



# Prabuddha Bharata

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

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## THE UNIVERSAL CALL OF RELIGIONS

Hearken, O sons of the Immortal, who occupy the celestial regions: I know the Supreme Being who is luminous, like the sun, and beyond darkness. Only by knowing Him does one pass over death; there is no other way to the Supreme Goal.

*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 2.5, and 3.8*

Rouse thyself! do not be idle. Follow the law of virtue. The virtuous rests in bliss in this world and the next.

*Dhammapada. 168*

Knowing the Eternal, means enlightenment. Not knowing the Eternal, causes passions to arise. And that is evil.

*Tao Teh King 16.3*

Blessed is the man who maketh the Lord his trust.

*PSALMS 40.4*

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

*ST. LUKE. 17.21*

Call upon your Lord with lowliness and in secret. Call on Him with fear and longing desire. Verily, the mercy of God is nigh unto the righteous.

*The Koran 7.53, 54*

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## ONWARD FOR EVER!

*What is there to be taught more in religion than the oneness of the universe and faith in one's Self?... All this manifoldness is the manifestation of that One. That One is manifesting Himself as many, as matter, spirit, mind, thought, and everything else. It is that One, manifesting Himself as many. Therefore the first step for us to take is to teach the truth to ourselves and to others.*

*Let the world resound with this ideal, and let superstitions vanish. Tell it to men who are weak and persist in telling it. You are the Pure One; awake and arise, O mighty one, this sleep does not become you. Awake and arise, it does not befit you. Think not that you are weak and miserable. Almighty, arise and awake, and manifest your own nature. It is not fitting that you think yourself a sinner. It is not fitting that you think yourself weak. Say that to the world, say it to yourselves, and see what a practical result comes, see how with an electric flash everything is manifested, how everything is changed. Tell that to mankind and show them their power.*

*Trickchand*

## HOMAGE TO MAHATMA GANDHI

A small, timid, diffident and sensuous man—that was how Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi started in his life. But when this man was felled by an assassin's bullet on January 30, 1948, at the age of seventy-eight, the whole world knew that there was lying dead—yet undying,—one of the greatest man of history.

'Never in modern history has any man been mourned more deeply and more widely.'<sup>1</sup>

The small man had become a colossus of power; the timid man had become the inspirer of fearlessness in the hearts of millions; the diffident man had become the maker of history; and the lustful man had become a holy man. While breaking the shackles that bound his personal life, he kept himself dedicated to the disciplines of removing the shackles of India. The more he fought, the larger was the number of friends<sup>2</sup> he got from among those whom he fought, such was the technique of his fighting.

From his life issued such liberating forces as substantially helped in rolling back the mightiest empire and making freedom history in many parts of the world. By his life's example he brought about some qualitative change in the lives of hundreds and thousands of people. He roused the dumb masses to courageous, creative striving. To the lowliest of the low he had brought succour and hope by truly identifying himself with them. To the women he gave equal share in the battle and responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> Vide: Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Part I), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1953, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Paying his nation's heart's tribute to the Mahatma on the occasion of the commencement of his birth centenary, Mr. Herald Wilson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom wrote (Vide: *Hindustan Times*, October 3, 1968):

He fought the mightiest power of his day but without any visible weapon. He asked the people to renounce their possessions and positions and join him in the service of the motherland—and many did so.

How did all this happen? What was the secret of the authority and power of this frail man who had no militia, possession or position?

The secret is simple: Gandhi had no secrets. He lived his epic life in the open. In the latter part of his life he did not have even a shirt to cover his torso. He grew into greatness grain by grain before the wondering eyes of the world. Besides he expressed himself so clearly and enormously through his copious writings that there is no mystery in his life.

Gandhiji once said with his usual humour:

‘The mahatma I leave to his fate. Though a non-co-operator I shall gladly subscribe to a Bill to make it criminal for anybody to call me mahatma and to touch my feet. Where I can impose the law myself, at the *āśrama*, the practice is criminal.’<sup>3</sup>

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‘It was through Mahatma Gandhi’s insistence on non-violence and upon what he fervently believed to be the right means to attain his goal, that the freedom of India was achieved with the full consent of both parties to the contract, that there was no sense of triumph and defeat, that Britain too felt happy at the settlement and eager to welcome this great new partner into the Commonwealth of nations.

‘All this was accomplished by the Father of India, who came to our country for the first time some eighty years ago and who learned to know us so well. *We in this country owe him an immense debt of gratitude for the solid foundation of Indo-British friendship which he so truly laid.*’ (*Italics Ours*)

There is hardly any parallel in human history of such owning of an erstwhile ‘enemy’ as one of the truest friends by a nation.

<sup>3</sup> Compiled and edited by Krishna Kripalani: *All Men are Brothers*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1960, p. 50.

Yet mankind continues to lovingly call him the Mahatma. In this regard perhaps the common man has proved himself a better *satyāgrahi* than the Mahatma himself!

To whom does our hearts’ loyalty, our unprompted inner reverence flow in the world? It is to the person who sacrifices his all for others. To the degree he personifies this sacrifice, to the same degree man’s spontaneous adoration flows towards him.

And this happens for a profound reason. The symbology of the Puruṣa Sūkta in the Ṛg-veda (X. 90) teaches that the universe issued forth from the self-sacrifice of the Puruṣa, the Supreme Being, and is sustained by his continued sacrifice. In a sense, if therefore, the Puruṣa reaches out as creation, through sacrifice, man also reaches the Puruṣa through the same process of sacrifice from his side. The Lord’s becoming everything, and returning of everything to the Lord is attained through the operation of the same law—law of sacrifice. In Indian tradition, therefore, practically speaking, the law of sacrifice is considered the highest law in the universe. Whoever functions in the world by way of being a process of this law becomes great. The common man may not be aware of this intellectually. But he knows emotionally that here is a man who is living his life according to the highest law of the universe. And his heart’s adoration flows towards him.

Gandhiji got processed this law in his life to an amazing degree. There was something within him, say a predisposition, which drove him almost spontaneously to choose sacrificial living in preference to acquisitive living, both in South Africa and in India.

This became easy, nay inevitable in his case, because by deliberate motivation he set his whole life in perspective at an early

age. He had no doubt in his mind as to what master-urge was to guide, propel, integrate and direct all his thoughts and actions. He wrote:

'What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *mokṣa*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end. But as I have all along believed that what is possible for one is possible for all, my experiments have not been conducted in the closet, but in the open; and I do not think this fact detracts from their spiritual value.'<sup>4</sup>

This refrain continues throughout his whole career—the refrain of yearning for the realization of God, through what he thought and did in life. Gandhiji's life-work has therefore, to be viewed as the strivings of a well-determined *mumukṣu*, the aspirant longing for the attainment of liberation of the spirit.

Once he knew clearly what was the purpose of life, he chose the most authentic methods known in the tradition of his country viz. renunciation of lust and lucre, adoption of the vow of *brahmacarya*, disciplines of truth and non-violence and service to fellow human beings. All these ancient ideals and disciplines took in Gandhiji's life, through his personal orientation to his life's situations, a new social meaning. Gandhiji loved God and man in a manner which transformed him before people's wondering eyes and also made history. For the first time in man's story he ventured to take spiritual disciplines, truth and non-violence, into political arena of a vast scale and thus added a new dimension to human civilization itself.

But it is to be always remembered that, as far as Gandhiji was personally concerned, all his work evolved and revolved on the axis of his *mokṣa*-mindedness. This

made his political life indistinguishable from the life of spiritual disciplines. Even in those dismal days about eight months before his martyrdom, when everything seemed to have gone out of joints in India, surrounded by darkness all around though he was, the inner refrain of his fundamental aspiration continued to find expression at unexpected moments. To a group of foreign visitors he said:

'I have pledged myself to do or die in the attempt to put down the present conflagration. I love all mankind as I love my countrymen, because God dwells in the heart of every human being, and I aspire to realize the highest in life through the service to humanity.'<sup>5</sup>

Gandhiji himself has so often confessed his imperfections, and even his Himalayan blunder, that it will be unfair to this truthful person to claim infallibility for him. And as his experiments involved the lives and destinies of millions of people, it is not improbable that his fallibility has affected the destiny of the nation in a far-reaching way, because the modern history of a momentous period of India is largely the story of his life. Personally, however, Gandhiji was great even in and through his imperfections.

When he was virtually the sovereign leader of the national movement, when the moment of truth came, terrible things happened in India in spite of himself. Gandhiji wrote:

'The partition has come in spite of me. It has hurt me. But it is the way in which the partition has come, that has hurt me more.'<sup>6</sup>

It not only hurt Gandhiji, but millions of people were perhaps hurt even more than Gandhiji, for while the Mahatma had higher resources to fall back on, the common people who were being smothered under the

<sup>4</sup> Pyarelal: *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1958, p. 246.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. pp. 3-4.

bull-dozer of history, had none. It hurt India most grievously and perhaps permanently.

It is not historically possible to dissociate Gandhiji's life and action from this turn of events which from now on took tragic and ironical patterns. As a by-product of the great *aspirant's* tremendous *spiritual strivings* two fruits inseparably came to his hands: one, independence of India, the other, the partition of India. After so many years of earnest practising and preaching of non-violence, Gandhiji had to witness the explosions of worst violence in Indian history. And the division of India which was unthinkable had become a fact of history with all its implications for the present and future. These twin fruits, one luscious and the other bitter, could not be separated one from the other. Up to this time destiny of India seemed to be in Gandhiji's hands. But from now on the Destiny took over. 'The hour of his triumph proved to be the hour of his humiliation.'<sup>7</sup>

But the way Gandhiji took all these un-hinging happenings and transformed them into inner material for adoration reveals the *mumukṣu's* closeness to the object of his worship. He wrote:

'I have passed through many ordeals of my life. But this is to be the hardest. I like it. The fiercer it becomes, the closer is the communion with God—that I experience and the deeper grows my faith in His abundant grace. So long as it persists, I know it is well with me.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his article 'Mahatma Gandhi', Vide: *Viswa-Bharati Quarterly*, Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, Santiniketan, 1949, p. 260.

<sup>8</sup> Pyarelal: *Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1958, p. 246.

At this juncture Gandhiji's life took the colours of a magnificent tragedy. Yet in and through this tragedy his soul shone brighter. Leaders of millions became a lonely pilgrim in the wilderness of desolation and darkness that had descended on India.

While India groaned, Gandhi the *mumukṣu* continued to grow through his ministrations of service. He left behind success and failure, and was there where man was in distress for love and God and man. While the power which came largely as the fruits of his labour was being shared, he went to the distant corners of the country for sharing people's suffering.

This man Gandhi who walked barefooted in the desolate villages of Bengal and Bihar left behind the great man who master-minded the unique battle of history for the gaining of independence of India. In this pilgrimage through human suffering caused by man's folly, Gandhiji trekked like a mellow civilizing power whose influence permeates epochs of history in a quiet creative manner.

Having lost enthusiasm for living a hundred and twentyfive years, he now longed to die with the God's name on his lips. When that hour came in all the suddenness of a bullet God's name was right there on his lips. The great *mumukṣu* had made good his claim as a man of God.

In living he was great, in dying he became greater.

Paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi is man's privilege.

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They who know truth in truth, and untruth in untruth, arrive at truth, and follow true desires.—*Dhammapada*.

# LETTERS OF A SAINT

## THE LORD MY REFUGE

Ramakrishna Sevashrama  
Kankhal, 6.4.1912

Dear Sri,

I have duly received your letter dated the 29th March and am pleased to know that you are well physically. I am, however, simultaneously surprised and filled with pity to read that your mental anxiety is 'a great problem'. Surprised, because why parents are regarded as great gurus you have to know this through questioning! And the reason for my being filled with pity is that you have been able to consider your parents as equal to pedestrians, even though you happen to know that people daily offer oblations of water in the name of their parents while uttering :

पिता स्वर्गः पिता धर्मः पिता हि परमं तपः ।  
पितरि प्रीतिमापन्ने प्रीयन्ते सर्वदेवताः ॥

'The father is heaven, father is Dharma, father is verily supreme austerity. Father being pleased, all the deities are pleased.'

Alas, what a spiritual degradation has come upon us! You have referred to common intelligence. More than his common intelligence, man has a bit of higher intelligence and this is why he is superior to animals :

आहारनिद्राभयमैथुनञ्च सामान्यमेतत् पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।  
ज्ञानं नराणामधिको विशेषः ज्ञानेन हीना पशुभिः समानाः ॥

'Eating, sleeping, fear and sexual intercourse—in these regards man is absolutely similar to animals; but knowledge distinguishes man from animals. Men devoid of knowledge are equal to animals.'

Getting the body, being nurtured by parents, and the parents' mechanical bringing up of children under the spell of attach-

ment—all these are especially observed among animals. But man's conduct is different from this. And what you have said regarding returning the gift—'in return it is our duty to serve them',—this consciousness is not in the animal. This is why when the young ones of animals have learnt how to find their food etc. for themselves, their relations with their parents are completely severed; but such is not the case with man. Among animals training ends with learning to eat and keep themselves alive. Among men, however, education is provided not only for the whole life and for here alone, but also for hereafter. It is this knowledge of the hereafter which makes a man devoted son or loving father. It is by this knowledge of the hereafter, out of compassion, the Supreme Father creates Vedas and other scriptures so that our intellects may be imbued with the spirit of the scriptures. It is for man alone that scriptures exist; instincts suffice for animals only. Therefore, if we have to become men, we must have intellects imbued with the spirit of the scriptures. The Lord said in the *Gītā* (XVI 23-24) :

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।  
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥  
तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।  
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

'He who, setting aside the injunctions of the scriptures acts under the impulse of desire, attains not to perfection, nor happiness, nor the goal Supreme.'

'So let the scriptures be thy authority in ascertaining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known what is said in the ordinance of the scriptures, you should act here.'

All, however, cannot become knowers of

scriptures ; this is why one needs to have reverence and faith in elders well versed in the scriptures. As soon as reverence and faith are awakened, one easily gets the fruits of the scriptures. Reverence and faith are undoubtedly gifts from God, but one attains these through keeping company of and serving holy men. The Lord Himself has so enjoined (*Gītā*: IV. 34):

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।  
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

‘Know that by prostrating yourself, by questioning and by service; the wise, those who have realized the Truth, will instruct you in that true knowledge.’

It is, however, true that when a person sees God in everything, then, for him, there is no longer any distinction between persons. He becomes same-sighted. Service to parents and service to men in the street

turn out to be the same for him, for the same Lord resides in all. But that realization is a far cry. That knowledge comes through whole-hearted service of the parents, the guru and holy men. Therefore until that knowledge is gained parents are to be known as the great gurus and one profits by so knowing, for it is through their grace alone that we shall become fit to attain that Supreme Knowledge. Do you now understand why parents are great gurus? Now I suppose I shall not have to explain any further why after their death one has to live very cautiously. Caution here means to stay mentally rooted in God.

So far today. I am staying at the Seva-shrama itself. I do not know how long I shall be staying here—the Lord alone knows. With love and good wishes,

Ever your well-wisher,  
SRI TURIYANANDA.

## SELF-EFFORT

GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH

Translated from Bengali, from the *Minutes of the Ramakrishna Mission*, 19th sitting, August 29, 1897.—Ed.

We engage ourselves in controversy on self-effort *versus* God’s grace but do not ponder on how we could attain liberation of the Spirit. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that both hold good. Two types of persons are apt to speak of God’s grace: holy men and idlers. In outward manifestation *sattva* and *tamas* look alike. According to Vivekananda, Arjuna’s words of dispassion which we read in the beginning of the *Gītā* did not issue from the excess of *sattva*, but from downright *tamas*.

People, after finding for many a time their self-efforts failing, ultimately depend on the grace of God. He who struggles for attaining peace does experience grace of God. We do not try to understand what is *mukti* or liberation of the spirit. We do not strive to free ourselves from the desire for worldly enjoyments and the resultant suffering, as if liberation is some kind of a title!

Many people ask: can we not attain liberation through worldly living? What, however, needs to be known is that it is by devoting one’s mind entirely to God one attains peace; nowhere else is peace. If we can do that

though living in the world,—whether we live in a palace or in forest, does not matter. If we can keep our minds immersed in the thought of God, then there is little difference between living in the world or renouncing the world. Through repeated enjoyments when our minds are fed up with worldly objects, we then go about seeking His grace.

We need God's grace even to be able to feel His grace.

I met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time in the house of Dinanath Basu. It was night already. In a state of absorption he was asking if it was not yet evening or still there was day light. On hearing this I thought that this man was a hypocrite. Thinking thus I left the place little knowing at that time that through love of God a man could attain a state in which he lost the sense of distinction between day and night. I took his divine state of being as hypocrisy. The cause of our suffering is that due to force of habit we cannot get rid of our attachment to desire-actuated work. He is the holy man who intends to free himself from this suffering. But there is no such affliction in place of which we cannot attain peace by taking refuge in Him. I believe, by calling on God with utmost sincerity we can get rid of any danger. Not to have called upon the merciful God in this life is indeed meanness. We do not really understand the distinction between self-effort and divine grace. That we have not taken refuge at the feet of the Merciful Lord is the real calamity.

Q. What is your opinion about the *avatāra* (incarnation of God)?

A. Speaking of myself I have never seen such love (referring to Sri Ramakrishna) in any one else. He himself came to the theatre and took me along with him. He used to say: 'I have no attachment but only compassion; every thing has dropped off but compassion.' Him I call the *avatāra*, in whom I find compassion for all creatures. He used to say: 'If by taking birth a thousand time, I can but help one, I shall deem myself blessed. Swamiji<sup>1</sup> used to say, 'Even if I have to go to hell for the liberation of others I am ready for that.' These words were not prompted by self-esteem but by compassion for all creatures. Among all the testimonies about his avatarhood the most valuable is the oral testimony of the *avatāra* himself. When the Lord incarnated Himself as Ramachandra only seven *ṛsis* could recognise him. There is no way of recognising Him if He does not open our eyes and make us see.

Q. Did he (Sri Ramakrishna) bestow his grace on all who went to him?

A. I believe that he did. But it so happened that on some rare occasions what I considered to be a cruel treatment, afterwards I found through practical results to have been an act of supreme grace and not cruelty. One day he sternly turned Sashi away and did not allow him to get into the cab. That impressed me at that time like heartless treatment of a man. But today how beautifully has that Sashi<sup>2</sup> blossomed spreading his fragrance far and wide. I have witnessed many such instances.

<sup>1</sup> 'Swamiji' refers to Swami Vivekananda.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sasi' refers to Swami Ramakrishnananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.



# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

The scriptures advise us what to do and what not to do; what is good for us and what is not good for us. The greatest good for us is God-realization which takes us beyond all worldly sufferings. For the realization of God they prescribe to us to do something and forbid us to do certain other things. The actions that are forbidden by scriptures are called *niṣiddha-karmas*. These are ethically wrong deeds. Scriptures, however, allow certain actions which are righteous in themselves though performed with desire for the results, viz. enjoyment in this world or in other spheres (heaven). Such people who have desires must have some enjoyment, have their desires fulfilled before they can take to the path of God-realization in the real sense, for one has to attain desirelessness before one can attain God-realization. So, scriptures prescribe sacrifices (*yajña*) for the fulfilment of such desires. By performing such work, though with desires to start with, one attains desirelessness ultimately. Works prohibited by the scriptures are never helpful and so one should not be prompted by inordinate desires to perform prohibited actions.

How can sacrifices performed with desires lead to desirelessness? In all sacrifices performed with desires, one has to offer something to the Deity who in return bestows on him the desired fruit. Thus a man takes the first step in the path of desirelessness. He learns to renounce and to be unselfish even by the performance of these sacrifices.

When a man learns to perform work without desires, his mind is purified and he gets *vicāra*, discrimination. He then realizes that this world is unreal and that God alone is real. This spurs him to struggle for

God-realization. When he attains to this stage the scriptures prescribe for him two paths for God-realization—the path of knowledge and the path of devotion. In the former one has to discriminate that he is neither the body nor the senses nor the mind but the pure Self. It is only by mistake that we think ourselves to be the body, the mind etc. The Self in us is concealed by a veil of ignorance and hence our wrong view of things. By this kind of *vicāra* or discrimination, by negating everything which is non-self we ultimately experience the Self. This path is rather hard for the common man to follow. So the scriptures prescribe the path of devotion which is easier. In this path one of the methods prescribed is repetition of the Lord's name (*japa*). Spiritually speaking the Lord and His name are one. Hence through constant repetition of His name God is realized.

One should always try to repeat His name all through the day even in the midst of one's work. This may look rather impossible, but then, the Lord Himself has prescribed this method to Arjuna. He says, 'Therefore remember me always and fight'. If in the midst of the battlefield this was possible for Arjuna, the General of the Pāṇḍava army, with all his responsibilities, can we not repeat His name and remember Him even in the midst of our work which is comparatively less onerous than Arjuna's? We often think that we are not getting time for spiritual practice and plan to take to it when we are comparatively free from work and its worries. Such an idea is foolish, for there will be no time when we will be free from work. If a man who wants to have a bath in the sea sits on the seashore and thinks he will have a dip when the waves subside, then he will never

be able to do so, for the waves will never subside. He must take a dip in between two waves. Similarly, we must take the name of the Lord in the midst of our work.

One thing is very important to remember in our spiritual life. However much we may practise austerities, *japa* etc. there is no guarantee that we will have God-realization. It entirely depends upon His grace. And grace is unconditional. We cannot attach condition to it. But then, His grace does not come on people who are effortless. We have to put our maximum effort and it is only then that there is a chance of getting His grace.

We should never abstain from spiritual practice simply because we are not having good results easily and quickly. Sri Ramakrishna has cited the example of the jaundice patient. Though sugar candy is the medicine for jaundice yet at the beginning it tastes bitter. But, as he goes on taking it, it will begin to taste sweet and jaundice also will be cured. Similarly the Lord's name is the cure for one's world-jaundice. It tastes bitter at the beginning, but if we persist in practising, slowly the world-jaundice clears up and the name also

begins to taste sweet. Therefore, one must repeat the Lord's name though it may not be pleasant at the beginning. Gradually he will realise its force and ultimately he will have God-realization. The more he repeats it, the greater the joy he will get. That is why it is said '*japātsiddhiḥ*'—God-realization comes through *japa*.

Contemplation is the one thing needful for realization of God. Continuous contemplation like a stream of oil poured from one vessel to another is necessary. That does not mean that one will have to retire to a lonely place from the world to realize God. So, Swami Vivekananda has supplemented this contemplation with work done with a particular attitude. If we serve people seeing God in them, such work will become worship or *upāsana* and also help us to keep the continuity of our contemplation even in the midst of our work.

If we want infinite joy and bliss of God-realization we shall have to give up the finite and transitory happiness of this world and work hard in a disciplined manner according to injunctions of scriptures as interpreted by our spiritual teachers.

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## MY MEMORIES OF HOLY MOTHER

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

I have very little to write about my memories of Holy Mother, yet I feel they are worth recording.

Most probably it was in 1908, when I was a lad of fourteen years old, that I had the fortune to touch the blessed feet of Mother. I was then a school boy at Bishnupur. To go to Jayrambati, her native village, she had to get down at the railway station at Bishnupur and from there to go to her village,

about eighteen miles, by bullock cart. And then at that time there were no devotees, who knew her at Bishnupur, with whom she could stay.

One afternoon, as I was going out for a walk with a friend of mine, we happened to notice a Swami in ochre robe seated on the porch of an inn, surrounded by women. 'We criticized him as we passed by, saying, look at that so-called

holy man surrounded by women. What sort of Holy man can he be?" On our way back we saw him again. We went on towards our home. But something from within me was drawing me back. However, as I had joined my friend in criticizing the holy man, I did not want my friend to know this. So we parted, he going towards his home and I towards mine. Then I turned and came back to the inn and prostrated before the Swami. The Swami immediately asked me, 'Do you wish to prostrate before Holy Mother?' I became excited and said, 'Holy Mother! You mean the wife of Paramahansa Deva?' I read two books at that period of my life. One was 'Sri Ramakrishna Upadesh'—Words of the Master by Swami Brahmananda, and 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita'—Vol. I. Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna by M. So I was, in a way, acquainted with the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Swami replied, 'Yes, there she is.' She was sitting a few feet away from him. I bowed down to her and touched her feet. She kissed me the way a Hindu mother kisses her son—that is, she touches the chin with the tips of her fingers and then kisses them. Then she asked me, 'Son, haven't I seen you before?' 'No, Mother,' I replied. 'This is the first time I see you.' Many a time as I recalled this scene, I thought to myself, 'Well, Mother, you know your own children; but the children, blinded by ignorance, do not recognize their own Mother.' Perhaps Mother knew that I would one day be a Swami myself, surrounded by men and women devotees, and it made her smile that I had criticized the holy man!

Two years later, after I graduated from high school, I was studying in a college in Calcutta. Whenever Mother came to visit Calcutta, men were allowed to visit her once a week at her residence at the Udbodhan Office. Every week I used to

take advantage of this—not because I had any great reverence or attraction for Holy Mother at that time, but because I used to have a very pleasant experience; every time I touched her big toes, with my two fingers, the middle and the index ones, I used to feel as if I were receiving an electric shock, touching a live wire, as it were, and it was a thrilling experience. My fingers would tremble for a few moments and then there would come a soothing feeling in my whole being.

Since I had been reading the 'Kathamrita'—the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, even before I ever met Maharaj, it was the name Rakhal that attracted me and later I met him and received his grace.

While still continuing my studies in Calcutta, I made acquaintance with a friend named Pares, who also joined the monastery the same day as I joined. He also became a disciple of Maharaj, and became known as Swami Amriteswarananda.

Pares and I, while students, made up our minds one day to visit Holy Mother in her village, Jayrambati. When I used to go to bow down at her feet in Calcutta, she would be completely veiled, only her blessed feet were visible to the devotees. But in her village, she did not veil her face. On our way to Jayrambati, Pares was our guest in our house at Bishnupur. Then we hired a bullock cart and left for Jayrambati. All night we travelled in the slow moving cart. In the morning we reached Koalpara, where there is a branch centre of our Mission, and there we stopped for a while. Then we both walked towards her village. We were a little late for lunch. But we were later told by Rashbehari Maharaj, an attendant of Holy Mother, that she had told him to save lunch for two of the children of Rakhal, who would soon be arriving there. We had no way of letting her know that we were coming. I was already initiated by Maharaj, and he had

agreed to initiate Pares. But no one was supposed to know this at that time, yet she knew it.

Yes, meals were ready for us. We went first to bathe in the pond at Jayrambati—where in a separate ghat there were women still bathing. And they were saying to one another, we could overhear them, 'these are Sarada's disciples.'

As we came back from our bath, we were served meals by Holy Mother herself on two leaf plates. She sat near us, without any veil. She looked to me like my own mother, and like my own mother she was entreating us to eat heartily. She began to pile up the particular foods that we liked best. And I still remember, how, as it were, I was tasting nectar. All the time, Mother was seated beside us and talking to us as a mother would. After we had finished our meal, I was about to take the leaf plates and clean the spot. Mother stopped me and said, 'What are you doing?' Pares was shy, I was the one who was chatty. I said, 'But Mother, we can't leave these unclean leaf plates here.' Mother asked, 'What would you have done if your mother were present?' Without a word we left.

We stayed there for three days and three nights. She used to send breakfast food

to everybody in the outer house. The rest of the meals we had in her house and she would be personally looking after our comfort.

The day we left, as we prostrated, she kissed us the same way as our own mother would kiss us. And she watched us from her door until we were out of her sight.

The last time I saw her was after I joined the monastery. As Maharaj was sending me to Mayavati, he asked those of us who were going to Mayavati to receive blessings from Holy Mother, who then happened to be in Calcutta, at the Udbodhan Office. So Prajnan Maharaj, brother Satyen (Atmabodhananda), and I went to receive her blessings. She used to sleep in the shrine at the Udbodhan Office, and her bed was there. We prostrated before her, she had no veil. She kissed us and then took one flower from the shrine for each of us, and offered it to each one.

That was the last time I saw her in physical form.

Once I heard Maharaj say that it is very difficult to understand the greatness of Holy Mother. Only he to whom she reveals herself knows it. And this truth I have testified to, during my long life on earth. She is the embodiment of grace.

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There is no treasure equal to contentment and no virtue equal to fortitude.

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Forgetting your personality, try to understand your identity.

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Love all equally ; do not want anything in return.

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He who thinks always of the Lord, which way can evil come to him ?

—HOLY MOTHER



### *The Seditious Fakir*

'...Having him in our house was like having a saint in the house. He showed that mark of a great and simple man that he treated every one with the same courtesy and respect whether one were a distinguished statesman or an unknown student.' So wrote Professor Lindsay (Later Lord Lindsay) of the Oxford University, at whose home the 'fakir' stayed for a couple of weeks. 'The servants did what no guest had ever inspired them to do; they all came out to meet the holy man'—related another host, none other than David Lloyd George, the great war-time prime minister of Britain. That special guest was Mahatma Gandhi.

'Him I call a Mahatman whose heart bleeds for the poor' declared Swami Vivekananda; and that was an apt description of Gandhi. 'Mahatma' meaning great soul assumes real significance when there is actual identification with all one's fellow-beings; and this is precisely what Gandhi was. His was no partisan sympathy, espousing the cause of one section of the people as against the other. He was at home with the poor as well as the rich, with royalty as well as commonalty, with whites as well as the coloured. But the vast millions happened to be the half-naked, half-starved ones, and he wanted to be one of them. Hence the half-naked

'fakirhood' which was not just a propaganda garb.

That is why he chose to travel to London, only by the lowest class, even when the Indian National Congress had elected him as their sole representative for the Round Table Conference. And when he found that his small party had brought with them baggage too much by his standard, he had the 'superfluous' things actually sent back. While in London, for a period of three months, he stayed in an East End settlement house, called Kingsley Hall, declining to put up in hotels or wealthy people's homes. He enjoyed living among his own kind, the poor.

