the university to the students. Let them administer it.' That way lies doom—doom to students and doom to the university. That is one 'solution'. Another is to purge the university of all traces of democracy and model it after Nalanda and Taxila. To me, this is the correct solution but I know it will not be accepted.

When we come to think of it, education can never succeed if it is built solely on secular foundations. Right from the start of child's life the spiritual values have to be instilled in him. Now that nursery schools have become a common feature of our educational system all over the country, let every activity in our nursery schools—dance, drama, singing, story-telling—let all these be steeped in the spirit of our great epics—Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Bhāgavatam. I would go to the extent of saying that the very cradle songs which

mothers sing to their infants should be inspired by the life and doings of the heroes in the great epics. There in the elementary school the teaching of Sanskrit should be commenced on a compulsory basis. It is possible to employ the most modern methods of teaching a language to impart knowledge of Sanskrit to children of age groups 5 to 11. Learning Sanskrit will automatically result in imbibing the spiritual culture of our land. In the high school classes Sanskrit literature should be prescribed for compulsory study by the pupils. And thereafter compulsion may cease, but ample provision should be made for the study of Sanskrit grammar, Sanskrit literature, philosophy of religion, comparative religion etc. at the University stage.

Unless our entire educational system is reorganized with the one aim of giving a spiritual orientation to studies, there seems to be no hope of improvement in the prevailing chaos and anarchy in schools and colleges.

De-secularization of education is the only solution to the problems we are facing in colleges and schools today.

Both of us often talk to the lads about the many noble deeds which our own fathers did in war and peace—in the management of the allies, and in the administration of the city; but neither of us has any deeds of his own which he can show. The truth is that we are ashamed of this contrast being seen by them, and we blame our fathers for letting us be spoiled in the days of our youth, while they were occupied with concerns of other; and we urge all this upon the lads, pointing out to them that they will not grow up to honour if they are rebellious and take no pains about themselves; but that if they take pains they may, perhaps, become worthy of the names which they bear.

— PLATO



ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

TRANSLATED AND COMPILED BY SWAMI SMARANANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Men in distress are sometimes prone to hear good counsel. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the father of the Kauravas, being in a predicament, was desirous of hearing more from Sanat-sujāta the ancient ṛṣi, who had already instructed him on the value of Brahman-knowledge (*Brahma-jñāna*) as against worldly pursuit. Therefore the king questioned him further: 'O sage Sanat-sujāta, please do tell me more about this subject of Brahman, which you have discussed so wonderfully and which, indeed, cannot be obtained for the asking. So please accede to my request.'

Sanat-sujāta: O king! The knowledge of Brahman, hearing about which you have become so pleased, is not obtainable quickly. When the mind, through intense concentration gets merged in the intellect, that state is called *Brahma-Vidyā*. This state can be obtained through *brahmacarya*, the spiritual practice through continence.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra: O great sage! You have said once that Brahman-knowledge is eternal and is not an effect of anything, like the result of sacrifices. And again you have said just now that through the practice of *brahmacarya* (spiritual practice based on continence) Brahman-knowledge is obtained. How am I to reconcile these two statements? Moreover, if freedom is a natural state inherent in every being, how does it become obtainable through Brahman-knowledge?

Sanat-sujāta: The knowledge of Brahman, though eternal, remains unmanifest (to an impure mind). But it becomes manifest through the practice of *brahmacarya*. Those who follow this path, leave this world after obtaining this knowledge from eminent preceptors. I shall discourse to you on that knowledge.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra: O great sage, please tell me what is the nature of that *brahmacarya* which is essential for attaining that perfect knowledge.

Sanat-sujāta: Those who are stationed in their preceptors' retreats and practise *brahmacarya* become men of great wisdom and, after death, attain the supreme Brahman. Those pure souls who practise austerities in their *gurus'* abodes with great patience and conquer all desires, intent on realizing the state of Brahman, become

capable of separating the Self from the body, like a blade of grass from its sheath.

The parents provide their children with one's body. But the new birth given by the spiritual preceptor to his disciple is pure, undecaying, and immortal. He who discourses on Brahman to the disciple with intention of granting immortality, and thus wraps him in the mantle of truth should be regarded as father and mother; and bearing in mind the good rendered by him, the disciple will never think of doing him any harm.

The disciple should always pay his respects to the preceptor and prosecute his scriptural studies, remaining pure and attentive. He should not show anger or pride before his *guru*. These are the first steps to *brahmacarya*. Following the prescribed mode of life for a disciple is another initial step in *brahmacarya*.

The disciple, with his possessions and his very life, should do what is pleasing to the preceptor in thought, word and deed. Similar should also be his behaviour towards the preceptor's wife and son. This is the second step in *brahmacarya*.

Bearing well in mind what has been done to him by his preceptor, and knowing that its purpose is to remove his ignorance, the disciple, out of gratitude, should feel greatly pleased towards him. This is the third step in *brahmacarya*.

Without redeeming his debt towards the preceptor by offering his gift, the disciple should not leave for some other dwelling; nor should he think, 'I make this gift' or talk about it. This is the fourth step in *brahmacarya*.

