

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXXIV

JANUARY 1969

No. 1



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

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A LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

Ramakrishna Sevashram
Kankhal, 25.3.1912

Dear Sri—,

I duly received your letter dated the 8th March. In spite of myself, due to various reasons, I could not reply to your letter in time....

What you have written about yourself, I think, has been a correct diagnosis about the disease. It is not that it holds good only in regard to yourself; it is the same with every one.

By disregarding our own limitations we obstruct the way of our progress. Of course, I am not saying that there is no need of the limiting circle. It is, however, very important to know, when it is necessary and when it is not:

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥

'For the man of meditation wishing to attain purification of heart leading to concentration, work is said to be the way. For him, when he has attained such concentration, inaction is said to be the way.' (*Bhagavad-Gītā* VI. 3)

What one has to invoke very carefully at one time, at another it is very necessary to sacrifice that very thing. Changed situation calls for changed provision—that is the meaning. Undoubtedly, however, it is extremely difficult to decide on this point.

One thing is certain: if we can become free of concern after surrendering everything to the Lord, we have not then to repent for anything whatsoever. By the Lord's grace everything will be all right—there is no need for worry. Take refuge in the Lord. Take refuge in the Lord. With my love,

Sri Turiyananda

ON LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

[EDITORIAL]

IN THE LIGHT OF GREAT TEACHERS

I

What exactly is a spiritual life?

Strictly speaking, spiritual life means living in the spirit as distinguished from living in the body and mind.

There are two positions about every individual: the apparent man and the real man.

This Mr. so and so, a son, father, husband, who goes about, does his work, earns money, competes in society—in countless ways you may describe him—is the apparent man.

The other position about the same person is that he is pure Spirit, nobody's father or husband, does not work or earns money, does not move, is not born, does not die, and is not qualified by anything. This is the real man.

When one discovers this ultimate fact of existence through direct personal realization, he enters into the true spiritual life. The life which the devotees of God live after having seen Him, that is also true spiritual life.

Now, these two may be said to be the connotations of spiritual life from the absolute standpoint. But normally we do not use the words 'spiritual life' in this absolute sense. We use it in a relative sense.

It has been known from the teachings of the great Masters of the world that there are ways of life through living which one can in due course experientially know the spirit or see God.

Living this life of discipline which will surely eventually lead to direct realization is also called a spiritual life. When we speak here of laying the foundation of a spiritual life, we use the term in the latter sense.

II

The architect may give the plan for a magnificent building. But the engineer has many things to do before he can actually lay the foundation.

(1) First, he has to clear the grounds.

(2) Second, the greater the structure is intended to be, deeper within the earth and in more spacious area the foundation is to be laid.

Those who want to build their spiritual life have also first to clear the grounds on which to build it.

Further, if they desire to build a magnificent spiritual life, a life which is steeped in God, they must lay the foundation deep in life itself and on a comprehensive area.

III

Some aspirants are apt to think that they would not waste time to clear the grounds for building a spiritual life, but would go straight and just build it. And perhaps they can quote examples where people have succeeded in doing so.

What they may not realize is that in some cases most of the clearing of grounds may have been done in a previous life. Or one may have received grace of a world saviour, such as Angulimala in the case of the Buddha Mary Magdalene in the case of Christ, Jagai and Madhai in the case of Sri Chaitanya, and Girish Ghose in the case of Sri Ramakrishna.

These are supreme exceptions of the religious history of man.

You do not start with expecting windfalls if you are a hard-headed aspirant. You go by the ascertained and the prescribed way. You do not go by the way of the gambler.

If you are not for building your house of spiritual life from roof downwards, you must know how to clear the grounds first.

In terms of spiritual life 'clearing the grounds' will mean creating an inner climate.

The *Kātha Upaniṣad* (1.2.24) beautifully sums up the whole requirement in one verse :

'He who has not first turned away from wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued, and whose mind is not at peace, cannot attain Atman. It is realized only through knowledge of reality'.

The first requirement, therefore, is to turn away from wickedness, overt or covert. It is not a posture that is being advocated here but inner penance.

The aspirant must desist from all sinful acts and remove all wickedness from his heart. And he must sincerely live an ethical life. There is no entry into the inner precincts of the spiritual life except through the portals of ethical living.

There is persistent down-grading of ethical living everywhere in the world today in many spheres of life. It is very unfashionable in some quarters to be ethical. Pragmatism, hedonism and dialectical materialism exercise great fascination on many minds.

Notwithstanding all this, there is no getting away from the fact that ethical living is the foundation of spiritual life. There is indeed such a thing as going beyond ethics. That is, however, not to say that you go beyond ethics without starting to be ethical.

One goes beyond ethics only when ethical living has become one's involuntary movement of nervous system as it were.

In Hindu teaching of *sāmānya dharma*¹ or ethical virtue to be practised by all irrespective of caste or stage of life; Buddha's teachings on avoiding ten evils², and in the ten commandments³ of the Old Testament—we have directions how we have to do the ethical living.

In ethical living we have to practise two sets of virtues. One set of virtues may be called self-chastening; the second set as other-regarding.

When properly practised, the first set of virtues chastens our unregenerate self, and the second set helps us to grow in harmonious relationship with others.

In the verse quoted from the *Kātha Upaniṣad* we noticed that it is not enough to only turn away from wickedness; we also require to be tranquil, subdued and peaceful in mind to be able to build our spiritual life.

control; friendliness with all beings; absence of cruelty; contentment,—these form approved conduct for men of all stations of life; observing them duly, one becomes universally benevolent'.

Vide: *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra* (XXII. 15)

²The Buddha said: "All acts of living creatures become bad by ten things, and by avoiding ten things they become good. There are three evils of the body, four evils of the tongue, and three evils of the mind.

"The evils of the body are, murder, theft, adultery; of the tongue, lying, slander, abuse, and idle talk; of the mind, covetousness, hatred and error.

"I exhort you to avoid the ten evils."

Vide: Paul Carus: *The Gospel of Buddha*, The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago and London, 1915, p. 126.

³The Hebrew Decalogue or Ten Commandments are: '1. I, the eternal, am Thy Father. 2. Thou shalt not have other gods before Me. 3. Thou shalt not take God's name in vain. 4. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. 5. Honour Thy Father and Mother. 6. Thou shalt not murder. 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 8. Thou shalt not steal. 9. Thou shalt not bear a false witness against a neighbour. 10. Thou shalt not covet anything that is neighbour's.' Vide: *Old Testament*, Exodus, Chapter 20.

¹'Absence of anger, elation, indignation, avarice, delusion, vanity, and enmity; speaking truth; moderation in eating; refraining from exposing others' weak points; freedom from jealousy; sharing one's good things with others; sacrifice; straightforwardness; gentleness; quietude; self-

Tranquillity and peace which are the prerequisites for spiritual orientation of life, may not be attained as an immediate effect of desisting from evil ways of life. Something more will have to be done.

There are three sets of Buddha's teachings which will be greatly helpful in this regard.

In *Samyutta-Nikāya* the Buddha says that in order to get prepared for meditation, one must get rid of six things : craving for sense pleasures, ill-will, sloth, flurry, worry and suspicion.⁴

Those who do not know how to get rid of these six things cannot have inner tranquillity. They will be always jumpy, nervous, unsteady and tense. They will be unable to control their minds. An uncontrolled mind cannot be concentrated. Without concentration of mind there is no meditation. Without meditation how can there be a spiritual life?

So the Buddha says that in order to get prepared for life of meditation one must get rid of these six things : craving for sense pleasure, ill-will, sloth, flurry, worry, suspicion.

There may be different ways of getting rid of these things. One sure way, however, of getting rid of all these through a single method is to desist from identifying oneself with the body and the mind and think of oneself as pure spirit, what one really is.

This is not an easy medicine to take but an absolutely sure one which will cure us of these six ailments in one stroke.

Those who cannot take this strong medicine, let them take a simple but equally powerful one : let them pray in a simple heart for love of God or bhakti. Bhakti is the sure antidote of all these six things.

"When does the attraction of pleasures of the sense die away? When one realizes the consummation of all happiness and of all pleasure in God—the indivisible, eternal ocean of bliss.

⁴ Vide : Sudhakar Dikshit (Compiler) : *Sermons and sayings of the Buddha*, Chetana, Bombay, p. 47.

Sri Ramakrishna says :

Those who enjoy Him can find no attraction in the cheap, worthless pleasures of the world'.⁵
 'He who has once tasted the refined crystal of sugar candy finds no pleasure in tasting the dirty treacle. He who has slept in a palace will not find pleasure in lying down in a dirty house. The soul that has tasted the sweetness of Divine bliss finds no happiness in the vulgar pleasures of the world'.⁶

Prayer awakens the subtle powers within a man, says Swami Vivekananda. Ill-will, flurry, worry and suspicion which are nothing but signs of weakness are easily taken care of by the awakened power through prayer in an aspirant.

Some of abiding worries and flurries arise from our stubborn refusal to understand and accept certain facts and forces of life.

The Buddha says that in order to create a proper inner climate (of tranquillity and peace) one should accept and contemplate on these five inevitable facts of life :

- (a) Old age will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it.
- (b) Disease will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it.
- (c) Death will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it.
- (d) All things I hold dear are subject to change and decay and separation and I cannot avoid it.
- (e) I am the outcome of mine own deeds, and whatever be my deeds, good or bad, I shall become their heir.⁷

The aspirants who accept whole heartedly these five inevitables of life will have their worries and flurries considerably reduced and they will know how to live in peace with themselves.

While living in peace with oneself is of

⁵ & ⁶ *Saying of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 4, 1965, p. 93, sayings No. 243 and 245.

⁷ Op. cit. p. 49.

singular importance to start in spiritual life, equally so is the need of living in peace and harmony with others. In a place where everyone seems to be against you, where there is no understanding of any sort, but quarrels and dissensions prevail, whatever inner climate you may have created for this life, that will stay largely ineffective, when the outer atmosphere is hostile.

Hence we require to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony around ourselves also. How can we do it? Can we really create such an atmosphere by some deliberate actions? Why not? If we can create quarrels and dissensions by deliberate actions, then why can we not create an atmosphere of harmony and peace also by adopting some measures?

The Buddha teaches in the *Kosambiya sutta* that this can be done by:⁸

- (a) Thoughts of goodwill sincerely harboured,
- (b) Words of goodwill sincerely uttered,
- (c) Sacrificial living as distinguished from acquisitive living.

It is not difficult to have sincere thoughts of goodwill, and sincere words of goodwill for those to whom you are selfishly attached. Commonly people do also sacrifice their personal interests for those whom they consider their own, family-wise, community-wise or country-wise.

But what the Buddha means here by saying 'thoughts of goodwill sincerely harboured' is that one who works for peace and harmony, in him there will be thoughts of goodwill for all without any exception whatsoever. He will be incapable of having thoughts of ill-will for anyone. He will have universal goodwill for all people and in all seasons.

Words which spring from such a heart will always be only words of sincere goodwill.

One who has succeeded in cultivating universal goodwill, his actions cannot but be for universal welfare.

Universal goodwill, however, is not easy to attain. Much self-chastening is necessary for that. Without the quickening of spiritual consciousness and development of good intent it cannot be attained.

There are two prayers in the Vedas which are significant from the standpoint of developing the psychology of universal goodwill for all. One prayer is named the Gāyatri, and the other 'Śiva Saṁkalpa', the 'Hymn of good intent'.

In the Gāyatri, which occurs in the *Rgveda* (III. 62.10), the prayer runs thus:

'We meditate upon the adorable effulgence of the resplendent vivifier, savitar; may he stimulate our intellect and quicken our spiritual consciousness.'

The Hymn of Good Intent (Śiva Saṁkalpa) occurs in the '*Sukla Yajurveda*' (XXXIV).

This hymn on mind and goodness of its intentions reveals a rare spiritual insight of the early Indo-aryans, who rightly found out that without Divine grace expressing itself within us as goodness of intentions, no firm foundation of a spiritual life could really be laid.

So they prayed fervently in this beautiful hymn:

'That Mind, the divine, which when one is wakeful or asleep, reaches far, which is the far-reaching light of all lights, may that mind of mine be of good intent.⁹

'By which the active and the wise perform the duties in sacrifice and intellectual activities, that which is the wonder-being inside the beings, may that mind of mine be of beautiful intent.

'That which is knowledge and fortitude, that which is immortal light within all beings, without which no act is done, may that mind of mine be of auspicious resolve.

⁹ Vide: Dr. V. Raghavan: *The Indian Heritage*, The Indian Institute of World Culture, 6 North Public Square Road, Busavangudi, Bangalore 4, 1956, p. 27-28.

⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

'That which direct men like a good charioteer directing the horses with reins, that which is established in the heart, is immortal and swiftest, may that mind of mine be of good intent.'

Prayers like Gāyatri and Śiva Saṁkalpa lead to clarification of intellect and opening of understanding in a new way.

This new opening of understanding, which automatically reshuffles our sense of values, can alone enable us to have *sanmati*, good intent, *Sanmati* means *mati* or proneness towards that which is *sat* or Real.