His love went out to all the British people; and in a large measure they too reciprocated. Labourers—men and women—would smile and greet him as he went along in the slums; and some would stop to have a talk with him. In turn, he visited several of them, in their homes. Children, particularly, were very happy with him. They would run up to their 'Uncle Gandhi' and hold his hand. One mischievous little fellow shouted, 'Hey Gandhi, where's your trousers?'; the Mahatma had a hearty laugh. On the same topic, raised by a reporter, he quipped, 'You people wear plus-fours; mine are minus fours!'

He was invited to the Buckingham Palace, to have tea with Their Majesties

King George V and Queen Mary. What would he wear on *this* unique occasion? The same loin-cloth, a shawl as the upper cloth, and sandals on his feet. Had he enough on?—some one asked. The Fakir readily replied, 'The King had enough for both of us.'

Only Winston Churchill stood apart. Earlier, when Gandhi had gone to meet the British Viceroy at Delhi, Churchill was revolted. He could not brook 'the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this... seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's Palace, there to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor.' And now, even when the Ex-Viceroy Lord Irwin, General Smuts, Harold Laski and many such met Gandhi, Churchill declined to meet him. He was the symbol of the Empire and its preservation; Gandhi was the symbol of its dissolution and partnership among equals.

'How far would you cut India off from the Empire?' he was asked. 'From the Empire entirely... From the British nation not at all. It must be a partnership on equal terms' was the clear answer. A voluntary interdependence inspired by creative love was the basis of his relations with people; he wanted the same to operate among nations too. This was no less true even of his relations with that class of people, often detested and reviled as the symbols of oppression, the agents of governmental tyranny—the Police.

Two Scotland Yard detectives, Sergeant Evans and Sergeant Rogers, had been detailed by the British Government to guard Gandhi. These officers were special, big men—big in physical stature as well as professional status—usually assigned to guarding royalty. But such was his stature of genuine goodness and simple dignity that these 'big men' grew to like the 'little man'. Neither did he feel oppressed by them nor did he like many dignitaries ignore and keep them at a distance. They would have friendly talks and he even visited their homes. In fact the Fakir became so close to them that he actually begged of the authorities a favour, on the eve of his departure from England—that they be kindly allowed to accompany him to Brindisi, in Italy, the take-off port to India from Europe. When asked to explain the reason for this strange request, the Mahatma's answer was, 'Because they are part of my family'. True indeed, for all humanity was his family. More strange, the authorities actually complied with the request. Only at Brindisi did the 'family' separate; nor did he forget them there. From India he sent each of them a watch on which was engraved, 'With love from M. K. Gandhi'—the love that flowed generously to one and all, from a great heart, a great soul.

*Explorer.*

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Chastity is the lily among virtues and makes men almost equal to angels. Nothing is beautiful but what is pure, and the purity of men is chastity. Chastity is called honesty, and its possession honour. It is also named integrity, and its opposite, corruption. In short, it has its own peculiar glory of being the fair and unspotted virtue of both soul and body.

—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

# REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

I do not remember exactly when and where I first met revered Swami Shivananda, popularly known as Mahapurush Maharaj. Perhaps I saw him first in 1919 at Belur Math. Before that, in the year 1918, I had the blessed privilege of meeting Swami Turiyananda, and having intimate discussions with him about spiritual life. I became very much drawn to him. Afterwards I met Maharaj<sup>1</sup> and would go very often to see him in Balaram Bose's house in Calcutta.

Once I went to Belur Math with some college friends. My friends had taken initiation from the Math and they were very devoted to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Afterwards they all joined the Order. That day both Maharaj and Mahapurush Maharaj were present in the Math. We first went to the shrine, then saw Maharaj and afterwards came to Mahapurush Maharaj. He was sitting on a chair in the same room where he stayed later on when he became President of the Math and Mission. We all bowed down before him. He knew my friends very well. He talked with them. I heard their conversation, but did not ask him any question.

On October 25 in the year 1919, I went to Belur Math with three or four of these friends, hoping to get initiation from Maharaj. Some time back Maharaj had told me that he would give me initiation on some auspicious day, but did not fix the date. I had heard that Maharaj would give initiation to some persons including a friend of mine, on the following day. I thought that if I were present on this occa-

sion, perhaps Maharaj would initiate me also.

After the evening service in the shrine, all outsiders had left the Math precinct. It was night. Mahapurush Maharaj was sitting on a bench on the eastern verandah of the main building. He saw me passing by and asked me a little sharply why I was still loitering in the Math compound. I said I would like to spend the night in the Math. He was reluctant to allow a stranger to stay there at night. Soon he heard from one of my friends whom he knew, that I was seeking initiation from Maharaj the next day. At this Mahapurush Maharaj was all affection to me and remarked, 'You are a student; you live in comfort in your college hostel. You may have to be inconvenienced if you stay here'. I said that no inconvenience would be too much for me. I was very much touched by his love and consideration.

The next day in the morning, Maharaj gave me initiation. After that, I went to Mahapurush Maharaj's room and bowed down before him. He was extremely happy and blessed me very much. After or before my initiation, I do not remember which, one evening I went to our centre in Baghbazar, Calcutta. There I saw Mahapurush Maharaj climbing up the stairs to see the Holy Mother. At that time she was very sick and no visitor was allowed to see her. I noticed that Mahapurush Maharaj had something in his hand—perhaps to offer to the Holy Mother. He was filled with so much devotion and reverence that the scene even now appears before my mind very vividly.

During the Christmas holidays in 1921, I went to Bhubaneswar to see Maharaj and consult him about my desire to join the

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<sup>1</sup> Except when used in direct address, 'Maharaj' refers to Swami Brahmananda and 'Mahapurush Maharaj' refers to Swami Shivananda.

Order. After his tour in South India he arrived in Bhubaneswar and was staying there. When I arrived, I found that Mahapurush Maharaj also was there. He recognized me and was very pleased to see me.

I was in Bhubaneswar for nearly a week. During my stay I seized every opportunity to accompany Maharaj on his morning and evening walks. On one or two days I went for a walk with Mahapurush Maharaj also. Perhaps he would take walks only in the evening. While walking with him, I could talk with him very freely. At that time the Non-cooperation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi was in full swing. There was great excitement all over the country. Hundreds and thousands of persons, young and old, joined the Movement. Though I wanted to join the Ramakrishna Order, I had great sympathy for those who dedicated themselves to the political movement. I greatly appreciated their courage, sacrifice and dedication. And with that perhaps now and then the thought unconsciously crept into my mind—who was right? I or they? To make things clear, I took the opportunity of my walk with Mahapurush Maharaj to ask him that question. I said, 'Intense political struggle is going on in the country. Swami Vivekananda had so much love for India. Some political workers complain that the Ramakrishna Mission does not take part in the Independence Movement.' When Mahapurush Maharaj heard these words, he stopped as he was walking, looked at me, and very firmly said, 'Sri Ramakrishna showed us a different path for serving the country. He did not tell us to go into the political field. If he had done that, we would have plunged into the political movement and would not in the least have feared a Lloyd George or a Winston Churchill. Ramakrishna did not tell us to do that.' These words he uttered with such feeling and power that it seemed as if his very stature grew taller and

bigger. Afterwards our conversation turned to some other topics, but what he said before settled finally what I should do. All doubts and hesitations were gone.

While at Bhubaneswar one morning I went to see Khandagiri and Udaygiri—which were at a distance of six or seven miles. In the eighth and ninth centuries there were Buddhist and Jain monasteries at these places. Many monks had done severe austerities and spiritual practices there. The caves where they lived can still be seen. The same day I went with Mahapurush Maharaj on his walk. In the course of conversation he asked me what I felt at Khandagiri and Udaygiri. I said in reply, 'In those places many monks underwent intense spiritual practices. They passed through many hopes and fears, many phases of struggle. Did they reach the goal for which they struggled? If not, it was a deplorable thing, a great tragedy'. While I was saying this, Mahapurush Maharaj kept silent. After a little pause, I said, 'This thought also came to my mind—that so many persons had struggled, surely some attained the goal.' Hearing these words, Mahapurush Maharaj felt very happy. His face beamed with joy, his eyes sparkled and he said, 'You are right. You are right. Surely some amongst them realized God.' I, a spiritual aspirant, thought in terms of hopes and fears; he, a man of God, saw in terms of positive achievements in spiritual life! That was the impression I was left with.

One day at a suitable moment, I told Maharaj of my intention to join the Order. He remained silent for a minute or so, and then with great affection and sympathy said, 'My child, your body is not too strong, it will be very difficult for you to stand the rigours of monastic life. Earn some money and with that you come. That will be very helpful to you.'

Hearing this, at once I thought I would



not like to be a monk with money in my pocket for future emergencies. But I could not say this to Maharaj, specially since his words showed such great concern for me. After some time when I met Mahapurush Maharaj, I narrated to him all of my conversation with Maharaj and my feelings and reaction. He listened to me with attention and said, 'Why don't you say to Maharaj what you feel?' When I did this, Maharaj said, 'I shall soon be going to Calcutta; see me there.'

The day before I left Bhubaneswar in the afternoon I told Mahapurush Maharaj that I would be leaving for Puri the next day on my way home. I do not know the reason why, but Mahapurush Maharaj asked me, 'Do you believe in these things (meaning pilgrimages to sacred places)?' In all frankness I told him, 'To speak the truth, personally I have no great faith in them, but when I see that you and other revered Swamis believed in these things, I feel inclined to do as you do.' My answer did not annoy him in the least, but rather he felt glad and said, 'Yes, you are right, perfectly right.' I was amazed to see his liberality and sympathy.

I could not see Maharaj in Calcutta as he directed. He passed away in the month of April, 1922. I was then elsewhere. As Maharaj had passed away, I was restless and worried as to how I could join the Order. Three or four months afterwards—in July, all of a sudden I got a letter from a very close friend of mine, who was a Brahmachari in Belur Math. In the letter he wrote, 'What are you doing? Do you know that Swami Turiyananda is very seriously ill in Benares? His life is almost despaired of.' I had deep love and reverence for Swami Turiyananda. Of all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Turiyananda was the one whom I met first. From him I got immense help, encouragement and affection. On getting the news

of his illness, the very next day I started for Calcutta on my way to Benares. Unfortunately, when I reached Calcutta I got the news that Swami Turiyananda had passed away. The following day, I went to Belur Math and told Mahapurush Maharaj that I wanted to join the Order. He graciously gave me the permission to do so. The date was 25th July, 1922.

Afterwards I learnt from my Brahmachari friend in the Belur Math that Mahapurush Maharaj had told him one day, 'Nowadays no one is coming to join the monastery. Why not try to get some new recruits?' My friend said in reply, 'Maharaj, what can we do? What power have we to do that?' Then Mahapurush Maharaj asked him to write me a letter. In his letter my friend did not write about his conversation with Mahapurush Maharaj, he only gave me the news of the serious illness of Swami Turiyananda. That did the trick. So from one standpoint, it was Mahapurush Maharaj who gave me the push to join the Order, though I was firmly contemplating it for a long time.

While staying at Belur Math, I heard many members saying that previously Mahapurush Maharaj was very reserved and awe-inspiring, but after he became the Vice-President of the organization, he changed completely. When I joined the Order, he was one step higher. He was the President. I found him extremely affectionate. He was all love and blessings to everyone—young and old, rich and poor, monks and devotees, and the public in general. A lay disciple of Mahapurush Maharaj, who was previously a well-to-do person but afterwards became very poor, once told me, 'Mahapurush Maharaj is not only my spiritual shelter, he was a great help to me even in my worldly life.' Mahapurush Maharaj gave him great financial support. And this was not a stray case. Many others had similar experiences.

I saw only the last chapter of Mahapurush Maharaj's life—when he was showering love and blessings on one and all and I also had the supreme privilege of getting a share of that. Sometimes, from trifling incidents and insignificant events, one could see how great was his compassion and consideration. These things might seem to be trifles to others, but to those who actually received them they had immense value. This I can say from my own experience.

When I began to stay in Belur Math, one thing struck me very much about Mahapurush Maharaj—his regularity in going very early in the morning to the shrine for meditation. I would try to go to the shrine at half past five in the morning, but every day, on arriving there, I would find him sitting before the altar very deep in meditation. Evidently he had come there much earlier. At that time Mahapurush Maharaj was very advanced in age. One day it was very stormy with heavy rains. Mahapurush Maharaj had to come to the shrine from his room through an open terrace. I thought, 'Certainly today Mahapurush Maharaj will not be able to come to the shrine.' But on going to the shrine I found him there as usual—deeply immersed in meditation. These things were great lessons to us.

Two or three years later Mahapurush Maharaj visited our centre in the city of Madras, where I was one of the members. The day following his arrival, very early in the morning, Mahapurush Maharaj was going up the steps to reach the shrine with his deerskin seat under his arm, and humming a song to himself. The first line of the song was, 'May Thy will be done, O Lord, the compassionate One.' The voice was very, very sweet; the words came as it were from the inmost depth of the heart. Unfortunately, when he got to the top of the steps, the shrine was not open. The climb to the shrine was also a bit strenuous

for someone of his age. Thenceforward, as long as Mahapurush Maharaj was in Madras, he would meditate sitting in his own room.

My first assignment in the Mission work was to go for flood relief in North Bengal. In our party were Pasupati (Swami Vijayanda) and two other members. After our return from the work, one afternoon Pasupati and I were walking with Mahapurush Maharaj on the lawn in front of the main building of the Math. Pasupati was narrating our experiences in the flood relief. Mahapurush Maharaj was listening with great interest and satisfaction. In the course of the conversation Pasupati said that he travelled second class on the train while going from one place to another. At once Mahapurush Maharaj told him. 'Could you do that—waste the money meant for the relief of the poor?' This casual incident made a great impression on me. I still remember it.

Though very reserved and indrawn, Mahapurush Maharaj could make fun himself and appreciate it when others did so. Another day—in the afternoon, Pasupati and I accompanied Mahapurush Maharaj on his walk on the same lawn on the bank of the Ganges. As it began to drizzle, we three came to the eastern porch of the building. On the wall of the building, above a bench, was hung a nicely printed piece of paper framed like a picture, containing 'Eighteen Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.' Mahapurush Maharaj stood before it, glancing at the sayings, and pointed out to Pasupati, who was near him, the saying: 'You must do hard spiritual practice, if you want to realize God.' Pasupati very quickly showed Mahapurush Maharaj the saying which ran, 'If there is the grace of the Guru, success will easily come.' Mahapurush Maharaj enjoyed the smart reply and began to laugh heartily.

About six months after I performed the

Brahmacarya vow ceremony, Swami Akhilananda wrote a letter to Mahapurush Maharaj from Madras. In it, he stated that he was being sent by our Madras Math to a place called Chidambaram to take charge of the religious instruction of the students in a college. For that he wanted an assistant. He wanted me. He and I had been great friends since our college days. One morning, I went to Mahapurush Maharaj's room to make obeisance to him. With Swami Akhilananda's letter in hand, he told me, 'Akhilananda has written this letter. What reply should I give him?' He did not plainly order me to go; he asked me what should be done. I was not in a mood at that time to leave Belur Math and go anywhere else, but I could not say that to Mahapurush Maharaj; he had put his request in such an appealing way. So I replied, 'If you wish me to go, I shall go.' He said, 'Yes, you go to work there.' Immediately after I had left the room, a great conflict began to disturb my mind. I did not feel like leaving Belur Math, with its nice atmosphere, specially since Mahapurush Maharaj was there. I spoke out my mind to Swami Suddhananda who was then the Assistant Secretary of our Math and Mission. He advised me to see Mahapurush Maharaj and tell him freely what I felt. But I had not the heart or the inclination to go so far, though the conflict was raging in my mind unceasingly.

One noon, while I was at work in the office, which was on the same flat as his room, quite unexpectedly Mahapurush Maharaj came right near me, and with his right forefinger raised a little, said, 'Bhu—, you go to Madras. I say you will not have any difficulty and inconvenience there.' Saying a few more words, he went away to take his bath. I was dumbfounded. 'He is the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission; everyone automatically bows to any order given by him. Here I am a

'raw Brahmachāri.' Sensing that in my mind there was some hesitation to go to Madras, he did so much! What a wonderful art of leading people he has!' Afterwards when I actually went to Madras, I felt as if he had his alert eyes always on me. If I wrote any letter to him, the reply would be prompt and filled with unlimited blessings and words of encouragement.

A few days before I was to leave for Madras, Mahapurush Maharaj told me, 'If you are to work in Madras, wearing your present white cloth will be a handicap. You will have to wear the ochre cloth; that is, you will have to take Sannyāsa. Take Sannyāsa.' I said, 'Maharaj, let my inside be transformed before I change my outer garb.' 'That certainly has to be done. There is no doubt about that,' rejoined Mahapurush Maharaj.

The day for my taking the vow of Sannyāsa was fixed. I had taken ceremonially the first vow; I was satisfied with that. I shall have to take Sannyāsa, or, what special need was there for taking Sannyāsa—such questions had never even arisen in my mind. Now, however, the thought began to arise: Is it proper for me to take Sannyāsa at this stage? So I consulted one or two senior monks. They looked at the subject from the standpoint of the organization. There was a rule that no one should be given Sannyāsa sooner than three years after taking the first vow. In my case that rule would have to be broken. That was their objection, though not so clearly expressed. I would not like to give any importance to procedure rules. I paid no heed to their opinions.

On the day previous to my taking Sannyāsa, the thought came to my mind, I should speak out my inner conflict to Mahapurush Maharaj. He will decide what he thinks best. But there was some little fear too. Unasked-for came this opportunity for Sannyāsa. I might lose this

chance through my foolish fastidiousness. Afterwards I finally decided I should clearly tell Mahapurush Maharaj what was weighing on my mind, whatever might be the consequence. At that time he was staying at the house of a devotee in Ramakrishnapur, near Howrah. I went to see him there. Mahapurush Maharaj was quite astonished to see me and asked with a little concern what the matter was. I told him the whole thing. I did not even keep secret my fear that I might lose the blessed chance of Sannyasa at this time. He listened to me very calmly and said, 'Yes, you should take Sannyasa. Who knows how long I shall live?' After a moment's pause he added, 'This also is true—after my passing away, Sannyasa will be given. Others will give Sannyasa.' Relieved of a great burden on my mind, I returned to Belur Math happy and cheerful.

In the evening Mahapurush Maharaj came back to the Math. After some time I went to his room. He was lying in bed, resting; he was quite old at that time. In the course of conversation he asked me, 'What have you eaten?' I said, 'How could I eat today? I shall be given Sannyasa, so I am fasting.' He became alarmed and said, 'Why have you fasted? Go down to the store right now and eat some fruits which have been offered in worship. And also don't take the customary bath before the Sannyasa ceremony. You touch the Ganges water. That will be sufficient.' At that time I was not well, having just recovered from a long drawn-out attack of malaria. So he gave those directions. Mahapurush Maharaj had to think about the welfare of all the monks of the Order, members of the Mission and devotees of the Lord. In the midst of these responsibilities, he could give attention to the details of what was needful for me! I was amazed.

Afterwards similar things happened.

When he went to the South, I was in the monastery in the city of Madras. While he was in Ooty, I wrote him a letter. I had been slightly indisposed for the past three or four days, so in my letter I could not precisely state that I was quite well. I wrote that I was keeping indifferent health. That was not a part of the news; it was only a part of the form. But very shortly after that, Swami Siddheswarananda of the Madras Math got a letter, followed by a money order, from Mahapurush Maharaj. The letter directed that with the money sent, Siddheswarananda should make arrangements for me to take milk in addition to the regular food. I might not like to take special food while eating with others. He should see to it that I took the milk at other times. I was overwhelmed with surprise. Mahapurush Maharaj not only sent money, he considered also the fact that I might feel embarrassed to take any special food. So he gave definite directions.

When Mahapurush Maharaj came to Madras Math, I was there. A Brahmachari of my time went to Uttarkashi in the interior of the Himalayas and was doing intense spiritual practice. I heard the news. Though I was not physically strong enough, now and then the thought would arise in my mind to go to some Himalayan region and live a life of exclusive spiritual practice. As a reflex action to that desire, one day I said to Mahapurush Maharaj something about what a laudable life that Brahmachari was living in Uttarkashi. I thought Mahapurush Maharaj would be very pleased to get that news. But no. He said, 'Do you mean to say that only by going to Uttarkashi one will get the realization of God?' He completely removed the unhappy feeling that was in my mind because I could not go out for exclusive spiritual practice. Later the Brahmachari who was doing spiritual practice in Uttarkashi went out of his mind.

During the stay of Mahapurush Maharaj in Madras Math, as everywhere else too, after our morning meditation, we would all go to his room to make pranam. Then incidentally some spiritual topics would come up. We would eagerly wait to hear something about spiritual life from him. In the monastery lived an old man who had retired from work. His name was Mudaliar. We loved him and used to call him 'Tata,' Tamil for grandfather. He was very good-natured and spiritually-minded. I understand that Maharaj—Swami Brahmananda—would endearingly refer to him as 'Sage Mudaliar.' In one of our morning gatherings before Mahapurush Maharaj, Tata asked him, 'How are you, Maharaj?' Mahapurush Maharaj replied, 'I am all right. The Self is all right. I am the Self.' Mahapurush Maharaj often made fun with Tata. We thought that this reply also was made in fun, as he did not like to mention anything about his health. Usually he sidetracked the question. But we saw him gradually becoming more and more serious and repeating the idea, 'I am the Self. I am Purnam,' and so on. Then we realized that he was not making fun; he was talking from his own experience. Gradually he became more and more indrawn, without any word at all. For a while we all stood silent, afraid lest we should break the atmosphere.

For a year and a half I was in the South. Then I returned to Bengal. From there I was sent to Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati. A few months after my joining the Order at Belur Math, I had had malaria, with repeated attacks of fever, which persisted for several months afterwards. Naturally I was a bit depressed. When I mentioned this to Mahapurush Maharaj, he said, 'You need not worry. We shall send you to some good place.' I was sent to Mayavati in the Himalayan region where the climate was salubrious. For

more than twenty years I was engaged in that work. The words of Mahapurush Maharaj came true. In connection with the work at Mayavati, now and then I would have to come to Calcutta and stay there. While in Calcutta, I could go to Belur Math and see Mahapurush Maharaj, which I would do quite often.

For a period I had to look after the Mayavati Publication Department in Calcutta. For that, I had to go to the paper market in the China-Bazar, to the printing press in College Square, to the place where book-binders lived and worked. In the Centre itself, persons of various types would come to the office in connection with the sale of books. Also, the accommodation there was very meagre. All these factors contributed to an atmosphere which was quite different from that of worship in an orthodox sense. Once I told Mahapurush Maharaj, 'I work in the Publication Department in Calcutta, where the atmosphere is different. I feel distraction.' He said in answer, 'Get up early in the morning and meditate and make japa to your heart's content. That will keep your mind on a higher level. I myself do that. I meditate in the morning, and the whole day passes, as it were, in intoxication.' Usually he would not say much about his own spiritual experiences. I felt fortunate and blessed that he mentioned to me what happened in his own inner life. And the fact that, as a result of his morning meditation, his whole day passed in blissful joy astounded me. Hearing his words, I said, 'You say that you meditate in the morning and the joy continues the whole day. And even when I sit for meditation and try, I have no real meditation. My mind wanders.' At this Mahapurush Maharaj burst out into laughter. What he said after that is a valued treasure to me.

I told him that many times I tried to

get up very early and meditate, but that would cause giddiness and as a result I would find it difficult to do my normal work. He felt worried and disturbed about it and said, 'No, no, don't do that. Have sufficient sleep and then meditate as much as you can without any strain.' He did not tell me to force myself to rise early and do my spiritual practice. So great was his concern to make spiritual life easy for us.

On another occasion he advised me—when, I do not remember exactly—'Do not do your spiritual practices forcibly. In an easy way, with inner feeling, pray to Him as much as you can. For the rest, depend on the Lord. Realization does not come like the acquirement of book learning.'

One evening he was resting on his bed. I was sitting on the floor. Of his own accord he said to me, 'You see, some students pass their examinations without working hard. It is exactly the same with God realization. Some persons have it in an easy way.'

While I was in Belur Math, I noticed he would be very much worried if any one of us was ill. One day, with reference to the hard struggle one has to go through in spiritual life, I asked him, 'When we are physically ill, you people have so much anxiety about us. But when our minds give us trouble and we find no way out, do you also feel worried then?' At my strange question, he smiled mildly and said, 'Everything will be all right in the end.'

When I was working in Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, an Englishman, Mr. H. A. Popley, Secretary to the Y.M.C.A., would come there. I knew him even while I was in Madras. He was a very fine man. As far as I knew, he had no bigotry. Once he wanted to visit Dakshineswar. I took him there. While returning, he said to me in the course of conver-

sation, 'I have asked many Christians whether they have realized God. Quite a number of them have said they have. Whereas when I asked the same question of the Hindus, not one single one of them said he had realized God. Does that indicate that Christ is the better way of reaching God?' I told him in reply, 'Live with those Christians who say they have realized God and live with those Hindus who say they have not seen God. Just see from whom you get greater inspiration for spiritual life.' He remained silent.

A few days after that he requested me to take him to Belur Math. At a convenient time I took him there. When I had finished showing him around, he expressed a desire to see the President of our Math and Mission, if possible. I went to consult Mahapurush Maharaj and with his consent, took Mr. Popley to him. He entered into the room of Mahapurush Maharaj in a spirit of great humility and reverence. After a word or two he abruptly asked Mahapurush Maharaj whether he had seen God. I was taken aback at Mr. Popley's asking such a personal question of Mahapurush Maharaj, but at the same time was eager to hear what the answer would be. Mahapurush Maharaj did not get in the least annoyed at the question, but rather gave the straightforward reply, 'Yes, I have realized God. I feel the all-pervasive presence of God. But you know, as the Upanishads say, there is no limit to the knowledge of God.' Then he quoted the verse from the *Kena Upanishad*, which says:

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।  
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 'He by whom Brahman is not known, knows It; he by whom It is known knows It not. It is not known by those who know It; It is known by those who do not know It'. *Kena Upanishad* (II. 3)

And he explained to him the meaning of the text.

Another Englishman used to come to our ashrama in Calcutta. He was Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent of the Oxford Mission Hostel in Calcutta. He was a monk, very pious and strict about his spiritual practice. At stated hours he would say his prayers. On no account would he deviate from his routine. I had great admiration for him, specially since I could not be so strict as he was. Once I told Mahapurush Maharaj about him. I thought Mahapurush Maharaj would be very happy to hear about the English monk. But Mahapurush Maharaj dismissed the whole thing by saying, 'This is all regimentation.' I got an insight into what real spirituality was.

When we used to go to Belur Math, we would make pranam to Mahapurush Maharaj after our arrival and also before our departure from the Math. Almost every time I would take leave of him, he would inquire whether I had taken prasad. If he knew that I had not taken anything, he would ask me to do so or he would make arrangements for that. Once there was no attendant near by. He himself got up from his seat, went to the 'meat safe'<sup>3</sup> and gave me some prasad. At that time he was very, very old. Nevertheless, he took so much trouble! I felt that what he gave me was not merely prasad. It was his brimful blessing.

It was one afternoon in summer. Mahapurush Maharaj awoke from his siesta but was still in his bed. Seeing that the door of his room had been opened, I went in and began to fan him with a hand fan. All of a sudden, a middle-aged man entered the room. At that hour, no outsider was allowed in the Math. I wondered how he could get there, and became a bit annoyed

with him. His hair was dishevelled and his appearance indicated that he was a disturbed person. Coming near the bed of Mahapurush Maharaj, he abruptly asked him, 'Why is there so much suffering in the world?' From his words it seemed he had become very cynical with the whole world. I was not sure whether it was right for me to remain there, as the visitor was asking a personal question. But I was eager to hear what Mahapurush Maharaj said. So I stayed in the room. Mahapurush Maharaj slowly got up from his bed and went to his chair near the table. The visitor sat on the floor. Mahapurush Maharaj bent towards him and with very deep sympathy said in a soft voice, 'I do not know what is the cause of misery in the world. I can say how one can get out of it.' The words were laden with his great eagerness to help the disturbed person. The visitor very soon became calm and soothed. I did not pay further attention to the conversation. What I heard and saw that afternoon is of great help to me even now.

Late in the morning once I went to the room of Mahapurush Maharaj for some errand. The visitors who had come early in the morning were all gone. Only one person was there, sitting on the floor. Mahapurush Maharaj was seated on his bed. The devotee asked Mahapurush Maharaj for his blessings, which Mahapurush Maharaj readily gave. But still the devotee asked for blessings again and again. Seeing the situation, I felt a bit disturbed and thought if this fellow is not satisfied with Mahapurush Maharaj giving him blessings once, he will not have any faith even if Mahapurush Maharaj blesses him a hundred times. Mahapurush Maharaj then told him a bit firmly and in English, 'We have only blessings and not curses. We have only blessings and not curses.'

There was a great plague in Lahore. Two or three of our monks were going to

<sup>3</sup> In which sweetmeats were stored.

do relief work there. They came to take leave of Mahapurush Maharaj. I was present. Mahapurush Maharaj heartily blessed them and said words of encouragement, telling them to serve distressed people in the names of Thakur<sup>4</sup> and Swamiji. When they went away, I saw Mahapurush Maharaj very piteously praying to the Divine Mother, 'Mother, Mother, look after them, protect them.' It was a very touching sight.