The disciple reaches the first step in the knowledge of Brahman through contact with the *guru* (*śravaṇa* or hearing); and in due course, the second step of reflection (*manana*); and, through practice, he reaches the third step of concentration (*nididhyāsana*); and by the study of the

Śāstra, the fourth step of Self-knowledge. Wise men say that perfect *brahmacarya*, consisting of good qualities like righteousness, along with auxiliaries like renunciation and physical and mental strength is obtained through the realization of Brahman, got as a result of the preceptor's teaching.

The disciple, living thus should offer the wealth earned by him to his preceptor; for this is the only means of the preceptor's livelihood. Even if the *guru* is not living, his son should get this offering. Living the life of *brahmacarya* in this manner, the disciple is endowed with many sons and becomes well-established in society. From all sides wealth is poured upon him and he himself becomes fit to receive disciples.

The gods in heaven have attained their godhood by the strength of this *brahmacarya* and sages, too, have attained the world of Brahman by the same. The Gandharvas and Apsaras¹ have got their charm through *brahmacarya* and the sun is able to illumine the world through it. Just as one who gets the *cintāmaṇi*² is able to get what he wants, similarly, the gods, too, become so capable through *brahmacarya*. Those who become purified through austerities and follow the path of *brahmacarya*, gain the ultimate knowledge through it and conquer death through their child-like nature. O king! those who follow the path of action through various ceremonies attain the perishable worlds like heaven, while those who follow the path of renunciation, obtain knowledge through *brahmacarya*. Thus knowledge alone is the way to liberation.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra: When one begins to visualize Brahman in his heart, It appears as it were, white, red, black or yellow. So I ask: Is this state induced by anyone or is it natural? What is the form of this ever free and indestructible Brahman?

¹ Celestial men and women of great charm.

² A fabulous gem supposed to yield to its possessor all desires.

Sanat-sujāta: No, Brahman does not reveal Itself in white, red, black or yellow colours. Its form is not seen on earth or the sky, nor does the ocean take Its form. Its form cannot be seen in stars, lightning or the clouds; nor can it be perceived in the sun or the moon, or the atmosphere or other deities. Brahman cannot be found in the *R̥g. Yajur* or *Atharva-Vedas* or in the beautiful *Sāma-Veda* and its branches. But It can be realized in the heart of a man endowed with great penance. Being beyond all ignorance, It cannot be compassed. Even death himself is lost in It at the time of universal destruction. Its form is subtler than the subtlest and bigger than the mountains (biggest). That Brahman is the abode of the world; It is ever free; It is all that exists and It is the great glory. All beings spring from It and are merged into It. Men of wisdom say that It is immutable and vast, and is appearing as this world. There is no change in It, except in the language used to describe It. They who know It become immortal. All these worlds are established in It and men of Self-knowledge see It through the *yoga* of knowledge, and thus become immortal.

(The path of knowledge has been explained. Now, Sanat-sujāta tries to give an idea of what Brahman is).

Sanat-sujāta: The primordial Seed (of the universe), all-powerful, luminous, vast; whose name is 'great splendour' and who is worshipped by all the gods and by whose light the sun shines; Him, the Glorious and Eternal, the *yogins* behold.³ From Him Brahmā the creator springs and, by Him nourished, he grows. He, the Pure One, dwells among all the luminous beings, both external and internal, and strikes terror into all of them. From Him, the supreme Brahman, sprang the five subtle elements

and from the subtle, the gross elements; the individual soul and the universal soul remained hidden in His gross body. (While even they fell asleep at the time of dissolution of the universe), He remains ever awake and, being the Sun of the sun, upholds them and also this earth and the heaven. He, the primordial Seed, sustains the individual and universal souls (*Jīva* and *Īśvara*), the earth and the sky, the quarters and all that exists. The directions and rivers and all the vast oceans have all sprung up from Him alone.

The indestructible past *karmas* whirl this perishable body and the senses round and round. But, when these senses are controlled, they take this soul towards the divine Ātman, free from decay and death. His form stands beyond compare. This eye does not behold Him. But they, who perceive Him as their innermost Self through an intuitive intellect and mind become immortal. In this terrible stream of illusion, projected by the Lord, the ignorant ones float looking covetously at the little pleasures in it with the help of ten organs, the mind and the intellect. This ignorant soul, like the black bee, restlessly accumulating the results of actions, enjoys half of it in the other world. The other half is enjoyed here in this world among all the creatures, as ordained by the Lord. When devoid of bodies (after death), the souls (in ignorance) take refuge in the mother's womb, like fledglings on a banyan tree of golden foliage. And attaining new bodies, they experience joys and sorrows, as the fledgling that has developed wings moves in all directions.

The *jīvas* (individual souls), though perfect, are separated from the Perfect (through *avidyā* or ignorance). Thus this manifestation out of the Perfect (Brahman) is through *avidyā*. When the Perfect (world as conditioned Brahman) ceases to appear separate (through the rise of knowledge) the Perfect (Brahman) alone remains.

All these elements have sprung from Him

³ This line is repeated in succeeding verses. But for the sake of brevity, it is omitted here.

and abide in Him always. All life exist in Him alone. What more shall I say than this that this whole universe has sprung out of Him?

The out-going vital force merges in the in-going vital force. That, again, in the mind, the mind in the intellect, and intellect in the supreme Ātman.

Though the Lord is transcendent, He has kept one part of His in the *jīvas*, the individual souls, and does not want to withdraw them into Himself. For if He does so, there will be neither death nor immortality for the *jīvas*, who constantly worship Him.