It is only after having attained *sanmati*, proneness to the Real, we take the most important step in the ground work of spiritual life, viz, changing the gravity of our life from pleasure-seeking to truth-seeking, or God-seeking.

The vast majority of people who are religious, so called, never take this important step in their life. They use religion for gaining what may be called God's groceries but not God Himself.

In the West and in the East as well, in some quarters religion has been reduced simply to a luxury item. God has become a sanctimonious decorative.

Not until our minds have turned away from God's groceries and have been fixed on God for His own sake, we have started in the spiritual life.

By changing the gravity of his life from pleasure-seeking to God-seeking the aspirant has set his whole life-process in perspective.

Now he has to get the instruments of spiritual practices, *sādhana*, ready. What are these instruments? These are his own body and mind.

This our body-mind complex creates no end of difficulties on our spiritual path. But by observing certain disciplines which Patanjali calls *sārva-bhauṁa mahāvratam*—universal great vows—we can so transform this psychophysical organism that it becomes the most helpful instrument for the realization of God, or attainment of illumination. Such

is the experience and teaching of the spiritual masters.

What are these universal great vows?

Patanjali narrates these vows as the first limb of his *aṣṭāṅga Yoga* or Yoga of eight limbs, calls them by the general name '*yama*'.

In his *Yogasutras* Patanjali defines *yama* as:

'Non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving are called *yama*.'¹⁰

In the next aphorism Patanjali says:

'These, unbroken by time, place, purpose and caste-rules, are (universal) great vows.'¹¹

You may be the follower of any religion, you may have chosen any of the yogas as your path for attaining illumination, but if you intend to advance toward the great goal of life by sure steps of deliberate disciplined living, then in conventional or unconventional form you must practise these universal great vows or the disciplines of *yama*, which we shall now try to understand.

Ahimsa, nonviolence is said to be the supreme form of righteousness, because it presupposes attained excellence in many other virtues like, self-restraint; conquest of anger, hatred and jealousy; goodness of heart; generosity, non-egoism, sincerity of purposes, and determined dedication to a higher law of life.

Violence, in thought, word or deed can only lead to greater violence. Not only that, violence destroys the finer sensibilities in a man and throws his inside into utter confusion. He becomes rough and gruff and quickly manifests many demonical tendencies. His spiritual qualities get shattered.

Whereas the man who is established in non-violence quickly makes spiritual progress. The secret is simple. Violence is awesome wastage of energy. The non-violent man conserves that energy and puts it to a higher purpose. Further, as Patanjali points out:

¹⁰ Patanjala Yoga Sutra II. 30.

¹¹ Ibid., II. 31.

'When a person is established in non-violence, in his presence all enmities cease in others.'¹²

In other words such a person always carries within him a potent power of peace. This peace is spiritually creative not only for the man who is established in non-violence but also for all those who live in that atmosphere.

Satya or truthfulness has no substitute in spiritual life. Without strict adherence to truthfulness the foundation of spiritual life just cannot be laid. The efforts of building of spiritual life without truth will be as successful at any point of time as trying to catch the wind in a net.

In the *Mahābhārata* there is a long eulogy of truth in which it is said:

'Truth is the duty; truth is penance; Truth is Yoga; and truth is the eternal Brahman. Truth is said to be the greatest sacrifice. Everything depends on Truth.'¹³

In this eulogy of truth in the *Mahābhārata* it is pointed out that there are thirteen forms of truth. One who is sincerely devoted to truth manifest all these forms of truth in himself.

The thirteen forms of truth are:

'Impartiality, self-control, non-envy, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, goodness, renunciation, meditation, dignity, fortitude, compassion and non-violence.'¹⁴

In other words all the virtues or spiritual qualities in a man draw their sustenance from the practice of truth. Hence truth is so fundamental for building the spiritual life.

So it is said in the same eulogy in the *Mahābhārata*:

'There is no duty which is higher than truth, no sin more dreadful than untruth. Indeed, truth is the very root of righteousness. Therefore one should never destroy the truth.'¹⁵

You may practise all the virtues in the world, but if you do not practise truth, it is like trying to fetch water in pitcher without a bottom.

Meister Eckhart says in one place: if he were to be given an alternative between keeping truth and keeping God, he would keep truth and let God go! Thereby he meant that if he kept truth, God just could not go, but if he gave up truth he could by no means keep God.

Sri Ramakrishna teaches that truth alone is the austerity for this age of Kali. In explaining this he says that in this age when we are all so much identified with our bodies, we are not capable of practising hard austerities as people of bygone ages were capable of doing. And without austerities, or self-regenerating spiritual action, God can never be realized. So Sri Ramakrishna exhorts us to practise truth in thought, word and deed. The Lord who is *satya-svarupa* or essence of truth, cannot be realized without truth.

And we can very well see why Sri Ramakrishna says that truth is the austerity for the age of Kali. By practising truth you automatically practise all the other virtues, so important for entry into the life of the spirit.

Doubts and objections are of course raised on the plea that it is well-nigh impossible to speak the truth these days and prosper in the world.

If that be your position, well then go and prosper in the world and take also what goes with it worry, flurry, pain and problem going with nervous pleasure, and do not talk of laying the foundation for a spiritual life.

What we must remember is that anytime, anywhere in the world it is possible to practise the truth provided we are ready to pay the price for it.

Those who are not prepared to pay the price for telling the truth are not yet ready

¹² Ibid., II. 35.

¹³ Śānti Parva : CLXII. 5.

¹⁴ Ibid., CLXII. 8-9.

¹⁵ Ibid., CLXII. 24.

for the spiritual life. No amount of sophistry or knocking with the jack-hammer will open to us the portals of spiritual life, unless we are simply and incorrigibly truthful.

At least in India where we worship Rāma, let us not say these words that truth cannot be practised these days.

Let us have the courage to charge our days and nights to conform with the requirements of truth and not change truth into falsehood to conform with our dark days and hideous nights.

Next comes Brahmacharya, continence, a very unfashionable thing to speak about.

But the irrevocable truth stands: the more continent we are the more spiritual we are. And if we want to realize the absolute we must be absolutely continent. How you will do it is your concern. The truth, however, you cannot change to conforming with your weakness.

The continent person is the ruler of his psychophysical organism, whereas the non-continent man is the slave of his psychophysical organism.

These are simple statements of facts which we must be bold enough to acknowledge as facts.

Do not bring down the ideal, says Swami Vivekananda, but dare to rise up to it.

Continence means conservation of energy. This physical energy when conserved, is transmuted into what is called Ojas, spiritual energy. One who has Ojas, develops a new power of comprehension and of the will. And with that power he does his spiritual work.

The simple fact is: the more energy you spend for purposes which man shares with lower animals, the lesser will be your left-over energy for higher purposes.

The spiritual seeker must accept these facts to begin with. Then even the married couple, by Lord's grace, can find their ways of gradually living a continent life.

The other two virtues one is required to practise are *asteya* and *aparigraha*, non-stealing and non-receiving.

One who steals not only overtly but covertly, not only in a blatant manner but also in a subtle way, does so through avarice, greed, temptation and many other degenerate impulses, which are anti-spiritual.

The aspirant desiring to lay the foundation of a spiritual life must have nothing to do with stealing.

We are also advised to practice non-receiving. Non-receiving here means to desist from such receiving for which you have not worked, or which leads you to obligation or degrading self-selling.

Something of the giver comes to you in a subtle way with the gift you receive. You know very well what is happening to India's soul by having to receive even loans, not to speak of gifts. You lose the content of independence which is the direst of calamities. And that creates bondage. You lose a little of your independence when you receive a gift. If you go on desiring so, after a while, upright, straightforward action, practice of truth becomes impossible. The path to freedom is not through losing freedom stage by stage. Hence non-receiving is advised to the aspirant who is the seeker after liberation of the spirit.

Now, it should have been clear to us why Patanjali, says 'yama' or practice of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence and non-receiving of gifts are the universal great vows.

Those who are sincere aspirants of spiritual life, and want to squarely lay the foundation for such a life, must practise 'yama' to begin with.

IV

In spiritual life sometimes there may be windfalls. Lord's special grace may descend on you in an unreasonable way. You may

receive the grace of an almighty man of the Spirit.

But it also may not happen.

He is a foolish man who depends on windfalls and does not work for himself on sure grounds.

What we have said so far, one can do for oneself and prepare the grounds in life like an honest farmer.

Then somebody comes along the way and tells you in a definitive manner what next you have to do for building the spiritual life.

This somebody is the Guru.

Those who have received the grace of their Guru have almost everything on hand.

QUESTIONS OF SPIRITUAL SEEKERS ANSWERED

SWAMI MADHABANANDA

Q: What practical advice can you give for breaking the bonds that bind worldly herds?

A: The practical advice is to see the evil effects of living this kind of life. Things that bind worldly herds, well, they hurt us, they wound us, they obstruct our progress in life. If we remember this fact along with going through these experiences,—that is, we may be subject to temptations sometimes, we may have to yield to different situations, but if, at the same time, we remember that we are lacking something, we lose something by yielding more,—well, that in itself will be an advantageous thing. So the best advice that is generally given in the scriptures is not to jump to the highest goal—because very few can do that, one in a million even cannot do that,—but they advise progressive advancements; in other words to be in the world but to discriminate also. Well, I am enjoying this, or I am thinking I am enjoying this, but along with this there is the reaction also, going hand in hand. They are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. So, if we remember that thing always, then those very attachments to which we are now being subject, will gradually fall away.

It is a part of Maya, and Maya has been likened to somebody who is showing some fun to some other person. If a boy puts on tiger skin and tries to frighten his friend, and if the friend finds out, well, it is not a tiger but his own friend, such and such, wearing a tiger skin, that charm generally does not have any effect. Similarly, if these worldly bondages are perceived by us as such, as what they are, we know that they are bondages, that they are snares for us, we may be in them and we may subject ourselves to them for the time being, but that attitude of awareness, of alertness, will help us out of them in the long run.

It can be illustrated in this way: Suppose a man has fallen into a current. He cannot go across the current, against the current; that requires very much strength, which the person has not. Similarly, in a stream one cannot wade, one cannot swim directly to the shore also—it may be difficult if the current is very strong. But there is a way of coming to the shore by simply diverting the course a little. Instead of going through the middle of the current straight on, if one just keeps the course a little to one side, then the current itself helps to bring us to the shore. It helps there, being added to our own efforts and

that current with our own forces will bring us, to the shore. So here also, if we allow these worldly attachments to have their play, but with our eyes open, 'Well, we are watching you—you are binding me now, but not for all time.' gradually they will loose their attachment and they will loose their force.

Q: 'The world will never see again a brain like his who wrote the *Gītā*, wrote Swami Vivekananda in one of his books. Please explain.

A: What is there to explain in this? In the *Gītā* we find a remarkable breadth of view; so many things are discussed—from the highest *jñāna*, the path of reason, to ordinary matter-of-fact arguments,—so that Arjuna might not miss but follow his duty. So there is a wide range of subjects: there is work, there is devotion, there is mysticism, there are rituals, there is the highest abstraction about the Atman and so on, and the relation of the soul and God. And the whole thing has been composed into a wonderful symphony, as it were. God's infinite grace, the rewards of our efforts, and finally, going beyond the relativities, everything is put in a beautiful way. So Swamiji said that it is a wonderful book. The man who composed the book is called sage Vyāsa. Here Vyāsa was the recorder of what took place in the shape of a conversation between Arjuna and Krishna. Anyway, he was the author, he wrote the *Gita*; to him the *Gita* is attributed. It is a part of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* was written by Vyāsa. So Swamiji says, here in this book, a wonderful display of intellectuality is manifest. That is all.

Q: Is there any other Indian scripture which explains more explicitly than the *Gita* the nature of the Atman?

A: Well, if by scriptures are meant those ancient books, probably the *Bhāgavata*, in some respects, compares favour-

ably with the *Gītā*, and it is a bigger book. But, it lays more stress upon devotion than on any other thing. It is not mere devotion, of course, but devotion mixed with intellectuality, reason and so on, but the great stress is laid upon devotion. Anyway, there are all the Puranas, and what are called sacred books; there are voluminous books, any number of them. And everyone of them, everyone of those books that are called religious, also try to explain these things. But they may not be so successful as the *Gītā*, because in the *Gītā*, in a very compact form, much of the essence of the knowledge is put forth. As Sri Ramakrishna put it, the *Gītā* contains the essence of all Sastras, all scriptures; there is this efficiency of the *Gītā*, the beauty of the *Gītā*. There are other texts, of course; any of the Puranas can help us like that. And if you add together other things, the succeeding things that have come,—you may not class them as scriptures but they are philosophical writings—oh, their number is legion.

Q: In the book, *Thus spake the Holy Mother*, she says, 'Even the injunctions of destiny are cancelled if one takes refuge in God. Destiny strikes off with her own hand what she had written about such a person'. Does this contradict the law of Karma?