It was the occasion of the public celebration of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda, I do not remember exactly which one. There was a large concourse of people at the Math. Of them, surely a few hundreds came to make pranam to Mahapurush Maharaj. He was not at all well, but still he received them. In the evening, when all had gone away, and it was quiet, I went to Mahapurush Maharaj's room, just to see how he was doing. He was sitting on his chair—all alone. I told him, 'So many persons came to see you and make pranam, surely it was a great strain on you.' He said, 'Why should it be a strain? Rather it was a great joy. The devotees of the Lord came. It was a matter of great rejoicing to see them'. Ordinarily one would say, 'The whole day there were crowds of visitors. I can no longer stand that. I feel tired,' and so on. What a great difference when one's outlook is different! The devotees of the Lord came, therefore Mahapurush Maharaj completely forgot his physical ailments and rejoiced.

In the adjacent room, on the eastern side of Mahapurush Maharaj's room, Maharaj lived. After his passing away, that room was kept exactly as it was during his lifetime. All his belongings were there,

arranged as before. Later on, these things were removed to Maharaj's Temple after its construction. One evening, I was meditating sitting in Maharaj's room. Conversation that took place in Mahapurush Maharaj's room could be heard from where I sat. Mahapurush Maharaj was perhaps talking with a devotee. I heard him saying, 'Those whom Sri Sri Thakur, Holy Mother, Swamiji and Maharaj have blessed, have undoubtedly got their liberation.' I only heard those words; I could not understand their meaning at that time, nor do I understand now. Afterwards, also, on one or two occasions, I heard Mahapurush Maharaj making the above-mentioned statement. When I heard it for the first time, the thought came to my mind that Mahapurush Maharaj was also a son of Sri Ramakrishna. Therefore those whom he himself has blessed will also be liberated. More than once, I heard Mahapurush Maharaj saying, 'Thakur, Holy Mother, Swamiji and Maharaj are one and the same,' so great was his reverence for Maharaj.

For many years I was a member of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. Swami Vivekananda started the Ashrama with the intention that here only monistic Vedanta would be practised. His idea was not completely fulfilled, for all are not fit for practising unmixed Monism. Therefore, the previous rules were modified and provision was made that, whatever might be the form of spiritual practice the members did inwardly, outwardly there should be no ritualism performed. In the first year of my stay in Mayavati, on the occasion of the autumnal worship of the Divine Mother, I thought I would chant the *Chandi* for the three days of worship in my own way and not as a part of any ritual. But then a difficulty arose: I had some urgent work to do which could not be postponed. If I were to finish that work

<sup>4</sup>The word 'Thakur', meaning 'Lord', in the parlance of the Ramakrishna Order means 'Sri Ramakrishna'.



in time, I could not chant the *Chandi* without taking breakfast in the morning. I made a compromise. I thought I would take my breakfast, finish the work, and then, after taking a bath, I would recite the *Chandi*. Actually I followed that plan. On the third day of the worship, in the afternoon, I went for a walk with the then President of Mayavati and in the course of the conversation, it came out that I had read the *Chandi* in the morning. He got a bit annoyed to hear this and remarked that it was not right for me to recite the *Chandi* after having my breakfast. I felt curious to know the opinion of Mahapurush Maharaj about what I had done—whether it was really wrong. So I wrote a letter to Mahapurush Maharaj at Belur Math. He wrote in reply, ‘If one chants hymns and songs with a feeling of devotion, it does not matter whether or not one observes the forms of external purification. But when one recites the *Chandi* as a part of the ritual in the worship of the Divine Mother, one should certainly observe the rules of worship; otherwise there can be no objection to reading hymns and prayers to the Divine Mother at any time, according to one’s moods and feelings.’ He was very liberal as far as external forms and conventions are concerned, but undoubtedly he was extremely particular as regards one’s inner integrity.

After I had worked in the Calcutta branch for two and one-half years, I was asked to go to Mayavati as editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I told Mahapurush Maharaj that I had been asked to take charge of the Journal, but I did not feel myself equal to the task. He said in reply, ‘Try to do enough prayer and meditation, then you will be able to do the work of the *Prabuddha Bharata* properly.’ He did not advise me on what to read or what policy to follow in conducting the magazine. He

said that all necessary help would come from doing one’s spiritual practice.

While working for the *Prabuddha Bharata*, I had to come down to Calcutta from Mayavati. From Calcutta once I went to Belur Math. Early in the morning I went to the shrine, and afterwards I went to Mahapurush Maharaj to make pranam. He was sitting on his chair. I sat below, on the floor. Naturally his eyes fell on my face. He asked me, ‘Where are your eye-glasses?’ Then I remembered that through mistake I had left the glasses in the shrine. I told him that. He said, ‘Do you go to the shrine?’ I could not understand why he asked me such a question. I stayed in Mayavati where there was no shrine. Perhaps I had lost the habit of going to the shrine. That was the idea behind his question, I believe. I did not give any answer to his query. Then, of his own accord, he said, ‘Yes, keep that habit. Otherwise nothing will be gained simply from the editorship of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.’ I kept quiet. A conflict was beginning to arise in my mind—‘If that be so, then what am I doing?’ He paused for a while and said, ‘Well, this also is the work of Thakur and Swamiji. This also is the work of Thakur and Swamiji.’

Once, when I cannot now remember, Mahapurush Maharaj told me, ‘When you sit for meditation, you should think, “I exist and God exists. Nothing else exists—nothing does. The world does not exist, nor the Math, nor the Mission. Only God is.”’ The thought flashed into my mind, ‘He is the President of the Math and Mission. He himself says, “When in meditation you should think the world is non-existent, even the Math and Mission are not.” How wonderful!’

It was, I believe, the year 1926, less than four years after I had joined the Order. I was working in the Mayavati branch of Calcutta. One afternoon as I reached

Belur Math, I found that Mahapurush Maharaj had come out for his walk. He was coming towards the south by the road on the bank of the Ganges. I met him when he came near Maharaj's Temple and made pranam. A few days back I had heard that there was need for an Assistant Swami at the Vedanta Society of New York. A letter to that effect had come to the headquarters and discussion was going on about that. As soon as I got up after making pranam to Mahapurush Maharaj, he raised his right hand a little in a very happy mood and with great affection, told me, 'Bhu—, you will have to go to America.' But, on hearing the news, I told him very plaintively, 'Where shall I go, Maharaj, away from you and Belur Math?' Seeing me plead this way, he also became a bit moved. For a moment he could not utter anything, and then he said, 'Why, the Lord is everywhere! The Lord is everywhere!'

At that time the proposal that I be sent to America was dropped. Afterwards, in the year 1951, I was sent to the United States of America to work for the Vedanta Society of New York. Twenty-five years later, the words of Mahapurush Maharaj came true. One has to face many difficulties while working in a foreign land. When the problems become very great and no solution can be seen, the words of Mahapurush Maharaj automatically come to my mind—'Why, the Lord is everywhere!'

Does God listen to the prayers of man? If He does, what is the proof that He does? When one prays for a particular desire, and that desire is fulfilled, one considers that to be the effect of his prayer. But can it not also be chance coincidence? Perhaps what he wanted would have been fulfilled even without his prayer! Again, so many persons pray, pray most piteously, with no response at all from God! This common and trifling question was once agitating my mind very much. Being unable to solve it,

I wrote to Mahapurush Maharaj from Mayavati. At that time he was very sick at Belur. He could not write letters himself; his secretary did all the correspondence. In my letter to Mahapurush Maharaj, I added that I wanted a reply only if he himself could write, otherwise no reply was necessary. My fear was that even if the secretary tried very carefully to convey the ideas of Mahapurush Maharaj in the reply, there might perchance be some distortion. In that case, I would prefer not to have any reply at all. I took it for granted that no reply would come. But strangely enough, within a few days came the reply, written by Mahapurush Maharaj himself. It was a precious and beautiful letter. My conflicts were solved and I felt glad beyond measure. There was a postscript to it, in which he said, 'While writing my hand shakes, so the handwriting is bad.' His handwriting was normally very good. In his old age, and though ill, he took the trouble to reply to my silly letter. I was filled with gratitude and remorse too! But I was overwhelmed at the indication of his great love and affection.

On February 20, 1934, the day Mahapurush Maharaj passed away, I was in Calcutta. When the news came that his end was drawing nigh, I hastened to Belur Math, together with other members of the Centre. A little after five-thirty in the afternoon, he passed away. Within the Math building, and outside it in the compound, there were large numbers of persons waiting with breathless anxiety. The moment he passed away, I felt as if a mountain-high protection disappeared all of a sudden from over my head. A few days later, the thought came to me, 'The shelter has not gone away; it has only taken a permanent shape.'

While I was near him, quite a number of times the biblical text came to my mind—'He lives, and moves, and has his being in

God.<sup>5</sup> Mahapurush Maharaj remained constantly immersed in the thought of God. He knew very well the dire problems troubling the lives of many, many individuals, the social problems of the day, the sufferings and miseries in the country—he was aware of all of them, and he had immense sympathy for them. He used to read the daily newspapers—all these things he did. But the moment one talked with him, one would realize that his true being was his spiritual life, full of human sympathy and understanding. Though his thought was tuned to the Highest, he did not keep himself separate from the ordinary world. He had great anxiety about human suffering and longed to see it removed. Many times I have seen him sitting by himself and very movingly praying to the Divine Mother for the redress of suffering in the world. In one letter in his own handwriting we find mentioned, "The spiritual practices of this body are only for the good of the world. I have no other craving, no other need. As soon as I sit for meditation and prayer, the only feeling that comes to me is, "Thou, the compassion embodied, may the world be blessed." "

God was always a living reality with him. In his presence the doubts and misgivings of even an atheist or a sceptic would automatically vanish. Not only would doubts vanish, but even ordinary persons would feel that God could be realized in life. Though it is difficult, it is not impossible. It is possible for even common men. He could awaken that feeling in others and instill in them that confidence. When he talked on spiritual matters, his words were not based on vague and uncertain faith. One would feel that he talked from his own direct experience, that he was actually visualizing the divinity in every human heart

and encouraging and advising all to realize that.

After Mahapurush Maharaj's passing, we were going through a book of his letters, reproduced in his own handwriting. Then we understood the reason why we had felt in his presence that it was not difficult to realize God; rather it was easy to do so. One of these letters, written to a disciple or a disciple-like person, read, 'My heartfelt prayer is that from day to day you advance in your spiritual life. May you have faith and devotion, love and knowledge, compassion and dispassion, and all other divine qualities. Rather, you have them already; nothing new will have to come. Sons always have the fullest right to the inheritance from their parents. One has only to know it. So I pray that He may make you aware of your inheritance.'

From this nobody should be misled into thinking that he did not dwell upon the need of intense devotion and yearning to develop one's spiritual life. He laid very great stress on this. Because of the lack of these qualities in our hearts, only in his presence would we feel that it was somewhat easy to realize God. But as soon as we were away from him, we would feel that it was not as easy as we had imagined. This mystery we perceived more deeply when his physical presence was no more.

The reason for this is—the memory of what we saw and heard in his presence was somewhat faded away by the distance in time and space; other things came and covered up that memory. The only remedy for this is to make a deliberate attempt to keep that memory vivid and bright. Hence the necessity of reminiscences. But although one gets great joy in hearing the reminiscences of others, or in reading them from the writings of others, one may not feel so inclined to write or tell his own reminiscences. There is a great difficulty in writing reminiscences in black and white.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 17 : 28.

One is entangled in writing one's 'auto-biography.' But are not reminiscences inseparable from the facts and events of one's own life? Being unable to resist the pressure of kind requests, I have here tried to note down something of what I know of Mahapurush Maharaj. By reading these notes, if anyone gets his curiosity about the great life of Mahapurush Maharaj, even slightly satisfied, let that be. It is no use

keeping the reminiscences closely guarded, hugging them to one's chest like a miser with his treasure.

Thirty-four years have gone by since Mahapurush Maharaj passed away. The image that was created so long ago in my mind has not faded away in the least. All-conquering time has not been able to destroy it—it rather shines brighter and brighter now.

## VIVEKANANDA AT THE PARIS CONGRESS, 1900

### PART ONE

SWAMI VIDYATMANANDA

Swami Vivekananda was strongly drawn to France. He was attracted by the beauties of the country, by French culture, and by the French character. He wanted very much to become proficient in the French language. And he loved Paris. The Swami found the city handsome and interesting.

Swamiji had been in France for two weeks in 1895 and again twice, briefly, in 1896. Thus it must have been a source of satisfaction to him to be able to pass the three months of August, September, and October, 1900, in this country. This was an especially interesting time to be in France. The Exposition Universelle Internationale was held in Paris from April to November of 1900. The industrial products and cultural attainments of many countries of the world were on display. Visitors flocked to Paris from all over the globe, many of them persons of talent and eminence. In connection with the Exposition, a Congress of the History of Religions was held, in which Swamiji participated. That first summer of the new century found France vital and glorious.

Of France and Paris Swami Vivekananda

said, 'After Paris there is no other city in the Western world; everywhere it is an imitation of Paris—or at least an attempt at it.' Further,

There is no city in the world that can compare with modern Paris. Formerly it was quite different from what it is now—it was somewhat like the Bengali quarters of Benares, with zigzag lanes and streets, two houses joined together by an arch over the lane here and there, wells by the side of walls, and so on. In the last Exposition they showed a model of old Paris, but that Paris has completely disappeared. . . . and a new Paris has risen in its place, cleaner and more extensive.

In another place the Swami continues :

Paris is the fountain-head<sup>7</sup> of European civilization, as Gomookhi is of the Ganges. This huge metropolis is a vision of heaven on earth. . . . This remarkable French character is the incarnation of the ancient Greek, as it were—always joyful, always full of enthusiasm, very light and silly, yet again exceedingly grave, prompt and resolute to do every work. . . . The Paris university is the model of European universities. All the Academies of Science that are in the world are imitations of the French Academy. . . . The style and diction of French writings are copied in all the European languages. Of science, philosophy and art, Paris is the mine. . . . One

distinguished scientist of England told me the other day that Paris was the centre of the world.

...

Of the Exposition Swami Vivekananda has this to say: "This year Paris is the centre of the civilized world, for it is the year of the Paris Exposition, and there has been an assemblage of eminent men and women from all quarters of the globe." Swamiji, as we know, met many of these outstanding people. To the Swami the Exposition was "an accumulated mass of dazzling ideas, like lightning held steady as it were, this unique assemblage of celestial panorama on earth!"

By all accounts the Exposition of 1900 was indeed a grand affair. It cost a hundred million francs. It covered about 250 acres in central Paris. There were art exhibits in the Grand Palais; and in the Petit Palais art in industry was displayed. Big buildings on the Champ-de-Mars displayed the latest machines and industrial products. Foreign countries gave an international aspect to the exposition by building, along the Seine river, pavilions designed to recall the best architecture of their lands. There were fountains and monumental archways. In the centre of all this stood the then new Eiffel Tower, the tallest structure in the world. Across from the Tower, on the hill of the Trocadero, the colonies of France and of other European nations constructed buildings and small communities designed to convey the flavour of these exotic lands. As Swamiji reported, a reconstruction of a part of Paris as it had been several hundred years before was built. Much of the walking of long distances—always a problem with big expositions—was reduced by the presence of marvellous moving sidewalks.

The American historian, Henry Adams, visited the Exposition a number of times. In his classic, *The Education of Henry Adams*, he devoted an entire chapter to the

Exposition. He was fascinated by the new machines he saw there, particularly a huge electric dynamo. Adams saw in the dynamo a force as revolutionary for the future as had been in the past: the ideas of Copernicus and Galileo, the discovery of America by Columbus, and the recognition of Christianity by Constantine in 310.

We know from Mrs. Frances Leggett, daughter of Swamiji's hosts in the United States and in Paris, as well as from the Swami himself, that Vivekananda visited the Exposition very often. Mrs. Leggett wrote me: "My half-sister Alberta [Alberta Sturges, daughter of Mrs. F. H. Leggett, Sr. by her first marriage] told me that she, Swami, and my father went every morning to see the Exhibition, accompanied by Professor Patrick Geddes, who explained to them the exhibits." From a letter Josephine MacLeod wrote to Sara Bull we know that on August 4, 1900, Swamiji was to have had dinner in the restaurant of the Eiffel Tower with Josephine MacLeod, Sister Nivedita, and a friend of the Leggetts who lived in Paris, Gerald Nobel.

A French writer named André Hallays wrote a book about the Exposition called *A Travers l'Exposition de 1900*. He concludes his account with a light paragraph in which the eventual closing of the fair was both welcomed and regretted. Strangers came and went, finding the Exposition marvellous, but the attitude of the Parisian might differ somewhat:

Some murmured, "Good riddance!" while "What a misfortune!" moaned others, when Monday, November 12, at 11:00 in the evening, the cannon shot from the Eiffel Tower told Parisians that the great festival had ended. Some people had even uttered, the one after the other, the two exclamations given above—and such were perhaps the most sincere.

What a shame to be able no longer to saunter through that immense pell-mell of opulence, of curiosities, of entertainment, of masterpieces!

On the other hand, what a good riddance not to

have in front of one the aggressive ugliness of all that foreign architecture!

What sadness not to be able anymore to look at the old Japanese Kakemonos [paintings], nor the portal of the Finish pavilion, nor the Sainte Foy [ancient relic] of Conques, nor the old costumes from the time of Louis Philippe, nor the crayon drawings of Ingres, nor the dances of Sada-Yacco, nor the Spanish tapestries, nor the Reaburns [painting] from England, nor the Watteaus [paintings] from Germany, nor those charming sunsets seen against the illumined palaces along the purplish river—an effect so rich and mysterious!

What joy to find again Paris clean of hideous ramshackle buildings, with which it has been so long encumbered, to see again our familiar horizons, and to no longer move about among hordes of barbarians from abroad and country folk from at home dressed up in their Sunday best!

In the autumn of 1900 Swami Vivekananda wrote a letter in Bengali to the *Udbodhan* describing the Congress of the History of Religions and his own participation in it. In English this report occupies eight pages, and is printed in Volume IV of the Complete Works.

This account seems to be the basis of the section in the official *Life* of Vivekananda dealing with the Paris Congress. In fact, the narration in the biography practically paraphrases the letter. The very same material has been repeated in biographies written subsequently. So far as I know, in the nearly seventy years which have passed since the Congress met, no research has been undertaken to add to the account given by Swamiji in the *Udbodhan* letter.

Swamiji's report is a brief summary. A number of questions pose themselves, which admirers of the Swami would like to have answered. For example: When was the Congress held, and where? How was it organized; and how many, and who, participated in it? When and where did Swamiji participate, and exactly what did he do? Is it really true, as is stated in the

official *Life*, and as has been repeated many times in later books, that Vivekananda knew French well enough to lecture to the Congress in that language, and did indeed do so twice?

His experiences in connection with the Congress of the History of Religions make up a relatively insignificant part of the Swami's life. Nevertheless, everything that Vivekananda did interests his admirers and spiritual descendants. I have consequently undertaken to investigate this phase of Swamiji's life. The findings are reported in this third chapter of *Swami Vivekananda in France*. The reader is directed to the two previous chapters, covering other aspects of this subject, appearing in *Prabuddha Bharata*: March, 1967, and March, 1968.

That the Paris Congress was a small and tame affair in contrast to the Parliament of Religions of 1893 held in Chicago is made clear by Swamiji himself in his account of the meetings. He describes the Paris conference as having been like a 'Congress of Orientalists which is convened from time to time, and at which European scholars, versed in Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, and other oriental languages, meet; only the antiquarianism of Christianity was added to this Paris congress.' The Congress, he said, was attended only by scholars such as 'devote themselves to the study of the origin and the history of different religions.' In a letter to Swami Turiyananda written in September of 1900, Vivekananda says that the Congress 'was not a big affair; some twenty scholars chattered a lot on the origin of the Śālagrāma and the origin of Jehovah and similar topics. I also said something on the occasion.'

The relative insignificance of the Congress is demonstrated by the dearth of material extant concerning it. I searched at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and in the library of the Musée Guimet for contem-

porary descriptions of the Congress. Although there was much to be found in newspaper accounts and in magazines of the period concerning the Exhibition itself, references to the Congress of the History of Religions were practically non-existent. A summary of the Congress was published in the September-October, 1900, number of the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*. In this the Editor said:

The daily press, overwhelmed by the number of congresses held at the Exposition and by the superabundance of marvels which the Exposition has paraded before the eyes of the public, does not seem to have grasped the interesting and instructive character of the Congress of the History of Religions.

Such evidence make it necessary to conclude that the Congress was even more trifling and more circumscribed than is generally thought.

Swamiji said in his *Udbodhan* letter that a general report of the Congress, printed in French, was to be issued. This report was published in four volumes in 1901 and in 1902. It is entitled: *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions, Paris, 1900*. It was published by Ernest Leroux, 28 rue Bonaparte, Paris, but has been out of print for years. The first volume takes up organizational matters, gives a brief account of the Congress in its entirety, and summarizes what happened at the general sessions. The three other volumes print lectures given at the sectional meetings. These volumes of proceedings give a complete, although dry and officially worded, account of the Congress. Many of the specific facts concerning the Congress given in the pages which follow come from these books.

A shorter volume was published in 1900 by the general director of the Exposition, issued by the French Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Posts and Telegraphs. It is called: *Congrès International d'His-*

*toire des Religions* and was published by the French national printery. But this does not add anything to the more complete account given in the later four-volume work.

The Congress was organized by a Commission of Organization named on the initiative of the Section of Religious Sciences of the School of Higher Studies of the Sorbonne, as a result of a directive of the general director of the Exposition. This committee, made up of forty persons—all French and all college professors—began its work in January of 1899. This commission disseminated in May of that year a prospectus calling attention to the Congress: its time and place and objectives.

In the first volume of the *Actes* is to be found a list of regulations by which the Congress was to be governed. These were presumably printed and sent out in advance to interested people.

The first two regulations state the time and place of the sessions.

Regulations Three and Four mention that there are to be general meetings; and sectional meetings according to the following subjects: I. Religions of the Uncivilized; II. History of the Religions of the Far East; III. History of the Religions of Egypt; IV. History of the So-called Semitic Religions; V. History of the Religions of India and Iran; VI. History of the Religions of Greece and Rome; VII. History of the Germans, the Celts, and the Slavs; VIII. History of Christianity.

Regulations Five and Six refer to membership. The membership fee was set at ten francs, which payment was to secure for the member a copy of the official *Actes* when published.

Article Seven says: 'The work and the discussions of the Congress shall be essentially historical in character. Polemics of an order confessional or dogmatic are forbidden.' In his letter to the *Udbodhan*

Swamiji discusses Article Seven and the reason for it—namely that the non-Christian religions had made too good a showing at Chicago and the Catholics wished to forestall the possibility that any such result might be repeated in Paris. The approach was, thus, to make the Paris Congress a solely scholarly affair—all of whose speakers and most of whose audiences were academic workers in the field of religion. This was not at all the same kind of parliament that had been held in Chicago in 1893.

Articles Eight and Nine refer to the preparation of papers and the submission of questions for discussion.

Article Ten states that, in addition to French, Latin, German, English, and Italian were to be considered official languages, in which papers could be written, discourses given, and discussions held.

Volume I of the *Actes* gives a list of the officers of the Congress. Of these there were sixteen. It is interesting to note that the President, seven of the eleven Vice-Presidents, the two Secretaries, the Treasurer, and the Assistant Treasurer were all French, almost all professors from the Sorbonne. Several were members of the Institute of France, that extremely exclusive honorary society of France, to be elected to which is the ambition of every Frenchman of eminence. The other four Vice-Presidents were professors from Oxford, Brussels, Budapest, and Rome.

I am not listing the names of these officers, as they are nearly all forgotten now. With the exception of two, the names do not appear in the latest *Petit Larousse*. The exceptions are two who served as Vice-Presidents: Gaston Maspéro, a renowned Egyptologist; and Emile Guimet. Guimet had built up a great collection of oriental objects which in 1884 he established in a museum in Paris. That museum now comprises the Department of Asiatic Arts of the

Louvre. Guimet was a friend of and contributor to oriental research. Local tradition has it that Guimet knew and deeply admired Swami Vivekananda, but I can find no data to prove this.

At the end of the list of officers there is a note saying that Max Müller, the Oxford orientalist, impeded by the state of his health from taking part in the Congress, had been named Honorary President.

A list of persons, about 360 in number, who presumably paid their ten francs and became members, is given in this same Volume I of the *Actes*. These included:

Eddy, Mlle. Rev. Mary Baker G., Pleasant View, Concord, N.H. [U.S.A.]

Loyson, Hyacinthe, 29 Blvd. d'Inkermann, Neuilly-sur-Seine [A suburb of Paris]

Olcott, H. S., President de la Société Théosophique, Adyar, Madras, Indes-Anglaises

Vivekananda, le Swami, 21 W. 34th St., New York.

'Mademoiselle' Eddy was, of course, the founder of Christian Science.

Loyson was the former Père Hyacinthe, erstwhile Carmelite and famous preacher, with whom Swamiji was acquainted in Paris and with whom he travelled to the near East at the end of his stay in Paris. Loyson was by then married and already a grandfather.

Colonel Olcott needs no identification.

The address given by Swamiji was that of the New York residence of Francis H. Leggett.

Additional names of interest to us today, listed as members of the Congress, are those of J. H. Barrows and Charles Carroll Bonney, associated with the 1893 Parliament, and Paul Carus, the well known Buddhist scholar of that period, and the official delegate of the United States to the Paris Congress.

The Congress of the History of Religions opened on Monday, September 3. The



opening session was held that morning at the Palais des Congrès, a large, two-storied building especially constructed as a part of the Exhibition, standing on the bank of the Seine just east of the Pont (bridge) de l'Alma.

By September 3 Swami Vivekananda had presumably been staying for a two or three days at the apartment of the French writer, Jules Bois. There is no way of knowing whether Swamiji attended this opening meeting; but the chances are good that he did, along with Miss MacLeod, Sister Nivedita, Mrs. Bull, Professor William James, and Professor Patrick Geddes. My reason for so concluding is that Swamiji's famous 'cranks letter' was written from the Leggett mansion at 6 Place des Etats-Unis that same evening, September 3. The letter, describing an imaginary Congress of Cranks, in which the above named people figure, can be taken as a droll caricature of the events of that day.

The *Séance d'ouverture* began at 9-30 a.m. and finished at 11-30. It was led by the President of the Congress, Albert Réville, Professor of the History of Religions of the College of France, President of the Section of Religious Sciences of the Sorbonne's School of Higher Studies. The meeting was given over to organizational matters, messages of goodwill, and the like. Réville gave a lecture on the value of historical research. This lecture is printed in Volume I of the *Actes* but is of little interest to us today.

Something of considerable interest to us, however, is a letter from Max Muller, read at the opening session. By 1900 Max Müller was seventy-seven years old and in poor health. He died later that same year. As is everything in the *Actes*, the letter is printed in French. But the *Actes* indicate that it was written originally in English but presented to the audience in French translation. The letter is sufficiently interesting

to merit our quoting from it. I have searched among the works of Max Müller for the English original but have not found it. It is hoped that my translation of the material back into English is not too dissimilar from what the original must have been. The letter was addressed to the President, International Congress of the History of Religions, meeting in Paris on September 3.

7 Norham Gardens, Oxford  
August 27, 1900.

Cher Monsieur et Honoré Collegues :

It is a profound nuisance to me not to be able to be present at your Congress of the History of Religions. But in growing older we have to learn to put up with unpleasant things of this sort. I was not able to go to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and that grieved me very much. Nor was I able to be present at Stockholm; and now I must give up even the great Congress of Paris where I would have met many esteemed friends and companions of study.

You know very well how, since the commencement of my labours, I have always held firmly to the historic character of our work. I know clearly that such ought also to lead to practical results. But these results at present do not concern you or me. My work, like yours, has always been a historical and comparative study of religions, and it is because of that that I commenced my publications with the first printed edition of the Rig-Veda. Since then, to anyone who belonged to the Aryan family of languages, it was possible to speak of the origin and the history of religion. Consequently I have not regretted having consecrated the best years of my life to the deep study of this literary treasure. ...

It is true that the Vedic religion is but one among others; but there is none like it to help us disengage the roots even, and the trunk and branches, of religion. *Ex uno disce omnes* [from one man you can learn many things] applies to that religion, and even still today one can say that all the serious students of religious history ought to progress by way of Vedic studies. ...

My dear colleague, you must see today that we have not worked in vain. Our studies no longer make people knit their brows, and we are not merely tolerated. No, they are followed with

interest and sympathy; they are even honoured by those who disdain them. I believe we are on the right track, and I hope that your Congress of Paris will not hesitate to give its sanction to that which has been accomplished, and in addition will give a new impulse to what ought to be done in the future.

Everybody seems today completely familiar with the idea that he who knows but a single religion knows none at all; and that one cannot know any religion if one does not know its origin and its history. Yet when such ideas were given out the first time they were considered very dangerous—shall I say, heretical. We know today that religion of itself does not necessarily require any temples or priests. The poor Siberian woman who in the early morning leaves her tent and bows before the sun, saying: 'When you rise, I also rise from my bed, and when you lie down, I also lie down to sleep'; the old Negro on the west coast of Africa praying before his fetish; the red Indian who prays before the post on which is painted the totem or the names of his ancestors—they all have religion. *He* who knows all thought, expressed and unexpressed, understands also all these fumbings.

I will be with you in spirit at the opening of your Congress. Permit me to congratulate you on your well-merited success.