That *jīva*, the innermost Self, moves out in his *liṅgaśarīra*, the subtle body. The fools never perceive Him—the Lord, fit for worship, the all-pervading primeval Creator.

He (the Parabrahman) exists in all human beings equally—whether one does spiritual practices or not, whether one is free or bound. But the freed souls experience unbroken bliss (while the bound ones alternate between joy and sorrow).

Whether they perform religious practices or not, those who are free while living, sojourn in this and other worlds, through the power of their knowledge. But, O king, let not this statement of mine make you think of this lightly; for Brahman is eternal Consciousness, whom the enlightened ones alone realize.

That great One ever-effulgent, pervades the individual soul always. He who knows Him, never misses fulfilment here.

Even though He may go with the speed of the mind, far and wide in a thousand directions, yet He comes to dwell in the hearts of the *yogins*. He does not dwell within the field of the senses; but those with a purified heart behold Him. Those who are well-wishers of all those who are not afflicted even in mind, and those who renounce the world attain immortality.

Just as snakes hide themselves in holes,

those of evil character, according to their own tendencies and due to the evil counsel received by them, conceal their vices from scrutiny's gaze.

The liberated soul thinks thus: 'I am not created by ignorance; I have no birth or death. From what shall I get liberation? All things—true and false—are ever connected equally with Brahman. I am the Cause of the cause and the Cause of all creations.'

The liberated soul has no connection whatever with virtue or vice. These can be seen only in persons still ignorant of the supreme truth. Thinking thus, a *yogin* should desire to realize that supreme Brahman. The liberated man is not aggrieved by slander. He does not feel any regrets that he has not studied the Vedas or has not performed Vedic rites. Such a one, free while living, attains that insight of the *yogins*.

He who perceives the Self in all embodied beings has not to grieve any more. Such a man of wisdom dwells cheerfully, being free from likes and dislikes.

(The great sage, Sanat-sujāta concludes with these words of Self-realization):

I am called the father and mother of this universe; I am the son, too. I am the soul of all that exists, of the past and the future. I am that old grandsire, Brahmā; also his father and son. You all are dwelling in my soul; but neither am I thine, nor are you mine. I am my own abode, the Self alone is my birth. I am the warp and the woof of the universe and am indestructible. Unborn, I move as it were and am ever awake. Knowing me, the wise one becomes full of joy, (free from attractions and repulsions). Subtler than the subtle, ever of the nature of knowledge, and dwelling in all beings I am the Father of all that exists. The great ones know me as existing in every heart.

(Concluded)

(Ref: *Mahābhārata*, Udyogaparvan, Chapters 44 and 46)



WHAT
INSPIRES ME
MOST IN
HOLY
MOTHER'S
LIFE

MRS. LILLA DHUME

The various facets of the Holy Mother's life would appear to be like the sun's rays passing through a prism, throwing out many points of brilliance, which catch the eye in a dazzling manner. No doubt, her immaculate life, the purity of her thought and deed, her utter unselfishness and her complete detachment towards anything savouring of the worldly have been oft applauded and revered. All these qualities add to her lustre and her grandeur and cannot but evoke deep reverence for her life. Yet, that which inspires me most is her complete faith in others, and the rare quality she possessed of never finding fault with any one, but if need be, laying the blame on herself.

One incident comes strikingly to the mind. On one occasion when her niece who was weak, threw a big egg-plant at her, causing her great pain, the Mother remained unperturbed and unshaken. Her first thought was of pity for the lamentable action of her erring niece and to atone for her lapse, she prayed to the Master and sought forgiveness for her niece's misdeed. The Holy Mother cast no blame on her; rather her comment was pithy and memorable. Only the Mother with her infinite goodness of heart could so completely absolve her niece of all blame for her callous action. Said she, 'The Master did

not even once utter a word of remonstrance towards this body, and you afflict it so much.'

Not only did the Mother preach that one should not find fault with others, but she put it into practice every day of her life. What Golap-Ma one of her companions, had on one occasion said in exasperation was true indeed: 'What's the use of bringing their lapses to your notice—you will never see anything wrong...', for the Mother was all forgiveness and could hardly bear to think of the lapses committed by her erring devotees. If only we could realize the truth of her message, there would be less ills in the world and more harmony and a sense of brotherhood among men.

Her complete self-abnegation also makes her appear as dear as a mother. She spent long intervals from 1872 to 1886 at Dakshineswar, except for her periodic visits to Jayrambati and Kamarpukur. Yet, in the Gospel there is only a sparse mention of her. Her life at Dakshineswar was busy from before dawn to near midnight; had it not been for her immense devotion to the Master, he would not have had the special kind of food he needed for his delicate stomach. Even the young disciples got the benefit of her motherly care, and daily she cooked for them all, never finding it a drudgery nor the toil irksome,

For her, this was a time of bliss and happy contentment. Like a piece of fragrant sandalwood used for worship, she was using her body, her mind and her soul in the Master's service and no wonder she felt that her life was being well utilized. Women visitors to Dakshineswar were inclined to feel pity for the meagre dimensions of her small room in the Nanabat and snigger at the cluster of things all heaped up in the small room. But that which caused others to pity the Mother, was in itself a pitcher of bliss for the simple hearted Holy Mother. For her, it was an abode of peace and happiness, though she lay on the floor on a mat with a home-made cushion as a rest for her heavy head. In later life she commented that she was far more comfortable in that state than when she was provided with a proper bed and a mattress.