A: There is no contradiction. Generally, on the ordinary plane, the Law of Karma operates. We are ordinarily under the operation of the Law of Karma, but when, having performed our duties in a true spirit, we have advanced sufficiently and God is pleased with our activities which we have offered in the way of work, well, then, there He applies His own help, He extends His own hand and takes us by the hand, as it were, so there really God's intervention—you may call it God's grace—begins. And in this case, if a person has taken refuge in God, and that

means at the end of all his works, having performed his duties properly, he finds that man is not independent. God alone is the prime mover and we are like children, as it were, playing in the field, and God is behind us all. When that consciousness comes, then only the operation of the higher law, called grace, begins and then really the shackles of Karma fall off. Whether God compensates these persons or rather takes on Himself some of the evil effects that otherwise would have come on this particular person, we do not know. We do not deal with that. But, simply, even in the ordinary life, we find like that. Suppose a person has done some mistake, something wrong and the punishment is such and such. But if he is well connected, if he otherwise has been a very exemplary person, then the judges generally are disposed to give a light sentence. Something like that.

But here the Holy Mother is referring to entirely different realms of being or existence, or sort of endeavour. In the lower plane it is Karma, and when that is completely gone through, it is transcended, and then God's grace helps us. Just as by taking a thing to the centre of gravity of the earth, all the weight of that thing is lost,—there is no weight whatsoever—, similarly, it is a different operation of the higher law that we come across. So it does not contradict the law of Karma, but, rather it brings us into the realm of a higher law than Karma, God's grace; that is all.

Q : What is meant by the law of one's own being?

A : The law of one's own being means that for which we are really fit, or that which is the essence of one's existence. For everyone there is not the same duty or the same path; wherever one is situated, or whatever level one is on, according to that there are different ways by which he

can guide himself. So, by the law of one's own being is meant a person's samskaras—the tendencies inherited from previous births—, whatever is best operative there, whatever justifies works in that state of existence.

Q : Would you say that meditation is a short-cut to victory over the ego, that otherwise has to be overcome through struggle and suffering?

A : I would not call it a short-cut. Meditation is by itself a very difficult thing. The questioner thinks that struggle and suffering can be avoided through meditation, but it is practically the same thing, that is suffering in another form. That is also struggle. For a great many persons meditation is also struggle, only it is a different way of avoiding many of the evils of life, that is all. Victory over the ego can be achieved through meditation, but through other ways also and all of them, every way, each path that we follow, every effort that we make for the obliteration, for the attenuation of the ego, is painful and entails suffering. Meditation is also one of the means; it also entails its own suffering, but it is an effective means. I would not call it a short-cut, but it is an effective means of obtaining victory over the ego, because there, through meditation, we understand that ego unnecessarily takes credit, inflates itself, as it were, and we become wiser, we act more soberly and with greater sanity.

Q : Should one try to visualize one's Chosen Ideal during meditation?

A : Of course, because that is with what meditation concerns itself. The mind engages itself in so many different things, tries to oscillate, as it were, run after many things, multiple things, at the same moment. So, the Chosen Ideal—that aspect of the divinity which appeals to one, well, that is the Chosen Ideal—we should always seek

to visualize and His presence within us ; or we may even consider ourselves as being immersed in Him, as it were.

Q : Do you think that India is in danger of losing its spiritual heritage with the coming of technology and a better distribution of wealth?

A : Unless one is careful anything can happen anywhere. But I don't think India will ultimately come to this terrible state of things by losing its spiritual heritage.

Spirituality is so deeply ingrained in India that even improvements in technology and better distribution of wealth will enable them to profit by that ancient heritage of spiritual teachings all the more. Because, at its first moment, probably, when a tidal wave comes many things happen but very soon there is again adjustment, and I believe that even scientific improvements and technology and distribution of wealth will not sap our spiritual inwardness.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: HIS RELIGION

PROF. SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKHERJI

'I do not believe in a religion or God which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth'.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda was born during a period of transition in the history of his land and people. Revolution was in the air. The soul of India had begun to awake after an age-long slumber. The sleeper was stirring after a long night, 'blinking away his drowsiness, and stretching his limbs with all the eager, impatient spirit of a youth approaching manhood'.

It fell to Vivekananda's lot to breathe new life and energy into his long hibernating but gradually awaking people. His mission was indeed much wider in scope. It was nothing less than the spiritual regeneration of humanity all over the world. But how was the mission to be fulfilled? What was to be the starting point?

The Swami found answer to these questions after his great 'periplus' for two years (1891-93) from the snow-capped Himalayas to the land's end at Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) and then for three years round the world (1893-96).

His wanderings revealed to him 'the tragic face of the present day, the God struggling in humanity, the cry of the peoples of India and of the world for help, and the heroic duty of the new Oedipus, whose task it was to deliver Thebes from the talons of the Sphinx or to perish with Thebes.'¹

Vivekananda's mission and line of action were finally chosen at Kanyakumari in 1892 and he made up his mind to dedicate himself to the service of suffering humanity. He realized like the Vaishnava bard of medieval Bengal that humanity, which is one and indivisible, is the highest truth and he decided to offer himself as a sacrifice at the altar of degraded, suffering and downtrodden humanity, whom he called 'Daridra Nārāyana'

¹ Romain Rolland: *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1947, p. 23.

(God in the Poor). The service of 'Daridra Nārāyana' in a spirit of humility and renunciation became the first tenet of his religious faith. He declared with all the emphasis at his command: 'I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, "doing good to others, (silently) like the spring"—this is my religion.'² The Swami emphasized instead public salvation, which meant for him the regeneration of the motherland and the resurrection of its spiritual powers.

Vivekananda was undoubtedly a friend of humanity in distress. But doubting Thomases—and there are many—seek to minimize the Swami's greatness and argue that suffering humanity meant to him only the suffering *Indian* humanity. If he was really a friend of distressed, down-trodden and disinherited humanity all over the world, they may argue, why did he give all his time and energy to the suffering millions of India alone? The answer is not far to seek. For one thing, duty, like charity, must begin at home. One's immediate neighbours should be one's first concern. It was humanly impossible for one Vivekananda, however great he might be, to wipe every tear from every eye, to remove each thorn from the path of every way-farer. Vivekananda, therefore, began his mission of mercy with his own countrymen in distress and put his whole soul into their service. It is a pity that the world does not produce Vivekanandas in shoals, that a Vivekananda is not born in every generation. For another, Vivekananda never sought to emphasize that he was different in any way from others who belonged to one or another group of underprivileged, submerged humanity even when

such an emphasis might be helpful to him. Thus, after his name had struck the headlines in the New World, during the 1890's, a section of the Negroes there claimed him to be one of them. The Swami did never contradict. There were occasions when American hotels showed him the door because of his complexion. A disclosure of his nationality and identity might have obtained for him the hospitality—paid of course—sought. It was never tried. We have it on unimpeachable authority that a sizable portion of what Vivekananda earned by his lectures in the United States was given in charities in that country.³

A great lover of humanity, Vivekananda was essentially a man of religion. But religion did not become in his case, as it does in many, 'an asocial quest for God or the Absolute' nor was he concerned far more with his own salvation than with the good of the society. Religion and worship, to be genuine, must be reflected in one's everyday life. Selfless love is the real elixir of life. That is why Paramahansa Ramakrishna enjoined loving, selfless and respectful service of God's creatures.

A harmonious development of the body, mind and soul, which alone can build up an integrated personality, is the essential precondition of evolving genuine spirituality. But the body, which is the receptacle of both mind and soul, must be taken care of first. Vivekananda, therefore, launched a crusade against the most serious material wants, viz, those of food and clothes, of his suffering countrymen and women. That is why he concentrated on humanitarian work in India. The Ramakrishna Mission, which owes its existence to the Swami's inspiration, stands today as the living embodiment

² *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1948, p. 190.

³ Marie Louise Burke: *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1958, pp. 168-9.

of his ideal of the spiritual regeneration of humanity through physical, mental and spiritual betterment. It has been in the forefront of all missions of mercy in India for the better part of a century. It has been doing valuable educational work as well and runs a number of schools, colleges and polytechnics.

Social progress and uplift depend on education and a sound system of education is the *sine qua non* of the one as well as of the other. The Swami had a poor opinion of the system of education in the India of his days. Nor would he think very differently if he were alive today. It specialized in bringing out 'branded bales of standardized commodity'. He wanted instead the re-construction of Indian 'intellect by spreading a real knowledge of Sanskrit', the language of Indian culture, by an integration of 'Western science in it, and by reviving the Indian universities so that they might produce men rather than diplomats and officials.' Education, according to him, was 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. It was to Vivekananda not the 'mere study of material sciences and turning out things of everyday use by machinery' but the discovery of the solution of the problems of life.⁴ The objective was to be achieved by a system of training 'by which the current and expression of will were brought under control' and by a combination of the sciences of the West 'with the Vedanta' 'brahmacharya' (continence) as the guiding motto, and also shraddhā (reverence) and faith in one's own self.⁵

The physical mental and spiritual well-being of man is the true aim of religion. Religion must be practical. To see Śiva, the Lord in Jīva, man, is the best form of religion. Vivekananda's love for suffering humanity welled out of his plenary Vedantic experience that existence is one and indivisible. This experience was the bed-rock of his religion. His religion, therefore, took the form of reverence for life. He aimed at serving the bodies as well as the souls, bodies first, of the down-trodden masses ground down by centuries of social, economic and political injustice and exploitation. Two square meals a day, a shirt on the back and a roof overhead was to be given to each and everyone of India's hungry millions. Their lost sense of self-respect and their self-confidence were to be restored by man-making education. They were first to be taught to walk with their heads erect and their chests out. Then and then only could spiritual regeneration be thought of. Vivekananda, essentially a man of religion, never lost sight of the ideal of God-realization, the realization of his identity with Brahman (the Absolute, Universal Soul) through the perfection of the divinity already in him. But he wanted to carry the less fortunate along with him. It stands to his credit that he neglected neither God-realization nor the service of God's creatures. To the last he maintained an admirable balance between a burning love of God and the suffering humanity. But when equilibrium was no longer possible, he would sacrifice everything else to the wails of 'poor, suffering humanity'. Time and again did he declare in emphatic unambiguous terms that he desired to be born again and again to serve God in man— '...And may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the

⁴ *Selections from Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1957, p. 479.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.⁶

⁶ *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1948, p. 399.

WHAT INSPIRES ME MOST IN HOLY MOTHER'S LIFE

VI

SARAH N. DAVID

What inspires me most in Holy Mother's life besides her utter humility, her patience, and her life of service, is her great, compassionate Mother-heart. Those of us who know of Holy Mother are indeed blessed to have before us always the picture of a supremely endowed spiritual woman who lived among us and showed by her example how our lives should be lived. More important, however, Mother showed us a side of the Godhead that is little known, and that is the great, compassionate Mother-heart of the Lord that is ever ready to shower us with Unconditioned Love. The heart of man craves and is continually seeking to find somewhere, somehow this great Love that lays down no conditions. He searches for it all his life, knowingly or unknowingly, but the loves he knows here in this world, all have their qualifiers—certain conditions must be met before that love can be bestowed, certain attitudes must be maintained, otherwise that love disappears entirely. Only with God are we always accepted; if we but look in His direction, we find His promise of an unchanging Love awaiting us, without questions, without qualifiers.

Holy Mother demonstrated this quality of God's Love in her life. She accepted all who came to her asking for help or for initiation. Both Swami Brahmananda and Swami Premananda were amazed that

Mother accepted even the 'poison' that they could not accept. She looked upon all as her very own and she poured her love unstintingly on all. Even if a man was a thief, like Amzad, or an alcoholic, like Padmabinode, if he called her Mother, she could not refrain from showering her love upon him.

When late one night Padmabinode, under the influence of drink and wanting to see Mother, sang a hymn out in the street below her window, she opened the shutters and looked out, to his great joy. Later when chided by the devotees, she said, 'I cannot contain myself when he calls on me in that way.'

When Amzad, the thief, returned after a long absence, she greeted him lovingly, and when he explained to Mother that he had been in jail for stealing cows, she said, 'Ah, me. I have been really worried.' When he brought some plantains to Mother to offer to the Master and asked if she would accept them, she said, 'Certainly I will, my dear. Why should I not, since you have brought them for the Master.' When a woman devotee rebuked her for it, she said, 'I know who is good and who is not. To err is human, but how few know how to lead an erring man!'

These are only a few of the many examples of her great love and compassion. From the very first, this is what attracted

me most to Mother. I feel that this Unconditioned Love is what modern man is really searching for; it is the one big need of this age, particularly here in the West. Modern man, having acquired all the external necessities, has yet to find that one cohesive quality or force, without which his life is incomplete and most unhappy. This Love demonstrated by Mother will surely draw mankind more and more, as time goes by, to the feet of the Lord. Partaking of that Love, man will become a changed being, for who, having tasted even a little of that nectar, can remain the same small being? That unchanging, unconditioned Love changes and reconditions man, pushes aside or destroys all contrary conditions, expands and uplifts his mind and heart, so that not only does he contain a portion of that Divine Love, but himself becomes a source of that same love for others.