Very truly yours, with my sincere esteem,

F. Max Müller

On the afternoon of Monday, September 3, on Tuesday, September 4, on Thursday, September 6, and on Saturday morning, September 8, other general meetings were held, in the Amphithéâtre Michelet of the Sorbonne. Whether Swami Vivekananda attended any of these meetings cannot be determined. All the sectional meetings were held at the Sorbonne also, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

The Sorbonne is in the Latin Quarter of Paris, at quite a distance east of the site of the Exhibition. Ever since medieval times this section of Paris has been an educational centre; young people from all over Europe lived here and studied here, and still do. The Sorbonne was founded in 1257. As it exists today it is a single large building with-

out campus, occupying about two square blocks, crowded on all sides by apartments and business houses. Dedicated in 1889-1901, the present building replaced structures constructed by Richelieu two hundred years before, which in turn replaced yet earlier structures. Richelieu's tomb is in the Sorbonne's chapel. A great deal of work went into the present Sorbonne to make it, according to the fashions of the late 1800's impressive and beautiful. It was considered a marvel and was greatly admired when dedicated. To anyone used to the functionalism of modern educational structures, the Sorbonne with its grand stairways, its pillars and statues, its many murals depicting classical subjects, its elaborate facade, seems a relic of a leisured age—as, of course, it is.

A clue furnished by Mrs. Frances Leggett made me hope for a time that I should be able to identify the room in which Swamiji spoke. From a letter written by her mother in September of 1900 to Josephine MacLeod from Kreuznach, Germany, she quotes: 'Swami at the Sorbonne! enfin. What would I give for a photograph of him with the Puvis de Chavannes background!' The Puvis de Chavannes referred to is a mural by the French painter Pierre Puvis de Chavannes; this graces the Sorbonne's Grand Amphithéâtre. Much admired when the Sorbonne was new, the mural runs the entire length—seventy-five feet—of the wall behind the podium of this auditorium. It is named The Sacred Wood. It depicts a woman, representing the Sorbonne, sitting on a throne in a forest, surrounded by other women representing Literature, Eloquence, Geology, Physics, Chemistry, and Geometry. The Grande Amphithéâtre with its Puvis de Chavannes mural may be seen today, essentially unchanged—except for the depredations caused by the occupation of the Sorbonne by militant students in May and June of 1968. Holding nearly three thou-

sand people, the great hall is today in constant use as a classroom in the overcrowded Sorbonne. Swamiji and Josephine MacLeod must have stopped into the Grande Amphithéâtre to see the mural, which probably explains Mrs. Leggett's reference; but the session where Vivekananda spoke was certainly not held there.

We learn from the proceedings that the general sessions of Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday were held in a smaller hall, the Amphithéâtre Michelet at the Sorbonne. This auditorium exists quite unchanged today. The fact that it holds but two hundred furnishes additional evidence of the comparatively small attendance at the Paris meeting. Whether Swamiji attended any of the general meetings at the Amphithéâtre Michelet is not known.

Some of the lectures given at the general meetings are published in the *Actes*. In general they do not interest us very much today. The one exception is an address given on September 3 concerning the Parliament of Religions of 1893. This was

a long account prepared by Charles Carroll Bonney, the President of the 1893 Parliament, and brought to Paris by Paul Carus. It was read, undoubtedly in French translation, by Professor Jean Réville. It tells in glowing detail what had transpired at Chicago, stressing the size of the parliament, the variety of religious views represented, and the spirit of fraternity that prevailed. Dr. Bonney concluded the address with these words (translated back into English from the French) :

Such were the religious conferences held in Chicago in 1893. And as the President said in his closing address on October 28, 'The Parliament of Religions has delivered the world from bigotry. Civil liberty and religious liberty will find henceforth their path greatly opened. The work of the Parliament has taken its place in history and its place in creating progress.'

For us the Parliament was an event in the history of religions of the highest importance, and in the future will be seen as having been a sign of the times.

(to be concluded)

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## GANDHIJI—HIS MORAL WAY

SWAMI CHIDATMANANDA

Gandhiji, in spite of his pre-occupation with politics, was essentially a moral man. His morality had its sanction and authority from his faith in God; and God to him 'is Truth and Love'<sup>1</sup>. His whole life and its various activities, including political ones, were nothing but 'experiments with Truth' the ultimate aim being the realization of God. As he himself has said time

and again, 'man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, political, social and religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the Vision of God'<sup>2</sup>. Gandhiji, more than most of us, perhaps sought to put this idea into practice in his own life and the way he chose for this arduous march was naturally the 'religious and moral way'.

We say 'religious moral way' because

<sup>1</sup> Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi, the Last Phase*—Vol I, p. 421, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> D. G. Tendulkar: *Mahatma Gandhi* Vol. IV, p. 108, V. K. Jhaveri & Tendulkar, Bombay-6, 1952.

the concept of morality is open to question these days. In the West, the last century saw many eminent philosophers who thought that God and religion were unnecessary factors for a moral way of life. Herbert Spencer, in his *Data for Ethics* (1879) wrote: 'Now that moral injunctions are losing authority given by their supposed sacred origin, the secularization of morals is being imparative.' Kant, Hegel, Darwin and Huxley and others like them lent support and supplied authority to this idea of 'secularization of morals'.

Their way of thinking has been summed up by Fred Elder, an American thinker, while he speaks about 'a non-super-natural, human evolutionary theory of the origin and nature of man's moral senses'. He says:

'A purely natural morality does exist, all independent of divine guidance. All matters as to morals, all problems as to rightness and wrongness of men's acts in their mutual dealings are covered by the science of ethics on a purely humanistic basis. Ethics has no concern whatsoever with any supposed relations of man with any hypothetical God, heaven or hell...God, heaven or hell no longer enter into the picture of the educated man's ethical problems'.<sup>3</sup>

But the Indian concept of morality, from which Gandhiji drew his inspiration, does not contribute to the idea of 'secular morality', which is said to be an end in itself. The secular or utilitarian views of moral life falls short of genuineness when put to stricter analysis. Swami Vivekananda questions this utilitarian demand for morality without religion or God as its basis or its end. He says:

'The utilitarian wants us to give up the struggle after the Infinite, the reaching-out for the supersensuous, as impracticable and absurd and, in the same breath, asks us to take up ethics and do good to society. Why should we do good? Doing good in a secondary consideration, we must have an ideal. Ethics itself is not the end, but

the means to an end. If the end is not there, why should we be ethical? Why should I do good to other men, and not injure them? If happiness is the goal of mankind, why should I not make myself happy and others unhappy?'<sup>4</sup>

Man does not ordinarily want to move even his little finger, if he can help it, without a purpose, conscious or unconscious. Will a man pursue then a life of restrictions and observances, self-denial and sacrifices, service and renunciation, which a moral way of life demands, only for the sake of utilitarian morality itself? Each living being, man not excepted, is concerned about his own 'good' and it is this idea of 'good' which is the real motive force behind all actions, moral or otherwise. This idea of 'good', however, differs between lower animal and higher animal, between animal and man and between man and man. Higher the attainment of mind, finer and more impersonal becomes this idea of 'good'. The concept of 'good', according to the highest Indian standards has always been associated with religion—the way to supreme realization. It is this religious sense of morality, and not intelligence alone, which becomes the differentiating characteristic of man and distinguishes him from a mere animal. Man has a '*Dharma*', the animal has none. '*Dharma*' is the way which leads one on through the observances of moral precepts nearer and nearer to God. Gandhiji, pertinently says:

'You will wish to know what the marks of a man are who wants to realize Truth which is God. He must be completely free from anger and lust, greed and attachment, pride and fear. He must reduce himself to zero.'<sup>5</sup>

Gandhiji therefore chose this religious morality as the way of his life. To him reli-

<sup>4</sup> *Complete Works*—Vol. II, p. 63-64, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.

<sup>5</sup> Pyarelal: *Mahatma Gandhi, the Last Phase*—Vol. II, p. 233 Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.

<sup>3</sup> F. S. Elder: *Morals and Religions*, Philosophical Library Inc., New York.

gion and morality could not be separated. He says:

'True religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other. Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil'.<sup>6</sup>

And a life bereft of this religious morality was to him 'a boat without a rudder in the midst of storm and waves' which must—against some unseen rock somewhere someday. He, therefore, rejected all ways of life where religion did not play its part. All things, including 'politics bereft of religion' he said, 'are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned'.<sup>7</sup> He, therefore, always sought to walk on this 'path of religion'. It is not easy to do so, as it was to Gandhiji himself. He had to make strenuous efforts, immense sacrifices, harbour defeats in his endeavours but with unfailing faith in the ultimate goodness of God, he never shrank from it because he knew that reward would surely come one day:

"I know the path. It is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: "He who strives never perishes". I have implicit faith in that promise. Though, therefore, from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I will not lose faith but hope that I shall see the light when the flesh has been brought under perfect subjection, as some day it must'.<sup>8</sup>

Gandhiji lived through this religious moral way of life, worked through it and prayed earnestly that he might reach the destination of the way, which is the 'vision of the Reality'.

Let us, therefore, in this year of Gandhi-

ji's centenary, search our own hearts and find out if we are really celebrating it with sincerity. In modern times, morality or let us say the 'religious morality' of Gandhiji's conception, has become the greatest casualty. We have, as if, started believing that all thought about religion and God, right and wrong, just and unjust is mere foolishness. Somehow or other the 'end' has to be achieved and thought about right or wrong means is absolutely unnecessary. But we forget that in the moral world, there is a law working all by itself, regardless of what we think of it or how we assess its value. That law, which in our scriptures, has been named '*Rta*'—operates as much as the sun sheds its rays, the river flows, the wind blows and the clouds give rain. To deny this truth is to deny the existence of light when we stand blindfolded in the sun. He only really gains therefore, who obeys the law and prizes the 'religious moral way' above all other things, as Gandhiji did all his life. In these days, when there is a turmoil in all spheres of national and international life, when even the wisest amongst us get bewildered as to where we are leading ourselves, when man swings between hope and fear and when light seems to be encircled by gloom, let us look to our own heritage—the heritage where spirit triumphed over matter and saved us from a thousand catastrophies through the millennia and from where Gandhiji drew his inspiration—and reassess the values of life and choose the right way. Let us be religiously moral, let us have faith in the goodness of God and let us believe that means only justify the ends. To achieve goodness and make ourselves and others happy, we have to be good ourselves. If we do so, we shall be feeling that we have really honoured the sacred memory of Gandhiji and have paid true homage to that great man.

<sup>6</sup> Nirmal K. Bose : *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 223, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1957.

<sup>7</sup> Prabhu and U.R. Rao : *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 70, Oxford University Press, London, 1945.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12



WHAT  
INSPIRES ME  
MOST IN  
HOLY  
MOTHER'S  
LIFE

REVEREND ANDREW B. LEMKE

### I

Holy Mother (speaking to Sister Nivedita): 'One day, long ago, Sri Ramakrishna had summoned me. I was twenty. It was spring, bursting with life. In his kindness to me, he said, "In the garden there is a small house. Go in, and shut the door. It is there that you must live. Meditate and pray. One day the door will open, and many will crowd around you calling you Mother!"'<sup>1</sup>

*Commentary.* It is the spring of the year. All nature is bursting with life. A young woman of twenty, bursting with virginity, hears the annunciation that her Dharma is to enter a small house in the garden, shut the door, live there, and meditate and pray. No moaning at the bar in the spring-time of life for her as she sets forth on a life of self-abnegation—"in his kindness to me," she said, 'one day long ago Sri Ramakrishna revealed to me what my life was to be.'

The vow of obedience is the primary discipline of the religious life. The vow of obedience, however, does not mean surrendering one's will to the will of another person. Sri Ramakrishna was not saying to Holy Mother, 'You are my wife, you must obey me, go into a small house, shut the door, live there, meditate and pray.'

Rather, he was a seer—all days were clear days for him and he could see a long way, and therefore he was able to reveal her Dharma, succinctly portraying the role she was to play in her incarnation on earth. The religious meaning of obedience is that one vows to so purify the entire compound of the body by the discipline of meditation and prayer that the body becomes obedient to the indwelling spirit of divinity, and the spirit is thereby freed from the bondage of the flesh. 'One day,' said Sri Ramakrishna, 'the door will open, and many will crowd around you calling you Mother!' In her day on earth many did call her Mother, and today all over the world she is Mother to multitudes of her spiritual children. First comes limitation, then later amplitude through the power generated by living the vow of obedience. 'Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.'

'In the garden there is a small house; go in, and shut the door, and live there; meditate and pray,' said Sri Ramakrishna to Holy Mother. All objective phenomena seen in the waking state of consciousness are symbolic; in fact, just as symbolic as the objective phenomena seen in the dream state of consciousness. When we are able to interpret objective phenomena, we have

<sup>1</sup> Vide: Lizelle Reymond. *The Dedicated*, the John Day Company, New York, Chapter 47.

learned the language of the soul. In the imagery we are considering we are trying to interpret the meaning of a small house with the door shut and a person within meditating and praying. Literally, the Holy Mother lived in such a circumscribed environment, manifesting for long years a life of perfect selflessness; and, by her grace, we see symbolically that for everyone the body itself is a small house with door shut, and within it we live out our Dharma for better or for worse; for better if we remember to meditate and pray, for worse if we weary in well-doing. Long ago in another age and another clime, Jesus said, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' This does not have to be interpreted as a harsh saying, but simply the expression of a psychological truth. Edgar Allen Poe expressed the same truism in his poem, *The Haunted Palace*.

In the greenest of our valleys  
 By good angels tenanted,  
 Once a fair and stately palace—  
 Radiant palace—reared its head.  
 In the monarch Thought's dominion—  
 It stood there!  
 Never seraph spread a pinion  
 Over fabric half so fair!

... ..

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
 Assailed the monarch's high estate.  
 (Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow  
 Shall dawn upon him desolate!)  
 And round about his home, the glory  
 That blushed and bloomed  
 Is but a dim-remembered story  
 Of the old time entombed.

To sum up the meaning of the vow of obedience, we interpret it to mean the uncomplaining acceptance of our Dharma under the limitation of which by meditation and prayer, we purify the compound of the body, bringing it into complete obedience to the divine spirit within the body. Either we control the body and make it go

where we want it to go, or it will control us and take us where we would not go. When the body is purified and brought under control of spirit, the door opens and, backed by the power generated, the spirit emerges to bless the encircling environment.

## II

Holy Mother: 'The boys come and entreat me eagerly. They take the *mantra* and go home. But nobody does any japa regularly. Some don't do it even once. Yet as I have shouldered the burden, should I not look after them? That's why I do japa and pray to the Master, "O Master, grant them enlightenment, grant them emancipation, and do you take on yourself their care in every way here and hereafter! This world is full of troubles and tribulations. May they never have to come back again."'

Devotee: 'Do you have to work for all your sons wherever they may be?'

Holy Mother: 'For all I have to work.'

Devotee: 'You have so many children; do you remember them all?'

Holy Mother: 'I do japa for those whom I can recollect. And for those that I don't remember I pray to the Master thus, "Master, I have many sons in many places. Do you please look after those whose names I can't remember, and graciously grant that they may prosper."'<sup>2</sup>

*Commentary.* The door to Holy Mother's small house has opened, and her spirit has issued forth to bless the whole wide world; and today from the subtle world she continues to bless the world, blessing not only her spiritual children, but the environment of her spiritual children as well, whether it be monastery or home, the solitary life of the recluse or the selfless worker in the fields of action. There is now abroad in the world the tender loving care of the 'Mother' principle, active again after having lain dormant so very long covered by the dust of worldliness. This Mother principle we define as compassion.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Gambhirananda: *Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1955, p. 397.

St. Paul was talking about this principle when he wrote, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not (compassion), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal . . . And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not (compassion), it profiteth me nothing.'

Being compassionate does not mean being a do-gooder; it does not mean building hospitals or dispensaries; it does not mean doing good to the world. Compassion is the inevitable out-pouring of the spirit of one who has attained Self-realization. Sri Ramakrishna said that after closing the door of our small house we should meditate and pray, meditate and pray, meditate and pray. Kierkegaard said that one attains purity of heart when he wills one thing, and this one thing is to know God, the realization of which is the goal of life. Vedanta stresses doing japa (repetition of a sacred mantram); the practice of constant remembrance as continuous as the ticking of a clock; and hundred per cent devotion to one's ideal. It is discipline of this kind that releases the attribute of compassion. Compassion is the fruit of the religious life; or, to change the metaphor, it is that which undergirds the whole world keeping it from crumbling.

The temptation to offer an 'aside' is so great that I yield. During my more than forty years in the Christian ministry, one criticism by Christian believers has been constant, namely that contemplatives live a selfish, wasteful, sterile life, all in all an unproductive life. Often this bias is so strong that readers put aside the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature as something that is incomprehensible; as one druggist friend, an inveterate bookworm, put it, just so much gobbledy gook. Catholics of the Roman tradition are more sympathetic because their tradition includes the

contemplative life. But even among Roman Catholics appreciation of contemplatives is tapering off. A Roman Catholic nun told me recently that her early years as a nun were given to the contemplative way of life and that during those years she experienced wonderful peace and joy, but that becoming more and more aware of the troubles and tribulations in the world, she had renounced the contemplative life to become a nun devoted to social action. I noticed on this visit in the convent that the front room, which had been a shrine where the nuns gathered at stated hours of the day and night, had been converted to an office with desks, typewriters, and numerous filing cabinets. 'Now,' she said, 'I do not feel the peace and joy of former days, but I do feel more useful.'

I conclude this 'aside' with an apt illustration from a blessed little book bearing the title *How to Know God: Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*<sup>3</sup> translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood:

'We all know instances of admirable, earnest men who become so deeply involved in the cares of a great reform movement or social relief project that they cannot think of anything beyond the practical problems of their daily work. Their minds are not calm. They are full of anxiety and restlessness. The mind of the truly illumined man is calm—not because he is selfishly indifferent to the needs of others, but because he knows the peace of the Atman within all things, even within the appearance of misery, disease, strife and want.'

A hospital is not a pleasant place, but it would not be improved by removing the operating room, the surgeon's scalpel, intravenous feeding, and the numerous painful means employed to restore the patient to health so that he may be released from the hospital. The hospital experience for the patient, however, may have divine im-

<sup>3</sup> Harper and Brothers, New York, 1953, p. 24.



port for him if in the spirit of obedience he accepts his sojourn there as an opportunity to do penance—his freedom curtailed he has the time to meditate and pray. It is not far fetched imagery to think of the world as a hospital where we are signed in and can only gain our release when we have been restored to health; according to this imagery, health means the realization of God. The goal of life is to realize God; the goal of life is not to change the nature of the world.

### III

'The Holy Mother busied herself day and night in the Master's service.'<sup>4</sup>

'Sarada Devi (The Holy Mother) did not outwardly practise austerities or observe rituals to the extent Sri Ramakrishna did. Her life was one of quiet prayer and meditation, and she never neglected the performance of her daily duties. She appeared to others more like a householder than a recluse or ascetic. Yet the ocean of her spiritual experience was as bottomless as his. This shows that she was not just a saint or mystic, but, like her husband, a manifestation of Divinity.'<sup>5</sup>

*Commentary and Conclusion.* Buddha, Jesus, Sri Ramakrishna-Holy Mother, though they are Divine Incarnations do not differ from us in kind but only in degree.

<sup>4</sup> M. : *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, (translated by Swami Nikhilananda), Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1944, p. 870.

<sup>5</sup> Swami Nikhilananda: *Holy Mother*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1963, p. 79.

They have passed this way before and know the way, the truth, and the life. Buddha is said to have recalled over 500 of his previous births. Being fully illumined entities, they vicariously accepted human birth to demonstrate the religious life. Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother in our modern times were the living embodiment of the truth revealed in the scriptures of mankind. In them we behold our future. Meditating upon them we regain our memory; illusions and vain imaginings vanish, and we realize that we are God, that all along we have never been anything else but God. In a famous prayer, recorded in the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus said, 'May all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.'

The purpose of this article is to state what inspires me most in Holy Mother's life. This limitation means leaving out so much that one would like to include, all of it so precious; yet the limitation has to be respected, else the world itself could not contain all that would be written.

To sum up, three related aspects of her life inspire me greatly: (1) her vow of obedience in accepting her Dharma; (2) the compassion which ensued from that obedience resulting in a reservoir of grace from which her spiritual children drink and have their spirit renewed; and (3) never under any circumstance, however difficult the conditions were, did she neglect her daily duties.

God, if I worship Thee in fear of hell, burn me in hell. And if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting Beauty.

—RABI'A

# 'CRISIS IN CHRISTIANITY'

FATHER ROBERT CAMPBELL

( The Text of a Speech )

Had I been giving this talk ten years ago, I would be here to give a very optimistic picture of Christianity; Christianity in its ascendancy having almost one third of the world population as its members. However, in the ensuing ten years, it seems to me (and my observations are verified by articles I read) that there has developed a crisis in Christianity. Today Christianity is facing what is possibly the worst crisis in its history. Taking my own denomination, the Roman Catholic Church, as one example: you are all familiar with the reception given to the Pope's encyclical on birth control. Now in the past the Pope's encyclical has always been met with acceptance by the Catholic population; but this encyclical has aroused tremendous opposition from Catholics. I wouldn't say the majority of Catholics, but we see the phenomenon of priests rebelling against the Pope's encyclical, priests addressing groups and saying: 'The Pope is not speaking for us. He's out of touch with modern Catholic thought. He's out of touch with the Catholic people.' We hear priests saying this and a petition which was originated by some priests in Washington D.C. protesting against the Pope's encyclical has been signed by upwards of six hundred priests who are teachers in theology and philosophy throughout the country.

Well, now this is just one example of a breakdown of authority which is endemic to present Christianity. Perhaps an even more basic example is the reception given the Pope's credo two or three months ago. The Pope issued a statement of his beliefs and it was very traditional, exactly what every Catholic had learned in his catechism from youth up. To this credo you would

think Catholics would say, 'Yes, this is our faith; this is what we believe', but this, too, met with a rather resentful reception from many directions.

So here you have two different currents in Christianity, and I want to describe for you these two different currents in Christianity because if I, as a speaker on Christianity, were to present just one aspect of Christianity, many would say, 'Well, that's not Christianity as I know it. That's not my idea of Christianity.' So I want to present the two main stream concepts of Christianity today and possibly those of you who are Christians will find you identify with one group or the other. These two main streams run through all denominations. Catholics are divided; some are in what you might call the traditional group and some are in the modernistic group. Every denomination is divided. A new phenomenon is emerging. It is no longer a matter of Catholic versus Protestant. Rather, the new alignment is liberal versus conservative. So I am going to describe these two main trends which exist in Christianity today. I think it is only fair in the presentation of Christianity to present both sides.

The first group I will call the traditional group or the supernatural outlook. This attitude toward truth is: God has revealed Truth to us. He has revealed the Truth about Himself, about how He wants man to live, the Truth about the afterlife. These Truths are eternal and unchanging, according to this traditional outlook, and it is our duty to find out God's Will in this matter; and to follow that.

The other group, the liberal or modernistic, or perhaps you could call it human-

istic or natural, outlook says, 'We don't agree with this. We believe that truth is a relative thing, a changing thing, and that these doctrines and dogmas are not fixed for all eternity, but rather, they are developing, changing, and we may come to the point, and we are coming to the point, where we deny some things that we formerly affirmed as being sacred Truths.'

So, we find a complete dichotomy between the two groups of Catholics. Both of them Catholics, or both of them Lutherans, or both of them Episcopalians, but completely divergent in their outlook. On their outlook on God, the traditional supernatural group says, 'God is the Supreme Being, Sovereign. He is a person; actually one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all equal, all eternal, equal in power and equal in love, equal in knowledge.' The liberal group says, 'This is an outmoded concept of God.' They say, 'We must adopt a God who is more like man; a God who has faults, who has feelings, who can change, who evolves.' They say 'We see everything in the world evolving. God should be no exception to this.' And you have terms like the 'ground of being'; Paul Tillich's concept of God as the 'ground of being', or 'God is the expression of the human consciousness', or 'God is the Supreme Reality'; getting away, once again from the concept of God who is a person apart from man. So once again, even on this most basic concept, the idea of God, we find a complete dichotomy between the two Christian outlooks.

Morality. The older, traditional concept of morality, especially sex morality, is: 'Any sex outside marriage is wrong and seriously wrong.' When I say this I am speaking for the traditional Christian group, I am speaking for traditional Catholics, traditional Protestants, and the Eastern Orthodox. These things I am saying are common to all of them. They had all a

very strict sex morality and still do. The liberal groups say, 'Let's re-evaluate our sex codes, sex morals, make them more adaptable to modern man. May be sex outside marriage is not always wrong. We must rethink these sex codes and divorce should be permitted. Perhaps abortion should be legalized.' The traditional group says, 'Cling to the unchanging codes.' The modern group says, 'We must adapt our morals to modern man'.

Then the heart of the Christian outlook, Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The traditional group of Protestants, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox say, 'This is the heart of our faith. Jesus Christ is God. He is unique. There is no other beside Him. No other person can be mentioned in the same breath with Jesus Christ. He alone is God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God in human form.' And, of course the modernistic or secularistic, if you wish to use the term, or humanistic outlook takes issue with this also and says, 'Christ, yes, we'll say he is divine, but the same as any of us can be divine.' And, of course, this strikes a very responsive chord with the Hindu outlook that the divine is in all of us. We are all potentially Gods. The liberal Christian outlook would sympathize to a great extent with this outlook. As a matter of fact, in many points I think you will find the humanistic Christian outlook moving in the direction of the East in much of its philosophy; both in its concept of a depersonalized, if you wish to use that term, God, and also in the concept that we are all potentially divine.

Then in the attitude toward man. Traditional Christianity has held what the critics charged as a pessimistic outlook on man. Traditional Christianity says God created man perfect but man fell. He sinned against God, disobeyed God, and fell. As a result, man is born with original sin,

an inclination on his own part to sin, to love himself more than God, to put himself first in all considerations, a tendency towards ignorance and towards sin. This is what is known as a state of original sin, and this concept is very offensive to liberal Christianity. They charge that this is a very pessimistic outlook on man, that man does not really have original sin, that man is infinitely perfectible, and by training, by proper education, man can be improved almost infinitely. He can reach the level of a God by successive generations of training, education, proper environment.

Then in the attitude towards the world. Traditional Christianity had considered the world as somehow a danger, something very attractive, very lovable, and in that lay its danger, because traditional Christianity says we must love God above all. As Jesus Christ said, there are two great commandments: love God with all your heart and soul, with all your mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself. Traditional Christianity says, 'The world, being so attractive, is a competitor for God's love, for the love that we should be giving God. We tend to be led astray, seduced, if you will, into giving that love to the world, to the attractive things of this life, to success and honour and pleasure, possessions.' So the world has been considered somewhat of an enemy by traditional Christianity. But liberal, humanistic Christianity says, 'This is an entirely . . . well, Manichean outlook.' This is the charge usually levelled against the traditional viewpoint. The liberal outlook says the world is to be loved. We should enjoy ourselves in this life. We should try to develop this world. As a matter of fact, this is the core of liberal humanistic Christianity. Build a more humane society. Build a better world. Don't reject the world. Don't look upon the world as an enemy, but embrace the world and devote yourself to building a

better world. This is what humanistic Christianity says.

Afterlife. Another central tenet of traditional Christianity. Man's goal is to achieve heaven, happiness with God forever, in the traditional Christian viewpoint, and the more profoundly Catholic and Eastern Orthodox outlook is that heaven is a very real place where we are joined with God forever in friendship with God, supremely happy; and hell, for those who die out of friendship with God, is also very real, torments worse than anything we can imagine in this life. These concepts, by humanistic Christianity on the other hand, are either slighted or rejected. Humanistic Christianity says, 'We should not concentrate on the next life. Let the next life take care of itself, if there is a next life. Rather, let's concentrate on this world, build a better world here, build a more humane society. Never mind this pie in the sky. This attitude of living forever or living in fear of God tends to lead us to neglect this world and to neglect present society.' This is the charge which modern humanistic Christianity levels against traditional Christianity.

So now, having sketched very briefly the two poles of Christianity, let me point out that not everyone belongs perfectly in traditional Christianity or perfectly in humanistic Christianity. There are some who do, who can say, 'Yes, I fit completely into the humanistic Christianity mould.' But I think many Christians would say, 'Well, I like the supernatural doctrines of traditional Christianity, but I also like the social emphasis of liberal Christianity.' So many Christians would say, 'I am sort of a mixture of both.' But I do think that each one of you who is a Christian finds that he tends to sympathize more with one group or with the other.

Now what is the present trend? Is it favouring one group or the other? Well, you see in the Roman Catholic Church one

example. In the last five or six years the rebellion against authority has been a move in the direction of humanistic Christianity. Challenging the infallibility of the Pope, challenging the ideas of heaven and hell, challenging many of the other traditional Christian doctrines. The whole idea of unchanging Truth has been challenged by the liberal Catholics and Protestants. So we find, especially since Vatican II, a very strong swing in the direction of humanistic Christianity; great emphasis on social activities, on building a better world. The characteristic activities of the traditional Christians would be prayer, seeking converts, seeking personal holiness. The liberal Christian feels that these things are old-fashioned and passé. He says, 'Never mind seeking converts. Let's develop better relations with other religions.' And as far as seeking personal holiness goes, the liberal Christian tends to look upon this as too individualistic and perhaps too selfish. He would say, 'We should be engaged in social projects. We should be working for civil rights. We should be engaged in anti-war demonstrations. We should be doing whatever is possible and necessary to build a better world, and never mind this prayer and individual acts of asceticism or worship. These are too individualistic, too selfish.' The trend does seem to be in the direction of humanistic Christianity.

Now, as one example of that, I cite my own classes at DePaul University where I have taken surveys of the students over the past five years, and I have found that, comparing the student attitudes of last year with five years ago, for instance on birth control: Now five years ago fifty-three per cent held the traditional Catholic position on birth control that it is wrong. But each year the percentage has dropped until last year it was twenty per cent only subscribed to the traditional position. The others had all swung in the direction of

more humanistic approach.

Infallibility of the Church. Here these students are all Roman Catholics. You would expect them to subscribe to the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. Five years ago eighty-three per cent of them did. But that, too, has dropped off every year until last year it was only fifty-three per cent who would agree with the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope as taught in the Church.