Her compassionate nature too leaves a deep imprint on the mind. She could refuse none anything they sought from her. During her sojourn at Dakshineswar, she waited for the hallowed hour, when she could serve the Master his midday meal. For, apart from this brief meeting, she hardly saw the Master; and for her, whose whole life was dedicated to his service, that alone was the fulfilment, the golden fruition of all her dreams and her waking thought. Yet, when some devotee expressed the desire to pay that homage to the Master, she willingly gave her the plate of food and withdrew from there. When the Master chided her for allowing a woman visitor of doubtful character to carry his food to him, the Mother meekly replied that she could not deny any request made to her as a mother.

The Holy Mother's all-pervading love for the disciples and devotees, even the cats and dogs around the household, cannot but evoke feelings of deep love and affection for her. She rendered service to them and

did not mind removing the leaves from which they had partaken of food; nor to fan them if they had walked through the sun and were drenched with perspiration. When they showed reluctance to accept such service from her she would hasten to put them at their ease and say why she should not do that much as any mother would do for her own child.

Lastly, the spirit of contentment which she possessed in plenty leaves one spell-bound. She, the immaculate consort of Sri Ramakrishna, veritable incarnation of God, she who ministered to the needs of countless persons—men and women—and granted them spiritual regeneration and peace of mind, herself had to suffer at one stage pangs of poverty and face the callous indifference of her near relatives. Suffering was the cross she bore bravely—nay smilingly. She had once remarked that suffering is a manifestation of compassion on the part of the Almighty. Maybe, that gave her the courage to face life's ordeals in a serene manner. Serious maladies impaired her health. Mentally she suffered on account of the avaricious quarrels of her brothers. Even her niece Radhu who was for some time the apple of her eye gave her immense cause for worry. Yet seldom did the Mother complain. She accepted all in her stride and remarked that difficulties never remain, but pass away like water under a bridge. To do one's duty, not to get caught up in worldly coils, to pray sincerely to God and to cultivate a spirit of contentment, to see one's own faults rather than magnify those of others, to live for others above all, in short, to practise the teaching of the Gītā : *niṣkāma-karma*, sacrificial work,—all this the Holy Mother has shown in her spotless life. So as we peruse her conversation with the disciples, we hear the vibrating undertone of her teachings. 'Yes, if you pray to him (Sri Ramakrishna) constantly before his

picture, then he manifests himself through that picture. The place where the picture is kept becomes a shrine.'

The memory of the Holy Mother shines like a scintillating star in our hearts. We can rise above the petty and sordid concerns by constantly remembering her and holding her lotus feet. We can thus hope to traverse this life's difficult journey and

find supreme bliss and happiness in leading an unselfish life, dedicated to the service of those around us, for the Mother's life and teachings constantly emphasize that service is prayer and that to lead a full life one must wear oneself out like sandalwood used for pūjā, by serving others selflessly and without any idea of reward or return.

CONVERSATIONS OF THE HOLY MOTHER

Mother: That's true. Everything is due to desire. What bondage is there for a man who has no desire? You see, I live with all these things, but I do not feel any attachment; no, not in the least.

Disciple: Indeed, you can have no desires. But how many insignificant desires crop up in our minds! How can we get rid of them?

Mother: In your case these are no real desires. They are nothing. They are mere fancies that appear and disappear in your mind. The more they come and go, the better for you.

Disciple: Yesterday I thought how I could fight with my mind unless God assured me of His protection. The moment one desire disappears another crops up.

Mother: So long as the ego exists, desires also undoubtedly remain. But those desires will not injure you. The master will be your protector. It will be a heinous sin on the part of the Master if he does not protect those who have taken shelter at his feet, who have taken refuge in him renouncing all, and who want to lead a good life. You must live in a spirit of self-surrender to him. Let him do good to you if he so desires, or let him drown you if that be his will. But you are to do only what is righteous, and that also according to the power he has given you.



HUMAN TRENDS

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES RAISED BY TECHNOLOGY

(Correspondence between the representatives of the World Council of Churches and the Ramakrishna Mission in Geneva.)

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

20 Ave. Peschier

Geneva

3rd March 1969

Dear Swamiji,

I fully realize that unless the questions are more sharply formulated it will be difficult to give precise answers. The books you refer to in your letter are all well known to me. Most of them deal with the issues in a rather general manner. I think it is important that men of different faiths should now indicate in what way they can make a distinctive contribution to the problems we are facing today. In particular I have three issues in mind. These are as follows:

1. In what ways does Hinduism respond to and react against the process of secularization? A distinction is made between secularism as a closed ideology based on human self-sufficiency, and secularization as a historical process, based on science and technology, positively contributing to human welfare, liberating man from bondage to custom, tradition and ecclesiastical authority. How does Hinduism react to the values of science and technology, to the

freedom and abundance it brings and the danger of new slaveries it represents?