It is the promise of that unchanging, unconditioned Love which I find so inspiring. It is there waiting for me, if I can only find Her, the Mother. I want to spend my days in an effort to discover Mother and live close to her, to partake of that Divine Love, and if there is nothing in me to impede it, I want to have the joy of letting it flow to others.

VII

ANNA NYLUND

How does one narrow down the totality of virtues and attributes that is The Holy Mother to only one that you can say inspires you most? One cannot bring her to mind without having all her magnificent qualities come crowding in—her all-consuming love for all mankind; her compassion for all creatures; her utter renunciation; her unselfish service to all; her absolute inability to find fault with anyone; her purity manifest even as a small child

of five when she looked at the moon and prayed: 'O God, even the moon has spots on it; but let my heart be absolutely spotless'; her tremendous spirituality, hidden for the most part, but which one catches a glimpse of when learning that such giants of spirituality as the Swamis Vivekananda and Brahmananda would tremble with a high spiritual emotion when in her presence; her perfected same-sightedness; and one could go on and on. Just how does one choose one quality as most inspiring from such an illustrious list? Surely not an easy thing to do, but to me it is always Holy Mother's complete and absolute inability to find fault with anyone that I find most inspiring. Perhaps this quality is inspiring to me because I know, oh, how I know, what a difficult thing it is to not find fault, and because it is a practice which anyone can work at unremittingly everyday until his last day on this earth, and because as a natural consequence of this practice, love for all beings will grow spontaneously in one's heart.

Once when Golap-Ma was scolding a maid servant, Holy Mother asked her the reason for it and Golap-Ma said in a pique, 'Mother, what is the good of telling you. You cannot see the defects of others.' How elevating and inspiring was Holy Mother's mild reply: 'Well, Golap, there is no want of people to see the faults of others. The world will not come to a standstill if I am otherwise.' Here indeed is an example for all who sincerely yearn for the higher life. Surely if only a small number of people would earnestly work at not finding fault, their influence would be felt by those around them and the effect would spread as ripples in a pond when a pebble is thrown into the water. If just a small number of people could look at others without first having a barrier go up to be at the ready to find fault because the colour of the other person's skin was different, or

because his religious beliefs were different, or because he belonged to a different political party, or for some utterly non-sensical reason as the length of one's hair, would not there be more harmony not just in one's own family, and in one's own community, and in one's own country, but between all nations of the world as well?

It would seem as though Holy Mother herself considered the practice of not finding fault to be of the utmost importance to all when it is recalled that five days before her passing she said to a woman devotee known as 'mother of Annapurna': 'But I tell you one thing—if you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a

stranger, my child; the whole world is your own!'

This is often referred to by Holy Mother's biographers as her last message not only to the 'mother of Annapurna' but to the world. So let us either as devotees of the Holy Mother or as citizens of the world take up the challenge and become wholeheartedly and dedicatedly engaged in this practice of not finding fault, and in the practice of correcting our own faults. And if any inducement is required, Holy Mother's promise of peace with oneself as a result of this practice should be inducement enough, for is there anyone in this world who has not at one time or another wished for and longed for peace of mind?

THE RATIONAL FAITH MANKIND NEEDS TODAY

SWAMI RASAJNANANDA

I

To the modern agnostic, religion is superfluous and dispensable, being antagonistic to the scientific and rational temper. Religion is even held as dangerous inasmuch as it prevents us from facing realities and shouldering responsibilities, and gives rise to fratricidal feuds. The tradition-centred and dogma-bound religion of the West being out of tune with the time spirit of today is finding it hard to face the general challenge that science has made religion out of date. Based on observed or experienced data as they are, truths of science are believed to be exact and empirical whereas those of religion are not so. The present trend therefore is towards the integrity of accepting scientific knowledge and not of non-empirical or mythical illusions of religion. This trying situation

has set religious leaders in the West to serious thinking. The hypothesis of God, it is argued, either as an explanation of the universe or as an answer to man's sufferings is unnecessary and meaningless. The theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, wrote :

'It is becoming evident that everything gets along without God, and just as well as before. As in the scientific field, so in human affairs generally, what we call "God" is being more and more edged out of life, losing more and more ground.' 'He wrote from prison : "Honesty demands that we recognize that we must live in the world, as if there were no God".'¹

¹ Quoted by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in *Religion in a Changing World*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1967, p. 55.

As for India, in the course of two decades and two years of Independence, religion has tended to be relegated to a secondary position as of little consequence in the matter of politics or society. It is even looked at with suspicion because of its association with movements of communalistic, anti-socialistic or anti-national bias. With all his piety, the common man mistakes religion for magic and miracle, local custom and practice, caste and sect. Entrenched Pharisees and Sadducees of religion also continue to repel many good-hearted people. There is demand for more and more secularization.

II

Competent thinkers do not, however, view this religious predicament with dismay and despair. As a part of the historical process, this malaise is regarded as a passing phase and travail of a new order devoid of deceit and make-believe. The growing secularization of the world is attributed to the stifling of freedom of enquiry of truth in the sphere of religion. Ancient Greece which laid the foundations of natural science for Europe by initiating the methodology of analysing exploring and testing everything in the light of reason, was not famous for religious genius. Though Christianity gave to Europe a sure sense of religion, it injected religious bigotry which nurtured narrowness and obscurantism, throttling the spirit of free religious enquiry and adventure. The period of the last four hundred years is marked not only by growth in political freedom, economic prosperity, scientific advancement and social reform, but also by a slow and sure decay of traditional religion and morality.

Man has achieved unprecedented conquest in the frontiers of knowledge of nature and is on the threshold of landing on the moon. Paradoxically, however, he

has not adequately attempted to conquer his internal nature with the result that he is subjected to tension, conflict, imbalance and insecurity and suffers from mental illnesses, despite abundance of affluence. The technique of heroic conquest of internal nature pertains to the realm of religion. C. G. Jung observed :

'I should like to call attention to the following facts. During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me. I have treated many hundreds of patients, the larger number being Protestants, a smaller number Jews, and not more than five or six believing Catholics. Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. This of course has nothing whatever to do with a particular creed or membership of a church.'²

If civilization is to be saved we have to recapture the true spirit of religion. One is able to see the point in Swami Vivekananda's warning more than seventy years ago that the whole of western civilization would crumble to pieces if there was no spiritual foundation. Equally forcefully he warned that if India gave up spirituality, dire would be her future.

III

'We need a rational faith', said Dr. S.

² C. G. Jung *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., London, Ninth impression, 1947, p. 264.

Radhakrishnan, 'to sustain a new order of life and rescue us from our mental fag and spiritual anxiety.'³ This rational faith is already in existence. And this is known as Vedanta. It adopt a rational attitude in the matter of religion. Being non-dogmatic and non-creedal, it has an universal appeal to men of reason. Scientific in its approach, it does not take things for granted but constantly seeks and studies truth with alertness, open mind and sincere endeavour. Rationalistic in its outlook, it employs reason in the discovery and verification of truth as far as reason can go. As Vedantic experience lies beyond the realm of reason, there is adequate reason why one has to transcend reason. It may, however, be noted that one has to follow reason up to the last point that reason can reach. Thus we find Vedanta consistently rational.

It is a sign of strength of Vedanta that no single prophet or group of prophets can claim to have founded the Vedantic faith at any particular point of time. A galaxy of prophets or seers of spiritual truths have contributed their share of discoveries and experiences to enrich and vivify Vedanta at different periods according to diverse needs. As a matter of fact, Vedanta is not based on persons but on eternal spiritual principles. Speaking on Krishna who is honoured as a great Vedantic authority, Swami Vivekananda said in his lecture on the Sages of India: 'Krishna is not the authority of the Vedas, but the Vedas are the authority of Krishna himself. His glory is that he is the greatest preacher of the Vedas that ever existed.'⁴ Evidently Vedanta cannot fall to pieces even if historical research were to question the historicity of Vedantic prophets.

³ Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: *The World's Unborn Soul*, Oxford University Press, 1936, p. 18.

⁴ Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Vol. III. 1955, p. 249.

Vedantic truths concerning God, soul and salvation are universal and hold good for all time whether we discover them or not. It reflects the wisdom of India that neither church nor state nor society inhibited the free search for truth in the domain of religion. With a passion characteristic of an explorer, with a dispassionate and critical mind expected of a scientist and with a heart purified of all dross of anger, greed and lust, the ancient Vedantist scaled peak after peak until he reached the Everest of Advaitic wisdom. As Swami Vivekananda wrote in his paper on Hinduism, read in the Parliament of Religions (1893): 'From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion.'⁵ One can find in Vedanta the spiritual ideals of different religions. Vedanta is so broad-based, universal in its outlook, and resourceful that it can supply the spiritual need of every man, woman and child under the sun.

IV

Vedanta is not so much a revelation as an effort to unveil layer after layer of man culminating in an inner experience of the soul's perfect divinity and identity with Oversoul, call it God, or Brahman or by any other name. In its functional process, it is an adventure of self-discovery and fulfilment of man's life in a changing world. Vedanta centres round actual experience, direct and immediate perception of the Divine. It does not feed us on empty words, vain arguments, priests' promises, schoolmen's casuistries, church's

⁵ Ibid., Vol. I. p. 4.

dogma and doctrines. Rather it warns us against ratiocination of logic, intellectual gymnastics and even mere study of scriptures. "The Atman cannot be attained by the study of the Vedas or by intelligence or by much hearing of sacred books."⁶ The Vedas are indeed bold when they themselves declare the insufficiency even of the study of the Vedas in attaining the Atman. A man without realization is spiritually a child, knowing little of God or religion, even though he is highly intellectual and is well versed in all the scriptures of the world. Religion is the attaining of a state of illumination, realization of God, being and becoming divine. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'religion is a question of fact, not of talk. We have to analyse our own souls and to find what is there. We have to understand it and to realize what is understood. That is religion.'⁷ Religion is a fact of experimentation and experience as is evident from the lives of the sages to this day. In the face of these evidences, modern science to be true to itself has either to extend its area of experimentation or to suspend its judgement lest it should become narrow and dogmatic.

What is the nature of the truth that is realized? It is realized as the innermost Self of man and Truth behind the universe, as the eternal Subject, as the undying Witness of the ever changing and mutable phenomena. It transcends the psychophysical awareness of man; rather It transcends the whole range of our empirical consciousness of waking, dream and deep sleep states. In fact, it cannot be described in words nor conceived by the mind. It cannot be made an object of knowledge.

The Upaniṣad says: "The eye does not

go thither, nor speech nor the mind. We do not know It; we do not understand how anyone can teach It. It is different from the known; It is above the unknown. Thus we have heard from the preceptors of old who taught it to us."⁸ That is why It is sometimes described by sheer silence. Sri Śankarācharya declares in his commentary on the Brahma Sūtras (III. ii. 17) that Bādhva being questioned about Brahman by Bāshkalin, became silent after saying to Bāshkalin: 'Learn Brahman, O friend.' Then on a second and third questioning, Bādhva replied: 'I am teaching you indeed, but you do not understand. Silence is that Self.' In view of the difficulty of describing It, the scriptures can give us only a very distant hint of It. They adopt negative method too. "The Self is that infinite entity which has been described as "Not this, Not this". The Self is incomprehensible, for It is never comprehended by the intellect. The Self is imperishable for It never perishes. The Self is unattached for It never gets attached to any object. The Self is unfettered for It is never pained nor suffers misery."⁹

The acme of Vedantic experience is that Atman is Brahman, that the Self is verily the Supreme Spirit. What is the benefit accruing from realization of Self as Brahman? A man who brings himself to the state of realization transcends all human limitations, sorrows and ills, and becomes immortal. The *Mundaka Upaniṣad* (III. ii. 9) says: 'He who knows the Supreme Brahman verily becomes Brahman... He overcomes grief, he overcomes evil; free from the fetters of the heart, he becomes immortal.' He becomes fearless. "This great unborn Self is verily undecaying, immortal, undying and fearless Brahman. Brahman is indeed devoid of fear.

⁶ *Katha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 23.

⁷ Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Vol. II. p. 163.

⁸ *Kena Upaniṣad*, I. iii. 4.

⁹ *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. iv. 22.

He who knows this unborn Self as described above becomes verily fearless Brahman.¹⁰ Absolute liberation from ignorance and illusion, from desire and death, from the many fetters which shackle a man on different fronts is the great gain of one who realizes Brahman before death. 'If a man is able to realize Brahman here, before the falling asunder of his body, then he is liberated.'¹¹ But great and grave are malediction and misfortune of a man who does not realize the Self in this human life. 'If a man knows Atman here, he then attains the true goal of life. If he does not know It here, a great destruction awaits him.'¹² In the ultimate analysis, spirituality is the panacea for the ills that afflict the modern man. Spiritual outlook on life will make him strong and fearless and give him peace that passeth understanding and joy that knows no waning.