So the acceptance of these distinctive Catholic doctrines among Catholic students is falling off rapidly, and on doctrines which we hold in common with the traditional Protestants, say Christ as God, the existence of hell, these, too, have been dropping off, not as rapidly, however, as the distinctly Catholic doctrines. Acceptance of Christ as God was about ninety per cent of the Catholic students five years ago and down to about eighty-two percent last year. Existence of hell was accepted by about seventy-five per cent of the Catholic students five years ago, and is now down to slightly over fifty per cent.

This is just another indication of the direction Christianity is moving, and of course this produces a crisis when you get the divisions. This schism in thought if not in—well a schism exists within the Catholic Church in opinion even though it does not exist jurisdictionally, organizationally, at present.

There was a recent article in 'Transaction Magazine' for June which said, 'Will ethics be the death of Christianity?' This was written by two gentlemen named Glock and Stark one a Lutheran, the other a former Lutheran who had done considerable studies surveying Christian opinions over the past few years, and their conclusion is the same as that I have mentioned; that there is a terrific swing away from traditional Christianity and toward humanistic Christianity. This humanistic Christianity

they choose to call ethics. So they say ethics is killing Christianity, and they themselves are in favour of this trend. They feel that this is a good trend, and there are certain things that can be said in favour of it. I know Swami Vivekananda, the great Swami who spoke here in Chicago seventy-five years ago at the first Parliament of Religions, would himself look with favour on most of these trends in the direction of humanistic Christianity, because one of his sayings was, 'Don't be concerned about doctrine or dogma or churches or temples', and the liberal Christians echo those sentiments one hundred per cent. Also Swami Vivekananda said that formerly in the old religion the atheist was the man who didn't believe in God and he said that now in the new religion we call an atheist a man who doesn't believe in himself and in mankind and, once again, this attitude would be echoed wholeheartedly by the humanistic, the modernistic Christian approach. Although Swami Vivekananda would not endorse all the attitudes of the new humanistic Christianity, perhaps the moral code he would not endorse one hundred per cent, still I think he would be in favour of this trend. Espe-

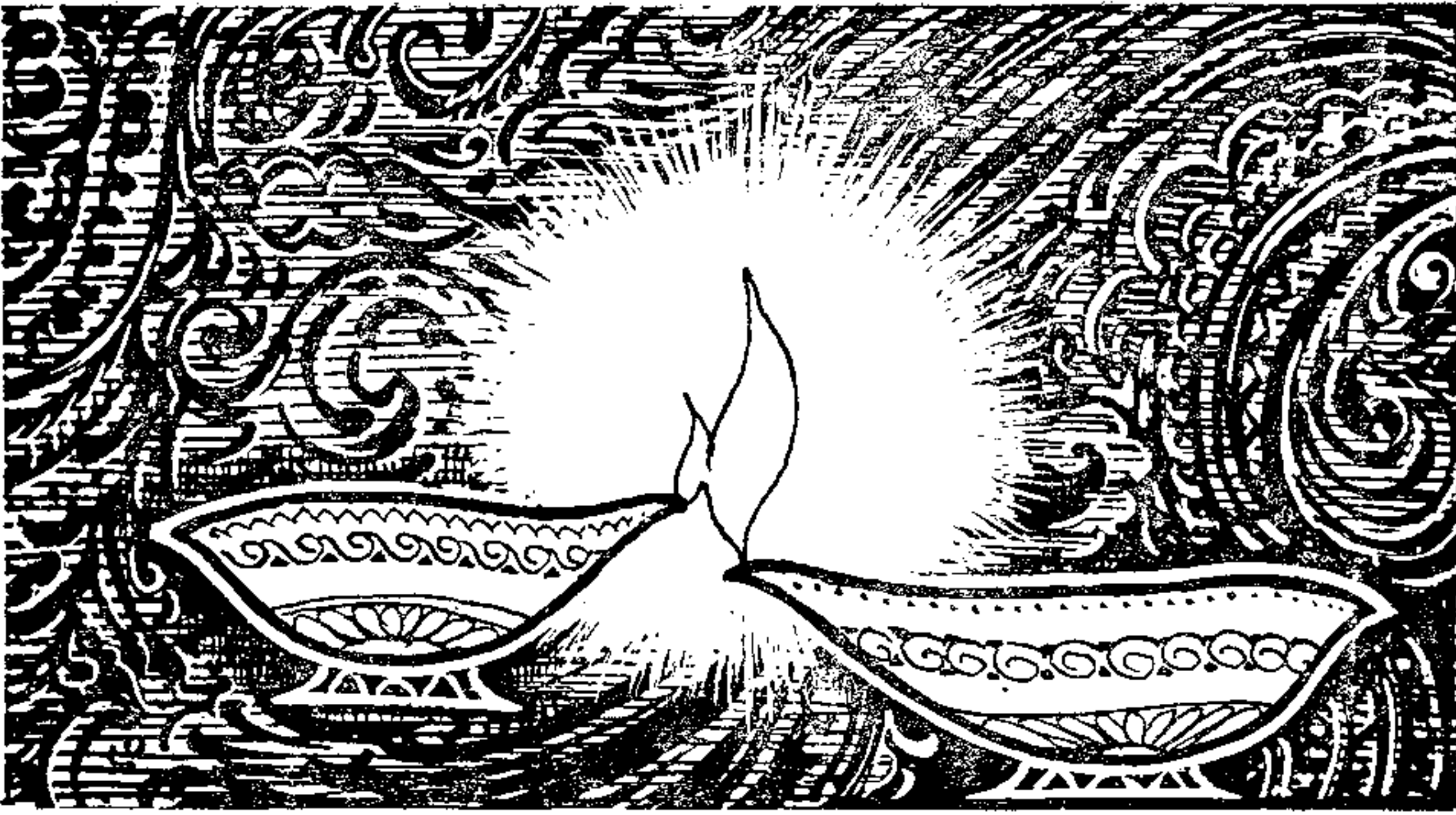
cially because it seems to be making more likely the development of the oneness of religion for which he was hoping. Ecumenism, for example, flourishes among the liberal Christians. Among the traditional Christians, some look with great hostility upon ecumenism, others are quite cool towards it. Ecumenists are among the humanists and liberal Christians.

For this reason, I think this trend in the direction of humanism would be applauded by Swami Vivekananda were he here today, because it does seem to be breaking down, to a large extent, previous divisions between religions and leading, conceivably, to one world religion in the future. Now whether or not you are in favour of this I don't know. Whether or not you are in favour of traditional Christianity or liberal Christianity I don't know, but I think we can all agree on one thing: I think we can agree that the purpose of this Symposium of Religions, to develop a fuller understanding of each other's religion, is a good thing, and I think we can all applaud and acclaim the further purpose of this Symposium which is to develop goodwill between the various religions.

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You are all Sons of God, immortal spirit. 'Know', he declared, 'the Kingdom of Heaven is within you.' 'I and my father are one.' Dare you stand up and say, not only that 'I am the Son of God', but I shall also find in my heart of hearts that 'I and my Father are one'? That was what Jesus of Nazareth said. He never talks of this world and of this life. He has nothing to do with it, except that he wants to get hold of the world as it is, give it a push and drive it forward and onward until the whole world has reached to the effulgent Light of God, until everyone has realized his spiritual nature, until death is vanished and misery banished.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



# ILLUMINATING DIALOGUES FROM INDIAN LORE

## SĪTĀ AND RĀMA

DR. V. RAGHAVAN

To Rāma, her husband, who had been given leave by sage Sutīkṣṇa and had started, Sītā said this in pleasing and affectionate words :

‘This great virtue is gained in a highly refined way ; it is possible for one who has turned away from the evil addictions bred by desire. Three are the evils in which man indulges and which are born of desire ; they are : first the utterance of falsehood, and two others, more heinous than that, the seeking of others’ wives and wanton violence not based on enmity. Falsehood was never in you, nor will it ever be, O Rāghava ! Wherefore seeking of others’ wives, which destroys virtue ? That is not in you, nor was it ever in you ; not even in your mind could it be anywhere, O Rāma ! O Prince, you are always devoted to your own wife, you who are most virtuous, true in your plighted word and one who acts according to your father’s direction. O You truthful one, born with great parts as elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa, in you truth, righteousness and all virtues are established ; all that, O Warrior ! those endowed with self-control can maintain ; and I know you, O Rāma of pleasing

looks, as one of self-control. This third, the terrible thing, the violence to life of others that one does out of delusion and without even enmity towards them, has come to you. For the protection of the sages dwelling in the Daṇḍaka forests, you, O valorous one ! have promised the destruction of the demons in battle. It is for this that you, with your brother, bearing your arrows and bows, have entered the forest known as Daṇḍaka. Therefore, seeing you who have started for the Daṇḍaka, my mind is perturbed with anxiety ; when I think over what you would do, I hope it would be to our welfare and good. O valorous Rāma ! I do not like your going into the Daṇḍakas ; I shall tell you the reason ; listen to me as I speak. The bows of Kṣatriya-warriors and the fuel of the fire, if these are proximate, fan the vehemence of the two all the more. There was of yore, O valorous one, a man of penance, of truthful word, pure, in a blessed forest where beasts and birds were living in happiness. Indra wanted to create impediments to his penance and visited his hermitage sword in hand and wearing the guise of a soldier. With that sage

who was in holy penance in that hermitage, that very sharp sword was placed (by Indra) as a deposit. Having received that weapon and intent on the safety of the object in deposit with him, the hermit moved about in the forest taking it with him and protecting the thing in his custody. Bearing the weapon constantly, that sage for whom the only prized possession had been austerities, gradually developed a violent mind giving up his stand on penance. He who had so long emaciated himself in austerities, lost his balance and began to take pleasure in acts of violence; and because of this companionship with the weapon, the sage went to hell. Thus runs the old story on the companionship of a weapon. Like unto the proximity of fire is that of weapon, the cause (of harm); I just remind you of this, out of my love and regard for you, I do not instruct you. Armed as you are with bow, you should never get into the idea of killing the Rākṣasas of Daṇḍaka without any enmity towards them. I do not, O valorous one, like people being killed without their doing any wrong. For the Kṣatriya warriors who take to the forests, this is all the function of their bows, namely succour to those who are afflicted. Where is weapon and where is the forest? Where is violence and where penance? The two are contradictory; let us respect the conduct appropriate to the place. Therefore, O noble one! by carrying arms, one's mind gets turbid. After returning to Ayodhya, you may resume your role as a Kṣatriya. Indeed it would be to the lasting satisfaction of our parents if, having given up the Kingdom, you live here as a sage. From virtue, material gain flows, from virtue flows happiness; one gets everything from virtue; virtue is the core and essence of the universe. The expert

ones gain this virtue by submitting their self, with all their effort, to the hardship of different austerities; happiness cannot be had easily. Always with pure mind, O you benevolent one, observed the austerities of the penance groves; you knew everything, indeed you know in truth all the three worlds. I have said these out of excess of enthusiasm on the part of a woman; who can expound Dharma before you. Think over these in your own mind along with your younger brother. What appeals to you, that you may please do without tarrying.'

Having heard these words spoken by Sītā who was devoted to her husband, Rāma who had taken his stand on Dharma, replied to her:

'Blessed lady, daughter of Janaka and knower of Dharma, you who are attached to me have spoken words which are beneficial and befitting you as one coming of a great family. But I shall say this which you yourself have mentioned, namely that Kṣatriyas bear the bow so that there may be no cry of distress. Sītā, sages with whom we should take shelter have, of themselves, come and taken refuge under me. These sages who are practising severe austerity in the Daṇḍaka forest, are in distress. They who are devoted to Dharma and living in forests on roots and fruits, are unable to live in happiness being afraid of demons who indulge in cruel activities. Even as they are engaged in the appropriate times in their various religious observances in the forest, they are being eaten up by these terrible demons who live on the flesh of human beings. These sages, foremost Brāhmanas, living in Daṇḍaka forest who are thus being devoured, have asked me to come to their succour. Having heard the words which fell thus from their mouth, I bowed at their feet and told them:



“Please, this is indeed an unparalleled shame to me that Brāhmanas like you on whom I should wait, wait upon me. What shall I do?” So did I say in the presence of all these Brāhmanas. All of them, joining together, said this: “Rāma, by these numerous *Rākṣasas* who take diverse forms at their will, we have been severely hāressed. You must protect us from them. Coming at the time of the oblations, during the Full Moon and New Moon occasions, these formidable *Rākṣasas* assault us; to us, the sages in penance, attacked by demons and seeking refuge, you are the greatest refuge. Indeed by the power of our penance, we are capable of destroying these demons, but we are unwilling to dissipate the penance which we have stored up over a long time. Penance is fraught with many impediments and is hard to practise, O Rāma; we therefore do not release our curses on them although we are being eaten up by demons. Therefore you, along with your brother, protect us. We are being tormented by the demons infesting this forest; you are our protector.” Having heard these words in full, O daughter of

Janaka, I gave my word for protecting the sages of Daṇḍaka forest. Having promised, I, while yet I am alive, will not be able to undo the promise that I gave to the sages. Truth is always dear to me. Sita! I would give up my life or even you along with Lakṣmaṇa, but never a promise that I have made, especially to Brāhmanas. Therefore I should protect the ṛṣis even if they have not told me so, not to mention when I have myself promised to do, O daughter of the King of Vaidehas! Out of love and friendliness towards me, O you pure lady, you have spoken these words to me; I am very pleased, O Sītā; one who is not dear is not given any advice. What you have said is fit and appropriate to you and your family. You are my companion in the performance of Dharma and dearer to me than even my life.”

Having said these words to his beloved Sītā, daughter of King of Mithila, the great Rāma, armed with bow and accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, entered the beautiful penance groves of the forest.

Source: *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa Āraṇya Kāṇḍa*, Cantos 9-10

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## THE EDUCATION INDIA NEEDS TO-DAY

SWAMI TEJASANANDA.

[The True Welfare of the Students as also of the people in general depends principally upon the education that we impart to them according to the time-honoured cultural traditions of our land. In the interest of the younger generation and the country as a whole, an attempt has been made in the following pages to give a pen-picture of the education India needs today when almost everything is in a state of flux.]

### 1. WHAT IS TRUE EDUCATION ?

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest thinkers of modern times, said: ‘The end

and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called edu-

cation.<sup>1</sup> 'My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books, and in the possession of a few only, hidden, as it were, in monasteries and in forests . . . I want to bring these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India . . . the ideas must be taught in the language of the people; at the same time, Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race.'<sup>2</sup> Religion, he asserted, was the very core of education, and real education, in his opinion, was that which enabled a person to stand on his own legs and helped him to manifest the perfection already in him by a harmonious development of his head, hand and heart.

It is to be borne in mind that education should not aim at a mere passive awareness of dead facts but at an activity directed towards the world that our efforts are to create. It must open our eyes to the shining vision of the society that is to be, of the triumphs that our thoughts will achieve in the time to come. In fact, in every scheme of education there should be adequate scope and facilities for stimulating the spiritual instincts of the boys and girls. Needless to emphasize that the Indians, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, must be made to feel through the national education, that they constitute the same family, have the same history, the same joys and the same hopes. Besides, they should sorrow over the humiliation of their common motherland, take pride in her prosperity and share her fortune, good or bad. Indeed there is nothing more powerful than a national and man-making

education. Sister Nivedita, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, also said, ' . . . if all are trained and equipped to respond in the same way to the same forces, then our unity will stand self-demonstrated, unflinching. We shall have acquired national solidarity, and power of prompt and intelligent action.'<sup>3</sup>

In this connection, it must not be forgotten that a balanced combination of the secular and spiritual training constitutes the true economics of education. Moreover, the alumni should be given opportunities to receive their education in an atmosphere of serene peace, discipline and moral purity so as to enable them to develop into worthy citizens of the land with a sense of genuine pride for their glorious cultural traditions and their intellect rightly harnessed to useful and constructive activities.

## II. THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION.

It is not too much to say that teachers are the builders of the destiny of a nation, for it is the teachers who are the custodians of the intellectual and moral interests of the youths of the land and bear as such the responsibility of giving proper guidance to the student community to mould their life and character. The lives of teachers should be an inspiring example to the students so that the alumni coming into contact with their teachers might get necessary impetus to grow up according to the best traditions of their motherland. Swami Vivekananda was of the opinion that old institutions of living with the Guru and similar systems of imparting education were needed. One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character was like

<sup>1</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Birth Centenary Edition, 1963, Vol. II, p. 15, Vol. IV, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Vol. III, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> Sister Nivedita: *The Complete Works*, Sister Nivedita Girls School, Calcutta, 1968 Vol. IV, p. 330.

a blazing fire, and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching.

Man-making and character-building education should be imparted to the students through all grades of educational institutions ranging from schools to universities, and in order to make such an all-round education most effective and useful, the teachers who have taken to teaching as the sacred profession of their life, must be paid remuneration commensurate to the huge task and responsibility they are called upon to shoulder in the field of education. It is then only that they would be in a position to free themselves from other entanglements and encumbrances to devote their whole time to their noble profession of teaching.

The teachers should take part in the various cultural functions organized by the students in their respective institutions from time to time. Besides, seminars, debates or symposia may also be held in schools and colleges on subjects which are calculated to foster a spirit of love and respect for the lofty ideals and cultural traditions of the country. The teachers who want the real welfare of the student community, must win the hearts of the alumni by their unimpeachable conduct and integrity of character; for it is character that counts more than mere intellectual brilliance in the formation of the lives of the students.

### III. TEACHERS AND POLITICS.

The teachers and guardians should conjointly try to keep the academic atmosphere of educational institutions free from all political affairs. In this connection Dr. Srimali, at one time the Minister of Education, Govt. of India, once said that in the ultimate analysis, the present situation is a result of the failure on the part of the parents to exercise control over their wards and of teachers to win the respect,

affection and confidence of their students. He further remarked that there were also politicians who were always ready to fish in troubled waters and exploit the students for their political ends. Besides, the distinguished educationists who attended the Conference held on November, 6, 1959 at the Jadabpur University at the initiative of its then Rector Dr. Triguna Sen (now Education Minister, Govt. of India) emphatically denounced the participation of teachers in politics, and reasonably suggested that college teachers should not contest any political elections, hold any office in the organisation of a political party or express any political opinion to the students in the colleges. Moreover, they should play an active role in maintaining discipline and in punishing indiscipline. They should take a firm stand individually and collectively when they find their students straying into politics or unacademic conduct.... For, all of them share the moral responsibility for giving proper training to the pupils placed in their charge.

### IV. PROBLEM OF STUDENT-INDISCIPLINE

It has been noticed in the recent past as also at the present day that a tremendous discontent has manifested itself amongst the students not only in India but also in some other countries of the East and the West and these agitations have assumed different forms in different countries under different circumstances. Whatever be the actual reason for this wide-spread lawlessness and violence, it cannot be gainsaid that the student-community cannot be expected to be completely impervious to the baneful influence of the disruptive movements that have appeared as a dark cloud on the horizon of our national life. It will not be too much to presume that the nation will die an unnatural death if the younger generation is not saved from the malevolent in-

fluence of these destructive activities and normalcy restored at an early date.

If we dispassionately analyse the causes of student-indiscipline, we cannot resist the conclusion that the teachers and guardians are no less responsible for this regrettable state of affairs than the students themselves. In most of the existing schools and colleges, the students are left to themselves to drift according to their individual impulses inasmuch as the teachers remain too much engrossed in their professional problems and means of livelihood and the guardians in their domestic, social and official or business preoccupations which leave very little time at their disposal to look into the pressing intellectual, mental and moral requirements of their wards and to properly channelize the accumulated fund of their superfluous energies. This is one of the worst drawbacks in the modern educational and social structure of the country. The absence of adequate scope for the engagement of students in the various creative and constructive activities during and after their student-life leaves sufficient room and opportunity for the students to indulge in undesirable matters which are detrimental to the balanced growth of their personality in general.

It may not be out of place to point out here that we have given the go-by to the real values of life in our mad craze for the shoddy things of the material culture imported from the West. In the words of the illustrious German Philosopher Nietzsche, 'the greatest events—these are not our loudest; on the contrary, our quietest hours. The world turns itself not around the discoverers of new noises, but around the discoverers of new values.' But our modern educational institutions built in imitation of the Occident, are encouraging the alumni to be more and more noisy and intemperate as if by noisiness and violence they can grow much bigger in their moral stature

than by silent pursuit of their works and education.

The political parties also draw the students into their movements so as to subserve their own political interests and the students become mere tools in their hands and are incited to indulge in various ugly acts of violence. The teachers themselves are also in a large measure responsible for student-indiscipline inasmuch as they (the teachers) very often use the students as instruments for carrying on their own movements and thereby encourage them (the students) in the serious breach of discipline in schools and colleges. The acts of violence and lawlessness that are running rampant in West Bengal and other parts of India are sufficient to justify this assumption.

If a bird is to wing its delightful flight across the firmament, it needs the help not only of its pair of pinions but also of its head and tail. Similar is the case with the education of a student. A concerted and co-ordinated effort of all the three elements, viz. the guardian, the teacher and the student coupled with a peaceful domestic environment and a quiet academic atmosphere in schools and colleges, is the *sine qua non* of the healthy growth and development of a disciplined life in a student.

#### V. NEED OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

In this connection we may also be permitted to draw the pointed attention of the guardians, the authorities of educational institutions as also of the Government which is designated as the 'Welfare State', to the fast deteriorating health of the Student Community. It is a matter of extreme regret that India has been losing her position of honour in the field of international competitive sports and athletics due to the woeful want of physical fitness. As a matter of fact, the amount of attention that this vital matter deserves is not being paid to the physical development of our younger

generation by the authorities concerned. It goes without saying that a generation of youngmen with diseased and emaciated bodies (even if they are intellectual prodigies) and without a balanced character will make a weak nation unfit for national defence against external aggressions and internal disruptions. That is why Swami Vivekananda, emphatically said, 'What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face.'<sup>4</sup> It is indeed high time that this question of physical culture should be taken up in right earnest to impart proper training to the younger generation who are expected to work for the upkeep of the integrity of our social life and the maintenance of national solidarity.

#### VI. ROLE OF THE PRESS IN RELATION TO STUDENT-INDISCIPLINE

It is well known to all that the Press has been designated as the fourth estate in the country and as such its responsibility is very great in educating public opinion and in maintaining a calm and peaceful atmosphere in the social, educational and political life of the country. So far as the student-indiscipline is concerned, the principal duty of the Press is not to inflame the passions of the disgruntled student-community but to suggest ways and means so as to remove the legitimate grievances of the students and help the established Govt. in the maintenance of law and order in the land. In short, the sober and impartial editorial comments in the newspapers regarding particu-

lar acts of student-indiscipline are expected to be more effective in bringing about normalcy in the social life. Articles from experienced and distinguished educationists may also be invited for publication to strengthen the views ventilated by the editors in their respective papers. The combined efforts of both are sure to be successful in curbing to an appreciable extent the spirit of indiscipline among the students.

#### VII. EDUCATION OF INDIAN WOMEN

The education of women of India should be made a major issue in the present-day scheme of our national improvement. As a matter of fact, much of our domestic peace and happiness as well as national well-being depends upon the kind of education that is imparted to our womanhood. It is in India that the people have been taught from hoary antiquity to look upon women as the veritable embodiment of the Eternal Being realized as Mother Divine. The conception of Motherhood of God is one of the most splendid contributions of the Indian seers to the world of philosophical thought.

It is a truism that a nation cannot develop or march ahead if one of its limbs is maimed or paralysed. Men and women constitute the inseparable units of the corporate life of a nation and it cannot have a healthy growth if one of its component parts is neglected and denied suitable opportunities for development.

India stands to-day on the threshold of a new era after the attainment of Independence. To ignore at this hour our duties to the womanhood and to keep them blind to the heavy responsibilities of their social and national life, is nothing short of a suicide and a stultification of the sacred idealism for which our country stands. Swami Vivekananda has rightly pointed out at different times in the course of his illuminating lectures on Education of Women: 'Women have many and grave problems but

<sup>4</sup> Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Birth Centenary Edition, 1963, Vol. III, p. 190.

none that cannot be solved by that magic word "Education".<sup>5</sup> 'Female education is to be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion.'<sup>6</sup> 'Our women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. First of all, intensify that ideal within them above anything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married or single—if they prefer to remain so—they will not be in the least afraid to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity.'<sup>7</sup>

It would indeed be a mistake to suppose that India has produced only women of soft virtues and tender texture and women of high spiritual calibre from the Vedic age to the present day. The history of India is redolent of the inspiring reminiscences of sharp-witted women of heroic mould also whose sparkling achievements and heroism excite even now the spontaneous admiration of all lovers of their motherland. India feels immensely proud that many women of the country are holding to-day exalted positions and are playing their responsible roles in their respective spheres of activity with admirable success. It is time that we discarded the blind imitation of the West and followed a well-balanced programme of national education which would enable our womanhood to unfold their sterling qualities of head, hand and heart according to their individual lines of growth. It is therefore the supreme duty of the leaders of the land to build up in suitable places *ideal schools and colleges* exclusively meant for our girls, and place them *in charge of well-trained and properly educated women* for their all-round growth and development. Sister Nivedita, one of the pioneers of

women's education in India, pertinently remarked: 'Until we have made ready a place for our woman, until we throw wide the portals of our life, and go out and take her by the hand to bring her in, the Motherland Herself stands veiled and ineffective with eyes bent, in set patience, on the earth. It is essential for the joyous revealing of that great Mother that She be first surrounded by the mighty circle of these, Her daughters, the Indian women of the days to come.'<sup>8</sup>

#### VIII. EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

It is undeniable that every noble undertaking for national well-being must draw its sustaining sap from the intelligent co-operation of the people who are the dynamic centres of national organism. And it is a hopeful sign of the times that the leaders of the country have made it an integral part of their national programme to admit the mute millions to the privileges which had so long been the monopoly of a handful of men. But it must be borne in mind that the support of these inarticulate masses who have not the adequate intellectual equipment to assess the true worth of a sacred cause or have not developed sufficient civic consciousness owing to a sheer want of education, is also fraught with grave dangers. For, very often it ends, as it has done in many other countries, in social disruption and political cataclysm of a nature that serves eventually to defeat the purpose for which such blind forces are pressed into service. It is therefore a matter of supreme importance that, though the hearty co-operation of the masses is a desideratum in any collective movement, their appalling illiteracy must first be liquidated so as to make them fit to realize the magnitude of their responsi-

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Vol. V, 231.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Vol. VII, 220.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Vol. V, 342-43.

<sup>8</sup> Sister Nivedita: *The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, 1968, p. 362.

lity and share in the corporate activities of the country.

It should also be remembered that the invidious distinction between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, as is witnessed in the socio-economic life of the people even to-day, has alienated a huge section of the Indian population from the higher classes and has been responsible in no small measure for its easy conversion to other proselytising faiths. The educational system of the land must therefore stand far above all petty-minded caste, communal or party considerations and should be governed by a spirit of undying love and sympathy for all, and should open out multiple avenues before the country to enable the rich and the poor, the high and the low to share alike in the blessings of a true man-making and nation-building education.

The new India, as Swami Vivekananda has truly prophesied, shall rise not from palaces or mansions, but from the peasant's cottage grasping the plough, out of the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller, from the factory, from the marts. The new India shall emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains. What is needed at this hour is not mere pious platitudes or political shibboleths but immediate practical steps to educate the voiceless millions of the land, to stimulate and guide their aspirations and energies to a proper channel. Swami Vivekananda wanted heroic bands of youngmen to go out from village to village with message of love and toleration, equality and brotherhood and implant in the minds of the people an unshakable conviction of the greatness of their life and culture and awaken them to the consciousness of their glorious destiny. Along with this the eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of all must be brought home to their minds; for, this is the only principle that would enable the people to get over the deadening

psychology of inferiority complex, and this is the dominant idea that must stand as the background of all our teachings and schemes for imparting education to the people at large.

#### IX. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

There is a lot of controversy over the tangled question of the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Some are of opinion that only regional languages should be the media of instruction and English should be discarded as early as possible. Others, however, opine that as no suitable substitutes for many English words have as yet been coined, English should be allowed to play its vital role for some years to come till regional languages succeed in finding out and evolving technical terms to prepare their own text books (general and scientific) for the education of our boys and girls in schools and colleges. But it is doubted whether it will be at all possible or expedient to totally taboo English which is an international language and is followed scrupulously by almost all the nations of the world. If we are to keep contact with the outside world we cannot do it without a fair knowledge of English. Under the circumstances, the three-language formula recently adopted by the Government of India with the consent of the Heads of different States is likely to solve our linguistic problem to a great extent. Besides, this will help remove the barriers of exclusivism and separateness and bring the people speaking divergent tongues, much closer to one another and serve to evolve a stable democratic socialistic pattern of society in the country without much difficulty.

#### X. FUNCTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY

In connection with the education of the students of the country the following few excerpts from the 'Report on Standards of

University Education' submitted by the Committee appointed in 1961 by the University Grants Commission, will help assess the important role and the responsibility of a university in matters educational. They run as follows, 'In the present situation in India involving attempts to bring about far-reaching economic and social changes, it would be conceded that universities have to lay much stress on development-oriented education. But in doing so, we have to take care that the personality of the student as a cultured and responsible member of the society and as a constructive citizen of the State is not lost sight of . . . The teacher has to be conceived as a person who can stimulate in the students a genuine desire for scholarship by bringing their minds into living contact with his own.'

'First of all we should see that every student who passes out of an Indian University takes with him some understanding of India's cultural heritage, its past achievements and triumphs in the field of art, philosophy, science and so on.'

'In India a wide gulf often separates our students from the life of the common people. If a student who comes out of the university considers that he has little in common with his community, something has certainly gone wrong with his education.'

The Report further adds that in the ultimate analysis every university is an intellectual institution since knowledge knows no boundaries. In the pursuit of truth and excellence to which all universities are committed, there is neither east, north or south. It is therefore of utmost importance that nothing should be done in our universities which would impair their relationship with the great society of Scholars and Scientists; on the contrary, every effort has to be made to make them active parti-

cipants in the work of the world community of learning.