2. There is a great deal of talk today about development. Too often, it is understood in limited, material terms only as the transfer of capital and technical knowhow from the developed to the developing countries. It is sometimes claimed that development, based on science and technology, has its roots in the beliefs expounded in the Bible, e.g. the attitude towards creation, nature, time, history etc. Is this justifiable? Can the Hindu doctrines of *karma-samsāra*, *Māyā*, *Niškāma karma* and *mokṣa* be reinterpreted to provide the impulse and power for development? What distinctive contributions can Hinduism make to remedy the ills of man in a technological age?

3. A third issue is about the meaning and possibility of salvation understood in the widest possible way as release from all kinds of bondage. Is the traditional view of *mokṣa* as individual liberation adequate at a time when release is sought from bondage of all kinds, social, economic and political? What is the basis in Hinduism for the social dimension of salvation? How does one relate the provisional values to

the ultimate, the *vyāvahārika* to the *pāramārthika*, without annulling the former?

I fully realize that you are a busy person and do not have the time to write lengthy papers on these questions. But I am trying hard to bring the insights of our friends of different faiths to our thinking. Therefore, whatever contribution you can make will be most helpful. Even if you make some brief remarks on all or any of these issues it will be most helpful to me to bring the points of view of your faith to our total thinking here. I would greatly appreciate a response from you at your earliest convenience.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
S. J. SAMARTHA

DOCTOR S. J. SAMARTHA
World Council of Churches
Geneva.

10th March 1969

Dear Dr. Samartha,

Your kind letter of the 3rd March carrying more detailed precisions regarding the questions you have evoked in your first letter. I thank you for the same.

I shall begin by taking up the third problem first and then proceed to the second and the first. The third problem you have posed is concerning salvation understood in the widest possible sense, and whether *mokṣa* as individual liberation carries with it a modern adequacy.

The *sthitaprajña* ideal (man of steady wisdom) well set forth in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, verses 55 to 72, explains the possibilities of liberation from vanity, passion and hate through cultivation of the habit of serenity, the nucleus of the Self. The Self is symbolized there as the ocean into which all desires enter as the rivers enter the ocean, which is not disturbed but is grounded in stillness.

As you well know, this ideal *sthitaprajña* issues forth in action in the karma-yogin, and in love in Bhakti-yogin. So then we can say that the ideal of the liberated man according to the *Gītā* carries with it three phases: Lucidity, Love and Action.

In the twelfth chapter, Bhakti-yoga, we find a specific mention of the real bhakta's concern for the good of all beings (*sarva-bhūtahite ratāh*), stanzas 3 and 4. The ideal of *Sarva-mukti* (collective salvation) is set forth in Sankara's writings and is an important topic of discussion in the work of a post-Sankara thinker, Appaya-Dikshita of the 13th century. The work is entitled, *Siddhāntaleśa-sangraha*. An English translation by the late Suryanarayana Sastri of the Madras University exists. In the introduction Mr. Sastri says that according to the doctrine of *sarva-mukti*, sages and saints who have achieved their release do not retire for rest in paradise, but come again and again on the earth until the last man is released, which means that they come for eternity, as for Vedanta creation is eternal. That he will be born again and again until the last man is released was the declaration of Buddha and also of Ramakrishna.

This idea of collective salvation can be linked with your second question whether *mokṣa* can be reinterpreted to provide the impulse and power for development and also with the problem of secularization.

As you know, *mokṣa* is considered as a Value, or *artha*, but as the ultimate value, the other rungs of the ladder being *dharma* (spiritual value) *artha* (material means, money etc.) and *kāma* (desire). If *mokṣa* is pursued, utilizing material prosperity and desire along righteous lines, then the results are supreme, both on the individual and collective levels. Desire and money are only means and for obtaining proper ends proper means should be used (*Ends and Means*: Aldous Huxley). In the doctrine of the four values we find also

the interpenetration of the *vyāvahārika* and *pāramārthika*, without annulling each other, the former being an application or *mise en valeur* of the latter. The relative values of life stand and must stand, as pointing their finger to the ultimate value of *mokṣa*, the relative goading man to push on to the summit.

Now regarding secularization:

Secularism based on human self-sufficiency, as you have well observed, points to human 'Interiority', to Man, the measure, though the deeper layers of this truth often escape popular understanding. Secularization as the cry of the human individual to liberate himself from ecclesiastical grips and tradition also points to Man, as an end and not as a means.

If God is dead (Nietzsche), He died to revive man's divinity. The desacralization poses the problem of the sacred: but a problem cannot be posed if at least a part of the problem does not become a subjective reality. Man's attempt to replace God symbolizes man's effort to capture the essential attribute of God, Independence, his thirst not to serve an immortal being but to become himself independent and immortal.

The Yoga-Vedanta proposes a technique which lends itself to universal or collective utilization. The theory of degrees of truth and ladder of degrees of realization point to the fact that all can take to it. There is complete absence of the element of mystery which is the trump-card in many other religions. Besides, the universality of technique is a confirmation on the empirical plane of the doctrine of universal salvation. Is not technique the universalization of God's or the Divine's sacrality and an appeal to human intelligence to go up the ladder of human perfection to the summit where all point of reference and hierarchy is lost in an all-consuming experience where the Self expands to the limits of existence

and existence comes to roost in the nest of the Self?

All the yogas insist that they are both means and the end, that they are both technique and the goal, which means that the technique can be spiritualized as to bridge the gulf between technique and Grace.