V

A pertinent and practical question is likely to arise: granted that spirituality is the panacea for modern ills and that God realization is the supreme goal that is hinted above, can everyone realize God and enjoy eternal joy? The spiritual teachers reply that everyone can, wherever he is, India, America or Russia and whatever his calling, creed, colour and race, for there is in everyone the faculty to dive deep within himself and come into communion with the Divinity. Again a doubt might creep in as to why ordinarily a man does not exercise that faculty and thereby foregoes the obvious benefits. This is because of sheer ignorance, resultant of indifference to spiritual values, preoccupation with the affairs of the world, ambition, greed and inordinate passion.

Should one then evade the duties of the world, renounce one's hearth and home, kith and kin, possession and property and retire in a cave or forest in order to lead a spiritual life? It is true that renunciation is the very breath of religion. However, it is more often than not, misunderstood and misrepresented. Renunciation, according to Swami Vivekananda, is not in leaving the world and fleeing to the forest, but in giving up the erroneous conception of the world and seeing the world as it is, that is, as God. Modern man with his various preoccupations is wary of nothing so much as renunciation and so fights shy of taking to religion. This is due to misapprehension of religion. There are instances in the Upaniṣads of religion having been practised and Brahman realized by Kṣatriya kings who were busier men than absolute monarchs, let alone modern men with plenty of leisure. In modern times the life of the great Vedantist Swami Vivekananda was one of incessant activity. Inactivity or evasion of duty is not the ideal of Vedanta, but intense activity in the midst of eternal calmness. Our duties cannot therefore stand on the way of our spiritual aspirations.

For correct comprehension and practice of renunciation which is so essential in the life of spirit, the first line of *Īśā Upaniṣad*. 'all this—whatever exists is this changing universe—should be covered by the Lord', will stand us in good stead. Vedanta does not ask us to denounce the world but to deify it. To quote Swami Vivekananda:

'We have to cover everything with the Lord Himself, not by a false sort of optimism, not by blinding our eyes to the evil, but by really seeing God in everything. Thus we have to give up the world, and when the world is given up, what remains? God. What is meant? You can have your wife; it does not mean that you are to abandon her, but that you are

¹⁰ Ibid., IV. iv. 25

¹¹ *Katha Upaniṣad* II. iii. 4

¹² *Kena Upaniṣad* II. 5

to see God in the wife. Give up your children ; what does that mean? To turn them out of doors, as some human brutes do in every country? Certainly not. That is diabolism ; it is not religion. But see God in your children. So, in everything. In life and in death, in happiness and in misery, the Lord is equally present. The whole world is full of the Lord. Open your eyes and see Him. This is what Vedanta teaches.¹³

He further elucidates the concept and practice of the renunciation of the world to be the giving up of the world as we think of it, as we know it, as it appears to us and knowing that it is God alone. What will be the result if we lead our lives with this attitude of putting God in all our thoughts, feelings and desires, in everyone, in everything, everywhere? Of course we live in the world facing the realities and shouldering our responsibilities ; but this inner approach to thoughts and things gradually transforms the world we live in from a hideous hellish one to a blissful one filled with God. If this is said to be a practical way of spiri-

¹³ Swami Vivekananda : *The Complete Works*, Vol. II. p. 146.

tual life it is because men and women have lived in this way and the fullness of the truth. We may not meet with success in the beginning, but perseverance and sincerity will ultimately conquer.

VI

The despair and despondency, the uncertainty and unrest, and the torment and torture that are writ large on the brow of modern man will all melt like mist before the rays of rising sun if he but makes room for the radiant rays of the liberating sun of spiritual knowledge in the dark cave of his heart. Never before perhaps was this darkness deeper than it is today. When the darkness is deep, the distant stars shine to steady our staggering steps. One can discern a glimmer of hope, an indirect and indistinct manifestation of the unifying, liberating Self in man's struggle for freedom, equality and fraternity and his frank questioning of the existence of God. But is it not preferable in the interest of humanity to explore the defying internal nature of man to its depth and reach the very centre of harmony and perfection directly and deliberately, consciously and concertedly?

ON BEING OURSELVES

SRI B. K. NEMA

About two thousand years back a question was raised : 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world but lose his soul?' The question itself suggests a negative answer. This question and its answer are more relevant and meaningful today. It is a much more important problem now than, what it might have been during the lifetime of Jesus.

Today man has gained the world. He has unravelled the mysteries of the

universe. He has amazing control over the forces of nature. The earth has become too small for him. New worlds are being explored. But, man has remained a mystery to himself. He has little control over himself. Man's control over the forces of nature has posed a threat to the world. But, the threat posed by the lack of control over himself is fraught with far more disastrous consequences.

One thing responsible for this is, the

tremendous disparity between advancements in the scientific and technological fields on the one hand and humanities and social sciences on the other. This disparity has acquired catastrophic proportions. Attention to this fact was drawn when outstanding thinkers of the world took stock of the advancements made in the various fields of knowledge during tercentenary celebrations of the Harvard University in 1936.

However, it is not mere disparity which matters, but what causes concern is the trend that has emerged consequent to the scientific and technological developments in the present century. The developments particularly in the fields of physiology, life sciences, medicine and mechanics seem to support a mechanical concept of man. The vital functions in man are purely mechanical in nature and depend entirely on the suitability of the organs. So, the life span can be increased with overhauling of the parts in the body. Successful transplants of the eye, ear, kidney and the heart indicate that greater miracles are yet to come. May be, the day is not far off when even brain transplants would take place. Such machines e.g. heart-lung-machine, have come into existence which may perform vital functions for a man and keep him alive for quite some time.

Another aspect of this development pertains to various kinds of machines and gadgets which are able to accomplish various mechanical and mental tasks with a far greater efficiency and accuracy than human beings. The result of all this is that we rely more on machines than man. They are now predominant in our life and living. Man shaped the machines and now the machines are shaping his destiny. Man, it would appear, stands today completely shorn of his dignity and divinity. He has lost his soul in the mechanical rut of our times and become a cog in the machine.

As if this was not enough, economists, political thinkers and sociologists started developing such theories and initiating such movements which turned the individual into a virtual non-entity. More and more importance came to be attached to the group, institutions, state and nation. The individual was lost in the masses. Under movements like socialism, communism, fascism, nationalistic upsurge etc. the individual was completely at a loss. The tremendous force of propaganda and public opinion has reduced freedom of thought and action into mere words without any real meaning. The mass crushes out the insight and reflection that are still possible with the individual. Individual has been reduced to a mere social unit, he has become more and more a function of the society.

These scientific and sociological trends may be quite appealing because they have the touch of modernity in them. However, they are far from being thorough-going and true. The mechanical concept of man does not go deep enough. It may tell us about the organization within the body, the way in which the complicated vital functions are carried. It may even tell us a good deal about the mental processes too. Yet, the most fundamental principle which makes all this possible remains unexplained. This view therefore has been well compared with the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark in it. Likewise, the sociological picture looks drab and unimpressive as the individual gets lost in the masses. A people however are not just a million zeros huddled together but each constituent is a person. The current unhealthy trend can only be counteracted by emancipation of the individual.

We have gained a world but lost our souls, our freedom and bliss. To regain that freedom and bliss the individual has to realize his importance, explore and enlarge

his real powers. Instead of being 'Walking-talking-living-machines' we have to be 'Persons'.

But, what is personality? Psychology defines it as the psychophysical complex characteristic of an individual. We are a blending of the physical and psychical forces. In man the psychical faculties are more developed than in other beings. He has acquired them through aeons of evolutionary process. Physically man is the weakest creature at the time of birth but has tremendous mental potentialities concealed in his being. His well-being therefore consists in the gradual unfoldment of these potentialities. The body makes us subject to various needs, cravings and passions. The enlargement of mental faculties opens up new channels of activities. Thereby man is able to experience creative enjoyment and freedom. This indicates the need of physical discipline for mental development.

Modern psychology seems to make no difference between the enlargement of mental powers and the development of human personality. They are correlated processes. A psychologist understands personality only in terms of mental traits. Personality evaluation is based upon the measurement of intelligence, assessment of emotional attitudes, capacity to think clearly and accurately, ability to make friends and win people etc. Likewise all personality improvement programmes aim at infusing self-confidence, assertiveness, emotional equilibrium, creative interests etc. in a man. The technique of personality development involves tapping the source of immense energy viz. the unconscious, with wise discretion, as and when required. The conscious mind must keep the unconscious well within control. A balance must be struck between them. The energies of the unconscious should not be permitted to fritter away in useless activi-

ties. Disintegration of the personality sets in when the unconscious usurps the ruling functions disturbing the harmony and equilibrium between the man and the world.

It appears then, that psychology has got the key to happiness and prosperity as it tells us how we can become persons by enlarging the mental faculties. There is no doubt that psychology can do much good to man but it too suffers from serious limitations. Firstly, because it fails to provide all that man aspires for and secondly, the applications of psychology, if indiscreet, are fraught within very dangerous consequences.

More often than not, people take up personality improvement programmes on petty mundane considerations. The gains achieved through them are not of far-reaching consequences. Suppose a man develops his mental powers so that he is able to tell the square or the cube root of any number in a split second or is able to read others' minds like an open book. He is certainly an extraordinary man, perhaps a genius. But, it may well be asked, whether his fantastic mathematical ability or telepathic powers will enable him to overcome the fear of death and annihilation? Would it be possible for him to show the world the path for the removal of suffering and misery? Would he thereby bring about a significant decrease in the incidence of crime and violence? Could he bring us nearer to the goals of world peace and universal brotherhood? Hardly do we need a second thought to see that we dare not answer in the affirmative. It shows, therefore, that mere expansion of mental faculties is not enough, it leaves much to be desired.

For the second point there is ample evidence in the annals of history. The despots and tyrants of history had extremely dynamic and magnetic personalities. They were highly ambitious. They all had indo-

mitable will-power and endless sources of energy. They were all master psychologists who led millions of people. They shook the world and changed its face by their deeds. They were demi-gods in their times. But their accomplishments have been only wars and misery, death and devastation, intrigues and concentration camps. Humanity will never forgive them. We had had enough with them.

On the other hand we all wish that Christ, Buddha or Gandhi be born again to show us the way to peace and happiness. Their greatness is far more admirable though they held no sceptres in their hands or crowns over their heads. Why this difference? The answer is not difficult to find. They had faith in the eternal values of life. They had realized that the inner spirit in men is one and the same and so truth, non-violence and universal brotherhood were the principles on which our lives should be based. Because of their faith and realization they worked for the good of humanity and their lives will serve as beacon lights for generations to come.

Thus, psychology has an impact upon personality improvement and fruition of mental potentialities but there are both desirable and undesirable channels of development. It is here that philosophy, religion and spirituality have important roles to play. They indicate the desirable channels of personality development. We would be lame without psychology but would remain blind indeed without philosophy and religion. Philosophy and religion give purpose and direction to life.

Since we are ignorant of the true purpose of life we pay more attention to superficialities and trifles. We get attached to things and lose our freedom. We cultivate a false sense of values and take pride in it. We attach too much importance to worldly achievements of money, position, prestige

and so on. We have lost ourselves in the world. Spirituality enjoins upon to turn towards the inner and real Self.

Man has a natural weakness for the pleasant and so he neglects the good. The realization of the good requires that the outgoing consciousness be turned inwards. This is the first step in spiritual upliftment. Indian thinkers have discussed to the minutest details the various steps involved in the psycho-spiritual evolution of man which culminates in self-realization.

This self-realization must not be misunderstood as self-aggrandizement or ego-satisfaction. It is not the empirical self whose fulfilment is sought, but it is the inner self which is the same as the ultimate Reality. The empirical self has to be renounced to realize the universal Self. This is the meaning of the paradoxical expression 'die to live' to which much importance was attached in Christian ethics. The narrow empirical self or the ego must die to achieve a life of bliss and peace.

Religion and spirituality have been very much misunderstood. One of the reasons for this is that various abominable practices and customs, modes of worship and living have been advocated in the name of religion. Various creeds have come into existence. But such things are merely matters of social necessities. They do not liberate a man but bind him instead. Spirituality when truly understood does not involve an abnegation of the world but of worldliness.

The essence of religion and spirituality is a faith in something nobler and higher, an ideal which is accepted as the consummation of Truth, beauty and goodness. This is the theoretical part of it. The practical aspect consists in continued and unceasing effort towards the realization of that ideal through an upliftment of the body, mind and the soul. Since we all have

bodies, minds and souls that are similar, in the ultimate analysis there can be one and only one religion for all. True religion is not meant for a privileged few. It is a universal religion. In other words, the ultimate goal of religion is to realize the underlying unity in the universe, through experiencing what we really are.

To sum up then, the malady we suffer

from is that we have lost ourselves in the world. With that we have also lost all freedom, peace and bliss which is our due. We must turn the consciousness inwards to win it back. Psycho-physical potentialities must therefore, be cultivated under spiritual discipline. Spiritual beauty can be achieved thus, only by really knowing and being ourselves.

THE TRUE WELFARE OF STUDENTS

SRI BHIMSEN SACHAR

One who studies is a student. And to study is to be engaged in learning or acquiring knowledge. Thus the true welfare of a student consists in enabling him to acquire knowledge. Consequently the early years of a student's life are of particular importance.