A careful consideration of the extracts from the Report referred to above, will make it distinctly clear that a University should produce ideal teachers and students who would be in active communion with the cultural heritage and aspirations of the nation, identify themselves with the sufferings and needs of the country to which they belong and move with the progress of the time to make the society a dynamic institution. For, unless they become fully aware of the circumstances in which people around them live, they become alienated from social realities and develop attitudes of mind which are not likely to make them useful citizens of the country.

#### XI. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In the foregoing sections, we have attempted to present to our countrymen a detailed account of the different aspects of education with a view to pointing out the fact that all of them being interlinked with one another, constitute an integrated whole and as such one cannot be divorced from the other without detriment to the sacred purpose of education. India stands today at a cross road and many of her pet ideas are in a melting pot. It is high time that the problem of education which has received a severe jolt during recent years, got the priority of the most serious consideration at the hands of the authorities concerned if the country were to forge ahead on the path of orderly progress.

It is noticed that sweeping changes are being wrought in the various countries of the outside world and the work of reconstruction is also going on everywhere to build up a new social order according to the best traditions of their respective lands. In India also we have been observing revolutionary changes in the thought-world of our people, especially of the younger gene-



ration who are bent on bringing into being a healthy socio-economic life in the country out of the chrysalis of present disorder. We have no doubt that, if the problems that have presented themselves to-day in the various walks of our corporate life,— particularly in the field of education, are tackled with circumspection and due judiciousness, the black cloud that has been hanging on the horizon of our national life, will vanish in no time and India would once again emerge in a blaze of glory to justify her rightful place of dignity and honour in the comity of nations.

## REFLECTIONS OF EXISTENTIALISM

E. R. MAROZZI

Disciple: Sir, I do not understand why in the contemporary philosophical and psychological worlds there should be so much concern over the search for meaning in life which is said to be beset with anxieties, absurdities and predicaments and which is haunted by a feeling of abandonment and an overbearing sense of responsibility.

It seems to me that a spiritually healthy mind does not need to be concerned about—or hunt about for—meaning in life for it finds meaning everywhere without making any particular effort in that direction. It is the oppressed and maladjusted individual—the neurotic or psychotic—who has lost his meaning and finds life absurd and a predicament.

Teacher: You have expressed the viewpoint of the Existentialist Philosophy, especially that of the literal or atheistic school. It is this, 'Having thrown out Zeus, whirl is king,' as Aristophanes said. Without recognizing that there is an ultimate spiritual entity at the core of life and the basis of the universe, all is indeed meaningless, absurd and life is a predicament attended with loneliness and an overbearing feeling of responsibility—for that which is the meaning *per se* has been thrown out. What remains of the man

who believes himself to be without soul and without God is an empty ego which feels helpless before the prospect of having to achieve its own goals as well as to orient itself with, and to govern the world around it. This is symbolically expressed by Albert Camus by his citing the story of Sisyphus who pushes a huge boulder to the top of a steep hill and immediately it rolls back down to the bottom. What remains when Zeus has been thrown out is what is called the *alpa*—the trivial, the insignificant, the finite, the valueless. The way of the atheist only multiplies his troubles. It is a movement away from the One and this creates duality which in its turn brings the play of the opposites. When the opposite is there then follow anxiety, tension and fear. Failure to cope with the opposite force results in despair, frustration, melancholy and suffering. In talking about the ultimate Reality the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV. 4. 19, 14) says, 'There is no diversity whatsoever in It. He who sees diversity in It goes from death to death . . . We have somehow realized Brahman . . . Those, who know it become immortal, while others suffer only misery.' And again it is said, 'There is no joy in things finite, only the Infinite is happiness.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII. 23. 1.

What you have said about a healthy mind is true, however, let us carry it further and say that we should classify a mind as healthy only when it has realized Ultimate Values—when it has reached a state of Perfection. Then, being identified with meaning *per se*, and itself having become all meaning, the question of searching for meaning would not arise. Then the universe and all things and beings are seen to be full of meaning.

Disciple: What are the Existentialists trying to say? It all seems rather confusing to me.

Teacher: The field of Existentialism taken as a whole is not clear. The schools vary in their principles and no one of them can be said to form a complete philosophical system. The various exponents are not in agreement in their philosophical outlook and it is not always clear what is meant by the terms used.

We must keep in mind that there are two distinct and opposing schools of thought: the literal or atheistic school and the non-literal or religious school. Kierkegaard, one of the founders, belongs to the second school and we have statements from him which are in harmony with the ideas of the various religions. He says that if our attention is turned inwardly we become aware of the contradiction in our life, for we become aware that we are both finite and infinite—something in time and also eternal. Out of this arises a feeling of despair; for there is the yearning for the infinite and unconditioned happiness which is the goal of life. The gap between what we are and what we should be causes a feeling of melancholy, and the solution for this comes not from abstract theories or intellectual disquisition but from the 'leap of faith'—that is, faith in the infinite aspect of man's existence.

As to the literal and atheistic school, we

have already indicated its position and pointed out some of its shortcomings.

Disciple: The Existentialists use the phrase 'existence precedes essence.' What do they mean by this?

Teacher: John-Paul Sartre an exponent of the literal school, himself answers that question thus:

'We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills and as he conceives himself after already existing—as he wills to be after that leap toward existence. Man is nothing but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism.'<sup>2</sup>

Disciple: Then according to this, man may not be responsible to anyone for his actions.

Teacher: They say that he is.

'If it is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men.'<sup>3</sup>

Disciple: If there is no God there can be no norm of values and man has no motive or goal for his actions, either good or evil.

Teacher: They admit that.

'The existentialist ... finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there dis-

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* in W. Kaufman's *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* pp. 290-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

appears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any good *a priori*, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. It is nowhere written that "good" exists, that one must be honest or must not lie, since we are now upon the plane where there are only men. Dostoevsky wrote, "If God does not exist, everything would be permitted"; and that, for existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. He discovers forthwith that he is without excuse. For, indeed if existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's actions by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism—man is free, man is freedom. Nor, on the other hand, if God does not exist, are we always provided with any values or commands that could legitimize our behaviour. Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. We are left alone without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything that he does.<sup>4</sup>

Disciple: How can man be free or there be freedom unless he is infinite and not subject to change and the limitations of space-time etc.? He cannot be free as a body-mind mechanism—which he is if he has no soul. And to deny God is also to deny soul.

Teacher: It is one of the contradictions in existentialist thinking which is ambiguous at several points.

Disciple: It is they who of themselves cover their eyes and complain that it is dark. By denying God and spiritual values they end in a void and complain that they are alone and 'forlorn'. They create their own misery by assuming that standpoint.

Teacher: Yes, perhaps the answer

may point to the question of a healthy mind we discussed at the outset. That is, before one will have an awareness of the spiritual Reality his karma must become to a large extent attenuated and his mind must become *sattvic*—pure. Radhakrishnan says,

'In his non-being man cannot help but aspire to being. So he cries for the light from which he has hidden himself. He is not content with the sandy wastes of the human spirit deprived of God. For Sartre, life is absurdity, nothingness and each one has to make out of it something meaningful. The sign of hope is that we realize our non-being. It is this which makes us aware of time. In our nature the temporal and the eternal meet.

'Existentialists of the school of Sartre struggle to find some meaning for human life in a godless universe. If we grant that the world has a meaning, it means it has a purpose. The reality of God does not, however, depend on our views. Our irreligion does not entail the suspension of divine acting.'<sup>5</sup>

Disciple: This brings to mind Descartes' principle of innate ideas of the human mind—one of which is the idea of the existence of an infinite and perfect Being—God.

Teacher: Strangely enough, Sartre cites Descartes as giving him the basis for his thinking and yet he does not follow through with the next logical step, as Descartes showed. That is, one's own existence is established by the discovery of the fact 'I think therefore I am (cogito ergo sum),' and then, he who exists finds that there are certain ideas in his mind not at all put there by his own will. Especially is this so of ideas of infinity and perfect being; for how could a finite and imperfect being come forth with ideas of infinitude and perfection?

Descartes says,

'By the word *God* I mean a substance that is infinite, independent, supremely intelligent,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 294-5.

<sup>5</sup> S. Radhakrishnan *The Brahma Sūtra* pp. 146 and 167.

supremely powerful and the Creator of myself and anything else that may exist. The more I consider all these attributes, the less it seems possible for them to have originated from myself. So, by what I said above, it must be inferred that God exists. . . . I could not have the idea of an infinite, for I myself am finite; unless, indeed, that idea proceeded from some substance that was really infinite.<sup>6</sup>

And Sartre says,

'And at the point of departure there cannot be any other truth than this, *I think therefore I am*, which is the absolute truth of consciousness as it attains to itself. . . . Before there can be any truth, then, there must be an absolute truth, and there is such a truth which is simple, easily attained and within the reach of everybody; it consists in one's immediate sense of one's self.'<sup>7</sup>

Disciple: So they talk of 'absolute truth of consciousness' and 'freedom of the self' and yet deny the existence of an eternal and

infinite entity and God. Is it not a contradiction?

Teacher: Yes, the truth of one automatically establishes the truth of the other. They also say, 'Thus the man who discovers himself in the *cogito* also discovers all the others, and discovers them as conditions of his own existence.' This points to an awareness of a universal Self. But the brotherhood of man is based upon the fatherhood of God.

Disciple: Since the motive of life is to achieve happiness and to be free from suffering—and it is the purpose of philosophy to teach us how to attain to that, then why should one adopt a philosophy which makes him forlorn and abandoned and increases the anxieties, absurdities and anguish of life?

Teacher: That is it. As the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI. 20) states, 'Only when men shall roll up the sky like a skin, will there be an end of misery for them without realizing God.'

<sup>6</sup> Descartes, *Meditations of First Philosophy* Third Meditation.

<sup>7</sup> Sartre,—same as note no. 2—p. 302.

## HE FOLLOWED GANDHIJI TO THE LAST

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

Early in October last year, just a few days after Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, I was sitting one morning in the 'Meditation Room' of the Memphis airport waiting for my plane to Columbus, Mississippi. The sign 'Meditation Room' in a busy airport, bustling with human crowds, had drawn my curiosity, and tracing the directions I at last found the place—a wide open balcony on the second floor from which one could see a magnificent view of the large historical city stretching in a semi-circle. The 'Meditation Room' was probably a misnomer for no one was expected to be in a

mood to meditate in this scene throbbing with activities. Yet the balcony was surely a comparatively quiet place. There were several big tables with chairs neatly arranged on both sides. There persons could sit and read or relax and soothe their tired nerves. Strangely I found very few people taking advantage of this 'Meditation Room'. Probably the word meditation scared them!

The autumn sun shone over a clear sky and the landscape of the city was very pleasing to the sight. So this was the Memphis which made history during the

American civil war, one century ago! As a follower of Vivekananda I recalled his visit to this city in January, 1894, just four months after his famous appearance in the Chicago Parliament of Religions. He stayed in this city for a week and gave three lectures which were very much appreciated. In one of those lectures he said,

'Religion is not the outcome of the weakness of human nature; religion is not here because we fear a tyrant; religion is love, unfolding, expanding, growing.'

'Love—unfolding, expanding, growing.' What a promise and a hope! And yet how disastrously the world challenges and baffles the fructification of such a concept of religion! Bigotry and hate go counter to the waking of love and compassion, and extinguish, at least for the time being, the lamp of hope for millions.

Such a tragedy happened here in Memphis just six months ago, I recalled. One of the world's noblest humanitarians was killed here on April 4, 1968, by a single bullet from a sniper's gun. The assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King has been captured after months of consolidated search by agencies of several governments. Newspapers and journals from time to time have been publishing columns and articles by politicians, psychiatrists, social scientists, and other specialists, analysing the different aspects of the ghastly crime. It might take months yet, if not years, to conclude the judgement on the alleged killer, James Earl Ray. But the irreversible fact remains that a man who never knew any malice, had never harboured any enmity towards any man, whose life meant so much to millions of oppressed people, had to meet here a violent death, brought about by irrational hate, and that at the age of 39! The feelings of people who knew and admired Martin Luther King could well be expressed by borrowing the words Jawharlal Nehru uttered twenty years ago after a similar

tragedy in New Delhi on January 30, 1948 :

'The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere.'

Martin Luther King had installed Gandhiji in his life most passionately. He now followed Gandhiji in death unceremoniously. The world has known many religious martyrs who have courted death for the sake of their faith. They have won acclamation from the faithful through the ages. But the cause for which they faced cruel death may not appeal to all. Sometimes these martyrs have been labelled as fanatics. The martyrdom of Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King on the other hand belonged to a different category. These men died not for God but for man—the common man. Their death has a peculiar pathos which is bound to touch every human heart.

Dr. Martin Luther King was barely 27 years old when he emerged as a leader of his race—the American negro. Both his father and grandfather were Christian ministers and young Martin also chose the same vocation after completing a brilliant academic career. He could have led a quiet, pious, comfortable life, ministering to the religious needs of his parish. However, the same situation faced Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, at Pretoria, Transvaal, in 1893, when, as a young 24-year-old barrister, he arrived as a professional lawyer with the immediate purpose of winning a lawsuit for the client who engaged him. But the events around him suddenly opened his eyes to the realities of Indian life in South Africa. This led him to a firm determination to fight for truth and justice. In the same way Dr King, the young negro minister of religion woke up one day in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, to the colossal lie that was being perpetrated on his race, behind the smoke screen of American idealism, and that day

took the oath of redressing the wrong that crippled and crushed 22 millions of U.S.A.'s black citizens.

Martin Luther King had an exceptionally keen and receptive mind. Though schooled in orthodox Christian seminaries he kept his mind free to look into domains of truth and techniques of disciplines not necessarily Christian. That is how he came to study the existentialist philosophers and was fascinated by the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's concept and practice of Satyāgraha held before him great promises for his oppressed race. He wanted to make an experiment with non-violent resistance against the arrogant powers of bigotry and hate.

The negro has been in the United States for more than 400 years. Even though his slavery was abolished by the emancipation proclamation of Abraham Lincoln in 1863, his lot for the next 100 years has neither brought to him the glow of real freedom, nor economic and social well-being. In a country which is professed to be the melting point of nations, most negroes have been constrained to live a life of isolation, cut off from the multi-directional progress of the white American people. Segregation and discrimination in numerous spheres of life have kept the black American helplessly crippled. Of course there are exceptions. There have been among the negro community successful businessmen, executives, leaders, politicians, authors, educators, musicians, sportsmen, who have attained eminence nationally. But these persons form a microscopic minority in the vast mass of negro population. It is difficult for an outsider to realize the depth of the emotional suffering of the average negro.

It is not that there have not been laws to protect and help the negro. It is that legal statutes can always be given convenient interpretations, hundreds of manoeu-

res can be devised to annul or obstruct the implementation of the laws. Exactly this happened in the case of the American negro. Neither the government nor the courts have been able to help him much against the overwhelming bias, callousness, or hostility of white Americans. So the negro has suffered in silent agony for years and years.

It is not fair to say that the negro has no friends among the white people. There have been and are many broad-minded, understanding white Americans who sincerely stand by their black brothers and try to help them as much as they can. But their number is insignificant in comparison to the majority of white Americans who are mostly indifferent to the problem.

Ever since the beginning of this century there have sprung up different negro organizations for defending justice and furthering economic and social well-being among their own people. The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) came into being on February 12, 1909, the 100th birthday of Abraham Lincoln. This and other organizations have undoubtedly done a good deal towards bringing unity, courage and self-help among negroes. Yet the legitimate aspirations of the black people for better education, jobs, health, housing and social freedom were far from being even partly fulfilled. Their growing sense of helplessness and frustration seemed to spread in leaps and bounds. Revolutionary steps seemed imminent, though negro opinion was divided about the form and method of this revolution-to-be.

In December, 1955, an incident happened in Montgomery, Alabama, concerning a negro woman riding a bus on the way home from her day's work. The insult and mistreatment doled to her might have been ignored at other times, but on this particular evening it served to bring the

accumulated grievance of the race to a state of conflagration. A revolution had at last sprouted, but under the leadership of Martin Luther King it was a non-violent revolution. Dr. King's first experiment with 'Satyāgraha' began in Montgomery. Seventeen thousand negroes carried on a bus boycott for 382 days and the Supreme Court had to give the decision in favour of their demands. This movement, most unprecedented of its kind in the United States, reminds one of the 'Dandi March' of Mahatma Gandhi in March, 1930, when he and seventy-eight residents of the Sabarmati Ashrama led a 200 mile protest march from Sabarmati to Dandi for breaking the unjust salt laws of the then British Government of India. 'We are marching in the name of God' Mahatmaji had told his followers on that occasion. Martin Luther King, who chose to follow the great Indian leader's example, told his associates,

'If you protest courageously and yet with dignity and Christian love, when history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say "There lived a great people—a black people—who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization." This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility.'

Since that direct non-violent mass protest of Montgomery in 1955-56 Dr. King, during the remaining twelve years of his life, led many such non-violent battles against injustice and oppression. 'We are through with tokenism and gradualism and see-how-far-you've comeism . . . We can't wait any longer. Now is the time,'—he declared. The climax of the revolution was reached in the famous march on Washington on August 28, 1963. Some 250,000 people—negroes and their white supporters came to the nation's capital from all parts of the country and gathered before the statue of the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln. There was no trace of

disorderliness or violence in that huge crowd. Dr. King gave a most touching address which has since then been famous as his 'I have a dream' speech.

'I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal."

'I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

'I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.'

Like Mahatma Gandhi Dr. Martin Luther King had had to face many ordeals and harassments. He had been arrested and jailed 30 times, but he never forsook for a moment his non-violent ideology. Just as Mahatma Gandhi could not look upon a single Britisher as his enemy (his fight was against British bureaucracy) in the same manner Dr. King cherished the warmest friendliness toward the white American. He was fighting a system, not persons.

After the colossal march on Washington Martin Luther King drew the attention of the whole world. He received invitations to speak in different European countries. It was only proper that he was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in 1964. He said that this was not an honour to him personally, but a tribute to the great cause which he had espoused. He donated the prize money of \$54,600 for the furtherance of the movement.

As in the case of Mahatma Gandhi Martin Luther King's non-violent revolution had many critics even among the negroes. There were many young reactionaries who would stand for violent offensives and Dr. King lived to see active signs of these tendencies. Naturally this made Dr.

King sad, even as the heart of Gandhiji was sorely grieved by the widespread riots which baffled his life-long desire for Hindu-Muslim unity.

Dr. King seemed to have a premonition of his impending death. He gave a hint of this in one of his sermons shortly before the last tragedy. In that very moving

speech he exhorted his listeners to remember him not as a leader or scholar, but as a servant of God and lover of man.

Like Mahatma Gandhi this sincere follower of Gandhiji in a distant country will surely be remembered by posterity as a person who lived and died for peace. Indeed he followed Gandhiji to the last.

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## WHAT CONSTITUTES THE TRUE WELFARE OF STUDENTS

DR. GOVERDHAN LAL BAKHSI

The student world is in turmoil; in India, in Europe, in America—everywhere. The old world is dead; a new world is struggling to be born. The student unrest is a symptom of the battle between the old and the new.

Wherein lies the true welfare of students? Political parties, seeking to harness student-power for personal or party gains, seem to vie with one another in posing as the greatest well-wishers of students and ever on the look out for a cause to fight for 'students' welfare.' The cause may be trivial or local or un-academic; e.g. raising of bus fare by one paisa (as in Andhra), location of the new university or new steel plant in this city or that, or cinema concession, or the ever-fresh complaint of police atrocities and demand for an enquiry by a High Court Judge. For these or dozen such causes, in which the vast majority of students are not interested, those self-appointed custodians of 'students' welfare' are ready to provide leadership and support, to gain popularity and influence among the younger generation. The student body is a combustible material that lends itself easily to exploitation by outsiders.

True welfare of students lies in refusing

to be thus exploited for other people's gain. Student welfare is not identical with the welfare of any party that tries to cultivate them—be it Congress, Communist, Socialist or any other.

The real welfare of students lies in being students, that is to study and equip themselves with excellences and qualities that would ensure them a bright and glorious future. Students have made a tryst with destiny. Student life is a preparation for life—not actual life itself; students are citizens of tomorrow, not already citizens, who should fight for their rights (often imaginary ones) or other people's rights or justice for others.

Parents pay fees for the education of their children, but the major portion of the expense on their education comes from society or Government. The aim of education is to produce a class of persons, sound in body, alert in mind, who have received training to do general or technical jobs, with efficiency, enthusiasm, integrity and incorruptibility. If education does not produce such socially useful individuals it must be said to have failed of its primary purpose. Surely parents and the community do not spend hundreds of crores of rupees on education to breed a



band of unrulies, who fight battles with police or burn trains and buses and public buildings and who are more interested in agitations and strikes than in their primary purpose of studies. But there is no cause for despair. Despite unproportionate publicity that sporadic struggles and strikes get in the press, thousands of schools and colleges carry on their even tenor of instruction, smoothly though silently.

Students have no welfare apart from the welfare of the society of which they are a part. They cannot advance their welfare by injuring society or trying to create conditions of anarchy or chaos, thereby also blasting their own future into the bargain. The students, we are told, are sensitive souls, who are up in arms against the hypocrisy, factionalism, corruption and old out-moded values of the older generation and seek to end them. In fact this should be the ardent desire of every well-meaning person, but the means that have to be adopted should be such so as not to distort the end. We in this country are lucky to have been taught by Gandhiji the importance of worthy means for achieving worthy ends. The lesson should not be lost sight of in trying to bring about a new order. The path of destruction and anti-social activities not only leads to chaos but also undermines all values of decent and dignified behaviour. The emphasis is not on accepting the status quo, but on the adoption of a code of conduct which has balance and poise, decency and dignity and never allows the good of the country to suffer by the excitement of the moment.

I am positive that real welfare of the students consists in passing their examinations at the first attempt, and not failing year after year with its attendant evils of loss of face, frustration and inferiority complex, financial ruin and parental disappointment. At our univer-

sities a large majority of our students fail in the various examinations. It has been calculated that if every year, 50% students fail and drop out, we need, not 100 admissions to produce 100 graduates at the end of four years, but 1600 students to produce 100 graduates at the end of a four-year course. Imagine the colossal amount of failures and heartache for the students. And yet 50% pass errs on the side of exaggeration. 'The exam-failure rate at some universities is 70 or 80%.' (U.G.C. Report, Page 255).

The remedy is not to start agitations to pass more candidates, or to lower the already very low educational standards. The tragedy of our education is that students are not imbued with a desire to study, but are eager to pass an examination, hoping that the degree would be a passport to some good job. Even research students, who should be motivated by love of learning or pleasure of discovering new knowledge, care too much for a Ph.D. degree as a stepping stone to a superior job, which after they have got it, puts a complete full stop on any further research or adventure in learning.

This wrong priority given to a degree or pass over real learning has led to such evils as mass copying (occasionally supervisors trying to stop it are assaulted, even killed), pilgrimage to the examiners, approaching the practical examiners, centre superintendents and the whole host of such evils.

The remedy for all this malaise is that students study deep and hard in an atmosphere of calm and tranquility, free from the shadow of recurrent strikes, gheraos and clash with police. My considered opinion is that Indian students are inferior to none in intelligence and brilliance and if they put their heart into the work, they can all pass and also raise educational

standards, without which the country is doomed. India cannot become a first rate nation on the basis of third rate education and fourth rate research.

The need of the hour, therefore, is to give to the schools and colleges a programme of work and to the students a taste of the joy born out of intense hard labour and resultant success. The creative urges of the students should find full scope for expression and greatest opportunities for development. Along with facilities for achieving excellence on physical and mental planes, the emotional and moral sides of education should not be neglected and there should be programmes built in the system itself which lead to emotional poise and moral uprightness. Such a programme is twice blessed; it blesseth the student and it blesseth the society. Let not the students be unduly perturbed by the phantom of unemployment at the end of the course. There is a world-wide market for real excellence and certain kinds of expertise.

Youth is at heart a rebel. The young relish adventure, hot action, excitement

and iconoclasm. That casts a duty on the educator to provide young students with thrills, adventures and challenging situations and mock fights—by means of games, sports, debates, dramatics, picnics, excursions, tours and a hundred other items included in that hackneyed but not unnecessary phrase co-curricular activities to satisfy the rebellious urges of the youth. All these programmes, which figure in every institution's annual report have become exhausted with time and lost their content and excitement through teachers' apathy and unwillingness to devote too much time needed for them. But if the teacher takes the easier path, making do with paper reports, the student community will march on the war path, doing great harm to themselves and to society.

A country's greatness depends on the quality and extent of its education, but a wrong education which fosters false values and false acts would do more harm than good. For as says *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, by education, one attains to the nature of immortals, while false education leads to utter perdition.

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## TRUTH AND UNTRUTH OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

DR. JURIJ ZALOKAR

In his book on Hinduism, Swami Nikhilananda wrote about psychotherapy as one of four present-day idols.<sup>1</sup> This idea deserves attention, since psychothe-

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<sup>1</sup>Vide: The German book *Der Hinduismus*, Ullstein Bücher, Frankfurt, Main, 1960, p. 14. The literal translation back in English may be: 'Today a fourfold substitute for religion is offered: Humanism, Psychotherapy, Morality and the Idolization of the State. Instead of literal 'substitute for religion' I have used the term 'idol'.

rapy is a phenomenon of a growing concern at present time, thus our attitudes towards it are not without importance. However, in order to understand it better, we should first examine the question what is contributing nowadays to the creation of idol. First of all, we should not overlook the laws of modern industrial and consumer civilization; in it mechanisms destroying moral values and creating substitute aims, are continuously undermining the

modern society. Among other reasons such mechanisms arise because we became insensible to higher values and lower, ephemeral values won absolute recognition. Thereby the social values deteriorated, and instead of being a productive element in the life of society, they have been perverted into an agent of disintegration. Among such distortions let us mention only some of them: deification of intellect which turns out into negation of intellect as soon as it is given an absolute value; glorification of success and profit which turn from factors of social progress into the core of inhuman commercialization; indulgence in sensuality and desires, which converts them from behavioural aids into servants of *āsuric* forces; an exaggerated striving for happiness—which, the more we strive for it, the more it turns into misfortune; negation of death and suffering which drive us in despair since we are not prepared to face them, etc.

Hence the present-time progress is not translated into reality also as a process of personal growth; on the contrary, it leads to personal and social regression, and both are interlaced. This is the consequence of mankind's having forgotten its *summum bonum*, which leads to an increase of detrimental social phenomena such as, especially in the western world: alcoholism, narcomania, hooliganism, prostitution, sexual looseness, family disintegration, neuroticism, etc. The actual man feels himself as being split and lost. However, one should not blame exclusively the progress and technical revolution, but rather the fact that the technical progress is not accompanied by an adequate spiritual awakening. Even more: the material enrichment is associated with spiritual impoverishment. While we build factories, we think of machines, forgetting the needs of the workers and of their families. We erect educational establishments which

offer to the youth more and more information, but we neglect the education. We establish enterprises in search of new profits, but we do not think of damages which might occur.

One-sidedness and neglect of spirituality create more and more conflicts, giving rise to various social and psychological crises. No wonder that efforts were made therefore in the field of psychology to do away with this confusion, and to heal the resulting mental hurts. One of the first, most recognized, and most widespread attempts of this kind was Freud's psycho-analysis which later ramified into various schools and sects. The common name of all these endeavours is psychotherapy. But most of them are rooted in the same mix-up of our contemporary society which they intend to heal.

No wonder that psychotherapies of this kind essentially tend toward the same idols which are being worshipped by the contemporary world. This congruence explains largely the fact that many of such psychotherapeutic schools made a breakthrough, and some of them became quite fashionable and even proclaimed by a number of psychologists, educationalists, sociologists, and what is more, of theologians, as scientific principles. But precisely because of the afore-said congruence, all those therapies are hopelessly ineffective. Some authors feel that they are not only ineffective, but also detrimental, since they mislead people to sidetracks and lead them away from the factual dimensions and orientation of their existence. They emphasize far too much man's superficial and ephemeral ego, captured between unconscious desires and the merciless superego, and they fail to indicate one's original spiritual foundations.

The failure is easy to explain, since their tool is too imperfect, and the eyes are not fixed at the right aims. One of the charac-

teristics of the contemporary man is his peculiar blindness which, in spite of failures committed, prevents him to realize that his approach to the solution has not been the correct one. He perseveres in seeing only himself. Psychology and psychotherapy neglect man's transcendent, or rather immanent essence, or they even deny it, reducing man to a merely biological, psychological, and social being. The French psychiatrist Laforgue supplements the explanation of man's egocentredness in the following way: 'The flight of man into the cult of himself is due to his fear of powerlessness and, ultimately, to his fear of death, the existence of which he tries to deny. Those who believe in life hereafter, are ridiculed or as even prosecuted.'<sup>2</sup> Of course the feeling of powerlessness and of fear is inevitable as long as one sees his entire reality merely in his transient embodiment.