And finally as to how Hinduism reacts to science:

If creation is seen not as opposed to man (which may be the point of science as science wants to domesticate or conquer Nature), but as forming one whole with him, then science as knowledge of the external world can help man to integrate it with the knowledge of the inner man. It was Aristotle who said that science is the knowledge of that which characterizes man.

Vedanta presents to us a scientific religion, where God is not a person, but the law that governs the evolution of matter and man; where Nature or Creation is not something created by God, but a principle that is self-creating, self-sustaining and self-destroying. Any religion that aspires to be abreast of science today, should be a spirituality that sees no hiatus between matter and spirit, but sees the former as an extension of the latter. This is the Vedantic view. Human intelligence as the canalization of Consciousness is capable of bringing about changes in matter favourable for human development. It is the same intelligence in the role of intuition that can bring to man the realization that Nature (creation) is there for the soul's development and ascent and not vice-versa. Science as knowledge and mastery of Nature then becomes a means for human evolution and not a means for man's slavery and destruction. In this context religion liberates itself from theology and recognizes the predominance of philosophy with which it integrates. The God of religion transforms

himself into the Supreme Spirit of philosophy (Brahman). For Hinduism, as you know, man or man's interiority is the focalization of the Supreme Spirit and Nature is the transparent arena wherein man has

to work up his liberation through love and creativity with diligence.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Swami Nityabodhananda

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' occur in the *Complete Works*, Vol. IV, 1955, p. 145.

We live in a revolutionary age but not perhaps sufficiently revolutionary. The editorial calls for the total, real revolution, namely, the sanctification of life, in which is the solution and self-fulfilment of all.

Miss Macleod was an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda. To her Swami Vivekananda was the 'Dearest I' and Swami Saradananda, (another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna) 'Dearest II'.

This letter came to us through the kindness of the Editor, *Udbodhan*, for which we are thankful.

Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Order addressed the afternoon session of the Symposium of Religions organized by the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago on 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion' at the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, on the 15th of September, 1968. The present article is adapted from that lecture.

In 'Profiles in Greatness', the 'Explorer' brings to our view the humble heroism of 'a true saint, upright, good and charitable

to the last', who even when about to be burnt at the stake under the order of the Church, affirmed his faith in the Lord, felt peace in his heart and acted magnanimously to fellow men.

Dr. G. Srinivasan, M.A., Ph.D., Reader, Post-graduate Department of Philosophy, University of Mysore, discusses the interesting theme of 'Reality of the Past' and concludes that 'in human relations of love and trust, the distinction of the past and the present seems to make no difference'.

Rabbi Asher Block is currently Rabbi of the Jewish Centre of Little Neck, Long Island, New York. His article 'Contribution of Judaism to Religious Harmony' is based on his speech delivered on the 15th September 1968 at the Symposium of Religions held in the Auditorium of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Prof. P. S. Naidu in his thoughtful article 'True Welfare of Students' offers 'de-secularization of education' as the solution to the problems we are facing in schools and colleges today.

In this Number the dialogue of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Sanat-sujāta compiled by Swami Smaranananda is concluded.

Mrs. Lilla Dhume, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi,

records here 'What Inspires me most in Holy Mother's Life'.

We are publishing in the column 'Human Trends' of this issue an engaging correspondence between two preachers of religion coming from two different faiths, Christianity and Hinduism, on some compelling questions posed by the age of technology.

One correspondent, Dr. S. J. Samartha, is the Secretary in the Study Department of the World Council of Churches, Geneva. One of his responsibilities is to promote dialogues between Christians and men of other faiths and ideologies on fundamental issues raised by technology.

The other correspondent, Swami Nityabodhananda, is the Founder President of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in Geneva.

A preacher of Vedanta, the Swami represents the Ramakrishna Mission in a vast area of European countries. We are thankful to the Swami for making the correspondence available to us.

It will be noticed that questions asked in the former letter were not Christian questions but human questions in which every thinking human being would be interested, and could search for answers from the standpoint of his respective commitment to faith or no faith. Swami Nityabodhananda gives his answers from the standpoint of his faith.

If others who are well-conversant with the thought movements and latest developments of human affairs could also think further on these problems and offer helpful comments they will be considered for publication in these columns.

THE COMING NEW YEAR OF THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA

We have good news to give to our readers. The next year of the *Prabuddha Bharata* is going to be a special one. In July 1970 the Journal will enter its 75th year of publication. We intend to celebrate this year in a befitting manner by publishing a bumper special number, which will include inspiring, refreshing and helpful reading material. Most of the new reading features introduced in March 1969 will continue to be published at suitable intervals. In fine, efforts will continue for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the Journal in every possible way.

We are aware that as an Organ of the Ramakrishna Order, this Journal has a special mission in the world. The imperatives Swami Vivekananda gave to the Journal when it was being started in 1896 were :

'Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the

cause of truth, humanity and your country and you will move the world.'

These words of power have unfolded the soul of the *Prabuddha Bharata* down the years of its growth. Eternal loyalty to the highest is its creed and mission.