The first requisite for acquiring knowledge is the desire to acquire knowledge. A student from his very infancy, should be filled with a longing for knowledge. He should feel aware of the truth that the most invaluable possession of a person is the knowledge that he assimilates; that this possession is beyond pillage or theft and that it is one's unfailing friend. It should be specially impressed on the baby mind that the only sure passport to health, wealth and prosperity in life is abundance of sound knowledge. It is wrong to think that this lesson will be lost on a baby. It will become a part of his thinking, though it may appear to us that the child is not able to digest what we are putting across him.

All through his childhood the parents must continue to impress on the mind of the child, both by precept and example, that the most precious period of his life

is the time spent in a temple of learning. That time—its every minute and second—is to be utilized for equipping himself for the inevitable battle of life in which he would have to be engaged ultimately. As a student, he must not dissipate his energies, for to do this would be to mar his chances of a happy and successful life. In this way the child should be fired with a passion for making the best use of his time and energy during the period of his studentship.

The responsibility of parents for keeping a child in a proper frame of mind does not come to an end on the latter's admission to a school. They must know whose company the child relishes. If they find the child associates with undesirable persons they must take immediate steps to pull the child out of the undesirable company. The child should be made to co-operate with them in their anxiety to save him from objectionable company. This task has to be undertaken by the parents, as according to the modern system of education, contact between the teachers and the students, excepting the resident students, is limited to the four walls of a teaching institution. It does not extend beyond them.

From the foregoing statement it is not to be inferred that in the case of resident scholars the hold of the teachers on them is firm. It is extremely fragile. The prevailing teacher-pupil proportion is mainly responsible for the lack of development of close personal relationship between the ward and his guardian. Besides, unfortunately, the modern system of education is least fitted to throw up teachers who would command the respect and devotion due to them from their pupils. In an age of mass-scale production it is bound to be so. The result is that the inmates of our senior educational institutions are just a mass of explosives ready to go into action at any moment and for any reason.

To this mass we look for our future leaders, administrators, business and industrial magnates, social reformers, legislators, scholars and scientists! It is well to stop to consider if it is worthwhile running after quantity at the sacrifice of quality. After all education has a purpose to serve. If it fails in that, do we still exalt it as 'education'? The true welfare of students demands a clear answer. We must give it.

The main purpose of education being to develop an integrated personality, it must bring out the latent faculties both of head and heart of a being who is divine by nature. It is against the background of this divinity in man that his head and heart should be shaped. An educated person, if properly trained, is a well-balanced person. Self-interest or self-indulgence is not everything for him. He is alive to his duties to others also and discharges them with due devotion. If he lacks balance he is deficient as a man.

Since balance in life means almost everything, it is necessary to inculcate in the mind of a student reverence for what produces balance i.e. 'Spiritual Values'. It is immaterial if he does not comprehend the

full meanings of spiritual truths. He will be in a position to do that as he advances in his study and gains experience in life. But I am convinced that the true welfare of a student lies in his mind being tuned up for spiritual notes. This will at least make him wary of flirting with accepted evils. It is better to be a coward and be saved from courting an evil and sinful way of life than be a dare-devil and indulge in what constitutes a blot on the divinity of man. I would rather, a child reject in later life what has been injected in him than start with a blank and fumble for the values of life as he grows in years. We should not belittle our spiritual heritage whose innate greatness has already earned the hall-mark of foreign encomium which we value so much. There are greater chances of a person with a proper background of moral and ethical values behaving in a responsible and considerate manner in life than one who has not been so equipped.

True welfare of a student also demands that from as early stage in his life as possible he should start acquiring knowledge of what he sees around him in fields, gardens and orchards on the ground and of the heavenly bodies shining and smiling above him. He must be in tune with nature whose child he is. In his heart must throb kinship for the denizens of the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. All this will enlarge his sense of belonging. He will learn to see beyond the narrow circle of his self and his family. Of course, the advantages of his knowledge of nature are too obvious to be specially emphasized. A child's expanded horizon will in his later life encompass much more than what he would otherwise see.

The studentship period is also styled as Brahmacharya *āśrama*. It is during this period that a student learns the art of conserving his physical and mental energy

and disciplining his body and mind for higher functional and spiritual purposes of life. Whether he realizes Brahman or the Supreme Spirit later in life depends upon the type of use he makes of this art. But if a desire to realize Brahman is not created in him during this period it is doubtful if in his later life he will be anything like the man his Brahmacharya *āśrama* had intended him to be. If a person gets to value the virtue of Brahmacharya he will not only have a healthy body but will possess a sound, sympathetic and understanding mind and a clear and incisive intellect, which will be his invaluable assets in later life.

Many grown-up students these days have many more things to occupy their minds with than the pursuit of knowledge. They live in the midst of temptations and fall an easy prey to them. They can absent themselves from their studies without any qualms of conscience and without giving a moment's thought to the sacrifices of their parents in providing funds for their education. They can destroy public property without a blush and practise

unethical and immoral living without in any way feeling small. Their conduct works to the detriment of their fellow students. Even when the latter do not approve of their conduct they sheepishly follow their lead in the matter of strikes etc. This is a very disconcerting state of things. The challenge posed by the wayward student must be met. And who else would do this but a student with a poise? The students who value Brahmacharya *āśrama* must band together to resist the thoughtless inroads on this noble *āśrama*. To impair this *āśrama* is to dig into the very foundations of a student's future life—nay, of the country. Care shall have to be taken that the resistance is organized on peaceful lines and is conducted in a fraternal spirit. It will be a brother's effort to reclaim his lost brother. All well-wishers of society must strengthen the hands of the sober student by helping him in every legitimate manner. The maximum responsibility in this respect is, of course, of the teacher. The teacher must play the proverbial guide friend and philosopher.

THE WITNESS OF TOTAL TRUTH

R. R. DIWAKAR

Vedanta is to a great extent the culmination of Indian philosophical and metaphysical thought. To the ever baffling question of questions, why this universe, this manifestation, this expression by the unseen, unknown Supreme Power (by whatever other name we call it), Vedanta gives the answer, it is a play, a play played in a sportful spirit (Lokavat tu Leela Kaivalyam). The same truth was expressed by Shakespeare in the language of

poetry when he said, 'the world is a stage' and we are all but actors playing our varied roles.

When I ponder over this truth in connection with myself as a unit of individual consciousness, I realise that I am witness to this cosmic drama in which I am myself an actor. I am thus aware first of myself as an individual and then as an individual taking part in the drama; I am also aware of the whole cosmic drama. When

I ponder deeper and further, I perceive that in the depth of my own consciousness, I am seeing myself as an individual, as an actor subject to all vicissitudes of life, and at the same time I am aware of the cosmic drama in which I am acting; I am seeing all this as in a mirror. What then is the poise of the Supreme Power and its perception of this whole cosmic drama, with innumerable selves and atoms and electrons and other things too many to mention, who are the actors in this drama? That Supreme Power who is responsible for this cosmic drama is Itself certainly aware of all this. It must be enjoying the same drama as much as an individual soul enjoys its own acting in a drama of which it is a witness.

The whole phenomena cannot but be one of ineffable joy; pain and sorrow may have their part to play but they cannot affect the aesthetic enjoyment of the whole play itself by the audience or witness.

If I review the whole situation as described above, I am witness to myself, to my existence, to my playing a part in the cosmic drama itself with myself playing my humble part. I am witness to the Supreme Power who is the author of the cosmic drama and who is also the witness of the whole drama. I am witness as well to the joy the Supreme Power must be en-

joying as witness of the cosmic drama—there can be no other emotion but of Supreme delight, Joy or Ānanda.

I as an individual soul am subject to the ups and downs of emotions and happenings because my consciousness is isolated and limited to my individual life and events.

I am making constant and almost frantic efforts, consciously and unconsciously to be simultaneously aware of the different poses mentioned above, of being a witness to the cosmic drama with all that is involved in it.

The more I am nearer to the poses and the more I am identified with the Witness of all other witnesses, I shall be able to participate in the ineffable delight of the cosmic drama.

It is the integrated and simultaneous synthesis of all the poses described above which alone will lead to the Truth of truths. The poses when taken one by one are but partial glimpses of the Truth and not a full view of the totality of Truth. It is only the realization and simultaneous experience of the 'Satyasya Satyam' by the soul which can lead to supreme and perpetual Ānanda. All else is *alpa* or limited and not the *pūrṇa* the limitless, the infinite, the perfect.

Truth has such a face that any one who sees that face becomes convinced. The sun does not require any torch to show it; the sun is self-effulgent. If truth requires evidence, what will evidence that evidence? If something is necessary as witness for truth, where is the witness for that witness?

—Swami Vivekananda

MUSINGS OF THE MUSAFIR

MAN NEEDS MORE THAN 'HALF A LOAF'

This wanderer recently met at an interval of several days two other wanderers, two nice young men one from Israel and the other from West Germany. Both came to India in search of 'something' not obtainable to their knowledge in their part of the world. Having passed through varying situations of life, and been trained in life's school in rather a hard way, they were keen observers of things, smiling though.

They spoke frankly, about the excellences and non-excellences of their countries. And so to talk with them was like peeping through a window out in the valley and seeing tillers cultivating the fields. The most noteworthy among things they said was, however, in their answer to the question: What was the secret of prosperity in Israel and West Germany?

They were rightly aware that a complex set of circumstances, political and economic were at the back of their prosperity. But both of them, speaking separately on their own, distinctly said that the basic factor behind attained prosperity in these two countries was skilful hard work.

This was something inspiring to hear that in those countries vast majority of people took their work in earnest seriousness and work hard in their respective situations of life. This is observance of *svadharma*,—observance of personal righteousness through fully doing one's allotted work,—without knowing perhaps the theory as taught in the *Gītā*. Proper observance of *svadharma* leads to prosperity and more: that is the theory. This is being proved today in every prosperous country, but alas in India where the doctrine was discovered, what a dismal picture do we not see!

It is time Indians learn not only technology from the West but also the doctrine of skilful hard work. What will mere imported technology do if the psychology of work is diseased? You may have a streamlined plant, but if workers do not work to their full capacity, how do you make adequate profit out of it for sharing? In working for prosperity, even more than capital investment, man is the important factor. The most important question is how to keep that factor in an ideal state of functioning.

In ancient India this used to be possible through the observance of *svadharma*. In today's world and India the ideas of trade-unionism hold the field. Trade unionism has undoubtedly succeeded in bettering the lot of working people through collective bargaining. But in doing so it is worth examining whether or not one all important and invaluable factor of the worker's life is being destroyed? That factor is: devotion to one's duty, the willingness to do one's very best. If this is happening, Dharma is being left behind. And out of this, enduring welfare of the worker cannot come. Not only that, it may set in motion in the life of the worker self-cancelling, anti-factor of prosperity. One needs detachment and insight to understand this.

Do you not see Dharma is wide awake in the world? It goes before and after; you go nowhere without Dharma. It is the path-finder, giver of plenty, and also the task-master. This precious experience of the ancient Indian people keeps on flashing in the wondering mind of the wanderer as he watches the world scene of yesterday, today, and 'tomorrow and tomorrow', yet to come.

It is truly inspiring that in India and in many other countries the people, those who toil and moil, work and perspire, are at last awake and arisen, that they are manifesting *rajas*, activist tendencies and asking for *abhyudaya*, material well-being. Many have worked to bring about this awakening. Now when it has come, let us view it in true perspective and not like bigots. Thanks to all who worked for it.

Beyond this, however, as far as India is concerned, nothing is sure about the actualization of the dreams of enduring and self-rewarding prosperity of the labourer for the simple reason that in this country a large number of people, especially many among those who are educated, and indoctrinated, do not seem to be disposed to hard work by way of observing their *svadharma*. Moreover, a large number of Indians seem to have impulsively entered into a complicated confusion in regard to means and ends, the consequences of which are bound to be far-reaching.

Prosperity is desired by everybody and sanctioned by all systems of thought: economic, political and religious. Ancient Indian wisdom teaches that your prosperity can never be genuine and enduring unless you attain it through the observance of *svadharma*, which is in properly doing one's allotted work in any situation of life. No doubt this idea, like every other great idea, has been wrongly used to the disadvantage of the worker but that does not make the soundness of the idea itself any the less relevant for our adoption.

Man, however, somehow has a strange in-built capacity to stand against himself while all the time thinking that he is helping himself. It is staggering to watch with what tenacity and thoroughness he sometimes uses this capacity.

A growing prosperity alone can be increasingly shared. And prosperity has

only one root: work, hard work, dexterous work, conscientious work. Prosperity progresses when work progresses. When you do not work, prosperity does not grow, cannot grow. This fact has a tremendous bearing on the future of a nation and individuals who make it.

You cannot go on breaking the wheel and riding it too, for reaching faster the heaven of prosperity. If you want to ride it you need to keep it whole and strong. And that is done by hard honest work.

Svakarma, one's own allotted work, is *svadharma*, one's own personal religion. Through the proper cultivation of *svadharma* alone one attains worldly prosperity. This is what Sri Kṛṣṇa teaches in the *Gītā*. You may say that you do not care for the *Gītā*. But you cannot say, if you are not insane, that you do not care for your progress, prosperity, well-being and self-fulfilment. If you care for these you have no way of bypassing Dharma, for there is not any little where without Dharma being there, either as cause or effect or combination of both. You can see it for yourself.