Happily enough the darkness is never so black as it seems to be at the first sight. Furthermore the psychotherapy is not constructed only out of wrong ideas. Besides many unacceptable theories, it enriched us with a series of scientific findings which may certainly be ranged in the treasure-house of human knowledge. Although we cannot accept its philosophy, we may adopt those parts of its propositions which are rooted in scientific thinking. However, we should first establish which are those parts. On the other hand, in some recent psychotherapeutical schools, it is possible to detect the glimpses of their future orientation; they are breaking with the traditional materialistic roots and returning toward religious values. In some cases this is just a groping. Such is the case of certain theories where we find a mixture of ideas in gestation, where intellectualism and determinism already associate with the

search for spirituality. But for this same reason, such a spirituality is far too much expressed in the sense of a kind of rational absoluteness and not as the fullness of mystical perception. Such elements are found e.g. in Fromm's works. More advanced is Mowrer, professor of psychology in U.S.A., who underlines more explicitly the importance of religious values for mental health. In one of his articles, he quotes a familiar couplet that goes:

'I sought my soul, I sought my God,  
but neither could I see;  
But then I sought my brother,  
and then I found all three.'<sup>3</sup>

Then he continues: 'This may not be exalted poetry, but it is excellent psychology and theology. It puts behaviour—interpersonal social, and moral behaviour—first and says that everything else will follow from this.'<sup>4</sup>

More and more psychiatrists in the East as well as in the West are returning to the spiritual essence of man; they nourish themselves from the philosophical and religious cultural heritage (Jaspers, Koji Sato, Vahia, H. Singh, London, Schofield etc.). However it is true that their voice, though loud enough, is—for the time being—lost like the voice in the desert. Among them, V. Frankl, the founder of logotherapy, is especially well known. He writes: 'True human wholeness must include the spiritual as an essential element. Moreover, the spiritual is precisely that constituent which is primarily responsible for the unity of man.'<sup>5</sup> Exactly for this reason, his logotherapeutical theory especially

<sup>3</sup> Vide: The article, Mowrer O.H., Learning theory and Behavior therapy in Handbook of Clinical Psychology, ed. by Wolman B. B., McGraw-Hill, New York, 1965, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Vide: Frankl V. E., Religion and Existential Psycho-therapy, The Gordon Review, VI. I, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Vide: Laforgue R. Au dela du scientisme, Les Editions du Mont-Blanc, Genève 1963, p. 247.

emphasized the categories of meaning and value. Frankl also wrote that it would be misplaced to proclaim any spiritual distress as being morbid and as something to be cured. He affirms that various crises of existence and frustrations are in itself neither pathological nor pathogenic: 'A man's concern, even his despair over the worthwhileness of life, is a spiritual distress, but by no means a mental disease.'<sup>6</sup> The help of logotherapy is useful, even in cases of real diseases since it brings the individual closer to his lifetask, and gives him a meaning in his suffering, too.

The psychotherapy has also its bright side, although we know it especially from the side with which we cannot agree: from the side which emphasizes pleasure seeking

and instinct determinism. Unfortunately enough it is this last aspect which seems to be especially appealing to the large opinion due to its apparent scientific character, moreover as we live in a time when the mere label 'scientific' seems to be a proof of truth. Hence we have to be critical towards various psychotherapeutical schools, since those who are not sufficiently familiar with the subject-matter, might be misled by their being so fashionable. This happened also to some theologians of different denominations—victims of their endeavour to render their opinions more convincing by covering them with psychoanalytical trimmings.

Those theologians, philosophers as well as psychotherapists, who are bewildered by the splendour of psychoanalysis, should meditate on Nikhilananda's thought according to which psychotherapy is one of the idols of our time.

<sup>6</sup> Vide: Frankl V. E., *Man's Search For Meaning*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1966, p. 104.

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Disquietude is always vanity, because it serves no good. Yes, even if the whole world were thrown into confusion and all things in it, disquietude on that account would be vanity.

—ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS



# HUMAN TRENDS

## SAN FRANCISCO LETTER

### THE AMERICAN STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

Many, many years ago, a very wise man of the East, prompted by some critical comments of the caste system in India, remarked that in the United States we would one day have a much more serious problem to solve; namely, the racial question. He went on to say this problem was building up to one of magnanimous proportions and what direction it would take no one could predict but it would be dire, and that it would shake the nation to the very roots of its foundation, of that there was no doubt. Where a doubt did exist was whether or not a solution could be found. Only the future would tell. Now it seems the future then spoken of is upon us, for there is little doubt that one of the most momentous issues in the United States today is the racial struggle for equal rights. Whether this issue or the question of the morality of our involvement in Vietnam is of greater magnitude is certainly debatable.

Surely when people in foreign lands hear and read about the race riots that have occurred throughout our land, they must believe the situation is completely out of control and beyond any hope of ever being righted. And indeed, those of us who live

here have had many grim and dark moments thinking these very same thoughts.

The blaring news headlines and the T.V. news media do bombard us with all the violent, unpleasant happenings. True, it is only right that citizens should know what is happening in their country, for a too sheltered, insular existence does lull one into a complacency that has its own particular dangers. But there is another side to every coin, and if we have race riots and violence we also have many dedicated citizens in both the black and white communities who want what is best for their country and their fellow countrymen and who are working earnestly and quietly at all levels of society to bring about a healthier climate in this most serious of national problems. It does seem a pity that these individuals are not given 'equal time' in the news media so that the public would become more informed of all the constructive efforts being made to lessen the inequities because of racial discrimination, much of which is due to long-standing prejudices dating back to the ignominious days of slavery. After all, 'equal time' is religiously given to differing political parties by radio and T.V. networks, a fact we have been very cognizant of in the election year we have just gone through. So why shouldn't the practice be carried over into

other spheres? Is it just because the quiet and good works are not what make headlines?

However, whether 'equal time' is given or not, dedicated citizens in government and private industry will continue to work to improve the educational and employment opportunities, the housing facilities and social position of the black community. Business firms throughout the land presently are working hand in hand with the government to not only find jobs for the unemployed, but are giving on-the-job training to individuals who have never had an opportunity to learn a trade or skill, and this is done at considerable expense in both time and money, but the result of seeing a person who was at one time considered 'hard-core unemployed' develop into a responsible, happy employee is all the return wanted.

An even more encouraging development is the emergence of a non-profit organization formed three years ago by a group of Negroes whose sole purpose is to help Negroes start their own businesses and keep them in business. This group has been so successful that they have been given grants by the Ford Foundation and the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration to carry on their work in helping Negroes become a part of the all American economy and not just a separate black economy. Some of the individuals helped by this organization have left well-paying secure positions to venture into new fields of their own because, as one person expressed it, he found his civil service job had become a 'racial refuge'. And lest it be thought that only those with well-paying jobs are just given an opportunity to become equally secure in another venture, it should be mentioned that one such new company had nine employees, five of whom had police arrest records. If people in any segment of a society are given a chance to develop their potential and become proud and

productive members of that society, and if individuals can be given an opportunity to overcome the stigma of a police record, there is hope for the future.

The very basic founding concept of our country and government is the belief that all men are created equal. Perhaps when Providence tries us so sorely it is because we are becoming much, much too removed from the high ideals and principles laid down by our forefathers, and Divine Providence in this way forces us to examine our national conscience to see where we are failing and to once again make us right our course. The Civil War was fraught with untold misery to the North as well as to the South; the Labour Movement of the present century also had its violence, hatreds, and killings; and yet, we have survived these calamities and are still a nation undivided. Unquestionably, the divisive forces in the present racial struggle are more deeply rooted. They are in the very psyche of the nation, but does that mean they must forever remain?

In any area of disagreement and diverse views there is always room for optimism if the channels of communication can be kept open. So in this greatest of all problems, racial inequities, if only the lines of communication can be kept open and if only an atmosphere of trust and confidence and respect can be generated, there can be no doubt that this problem, too, can be overcome.

Many people of the older generations may pessimistically shake their heads and predict that our society as it is constituted is doomed. But when one looks in the opposite direction at the younger generations and sees children happily playing together, not even knowing or caring that one may have white skin and the other black, and when one sees students of all races harmonious in their relations with one another, it does seem reasonable to believe

that a day is coming when more and more the external differences will disappear and that more and more the real brotherhood of man—his divinity—will be a truth of which all, and if it is too much to expect all, let us say the majority of mankind will become fully aware.

Let us remember and ponder on what that noble American of our time, the late

Senator Robert F. Kennedy, said so many times and in so many corners of our great land—

'Some men see things as they are and say why.  
I dream things that never were and say why not.'

Do we really have any other choice?

—*Anna Nyhund*

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## GANDHI, THE GREAT EXPERIMENTER

SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

### I

When Gandhiji fell from an assassin's bullets his last words were 'Hey Ram!' It would have been surprising if he had died with some other words on his lips, for all his life he had worshipped God and had acted as he thought God wished him to act. That is to say, God was his constant guide, his source of inspiration, and whatever he did, he did to please God. This was why he never missed his prayer. He might be in the midst of a hectic political activity, but when the time for prayer came he would interrupt it and begin his prayer. He never deviated from his time-schedule even if this meant he had to keep a dignitary waiting—a Viceroy, a member of the British Cabinet or somebody else. The dignitary too would gladly accept this eccentricity of the old man, for he knew it was no use protesting. Gandhiji, it will be recalled, died on his way to the prayer meeting. Did he have any premonition about his death? It is difficult to tell, but others—specially the local police—certainly knew that something wicked was brewing. Even the man in the street sensed that something was wrong, for a few days earlier a bomb had exploded at the prayer meeting though

no one had been seriously injured. This was a clear warning that some people would stop at nothing. They blamed everything on Gandhiji—the Partition of the country and all the tragedies they suffered in their personal lives. If a man had had his young daughter outraged or his aged parents killed before his own eyes he held Gandhiji responsible. Had he not promised to lead them to freedom and peace and happiness? They thought he had cheated them. They had so long been impressed by his talk about non-violence, truth and communal harmony, but they now thought it was all humbug. He was a saint to them before but now a villain. They held him and him alone responsible for every misery that they now suffered.

Gandhiji knew the people's mood but he did not worry too much about it. He had never been afraid to tell the truth and he was much less afraid now. He condemned violence in much stronger terms than he had done ever before. Other people might have used moderation considering everything but not Gandhiji. He was blunt and forthright. People were boiling with rage but they did not know what to do. The police knew that though most people would



not hurt Gandhiji for old days' sake, there might be cranks or hot-headed young men who would go to any length to punish Gandhiji. If the police could, they would have liked to prevent Gandhiji from holding open-air prayer meetings or at least, to enforce strict security measures. Is it possible that Patel who was Home Minister then had come to discuss this matter on that fateful day? It will never be known, but if this was what he discussed with Gandhiji, he obviously failed to make any impression on him, for Gandhiji soon walked into the prayer-meeting and into—death. Nothing had yet made him miss his prayer. How could he miss it now because the Home Minister thought there was danger to his life?

## II

But if Gandhiji was such a religious man, how could he then join politics? Is not politics contradictory with religion? Can a truly religious man be a politician too? It is true that Gandhiji spent an entire lifetime fighting for the independence of his country, but it is doubtful if he could be called a politician; at least, he could not be called a politician in the conventional sense of the term. It is true that he was his country's political leader for three decades, but this was a role that his religious beliefs had cast on him. It was his love of God that made him fight against injustice wherever he saw it. It started first in South Africa and then it extended to India—this war against injustice, both political and social. In Africa, he himself had been a victim of racial discrimination. It was his religious feelings that prompted him to protest and launch his *Satyāgraha*<sup>1</sup> movement against it. He suffered much but finally won the battle, thus vindicating his belief that it is possible to change the heart

of the enemy. Because he had faith in God he had faith in man too, for he believed that God resides in every heart and He is constantly telling man to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. His 'still, small voice' can always be heard, if only man will hear it. He himself took all the momentous decisions of his life only after long hours of silent communion with God. He considered himself an instrument in the hands of God and acted as he thought God wanted him to act. This was what gave him courage to do or say things, he knew for certain, nobody was going to like. It did not matter to him a bit if the whole world went against him so long as he felt certain he was acting according to the will of God. Many people thought he was crazy, unpractical and indiscreet. There was good reason to think so, considering how he often behaved. Where there was no reason to give offence he gave offence; similarly when everybody felt it was time to strike at the enemy he would try to appease him. But because Gandhiji believed that God was guiding him, he completely ignored what other people thought about him.

Thus, whatever he did was an act of worship, for he believed he was acting strictly according to the will of God. He always insisted on truth because God and truth were to him synonymous. He calls his auto-biography 'An experiment with truth' because throughout his life he searched for truth and also applied it to his day-to-day life as he understood it. Even when he launched a political campaign, it was to him an attempt to establish truth, for in the political conditions that prevailed in India then he felt truth had been trampled. He bore no ill will against the British, but he fought for the end of the British rule, because that rule was essentially wicked, unjust and evil to him. Anything against man was to him against God too. This

<sup>1</sup>lit. dedication to Truth.

was why he fought against untouchability all his life, for it was, as he saw it, a sin against God. Human misery in any form was to him an evil which fully justified a protest.

But being a religious man he did not hate the people he opposed. He hated the British system but not the British people. He used to claim that he was the best friend the British had in the East. This was perhaps no exaggeration. Again, because he was a man of God he never adopted dubious means. He did not believe that good ends could be achieved by bad means. However strong the temptation, he insisted that none of his workers adopt wrong means for a right cause. Even when he wanted to break a law (which he did when he thought the law was wrong), he must first warn the rulers. He thought it was wrong to take the enemy by surprise, however powerful or wicked he might be. According to him, he should be duly notified and then only should action be launched against him. Many of course thought he was making a fool of himself, but this did not deter him from doing what he thought was right. It only strengthened his purpose further.

The techniques he adopted were entirely new in the history of a subject nation's struggle for independence. People thought he adopted non-violent means in fighting the British, because in the absence of arms and ammunition, he had no other way of fighting them. It was only a matter of expediency. All he was doing was making a virtue of necessity. This is not quite fair to Gandhiji. Non-violence, in his case, sprang from religious convictions; it was the result of his deep love for God. God is love itself and God filled his heart; how could then there be any place for hatred in his heart? Love for all,—this was his guiding motto. It is wrong, therefore, to say that he preached non-violence because

as leader of an unarmed people, he had no other way to fight the British. The fact of the matter is that he would not have people use arms even if they had the means to buy arms. He would not mind if they got killed but he would not like that they should kill others. But he warned that he did not want the kind of non-violence that a coward might show; he wanted real non-violence, the non-violence of a bold man who knows he can hit back if he so wishes but he would not, out of his own free choice. He asked people to be violent rather than be a coward.

### III

It must not, however, be thought that Gandhiji was a scholar, a mystic or a philosopher. He was a simple man who prayed to God that he might be a willing tool at His hands. He respected all creeds and dogmas but none of them had an absolute claim on his loyalty. He was not interested in theology; he was no great believer in rituals, either. He once remarked that he loved Hinduism to which he was born, but the religion he believed in was bigger than Hinduism or for that matter, any other religion. What he meant by this was that he did not wish to give any particular label to his religion, for it contained in it the elements of all religions and, if possible, even more. He in fact did not care so much for institutionalized religion; he preferred a direct approach to God without any intermediary being there. 'My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself', he used to say. He was a great believer in religious unity. 'The soul of religion is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms', he once remarked. He also said that religions were so many roads which converged to the same point. According to Gandhiji, the sum and substance of all religions is truth and non-violence.

He was a practical man who did not

bother too much about philosophical niceties. He, instead, preferred to practise whatever he understood of religion. He perhaps argued that just as one could not exhaust God, similarly one could not exhaust the science of religion. Two things were to him most important: morality and restraint. Divorced from morality, there can be no religion. Similarly, no one can be religious without self-restraint.

Gandhiji did not preach religion, but lived it. Because religion was to him more than his life, he took on himself the role of a political leader. He joined politics not in spite of religion but because of religion. He says in his *Autobiography*, 'such power as I possess for working in the political field is derived from my experiments in the spiritual field'. Religion taught him to love man, God's best creation. This was why he could not keep quiet when he saw millions of Indians suffering due to political bondage. He fought

against the British just as he would have fought against his own countrymen if they had held in bondage some other people. In this connection, his fast in protest against India's vacillation over the question of paying Pakistan the money due to her, will be recalled. His action was embarrassing to his close friends and associates and angered his countrymen, but he paid no heed to this because he felt India had no right to hold back the money.

Thus, all his life Gandhiji had fought whenever he thought wrong was being done to any section of humanity. This was the way he searched for truth (to him, another name for God). He called his life 'an experiment with truth', because in searching for truth, he approached the problems of life entirely in his own way and broke new grounds. Whatever he did was a way of knowing and serving truth as he understood it. He was indeed a great experimenter.

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The rules of duty prescribed by great Rishis, each depending upon his wisdom, are many. The highest among them all is self-control.

Self-control increases energy. Self-control is highly sacred. Through self-control a man becomes purified of all his sins and gifted with energy, and therefore acquires the highest blessedness.

We have not heard that there is any other duty in all the worlds equal to self-control. Self-control according to all virtuous persons, is the highest virtue in this world.

The self-controlled man sleeps in happiness and moves through the world in happiness. His mind is always cheerful.

The man who is without self-control always suffers misery. Such a man brings upon himself many calamities all begotten of his own faults.

Forgiveness, patience, abstention from injury, impartiality, truth, sincerity, control of the senses, alertness, mildness, modesty, firmness, liberality, freedom from anger, contentment, sweetness of words, benevolence, freedom from malice--all these combined make for self-control.

Bhishma in the *Mahabharata*

Santi-parva, Chapter CLX, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15-16.



## IS AMERICA READY FOR A SĪTĀ OR A MAITREYĪ?

An American correspondent raises this surpassingly unusual question: 'Is America ready for a Sītā or a Maitreyī?' and without waiting for anyone else's any other reply, in effect answers: 'No, not for the present, perhaps never!'

This rather un-American question arose out of a typically American situation, namely, the recent controversial remarriage of a nationally adored famous widow, which intriguingly enough seemed to have shocked the whole country, where such a thing is pretty endemic. Disillusioned and hurt the correspondent writes:

'It was hoped by many of us that she would remain a widow and become an ideal for women of our country to look up to. She could have done much had she chosen to, that would have been worth-while and lasting and inspiring. . . . Many lesser women, living obscure lives with a little or no security, have chosen to remain alone and struggling along to provide for themselves and those dependent on them as best as they could, rather than be unfaithful to a great love or ideal that had been taken from them. . . . Our country does need heroines on the national scene, as well as heroes, but it seems we are not ready for a Sītā or Maitreyī and whether or not we ever will be right now seems to be doubtful indeed. . . . She has had her share of sorrow and tragedy and owes us nothing, but by choosing the way of the pleasant instead of the way of

the good, she has disillusioned and hurt many Americans.'

Let no one feel disturbed at the strange polarity of images in the correspondent's mixing up of the profane and the profound. The democratic spirit in which the correspondent is nurtured answers life's inner demands in that strange fashion! Yet you will agree that the thought itself is beautiful, nay inspiring. This bubbling of the Sītā-thought in the heart of an agony, caused, so to say, by a symbolic civilizational failure, even though it may have occurred only in one American mind, is not a small compensation of grace.

The thought of Sītā when started being cherished deeply can begin redeeming any civilization from inner turmoil. Sītā is not an epic image of legendary dreams as some may suppose, but the most effective emanation of the Supreme Spirit that salvages and saves. If the people of America can receive Sītā with the same zest as they receive life, stupendous things can happen in that country, which not all its wealth and power can ever get for it.

It is immaterial whether or not a country is ready for Sītā. Sītā is there always enshrined in the threshold of your soul. You have only to open the closed door to see her seated there.

You might ask how could this be? The

answer is: in a very simple way. There was such an entity as Sītā of time and there is such an entity as the Sītā of eternity. Sītā of time no doubt belonged to India only and vanished in the bowels of the earth at the end of her sojourn on earth. But the Sītā of eternity belongs to all mankind. She belongs to you already whether or not you are ready for her. It is she who will make you ready if you but open yourself to her power, you will not have to be ready to make her.

The timeless Supreme Spirit, after having once gotten released in the scheme of time, cannot take itself back away from mankind, nor can It limit Itself in a geographical locus. Therefore Sītā already belongs to the world as much to India.

You have only to discover her. How? This can be done by the devoted study of the *Rāmāyana* and meditation on Rāma and Sītā. If the Americans take to the study of *Rāmāyana* with same earnestness with which they read so much of ephemeral literature, they will discover the Sītā in their heart. They will know how deeply the Sītā-idea can possess their heart and soul. When millions and millions of people will have this home-grown love for Sītā-ideal deep in their soul and lived the life of personal purity for ages with retrospective or prospective effect, then you may one day find a Sītā of America driving past, why not, the Hollywood Boulevard.

In Sītā the divine and the human coalesce. From the side of the Divine, this wanderer cannot understand how anyone can set limit to Sītā possibilities. If you think that you cannot expect a Sītā because of the decline of spirituality in your society, funnily, it is all the more reason why you could expect! The Lord said so in the *Gītā*. If you have truly made a mess of things that really matter, which are called Dharma, then the messiah comes, for,

after all the entire burden is His. The idea of eternal damnation could be paying to the earthly interest of the Church, but not to God, to be sure. He could not be asking for eternal agony for Himself. So, it is good for the heart of any nation to meditate on the brighter side of God's face and then gradually on the whole face in order to discover that man, willy-nilly is God-devoured.

Sītā therefore, does not need to have a visa to be in America. Immortal ideals are born world citizens. The question is of only deliberately claiming and clinging to. This discovery need not start in high places. It may start from a farmer's cottage. Her Ayodhyā may be her apple orchard. She may be smart and quick with her car, washing machine, or even her husband's small tractor.

But in purity of body and mind, in her spiritual powers she may be a volcano. Then there you have an American Sītā.

Sītā of eternity, ah, what a wonder she is! Many scenes come crowding to this wanderer's mind so vividly. Who can speak of Sītā in measured terms? But, alas, yet you have to—such are disciplines of time and space! One spark of Sītā is enough to convince any one about the quality of the fire that she was. When in Aśoka-grove of Lanka the temptations cast by the demonesses employed by Rāvaṇa became too voluble and aggressive, captive Sītā would burst forth in indignation. At such times one knew the voltage of the fire that was Sītā. On one such occasion she said to the foolish demonesses surrounding her:

'I would not touch the demon Rāvaṇa with my left foot, much less love that abominable creature. He does not notice my refusal, nor does he understand himself or his own race. Driven by his own cruel nature he seeks to win me over. I will not however submit to Rāvaṇa even if I am torn apart, cut asunder, hacked to pieces, roasted in flames or burnt to ashes.

What are you going to gain by your long ravings?¹

Sītā was a staggering explosion of purity that took place in India. But this could happen only because many millions lived the life of purity in their simple lives. This however is from the human side, which needs to be understood clearly.

From the human side, unless an overwhelming majority of men and women in a nation throw out from their psyche the very volition for divorce and separation as a step to remarriage, psychologically speaking a Sītā emanation in a nation is not a thinkable proposition. But if a nation fulfils this condition it should become a theoretical possibility. It should also be remembered that there can be no emergence of a Sītā without a Rāma. They are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

So far as this muser knows, there is no parallel example in world's legend or history where you find a helpless delicate woman subjected to so much torments, insults, terrors and temptations and yet triumphing over all the concentrated power of evil only through her inner spiritual strength and emerging resplendent for all times.

What Sītā is to Indian mind Vivekananda gives fervent expression to in such glowing words :

'Sītā is typical of India—the idealized India. The question is not whether she ever lived, whether the story is history or not, we know that the ideal is there. There is no other Paurāṇika story that has so permeated the whole nation, so entered into its very life, and has so tingled in every drop of blood of the race, as this ideal of Sītā. Sītā is the name in India for everything that is good, pure and holy—everything that in woman we call womanly. If a priest has to bless a woman he says, "Be Sītā!" If he blesses a child, he says "Be Sītā!" They

are all children of Sītā, and, are struggling to be Sītā, the patient, the all-suffering, the ever-faithful, the ever-pure wife. Through all this suffering she experiences, there is not one harsh word against Rāma. She takes it as her own duty, and performs her own part in it. Think of the terrible injustice of her being exiled to the forest! But Sītā knows no bitterness. That is, again, the Indian ideal. Says the ancient Buddha, "When a man hurts you, and you turn back to hurt him, that would not cure the first injury; it would only create in the world one more wickedness." Sītā was a true Indian by nature; she never returned injury.²

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The correspondent mentions the name of Maitreyī also. Maitreyī stands in Indian consciousness like a glorious snow-peak of the Himalayas bathed in the last gold of the day and looking at the blue beyond.

It was she who gave the most unforgettable expression to the profoundest question of India's soul: *yenāham nāmṛtā syām kimaham tena kuryām*, 'what shall I do with that by which I shall not be immortal?'³

Sage Yājñavalkya, after living a fruitful and enlightened householder's life maturing into Vānaprastha, was now about to enter the fourth stage of his life, Sannyāsa, life of complete renunciation. He said to Maitreyī that he wanted to divide his property between her and Kātyāyanī, his other wife. Then Maitreyī asked if all the wealth of the world was hers, would that lead her to enlightenment and immortality? In answer Yājñavalkya said that of that there was no chance. By having much wealth she would only be like those who were affluent! This brought deep down from Maitreyī's soul that mighty question: What shall I do with that by which I shall not be immortal? In reply

² Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1955, Volume IV, pp. 75-76.

³ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4-5-4.

¹ *The Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*; Book V, Canto 26, 8, 9, 10.

Yājñavalkya taught her the methods of attaining immortality.

Maitreyī is the maturest product of the world, who has brought fulfilment to every thing she has gone through. And she came up so beautifully to the threshold of the final leap, leaving trails of glory behind that you feel this world is verily the sacrificial altar from which flames leap only upwards. Nothing remains in the world to be condemned, nothing in the higher sphere unattainable. Between the actualized and the attainable the striving human being is the dynamic arrow of light shooting Godwards.

Maitreyī represents the dynamics of the attained meaningfulness of life plunging headlong into ultimate wondrous self-fulfilment. Life has been shorn of everything gross in so gracious a manner. And

quietly and tenderly it slips to the edge of the empyrean wherefrom meanings are interchanged between the relative and the Absolute.

It is no wonder that Maitreyī should fascinate American hearts, for many there will have already known the futility of affluence without enlightenment.

May this fascination grow. Then Yājñavalkya's teachings on Atman will have a chance of going right into heart of America. And then the choosing of the good in place of the pleasant will happen without tears and with joy.

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A painful question, however, disturbs the heart of this wanderer: Do Indians of today cherish Sītā-Maitreyī as the core-treasures of their hoary civilization? How many really do?

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

In the editorial and four other articles of the this issue we pay our homage to Mahatma Gandhi in the year of his birth centenary.

In the column 'Letters of a Saint' is published letters of Swami Turiyananda (1863-1922) a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. These intimate letters of an illumined soul provide seekers with spiritual inspiration, authentic guidance and a rare type of holy company. Except when specifically otherwise mentioned, the letters will be translations from Bengali originally published in the book, *Swami Turiyanander Patrāvali*, Udbodhan Karyalaya, Calcutta.

After his return from the West in 1897, Swami Vivekananda organized the Ramakrishna Mission with the help of his brother disciples, lay and monastic. The first meeting of this association was held on May 1, 1897, at the house of Balaram Bose, in Calcutta. These weekly meetings—later on held at the house of Girish Chandra Ghosh—continued nearly for one year upto April 24, 1898. In these meetings the disciples of the Master recalled their memories about Sri Ramakrishna and discoursed on various religious and other allied topics. Disciples and followers of the movement also took part in discourses and discussions.

Girish Chandra Ghosh, the father of the Bengali stage, and a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, often participated in these meetings. This writing captioned 'Self-Effort' is rendered from the report of his

Bengali talk (given at the 19th meeting on August 29, 1897) as recorded in the *Minute Book of the Ramakrishna Mission*.

In this short discourse we are given a rare insight into the heart of Sri Ramakrishna.

Under the caption 'Spiritual Practice' is presented here helpful precepts culled from the religious instructions occasionally given to seekers by Swami Vireswarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Swami Prabhavananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, and Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, U.S.A. shares with us his tender reminiscences of the Holy Mother.

Swami Pavitrananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, and Head of the Vedanta Society of New York makes in his 'Reminiscences of Swami Shivananda' a vivid and inspiring presentation of a saint, who was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the Second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Swami Vidyatmananda—of the Ramakrishna Order and a member of the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, France—had written earlier in this Journal in March 1967 and March 1968 two articles on 'Swami Vivekananda in Paris'. His article in this number captioned 'Vivekananda at the Paris Congress, 1900' is the fruit of his painstaking continuing research on the theme.

The author of 'Vivekananda at the Paris Congress, 1900' wishes to acknowledge his appreciation to the following for their help in the finalization of this article: Mrs. Frances H. Leggett; M. Jean Bruno, Conservateur au Departement des Imprimeries, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris; Mlle. Henriette Girre; and Directors of the Shanti Foundation. The unidentified quotations

from Swami Vivekananda included in the article, giving his impressions of Paris and the Exposition, were taken from his 'Memoirs of European Travel' and 'The East and the West'. The photographs of the Sorbonne and of Old Paris were used with the permission of the copyright owner, Roger-Viollet, Paris.

In paying homage to the Mahatma, in his article 'Gandhiji—His Moral Way', Swami Chidatmananda, Assistant Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, expounds the central theme of Gandhiji's life, commitment to which alone can make all celebrations for honouring him meaningful.

Revered Andrew B. Lemke, the retired Minister of the First Congregation Church, Allegon, Michigan, U.S.A., writes with felicity and understanding that is the result of his nearly forty years of ministry, on 'What Inspires me most in Holy Mother's Life.'

'Crisis in Christianity' is the full text of the speech given at a symposium of Religions commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago of 1893, by Father Robert Campbell, Professor of Theology, DePaul University, Chicago. The proceedings of the symposium were reported in the December 1968 issue and further, Campbell's speech commented upon in February 1969 issue of this Journal.

Swami Tejasananda, a senior monk and an experienced educationist of the Ramakrishna Order who has been for many years the Principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira at Belur, writes here from his wide experience and comprehensive thinking on the 'Education India Needs Today'.



Mr. E. R. Marozzi, M.A., a teacher of Art and student of Philosophy from Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. through his engaging and learned dialogue between the disciple and the teacher points out in his article 'Reflections on Existentialism' how the true meaning of life is to be sought and right where it is to be found.