It believes that only by always holding on to the highest, can humanity and the country be truly served. Deviation from loyalty to the highest is a betrayal of humanity, for only in and through holding on to the highest is the salvation of all. Obedience to truth and obedience to the highest are synonymous. This Journal is a devoted servant of India, its country; it is equally so of the whole world which is its greater home. Neither chauvinistic patriotism nor rootless internationalism is in coherence with that law of life which is open to the highest in a truthful manner. Therefore the message of the *Prabuddha Bharata* is manifestly or potentially for

everybody everywhere in the world. And it will always remain so while changes overtake everything, because there will never be a time when we shall not need the highest, that is, the truth, for the well-being of the country and humanity.

In today's fear-stricken troubled world of gathering darkness, the *Prabuddha Bharata* brings to the door of man the eternal message of the essential divinity of man—a message of strength, fearlessness, freedom, solidarity of mankind and of

universal love. Bring love for all and there will be enough for all in the world to attain progressive self-fulfilment. There is no other way of healing our self-inflicted injuries.

Those who are devoted to truth, humanity and country, those who are earnest in doing something for enhancing the well-being of all, their help we seek to bring in their own way the message of the *Prabuddha Bharata* to an ever-increasing number of earnest people everywhere in the world.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE PRECIOUS LITERARY LEGACY OF SISTER NIVEDITA

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SISTER NIVEDITA: BIRTH CENTENARY PUBLICATION, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 5, Nivedita Lane, Calcutta-3. Volume II, pages xxii+510; Volume III, pages xvi+527; Volume IV, pages xv+532. 1967, 1967, 1968 (respectively) Price Rs. 12.00 each.

Sister Nivedita dedicated her life for the understanding of India and the cause of its uplift. Worthy of her name Nivedita (the dedicated one) given by her Guru, Swami Vivekananda, she literally sacrificed herself for the regeneration of India. By her flaming life of purity and selflessness she exercised a profound influence on the Indians in the first decade of this century. She reached the masses, especially the younger ones, through her writings and speeches. She inspired the young with patriotic fervour and to live noble and purposeful lives. Her impact was great on eminent intellectuals, statesmen, journalists, artists, poets, scientists and historians of her time in India. One distinctive feature of her writing is that it is as fresh even today as it was half a century ago. Several of her writings had become out of print for some time. The authorities of Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta have published the *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* in four volumes, which include all her previously published works and a few others, which remained unpublished earlier. The first volume was reviewed in a previous issue of this Journal, in February 1968.

VOLUME II CONTAINS: THE WEB OF INDIAN LIFE; AN INDIAN STORY OF LIFE AND DEATH; STUDIES FROM AN EASTERN HOME; LECTURES AND ARTICLES; APPENDIXES I AND II.

In *The Web of Indian Life* she weaves beautifully the Indian life. Her appreciation and understanding of Indian culture is profound, so much so that many born Indians can with profit learn from her writings. She identified herself completely with everything Indian. This book can be of great help to all Indians who go abroad for short or long visits in correctly representing their own culture and tradition, and also to non-Indians who intend to understand India in true perspective.

An Indian Study of Love and Death and *Studies from an Indian Home* were first published in 1905 and 1913 respectively. A few other articles published in journals on the same theme have also been included in the present volume along with the former. Besides these, seventeen lectures and articles adorn this volume of the complete works.

In her lecture 'How and Why I adopted Hindu Religion' she explains in details how she met Swami Vivekananda and pondered on his teachings for more than a year before deciding to adopt the Hindu religion.

Her lecture entitled 'India Has No Apology to Make' is highly thought-provoking.

Appendix I consists of three more lectures and

Appendix II gives a chronological list of about thirty-five lectures which she delivered during 1899-1901 and 1908 on India, Indian literature and different aspects of the Indian life.

VOLUME III CONTAINS: INDIAN ART, STAR PICTURES, BUDDHA AND YASHODHARA, CRADLE TALES OF HINDUISM, RELIGION AND DHARMA AND AGGRESSIVE HINDUISM.

Indian Art is a series of essays which exhibit her mastery of the subject as she touches delicately on the intricacies of the Indian art. This is followed by appreciations of paintings by eminent Indian painters such as Abanindra Nath Tagore, Nanda Lal Bose, Asit Haldar, Samarendranath Gupta, etc. Some notes by the Sister of notable European paintings are also added to demonstrate the true ideal of the Western art to the Indian artist. She was a real art connoisseur who inspired and encouraged our young artists to develop modern Indian art.

The Star Pictures is a series of articles published in the *Modern Review* in 1911 and 1912. Here she selects the puranic stories that represent an interpretation of the observed stars in the sky.

Buddha and Yashodhara is also a short essay. It traces the story of Buddha from his birth till he attained Buddhahood and later received Yashodhara, his erstwhile wife, into the Order,—proclaiming that his teachings are for all, both men and women.

The *Cradle Tales of Hinduism* is considered one of the Sister's best published works, which every Hindu child learnt from its grandmother in the earlier days. The same simple stories are presented in the Sister's appealing and inimitable style. Today when the joint families are broken, a grandmother is only in the story-book for the modern Hindu child. There is hardly any one around to tell him these tales which constitute his rightful heritage. This book will fulfil that task and will give entertainment and elightenment to both the mother and the child.

Religion and Dharma is a set of thirty-five articles in which the Sister expounds on the various aspects of religion and dharma. All these essays sparkle with many precious gems of thoughts. These—rich in thought-content as they are and also because they represent masterly style of English prose—essays should find place in college textbooks.