If you work haltingly, your progress will be in the same tenor, halting. For produced wealth alone can be shared. When you do not work, wealth is not produced. Natural resources do not by themselves make wealth. It is only when the impact of man's intelligent and disciplined labour is brought upon the natural resources that wealth is produced.

Out of the mystique of go-slow-work, you can have nothing but the more advanced mystique of go-slower-prosperity. If you do not fulfil your *svadharma*, personal religion, in *svakarma*, personal work, you cannot but be the haunted victim of your unfulfilled expectations.

A man, who does not do his allotted work conscientiously and fully, he desecrates himself, atrophies his powers,

makes attainment of excellence impossible for him. What he bargains for collectively, perhaps also gains on the surface, he loses much more than that in depth.

Sri Kṛṣṇa, who wants you to enjoy well-being and also work for spiritual excellence so that you may eventually reach self-fulfilment—for otherwise you are simply after a wild-goose hunt—pointedly says in the *Gītā* (XVIII, 46): *svakarmanā tamabhyarca siddhiṃ vindati mānavāḥ*—‘by worshipping Him through his own work a man attains success.’ You are at perfect liberty to worship success in place of God. But to attain it, you are required to worship it through doing your work properly. No one neglected his own work and attained enduring success.

If the quality of work is bad, the fruit of that work in terms of prosperity can never be of a better quality. You may not accept the law of karma. But you surely do not deny cause-effect relationship in a given phenomenon. And there may be strange ways of nature for getting squared the cause-effect compendium which will be out of your control.

Further, he who does not do his allotted work in the office properly, will have destroyed his capacity to discipline his children, for by going against his *svadharma* he will have scotched that very precious factor in his personality which a child learns from and is unknowingly grateful for. Now the child imitates his father, fallen from *svadharma*, and excels him too! As a student he does not observe his *svadharma*, and in diverse other ways he disobeys the laws of his stages of life and desecrates himself to the horror and dismay of the father. But all the same, father has by his own act brought all these on himself. Where many fathers continue to do the same, the collective result is what you witness in society today.

Further, the man who does not do his

work properly cannot be at peace with himself, much less with the world. There will be no end of his worries. His home is likely to be the place he would like to escape from, for after infecting the place with his inner disquiet, he would like to seek peace elsewhere, which would not be again viewed with charity at home.

Thus the vicious circle originating in neglecting one's work expands and becomes complicated, and society goes from one crisis to another in search of prosperity.

You cannot cite one example in history where you can show a nation prospering without hard honest work. The latest examples of striking prosperity are to be seen in Japan—after—1945, and West Germany and Israel. Many factors have contributed to this eventuality. But one basic factor without which no combination of factors could have resulted into attained prosperity, as pointed out by two wanderers, is disciplined hard work.

Many factors have already combined in India too to make prosperity hypothetically attainable. But the lack of that basic factor has become pretty endemic in India, viz. the disciplined and devoted hard work.

If you are a crass materialist then for a while perhaps you may go on with the idea: ‘Less work, more pay; if possible, no work, all pay’. But when you become responsible for looking after the where-withal of everybody's prosperity and self-fulfilment you have to quietly give a short shrift to the idea. It is very well understood in some countries that labourer's interest is not in stopping to labour, but in labouring in a disciplined manner for the fruits they seek and deserve.

It is interesting, how Dharma, like the proverbial chameleon changes its appearance and smilingly permeates the consciousness of the people who have ostentatiously pushed it out by the front door!

Other things apart, where the labourer

does his work properly, he is being *dhārmika*, righteous. And this Dharma does not wait to be officially recognized in order to be the giver of plenty and prosperity.

Given the same basic factor, be it in a 'Godless country', or 'Gods-full country', the result will be the same. The element of compulsion that may be there in the structure of the authoritarian government to enforce this discipline, if the workers in other forms of societies cannot cultivate it by their free-will, they will not be gainer for that.

If a country does not want to push out Dharma by the front door—because it has known better through millennial experience and can see beyond tomorrows—and at the same time wants to open to its last and the least all the ways of self-development and self-fulfilment, then the thinkers of that nation are required to find a way by which honest hard work may continue to go on increasing in intensity and extensivity, and prosperity get going shared by those who labour, in as fair proportion as full justice to the manhood of man demands.

In this, the greatest responsibility lies with those who have. No trickery is going to hold water. Hearty sincerity has however a chance of being reciprocated.

The West has taught the worker ways of demanding his rights, India has taught him how to observe his *svadharma*. For attainment of personal excellence, prosperity and self-fulfilment on levels physical, mental and spiritual, both sets of teachings need to be synthesized. Is this possible?

Indian genius stands challenged to think out a programme by working which the labourer can attain prosperity without desecrating his manhood and thus making his pilgrimage to enlightenment longer.

Swami Vivekananda clearly saw that socialism was the wave of the future and he welcomed it not because he thought it

was a perfect system, but because 'half a loaf is better than no bread'. For the famished, the hungry and those who have suffered oppression for ages, half a loaf is no mean salvation. This wanderer, however, salutes Vivekananda as a millennial revolutionary of a singular type for he dared to think that half a bread was inadequate for and below the dignity of man and that socialism, freedom and spirituality needed to go together. This vision of the fulness of the toiler is a standing challenge to all who are not afraid to think.

Those who are engaged in securing the people 'half a loaf' deserve to be thanked.

But they need understand that they go wrong and hurt the present and future of the very persons whom they profess to serve when they place this 'half a loaf' on the altar and preach that here is the new saviour of man.

Vivekananda clearly saw the limitation of materialist revolutions. So when he welcomed socialist ideas, he said that before the tide of socialism overtook the land, the country needed to be flooded by spiritual teachings. He himself started this flooding which was taken over by others after him. The flooding went on through the work of a number of master minds.

Vivekananda wanted to save the common man from the horrifying inner destitution while being replenished from without. He sought to strengthen their spiritual fibre and sensitivity along with their material betterment so that they might stay a worshipper of a higher God than a mere half a loaf. His clarion call is: raise the masses without hurting their religion. In other words: raise the masses on all levels of existence, physical, mental and spiritual. The labourer will be a gainer for understanding this and working for such an end without hatred and violence in his heart,

In India we have the requisite wealth,

inner and outer, to provide everyone more than a full bread. Why then deprive people of their birthright and call it a 'revolution'?

Come, have the courage to face the totality of facts!

To every one who does not think himself to be an uncommon man this common man says: Brother, earn well, eat well but think better. Think for yourself. Do not

mortgage your thinking apparatus for any promised gain. Live well, but love more, not excluding yourself in all its dimension. Prosper, but do not barter your higher possibilities for a mere mess of pottage. Do not lose from within more than what you gain from without. Stand on the soil, till it hard, but also smile looking at the limitless blue of your possibilities.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The letter of Swami Turiyananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, provides in a few words spiritual succour, a seeker looks for.

The editorial 'On Laying the Foundations for a Spiritual Life' is written in the light of authentic teachings of the great spiritual teachers of the world. Aware as we have been of our readers' felt need of more reading material on applied religion we intend to publish as frequently as possible such articles as will suggest how to practise the great teachings of religion through all obtaining situations of life as we know them today.

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

Professor Sudhansu Bimal Mookherjee, Head of the Department of History, Surendranath College, Calcutta, in his

article 'Swami Vivekananda: His Religion' reflects on some important aspects of the great Swami's teachings on religion.

The stream of writings on 'What Inspires me most in Holy Mother's Life' continues in this issue. Sarah N. David and Anna Nylund are Vedanta students from California, U.S.A.

Swami Rasajnananda, the Joint Editor of the Journal in his article, 'The Rational Faith Mankind Needs Today' shows how Vedanta is capable of helping man to master life's situation and attain self-fulfilment in today's world of many stresses and strains.

Sri B. K. Nema, a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Rajasthan, India, in his article 'On Being Ourselves' writes on a theme which advancing technology has been impinging upon us with more and more poignancy every succeeding day.

Through his thoughtful article Sri Bhimsen Sachar, a distinguished elder leader

of India, participates here in the thought-work on 'The True Welfare of Students' started in the Journal in November 1968.

Sri R. R. Diwakar, who hardly needs introduction to our readers writes in so simple a way on such an abstruse subject, 'The Witness of the total Truth'.

The Musafir, who no longer requires introduction to our regular readers, writes in this issue on how to build prosperity and something more in developing countries on surer foundations than prevailing today, especially in India.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA

The *Prabuddha Bharata* or 'The Awakened India' enters its 74th year this month.

Down these years from its Himalayan abode this Courier of the timeless Spirit has sympathetically surveyed the movements of human affairs and sought to point out the pole star and sung the song of awakening and movement ever onwards.

From Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda received two mandates: to remove sufferings of human beings and bring knowledge to them, knowledge that inspires, uplifts, strengthens transmutes and liberates. Whatever the Swami did in his life had these twin ends in view. The *Prabuddha Bharata*, as an instrument of Vivekananda's ministry to the world as the same objectives. These the Journal seeks to accomplish by constantly focussing the attention of man to his true identity in the light of authentic scriptures and teachers, and by showing how life's issues require to be faced and ordered for attaining mastery over strifes and sorrows and for being on the way lit by knowledge. As many patterns of approaches may be adopted as are needful, but objectives are: removal of sufferings of men and bringing knowledge to them.

Sufferings and strifes of today are indeed complex and complicated, but their root is the same ancient one: man's false identifications born of the ignorance about the ultimate fact of existence. Dynamics of the entire situation and its ameliorative needs are here understood and worked for in its own manner of transcendental realism. It has also tried in its own light to provide life's pilgrims the inner vision and strength for being travelworthy. To work on, is its acceptance; and the continuing pilgrimage is its privilege.

The *Prabuddha Bharata* was commissioned by its illustrious founder, Swami Vivekananda to always hold unto the Highest, to 'be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country', and work for the 'levelling up' of all, especially for the upliftment of the lowest and the lost, through 'eternal love and service free'.

'Be and make: this sums up its motto and method.

Its message is simple but all encompassing; for everyday but eternal; quiet but far-reaching; for you especially but for all also, without one exception; for India especially and also particularly for the whole world. In farms, hermitages and parliaments, in factories, in cottages and palaces, in students' gatherings and political meets, in laboratories and clinics, in universities and market places—everywhere its vibrant relevancy is open to man.

It preaches something so precious for man, that if the world were gained without it, it would be no gain at all. It preaches divinity of soul, its perfect identity with the Supreme Spirit, solidarity of mankind and unity of existence. It teaches that problems of man, his society and the world cannot be solved by excluding the highest truth about man himself, his very essence, his supra-elemental inalienable divinity. The way is either to convert this plenal

wisdom into human affairs or convert human affairs into this wisdom. The end is to help man's every man's self-development through control of inner and outer nature, for eventual attainment of self-fulfilment in perfect freedom of the spirit.

It exhorts: Do not reduce man to pigs and then quickly find some neat pig-solution for them. Let them struggle heroically in obedience of the laws of their essential greatness so that even in contingent failures man may know that he is imperishable. But there are more chances of success than failure when man dares to claim the divine heritage for all men.

The relevancy of the message and mission of the *Prabuddha Bharata* becomes deeper and deeper as the human situation becomes increasingly more baffling in a world where: crimes of all descriptions grow in streamlined cities like fungus; to walk on streets is sometimes taking risk for life; morality is thrown out of human conduct by ever-growing number like garbage as it were; more and more mental homes require to be built for housing those who are too dangerous for being at home; marriages break like china wares; foundlings abound in baffling numbers; adult and juvenile delinquency vie with each other for ascendancy; races and communities clash menacingly; students in many countries throw their studies to the winds and are out on streets revolting against something, defined or undefined; in the highest forum of the world, in the Parliament of Man, having come from the ends of the world ostentatiously for finding ways of harmony and peace, men fight bitterly the battles of hatred and deceit and the existence of mankind is threatened by nuclear annihilation.

This is the time when the pilgrimage of the *Prabuddha Bharata* takes the notes of special urgency. Man needs to understand himself at a deeper level, in his quintes-

sential aspect. He needs to be nursed and served and helped not to hurt himself and to find the ways of self-conquest.

He must recapture life's lost purpose and construct for himself life's undefined unique meaning. Existence for you is what you make out of it. Tags are blank, price-fixing and realization of it are your personal affairs! If you mean it, meaning is there in every particle of dust. Many have found it. You too can find it provided you do not become a worshipper of madness, sadness or badness.

Almost every malady in the catalogue is born of an imbalance between man's attained control over outer and inner nature. This imbalance,—in which we may have varying degrees of coalescence of attained control over inner and outer nature in varying situations—clouds the vision of man, and he acts like one without light. He breaks down what he has built. He sets fire to what he has adored. He bites his own flesh in order to feel the crass sharpness of his own teeth. He becomes licentious and preaches it as liberty. He does not know what to do with his mind and that becomes a philosophy. He has lost the capacity to be self-controlled and so he needs comforts of permissivism. He cannot discipline himself for facing reality and so he cries for doddles of illusions.

And yet he has all the powers in there right within himself. Nothing is greater than his essence and yet he swallows rubbish and becomes insane. Above everything else today man needs to hear the message of his self-identity and the methods of actualizing it in experience. Who will take care in infinite love of those sweet sorry children of this age of distemper if not the mother of all hearts—the knowledge of the Atman, whose standard-bearer is this Pilgrim?

Of necessity such a pilgrimage once in a while gets tough going due to existing

weather conditions. And why should it not? If the light cannot face a storm what worth is it? If gold has not gone through fire how to know that it is not baser metal? Truth must get weather-beaten waves of seven seas must get madly broken upon it, before you can build on it. So, tougher the times, lovelier becomes the message of truth, the sweeter its songs, and more delicious its relish. Darkest nights are truest invitations to light.

This Pilgrim has to watch in the world the aggressive tide of vocal denial of the Spirit, in the heart of which dwells an unresolved agony sequestered in the form of fear of facing oneself in the utmost depth of one's being. On the other hand you find in the same world the onward asking for the Supreme finding expression in so many bizarre ways. Piety is coming out of temples. A-moral science is speaking the language of heart and conscience. Monoliths of politics are falling apart in search of security and relevancy. Truth is on triumphant march, breaking and building, rejecting and upholding—like Kali the Mother. What is the central theme? From man's standpoint, yes, man.

We indeed live in mighty times, and by the supreme grace our hands are full and hearts are fuller. Such a time calls for more energetic holding on to the Highest and deeper sacrificial approach to man's service for the removal of his sufferings and bringing him knowledge.

In this context in India of today the pilgrimage of the *Prabuddha Bharata* takes a special meaning in that in the face of the ideological ferment that has been going on in India a blurring of the quintessential memory is tending to happen. What India needs above everything else is listening to the clear fearless voice of the Spirit laden with love infinite, and holding on to the abiding sense of the essential on planes, physical, mental and spiritual. When

Arjuna regained his losing grip on this sense, the fainting fighter got transformed into the invincible hero.

If the sun-god is your charioteer what do you need flickering lamps for? By holding on to the Highest alone one can be the bravest. If the Lord is the anchor of your being, what can swelling deluge do to you but give a refreshing bath? Play with the surging waves but save the pearls. Man needs them.

Swami Vivekananda foresaw the on-coming of more glorious days of India than they ever have been in the past. This will naturally mean more glorious days for the world, for India's genius is sacrificial. India will not hold the light under the bushel. India could not be great and glorious in isolation without dedicating herself to the service of mankind.

Was this a mere dream of Vivekananda or statement of fact yet to born, called a prophecy? The answer to this question has to come out of our lives, lives of the millions.

Many worthy sons of the nation, known and unknown, remembered and forgotten, worked and sacrificed their all that India might rise, that the world might be a better place for self-respecting man to live in. The pilgrimage of the *Awakened India* includes not only the co-ordination of creeds for the multiform growth of society by stages, but also the consummation of that tremendous symphony, of seeking one's self-fulfilment, which can be brought about only by constant resuscitation of all that has been good, great and creative from the day of thought's dawn to this day. This great end of man the *Prabuddha Bharata* endeavours to serve by simply growing in truth in itself through varying human situations obtaining in the world.

Whoever gives up the lesser for the greater, loves and serves, the essence of his work gets spiritually integrated in that one

great inner work in which the clue for regeneration of mankind is concentrated. Destiny invites us all to bring our offering for adoration of man's divinity so that by experiencing unity of existence man may shine in salvation.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CONCEPT OF PERFECTION IN THE TEACHINGS OF KANT AND THE GITA, By DR. BALBIR SINGH GAUCHHWAL. Published by Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi 7, 1967, pages 184, Price Rs. 18/-.

With Immanuel Kant begins modern European philosophy. His 'Metaphysics of Morals' which is a part of his 'Critique of Practical Reason' offers an enquiry into the nature of the moral life. In this enquiry Kant came to propound the doctrine of the categorical imperative which in many ways resembles the ethical Idealism embodied in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Dr. B. S. Gauchhwal examines the various charges levelled against the moral philosophy of Kant. He does not believe that Kant advocated an ethics of duty and that the Kantian moral law is negative and abstract. On the contrary, Dr. Gauchhwal comes to the conclusion that Kant propounded a 'Moral religion' which is based on the assumption of a personal God and on the concept of the 'goodwill'. This, the author argues, is closer to the spirit of the *Gita* alone. But the *Gita* does go beyond the concept of a personal God, since the ultimate goal of a moral life given by the *Gita* rests on the foundation of the impersonal *Absolute* as well. The author would have increased the value of his work if only he considered this aspect which appears in the writings of the stalwarts like Madhusudana Sarasvati, Green, and Bradley.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE INDIAN MIND: ESSENTIALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE. Ed. by Charles A Moore. East-West Centre Press. Honolulu, 1967, p. 459 Price \$ 9.50.

'The East-West Philosophers' conferences held in Honolulu in 1939, 1949, 1959 and 1964 brought together some of the leading thinkers of the two hemispheres. The present volume is successor to another entitled 'The Chinese Mind' and is to be followed by one on 'The Japanese Mind'. The articles all of them by authoritative savants, are a few among the many read at these Conferences.

The contributors include such outstanding name as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Prof. P. T. Raju, Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dr. Kalidas Bhattacharya, Dr. Malasekhara, Swami Nikhilananda and others.

The Editor Charles A. Moore provides an illuminating *Introduction* on 'The comprehensive Indian Mind' in which he says that one of the reasons for 'studying and understanding Indian Philosophy' is 'to enlarge the scope of philosophy and to broaden the horizons of philosophers'. This purpose has been abundantly achieved in the articles that go into the book. The subjects dealt with are as extensive as they are comprehensive. Among them are 'Relation of Philosophical Theories of the Practical Affairs of Men', 'Some Aspects of Reality as taught by Theravada Buddhism', 'Social, Ethical Approach to the Religious Problem' 'The Realistic Aspect of Indian Spirituality' etc.

The articles, as is to be expected from writings of such eminence, are scholarly and highly illuminative. Special attention deserves to be drawn to the articles by Dr. Radhakrishnan and Swami Nikhilananda who import their characteristic freshness and clarity to what they write upon. A careful reading of the book will dispel hasty and ill-informed notions of the Hindu approach to the problems of life, and will convince one of "the richness and complexity of one of the most profound philosophical traditions" of mankind.

The book is heartily to be recommended to every serious students of Indian Philosophy and Religion.

PROF. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

THE CHINESE MIND Ed. DR. C. A. MOORE. East and West Centre Press, Honolulu, 1967, p. 402, Price 9.50 Dollars.

Comprising select papers submitted to four East-West Philosophers' Conferences held at Hawaii (1939-64), this volume deals with the fundamentals of the culture and philosophy of the Chinese people before the present Communist regimen. There are as many as 15 articles by competent men—

some of them are Chinese—throwing light on the different aspects of the subject and incidentally rebutting a number of ill-informed criticisms.

Among the points discussed and underlined are the following features of Chinese Thought and Culture: Philosophy is more important than Religion and the task of philosophy is to help achieve 'sageliness within and kingliness without'. Humanism is more pervasive than any other philosophical tradition. The ethical consciousness is equated with the spiritual. The doctrine of filial piety is a very important factor in the ethical and social life. Social living is an art which is cultivated without prejudice to the welfare of the individual. Duties are more important than rights in the case of the individual. A spirit of

harmony and synthesis in the realm of religion and intellect as well as in the practical and ethical life of man. Man is paramount, not law. 'Investigation of things' is encouraged at every level as it is a powerful builder of mental and soul faculties. In the words of the Editor. 'The Chinese thought—and—culture tradition may be characterised by humanism, by its emphasis upon the ethical, the intellectual, the aesthetic, and the social, without any aversion to material welfare and the normal enjoyments of life and with an inner tranquillity of spirit that pervades life in both prosperity and adversity, a tranquillity born of a sense of harmony with Nature and one's fellow men.'

M. P. PANDIT

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S RELIEF WORKS

THE MISSION NEEDS DONATIONS FOR ITS

PERMANENT RELIEF FUNDS

The public are aware that the Ramakrishna Mission functions in India and some other countries in the world through many centres, conducting various types of institutions of permanent nature, dedicated to human well-being on levels physical, mental, and spiritual.

What, however, may not be so well known is the extent of the Mission's almost continuous engagement in relief works of temporary nature. Since 1896 the Mission has all along been engaged in relief works of all kinds for alleviating human suffering brought about by ravages of nature or follies of man. In 1966-67 alone the Mission spent nearly sixteen lakhs of rupees in cash for giving relief, besides several lakhs of rupees in kind. The following list of the Mission's relief activities in 1968 will show the extent of the Mission's work in this field of emergency services:

January :

1. Midnapore Flood Relief, West Bengal.
2. Orissa Cyclone Relief.
3. Maharashtra Earthquake Relief.

February, March, April, May, June :

1. Orissa Cyclone Relief.
2. Maharashtra Earthquake Relief.

July :

1. Orissa Drought Relief.
2. Maharashtra Earthquake Relief.

August :

1. Orissa Drought Relief.
2. Maharashtra Earthquake Relief.
3. Calcutta Flood Relief.

September :

1. Orissa Drought Relief.
2. Hooghly Flood Relief, W.B.
3. Midnapore Flood Relief, W.B.
4. Hailakandi Flood Relief, Assam.
5. Gujarat Flood Relief.

October :

1. Orissa Flood Relief.
2. Hooghly Flood Relief, W.B.
3. Midnapore Flood Relief, W.B.
4. Kamrup Flood Relief, Assam.
5. Hailakandi Flood Relief, Assam.
6. Gujarat Flood Relief.
7. Jalpaiguri Flood Relief, W.B.

November :

1. Midnapore Flood Relief, W.B.
2. Gujarat Flood Relief.
3. Jalpaiguri Flood Relief, W.B.

December :

1. Midnapore Flood Relief, W.B.
2. Jalpaiguri Flood Relief, W.B.
3. Gujarat Flood Relief.

One can easily comprehend what this simultaneous engagement in so many fields of relief operation means to the Mission. It necessitates readily available manpower for instant mobilization to the spots of calamity for rendering service to the distressed for an uncertain length of time, involving vast expenditure.

As far as human resources are concerned, in spite of our numerical limitations, our monks are always kept in readiness to be sent at short notice to places of calamity and, in the face of great difficulties, work for bringing succour to the distressed for months at a stretch.

But, as far as the financial resources are concerned, we entirely depend on friends and sympathizers of the Mission in India and abroad and State and Central Governments. We appeal to such friends to come forward to find ways and means of keeping the Mission's General Relief Fund always fully replenished so that our prompt and adequate service to humanity in distress may never be hampered for want of money.

Donations may be sent by cheque or draft, drawn in favour of the Ramakrishna Mission on any reputed Calcutta Bank, to the General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Howrah, West Bengal, India.

BELUR MATH.
7th November 1968,

Swami Gambhirananda
GENERAL SECRETARY

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE
DISPENSARY MYLAPORE, MADRAS 4.

REPORT FOR 1967-68.

The activities of the Charitable Dispensary during the year under review were the following:

Allopathic and Homoeopathic Departments: 1, 61, 629 cases were treated in these two departments out of which 62,734 were new patients, 1,158 minor surgical operations, 22,182 dressing cases and 521 examination of different kinds of specimens were also attended to. 20,389 injections were given to different patients during the year.

Eye Department: It treated 21,099 patients out of which 4,446 were new cases. 546 refractions were performed.

E.N.T. Department: Out of 9,529 patients treated, 4416 were new cases.

Dental Section: The figures relating to the treatment of this section were: extractions: 1,025; caries; 2712; pyorrhoea: 524.

X-Ray Department: The number of patients X-rayed was 475 and that of the screening cases was 4.

Children's Special Treatment and Milk Distribution: The suffering children were given free medical aid by a specialist in child diseases. 11,640 under-nourished children were served with milk during the year.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MANGALORE

REPORT FOR 1967-68.

This centre was started in 1947 came to occupy its permanent site on Mangaladevi Road in 1951. The activities of this centre during the period under review were the following:

The Boys' Home: It maintains poor and meritorious students irrespective of caste, creed by providing them free boarding, lodging stationary and clothing etc. The number of boarders studying in different schools and colleges was 45.

In the Balakashrama an attempt is made to impart integral education through inculcation of spiritual values in their widest sense. Boys are encouraged to cultivate virtuous tendencies, sense of social duty etc. The boys are allowed to manage the affairs of the Home gaining thereby the spirit of self-reliance, co-operation and creative personal effort. A weekly discourse was conducted for the boys by the Swami. The birthdays of saints and important festivals are also celebrated.

The Charitable Dispensary: 27,452 patients were treated out of which 5,707 were new cases, 1,178 injections were given and 336 laboratory tests were performed.