Aggressive Hinduism is the Sister's attempt to put in writing Swami Vivekananda's idealism. All the four essays are very thought-provoking and need to be read by one and all who intend to truly comprehend the spirit resurgent dynamic Hinduism.

VOLUME IV, THE LAST ONE IN THE SERIES, CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING WORKS OF THE SISTER: 'FOOTFALLS OF INDIAN HISTORY', 'CIVIC IDEAL AND INDIAN NATIONALITY (CIVIC AND NATIONAL IDEALS)', 'HINTS ON NATIONAL EDUCATION IN INDIA', 'GLIMPSES OF FAMINE AND FLOOD IN EAST BENGAL IN 1906' AND 'LAMBS AMONG WOLVES'.

Footfalls of Indian History is a unique work in that it is an historical travelogue.

Her description of the Ajanta caves is very vivid. Through its sculpture and paintings she traces the history of the influence of the various regions of India and finds the underlying unity.

The description of the Ajanta caves is followed by that of the Elephanta caves and a learned discussion on the concept of trinity in Hinduism. The relation between Buddhism and Hinduism is also expounded with great insight.

The rise of vaishnavism and the brahmanical learning comes under critical scrutiny from her pen.

Civic Ideal and Indian Nationality contains seventeen articles out of which eleven are published for the first time in the book form. These give a good comparative study of eastern and western societies.

Hints on National Education in India and *Glimpses of Famine and Flood in East Bengal* are so fresh as to be applicable even today. The basic short-comings of the national education is a persistent malady continuing to the present. Even after 22—23 years of freedom we have not been able to evolve an effective national education programme. Manual training as a part of general education in India deserves serious consideration. Her description of the flood and the famine in East Bengal, strangely enough, is incredibly a replica of the modern day newspaper account.

Lambs among Wolves—Missionaries in India: is one of the fittest rejoinder to the propaganda and the prejudicial activities of the Christian missionaries in India.

All these three Volumes as also the 1st Volume reviewed earlier bear the stamp of careful editing, and are interspread with a number of art plate by famous artists and photos of the Sister. The Volumes, with excellent printing and get up, though priced moderately are designed to last for a long time.

One, however, feels that these Volumes should have carried subject indices, if not also glossaries for helping those readers who are not familiar with Indian religions and philosophical terminology.

An original thinker of vast erudition and rare insight into things and affairs as she was, Sister Nivedita's works make a stimulating study equally for the religious and the intellectual. Her fervour for man and God going about, all that is beautiful and great, her sacrificial temper, all combined together give all her writings an unfailing lumino-

sity of a rare quality which not only enlivens the reader but inspires in an abiding manner.

These Volumes should be in the libraries of all individuals and institutions devoted to understanding and culture, knowledge and freedom.

DR. B. B. BALIGA

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR 1967-68

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital which forms a part of the activities of the Advaita Ashrama in the district of Almora, came into being as a sheer necessity—in fulfilment of the local needs. The conditions of the villagers, mostly poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that anyone who sees them will be moved to give them some relief. A dispensary was, therefore, started in 1903. Since then, it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from long distance taking 3 or 4 days for the journey.

The Hospital stands within the precincts of the Ashrama, and is under the charge of a monastic member qualified for the work. There is also a qualified doctor. Service is done in the spirit of worship, and irrespective of caste or creed. A great effort is made to keep a high standard of efficiency. In the Hospital there are 23 beds. But, sometimes, arrangements have to be made for a much higher number of indoor patients. The operation room is fitted with up-to-date equipment and there is also a small clinical laboratory. The Hospital provides some recreation facilities to the patients too.

Through the generous help of the U.P. Government the Hospital gets the electricity supply.

In the indoor department 583 patients were admitted during the year. In the outdoor department 15,487 cases were treated of which 9,451 were new.

Needs: Besides donations and gifts towards the general fund, the Hospital needs some permanent fund and some necessary repairs and additions to the present Hospital building.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, LONDON

REPORT FOR 1968

The Centre continued its activities as usual at 54 Holland Park, London W 11, and at the Ashrama at 68 Dukes Avenue, Muswell Hill, London N 10, as also in the provinces. At the Holland Park Ashrama the number of visitors was 3382, and at the Muswell Hill Ashrama 4115; the total number being 7497, excluding attendance at meetings in and outside the city which totalled 5054.

Vedanta for East and West entered its eighteenth year of publication in September, 1968. *Swami Vivekananda in East and West*, a book consisting of a number of essays on the great Swami and his work by some distinguished writers, Indian and Western, was published in his honour in August.

The Centre sold over £1,000 worth of books and photographs; some of the customers are in Europe, New Zealand, Australia, North and South America and Africa.

Swami Ghanananda conducted the Sunday services at the Holland Park Centre on thirty-five occasions. He lectured and answered questions at Sevenoaks school, spoke to a group of sixty people from Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, and represented Hinduism at the Affirmation of Faiths at the Buildhall in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen. The Swami also went to a garden party at Buckingham Palace by invitation of the Lord Chamberlain, and attended the Mauritius Independence celebrations at Westminster Abbey.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and Swami Shivananda were observed as usual, as also Sri Krishna Jayanti, Buddha Dev, Durgashtami and Christmas Eve.