In the West, especially in America, when people think of Mahatma Gandhi, they cannot any more help thinking of another great man, Dr. Martin Luther King. In his article 'He Followed Gandhiji to the Last', Swami Shraddhananda of the Vedanta Society, San Francisco, U.S.A. poignantly narrates why this is so.

As far as any nation's present and future is concerned, if wisdom were to prevail, one of the priorities must be the true welfare of students. Students are no less responsible than their elders in working through prevailing situations to enduring desirable ends.

Dr. Goverdhan Lal Bakhshi, D.Sc., the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab, writes on the subject with deep understanding of problem born of his long years of intimate association with education of thousands of students and their welfare.

Dr. Jurij Zalokar, Head of Psihiatricna bolnica (Psychiatric Hospital) in Begunje na Gor., Jugoslavija, whom we welcome as a new contributor to our Journal, writes with professional insight on 'Truth and Untruth of Psychotherapy'.

Swami Lokeswarananda, Secretary Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, West Bengal, purposively shows in his article 'Gandhi, the Great Experimenter' that one of the keys of understanding

Gandhiji's life and work is in the fact that he was a great experimenter.'

Some go after trinkets and tinsels leaving behind gold at home. Others who have had enough of those things hanker after a particle of that gold. While East rushes West, West haltingly pines to go East. The Musafir stands somewhere in between the two worlds and being provoked by a correspondent muses on a very strange topic: 'Is America Ready for Sītā or Maitreyī?'

### *New Reading Features in Prabuddha Bharata*

In fulfilment of our announcement in the December 1968 issue of the Journal we are introducing from this issue onwards five new reading features besides 'Musings of the Musafir' which has already become familiar with our regular readers. These reading features will be presented as often as feasible.

In the September 1968 issue of the Journal we gave our readers to understand that we could never be sure of regularly presenting the writings of the Musafir. Though Musafir has been more or less regularly writing through these months, this position remains unchanged for the simple reason that the homeless wanderer refuses to bind himself with any promise.

The five other new features are:

1. The Universal call of Religions
2. Onward for Ever!
3. Illuminating Dialogues from Indian Lore
4. Profiles in Greatness
5. Human Trends.

We may here briefly indicate the scope of these columns.

*The Universal Call of Religions:* By listening to this call one finds one's way open to the Highest, from where one stands

Onward For Ever! Man suffers only when he stagnates on the way. The Vedic seer therefore breathed the *mantra*: *Caraveti*, move on. One who keeps on moving reaches the goal. The same life-quickenning *mantra* vibrated again on man's consciousness in Vivekananda's words of power: 'Onward For Ever!' In this column 'Onward For Ever!' we will present such words of the Swami as can rouse, inspire, and guide every human being to the luminous destiny.

The words quoted in this issue occurs in *Complete Works*, II, 1958, Pp. 303-4.

*Illuminating Dialogues from the Indian Lore*: In our invaluable spiritual heritage in India there are various types of literature. Of these we are choosing one for especial presentation, viz. illuminating dialogues. Indian masters had great faith in teaching spiritual principles through dialogues. Dialogues are easily participated in by readers for there is an inalienable livingness in this form of interaction of minds. And there is no dull moment in a dialogue which goes on between a great knower and an earnest seeker. The questions raised are often found to be our own questions. The answers given are often received as directive principles for life. And this happens without having to go through the rigours of ponderous intellectuality or ascetic austerity. Everyone can enjoy these dialogues and in a real sense be helped by them also.

Dr. V. Raghavan will mainly present these dialogues.

We are happy to welcome Dr. V. Raghavan, Professor of Sanskrit, Madras University and an internationally reputed savant of India, among the distinguished contributors to our Journal. Our readers will surely find Dr. Raghavan's writings in this column not only enjoyable for their literary merits, but truly helpful for their precious spiritual content. His will be the work of presenting

one precious gem after another from the vast store we really have, and so readers will always have occasion to joyously wait for the next.

*Profiles in Greatness*: What will be the theme of this column? Let the writer of the column himself explain—this being quoted from one of his letters to the Editor:

The only point to indicate (from my side) would be how our life is a quest after Sat-Chit-Ananda, Vibrant Life, Dynamic Wisdom and Joyous Love, how only those things are worthwhile which quicken and exalt our powers of intellect, heart and will, how that it is possible to understand, appreciate and imbibe the creative elements of life only through true personal examples of human creativeness—through life-situations. Hence this column seeking to present such 'human' inspirations and excellences. True nobility of this sort is not the exclusive characteristic of any one class or people; it is manifest in men, women and children, monastics and householders, artists or artisans, etc.

The sun is great. Is not also the due drop which reflects it so wonderfully great in its own small way? From the purview of this column no type of greatness will be left out.

True to the spirit of his undertaking, the writer of this column intends to be known as 'Explorer'. His own writings will be his best introduction.

His first profile is of 'The Seditious Fakir', whom we all know, love and revere.

*Human Trends*: In this column we aspire to present something singularly relevant to all types of readers. It will be news-views type of writing to show men's movements through affairs and not movements of affairs through man. Here our attempts will be at perennial journalism as distinguished from popular journalism, writings always being of general human interest all over the world. Though fundamentally news-based, these writings could also soar high and away from the day's struggling concern and wander about in the infinite blue of unconcern.

To start with, we have in this column a

'San Francisco Letter' on 'American Struggle for Equality' from Anna Nylund, who writes on this blazing theme with the earnestness and agony of an insider. While we expect Anna Nylund to continue to write in this column, we also hope that others from overseas and from India will occasionally enrich it by their writings.

In juxtaposition to the struggle for equality that has been going on in India, we find another struggle for equality going on in America. It augurs well that Anna

Nylund looks upon this problem as America's national struggle for equality and not as a mere Negro struggle. While this struggle for equality will be going on, we venture to think, after being equal to somebody in vice and virtue alike, life's fundamental problems are not really solved. Then the discovery will be made that being oneself, manifesting one's own infinite divine potential, is the real challenge of life. And a high adventure of great spiritual significance will then have been started.

### *THE SMALL FARMER AND INDIA'S DESTINY*

That emaciated man who is tilling his land with a primitive plough drawn by half-fed bullocks of the backward area of the country, what does he really know of the 'green revolution' sweeping over the country? He knows nothing. Cowdung is the only manure he uses. Of this also he has scanty supply. He is not sure of rains. His land has no protection against floods. No irrigation system has passed by his field. He has not yet seen an electric light. He does not know that water could be drawn out from within the bowels of the earth most easily through the power of electricity. He has no idea as to how much of thinking and talking goes on in New Delhi in regard to the methods of enhancing the agricultural output. He does not know that he has a responsibility to fulfil to the country being himself a farmer. In fact he has been a hereditary farmer. He is not an idler. He works hard, he has his own skill. But he is never sure of the harvest. He has always been very very poor. India's much talked of national planning has not yet touched a fringe of his tattered clothes.

This man does not know that he is the central figure in India's national economy. But people in New Delhi should know that,

They seem to know theoretically where their duty lies but they are captives of circumstances and can hardly do the needful for reaching the grass roots of prosperity.

The Union Food and Agriculture Minister of India admitted (Vide: Report in *The Hindustan Times*, September 29, 1968) that a persistent complaint was that only the big farmers were reaping the benefits of Government's agricultural strategy. And he was not unaware that the present agricultural strategy disturbed the social balance in rural areas. If this trend was allowed to continue it would result in social tension. The rural oriented social tension, the Minister warned, would be worse than that of urban industrial unrest as it would disturb the peace in the entire country and threaten the democratic set up.

Referring to the persistent complaint that only the big farmers were reaping the benefit of the Government's policy, the Minister said, 'the Government could solve the food problem by introducing modern farming in thirty-three million acres which would yield about hundred million tonnes of food grains, but it would further aggravate the gap between the rich and the poor farmers.'

The Minister has rightly sensed one of the sore points of Indian national life of

today. Progress of India will largely depend on the pace of attained prosperity of our poorest farmer in the most backward village. He is a simple man who knows nothing of the ways of availing himself of the opportunities that agricultural planning might be opening up for him. He knows nothing about statistics or economics as it is understood in New Delhi. He lives in his world of limitations imposed on him by his ignorance and conservatism. He knows his field, bullocks and the limited horizon of his village.

The administrations in the country are no doubt aware to a certain extent of the importance of this man. But what is urgently needed here and now is to realize that if he is not made the centre of gravity of forward looking agricultural policy of the Government, the vicious pattern of economy will continue to grow in the country, making the rich richer and the poor poorer, resulting in inevitable violent revolution some day, sooner than later.

So the most important question in India's common sense economy is: how is this least farmer to be made the most advanced farmer in the country?

It augurs well that the Minister of food and agriculture is aware of the flaw in the farm policy. But if this awareness continues to co-exist with the defective farm policy then something is wrong in New Delhi. There have already arisen in the country forces which are out to exploit those situations in our far off villages in a worst violent conceivable.

What is done in New Delhi is important for India. But what the least farmer in our out-of-way villages is helped to do is any day more important, as far as the stability, economy, and progress of the country is concerned.

In all modern situations time is the essence of all desiderata. If we fail to do the right thing right now, we may never

have one more chance of doing it. Too much faith in gradualism has led some nations to grief.

In this regard, the people have their duties too. The limitations of the governmental capabilities being well-known, organized public efforts in this direction will be a great service to the nation. In Thailand the Bangkok Bank Limited, launched a programme of bank-to-farmer agricultural credit programme and succeeded in helping poor farmers in out-of-the-way places in an incredible manner. What is working in Thailand should work in India too.

Our young enthusiastic entrepreneurs who want to do business in an adventurous manner which will also be an altruistic work have a challenging field open before them.

Our approaches may be various, official and unofficial, but the central figure whom we all need help serve—for the good of all concerned—is the poor farmer in the backyard of our backward village. If we can help him to rise to his full glory, India will have made good in all regards for quite a while.

Now, in trying to help this man care need be taken that in our attempts to improve his situation we do not actually impoverish him further. This man, though he is extremely poor has some inner assets which are highly valuable for him—he has innate spirituality. There is a school of thinking which assumes that in order to help this man you must first destroy his spirituality through a process of indoctrination and infuse within him violent impulses and motivation of class strife. Examples are also shown that such methods have worked elsewhere and so they should also work in India. How far such method has worked and at what cost are not, however, properly assessed.

What is important to note is that in India down the ages the messages of well-being

have always come through the clarification of man's understanding of the true meaning of religion and its application in life. Through this way alone the best work can be done for the masses of India. For this method alone can help man's advancement on levels physical, mental and spiritual simultaneously.

It is one thing to take the man as a mere economic animal and try to help him. But it is a different thing to take man as potential divinity and try to help him. Indian concept of help to anybody has a direct reference to the essential nature of the person concerned. If a man is in fact taken as an insect, whatever we may do for helping him, would only be insect-measures for man. These measures, therefore can help not the man, but the insect of someone's understanding.

Swami Vivekananda exhorts all workers for welfare of humanity: never forget the glory of man, his divinity and then do the rest for him. That will be genuine help. He needs the choicest of ingredients for self-improvement. In the root-ideas that Vivekananda gave for the raising of the

masses, the essence of socialistic idealism is digested and transformed into a liberating power which seeks to raise everybody in all levels of existence—physical, mental and spiritual, from where he stands, instead of dragging down all to unregenerate level for the attainment of equality.

The method he enunciated was to work for the masses in and through essential religion and give choicest help to the poorest without making them lose their innate spiritual nature.

Gandhiji in effect believed in and worked through the same method for the upliftment of the masses. If he maintained that he was more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in preventing the suffering of his own people, it was because he was perfectly sure that those who sought to achieve their ends through such a process ended up in dragging themselves and humanity down with them.

Man can be truly helped only through the awakening of his higher nature. And this work needs to be combined with giving him all the material succour he needs.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**MYTHS OF THE HINDUS AND BUDDHISTS**  
BY ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY and Sister Nivedita.  
Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York, pp. 400. Price \$2.50.

It is understandable that both Sister Nivedita and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy were anxious that the West should know India. But what made them decide to write about her myths? Why did they not write a good and authentic history of the country, instead? Perhaps they felt that myths portray a nation's character more faithfully than even its history. If that was the real reason, the book they have jointly written admirably serves its purpose. Here, in this book, one sees clearly where the heart of India beats. That reli-

gion and religious heroes are India's main source of inspiration is shown beyond all doubt. India, with her many races and each of them distinct historically and otherwise, is naturally a vast storehouse of myths, but the authors make their choice with great discrimination. Inevitably, the story of Rama and Sita is there, for how can anybody understand India without knowing the tragedy that always hovers over the love of this ideal couple? Sita is the ideal wife who teaches every Hindu wife to think no sacrifice too great for her husband. Rama is a combination of ideal son, brother, king and husband. There are often conflicts between one role and another, specially between the role as king and the role as husband, but invariably, self-interest is brushed aside to give

priority to the interests of the State or to meet the requirements of ethics.

Like the story of Rama and Sita, stories from the *Mahābhārata* also find a place in this anthology, for how can you ignore this great epic about which it has been said, 'That which does not occur in this Bhārata (i.e., the *Mahabharata*) does not occur in Bhārata (i.e., India)?' Indeed, there is no aspect of human character which this great epic does not try to focus in the vast mosaic it conjures up of the doings of men and women of many levels and many stations. Krishna is the central figure in this great epic. He inspires action, but he is never the actor. Even today millions of Indian hearts are filled with emotions at the mere mention of Krishna (and also, of course, of Rama and Sita). Stories about him are read and re-read throughout India, for he symbolizes what is best in man.

There is also the story of Shiva, the Great Ascetic who is the overlord of the universe. His many foibles are dealt with, but the over-riding impression that is left on the mind is of his great selflessness. He is often fooled and cheated, but that does not deter him from being the kind and forgiving Master that he is. Buddha, too, has his honoured place,—Buddha, the compassionate, who, by his life and example, gave, as it were, a new dimension to the practice of religion in India. His story is typical of the struggle that each individual has to make to find his destiny. There is no such thing as a beaten track in the world of religion. Each has to plough a lonely furrow. There is also no magic, no short-cut. It is slogging all through. There are also other themes, each well-chosen, to illustrate the values India cherishes most.

The book's value is enhanced by the inclusion of some wonderful pictures in the book drawn by masters of a by-gone age, Abanindra Nath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and others.

Though the book first appeared many decades ago, it is still without a peer. With Basham's 'The wonder that was India', it provides a key to the understanding of India. Its reappearance is, therefore, most welcome.

**A HISTORY OF GREEK AND ROMAN PHILOSOPHY:** JOHN HACKNEY. Philosophical Library Inc. 15, East 40th Street, New York 16, 1966, Pp. 260. Price: 6 Dollars.

This is a popular exposition of the development of philosophical thought in Europe beginning with

Greek thinkers in the 6th century B.C. The way in which questions of the fundamental truths of life, the destiny of man, the reality or otherwise of the soul, the relation of the One to the Many etc. were raised and handled by Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Zeno, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and later Pythagoras, is described in a cogent discussion. It is the author's considered view that the legacy of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle provided the 'scholastic framework within which was placed the thought of the Christian Church.'

Though the Romans are not particularly noted for their contribution to Philosophy, as indeed they are in the field of Law and Government, the writer invites attention to the speculative contribution of Stoa, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius.

M. P. PANDIT

**THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IN ISLAM:** DR. T. J. DE BOER, Dover Publications, 180 Varick Street, New York, 1967, pp. 216, Price \$ 2.00.

Written more than sixty years ago this study follows a pattern that is now out of date. The author is convinced that whatever worthwhile there is in Islamic thought is to be traced to Greek and allied sources. It is wrong, in his opinion, to pay too much attention to what are, after all, 'the childish thoughts of pious Hindoos' or the 'meditative penitents' of India. All the same, the study is a useful introduction to the subject inasmuch as it gives some background, historical and geographical, of the Islamic movement and presents the contributions of certain notable thinkers like Farabi, Gazali the mystic and others. Even while speaking of individual thinkers the stress is more on the likely influences to which each was subject rather than on his original thought.

M. P. PANDIT

**LINKS BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY:** SAMUEL UMEN, Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, 1966, pp. 153. Price: Dollars 4.75.

Rabbi Umen believes in the basic unity of Judaism and Christianity, the two faiths that have contributed the two fundamental truths of Justice and Love, respectively, to the Western civilization. In this study of the texts, the dogmas and the religious ceremonies of both, he traces definite connections and discusses how precisely the older

faith has influenced the new. His accounts of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist and Paul of Tarsus are written with understanding and sympathy. There is a chapter on the influence of Hellenism on Judaism and Christianity. Necessarily not all the conclusions of the author will be acceptable to the leaders of the Christian church but all will agree with him when he says, 'The links between Judaism and Christianity are numerous. However, the single link more significant than all of them combined is the one which maintains that we are all children of One God who is the Father of us all.' (P. 149)

M. P. PANDIT

**SEQUEL TO THE MYSTERIES OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE:** H. S. SPENCER and others. H. P. Vaswani, I, Rajkamal, 795/3 Padamjee Park, Poona 2, pp. 181, Price Rs. 10/-.

This is a collection of essays and notes by the author intended to form an annexe to his major work *The Mysteries of God in the Universe*. They deal with interpretations of key terms in the Avestan literature, comparisons with identical concepts in the Veda, proofs of belief in the doctrine of Re-incarnation in Europe and England based upon passages from Jewish and Christian scriptures, poems and letters of celebrities etc. There

is a good deal of data which can of course be drawn upon for quite different conclusions.

M. P. PANDIT

**THE DISINHERITED AND THE LAW:** DAGOBERT D. RUNES, The Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, 1964, Price \$ 3.

Runes in the book under review makes a detailed analysis of the concept of Law and arrives at the challenging conclusion that law neither serves justice nor respects it. The iconoclastic assertion that law did not symbolize justice needs careful and critical consideration from all quarters. In order to substantiate his thesis he quotes certain rules of law as prevalent in different parts of the world and brings out the inner contradictions in the concept itself. He quotes as instances in point the Liquor Law in California as contradicting that in Yemen. Negro Laws in the states of Georgia and New York hold out completely different prescriptions. By alerting thus the reader to the false sacrosanctness of the law in human affairs, Runes has sought to do a service to the thinking public. The entire field of law, national and international, needs to be examined carefully and the book under review places before us a very strong case for such reconsideration. Even if we dismiss all his arguments, that would at least help us understand the problems involved in their proper perspective.

DR. S. K. NANDI

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA PATNA

REPORT FOR 1967-68

This branch of the Ramakrishna Mission started in 1922, had the following activities during the period under review :

#### *Educational Activities :*

1. *Students' Home :* The Home is exclusively for college students. At the end of the year there were 19 students of whom 13 were free, 3 part-paying and 3 full-paying. Out of 15 students who appeared for different University examinations, 13 passed.

2. *Swami Turiyananda Library and Free Reading Room :* At the close of the period, there were 8,072 books in the Library. The Reading Room received 70 periodicals and 10 dailies. 15,190 books were issued during the year to the reading public. The average daily attendance was 63. Also, Ramakrishna Mission publications in different languages was available for sale.

*Cultural Activities :* From time to time, lectures and discourses on cultural and religious subjects were arranged at the Ashrama.

*Medical Activities :* The Bhuvaneshwar Charitable Dispensary treated 73,000 and 91,343 patients during the year in its Homeopathic and Allopathic

departments respectively. Out of these patients new cases were 7,932 in the former department and 11,796 in the latter.

*Religious Activities:* Daily worship at the Ashrama temple, weekly classes and scriptural discourses in and outside the Ashrama formed main features of religious activities of the centre. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda and other important festivals were observed with due solemnity.

*Relief:* This Ashrama rendered services in the drought relief work conducted by the Ramakrishna Mission in Bihar during 1966-67.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SALEM, MADRAS STATE

##### [ CONSECRATION OF THE NEW TEMPLE ]

The 29th of November 1968 was a memorable day in the history of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Salem-7, Madras State. For on that day, in its premises, a new temple of Sri Ramakrishna was consecrated by His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, in the presence of about sixty monks of the Order, who had specially come there for the occasion from its several branch centres, and nearly 4,000 devotees who had gathered there from far and near.

The temple has been constructed at a cost of nearly two lakhs of rupees. It consists of the main shrine, where a beautiful photograph of Sri Ramakrishna adorns the altar, flanked by the photographs of Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, and a spacious prayer hall adjacent to the shrine, known as the Vivekananda Hall.

While generous contributions from a large number of devotees and admirers enabled the Ashrama to take up the construction of the new temple, it was largely through the munificent help of Srimati R. seethalakshmi Ammal of Sri Sarada College, Salem, that it was possible to complete this artistic shrine-cum-prayer hall.

In connection with the consecration ceremony, week-long celebrations commenced on the 24th November with Vāstu Pūjā, Gaṇapati Homa, etc. Every morning and evening till the 28th, there were programmes of Vedic chanting, devotional music, and Harikathā. On the consecration day itself, there were special Pūjā, Homa, etc. in the morning, Harikathā in the evening, and Kālī Pūjā at night. On that day, nearly 3,500 persons were fed with the consecrated food.

On the 30th November, the Vivekananda Hall, the prayer hall adjoining the main shrine, was formally opened by the President Maharaj of the Math and Mission. At a public meeting held on that occasion at the Ashrama premises, over which the President Maharaj presided, Swami Tapasyananda of Trivandrum, Swami Hiranmayananda of Bombay, Swami Niskamananda of Ootacamund, and Swami Somananda of Coimbatore spoke on the significance of the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, and their spiritual teachings, as well as on the role of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in the context of the present-day India and her problems.

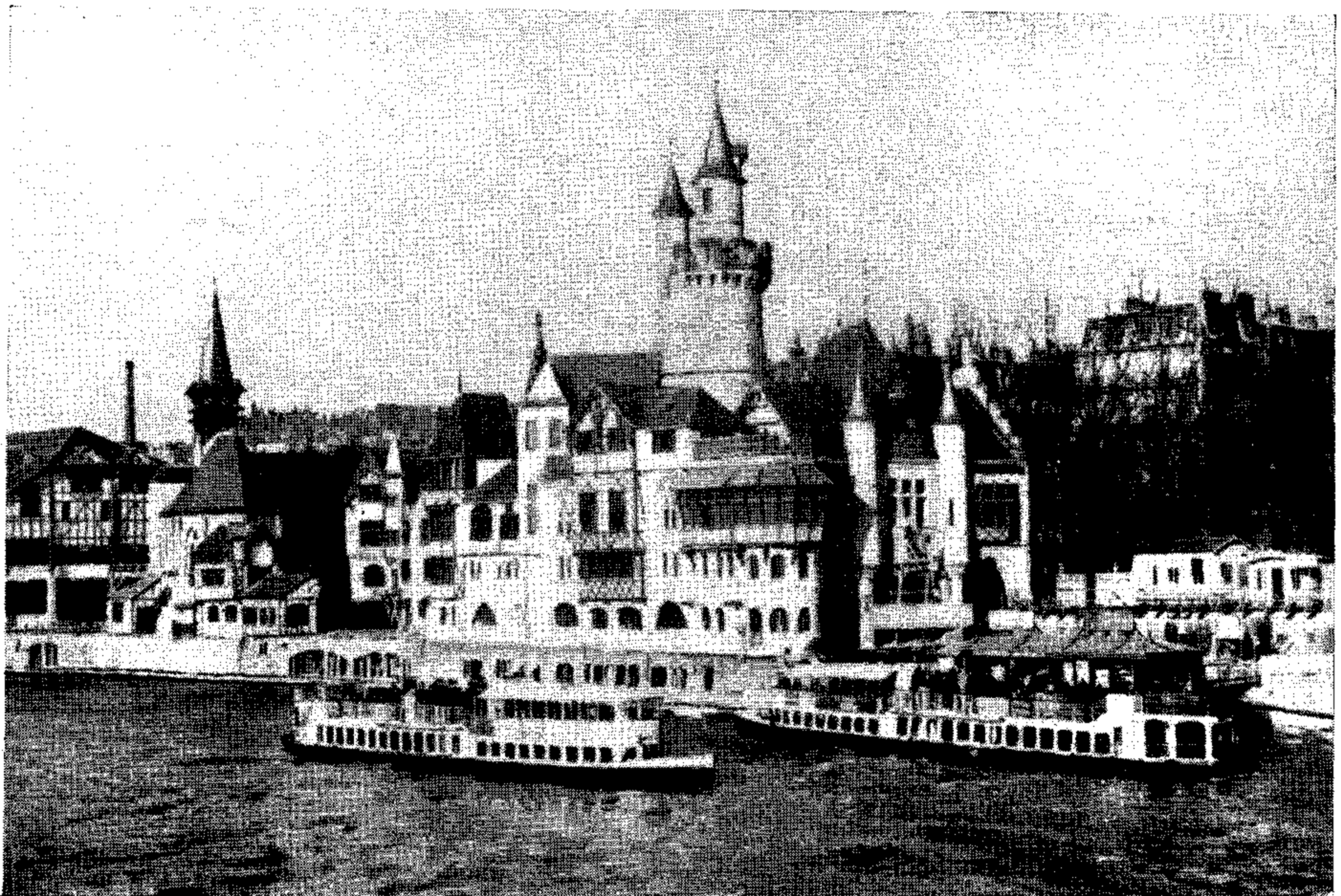
During the week of the celebrations, over 10,000 people, men and women, young and old, visited the Ashrama shrine and offered worship to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda.







1. General View of the Exposition Universelle Internationale, Paris, 1900.



2. Old Paris, referred to by Swami Vivekananda. A reconstruction made for the Exposition, of the Paris of the Middle Ages.



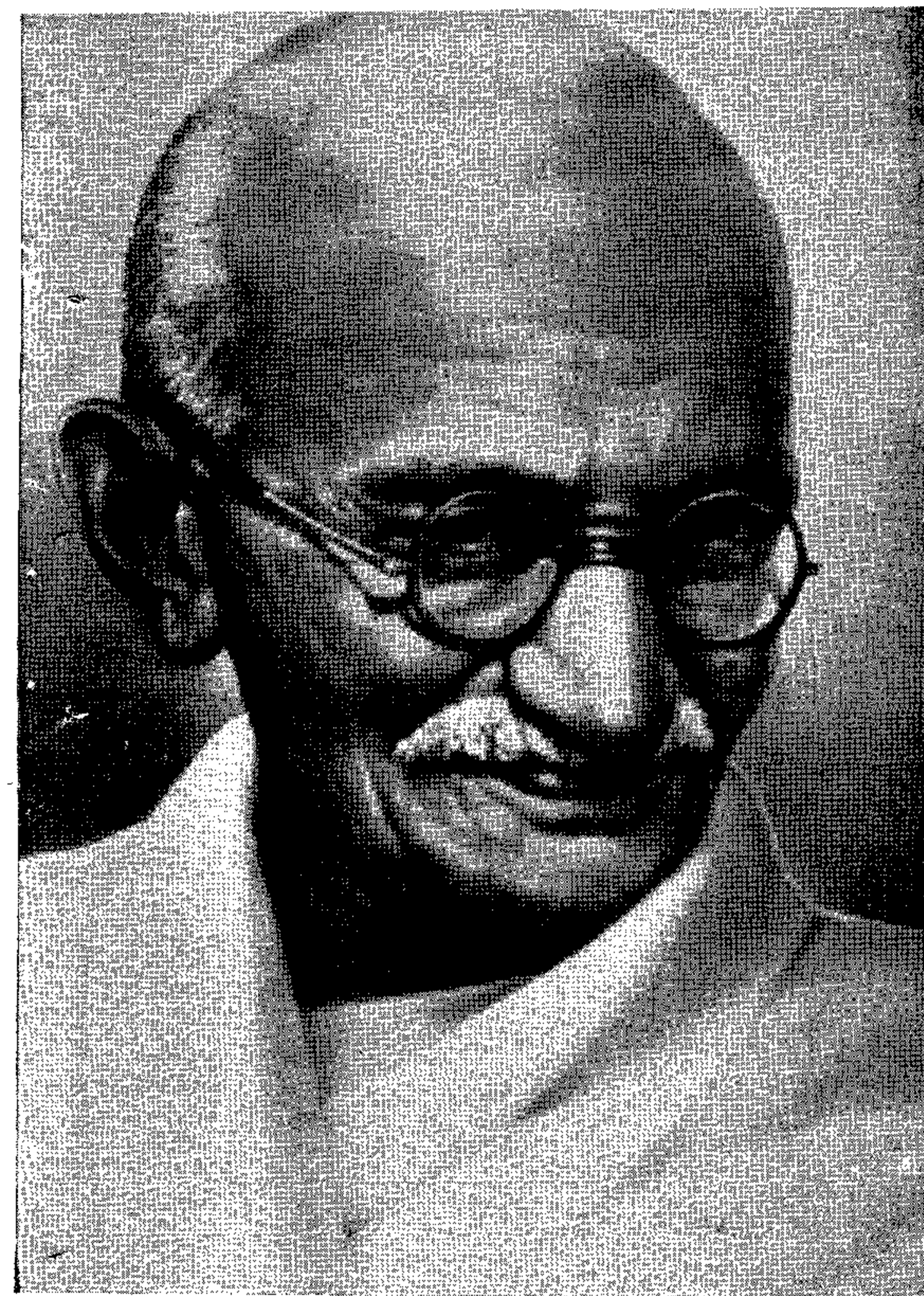
3. Moving sidewalk, Paris Exposition, 1900. The two portions of the sidewalk moved at different speeds, the narrow portion slowly and the wide portion more rapidly. Taking hold of a post to steady himself, the pedestrian stepped first on to the slowly moving strip, thence to the more rapid strip.



4. Palais des Congrès, Paris Exposition of 1900, where the opening and closing sessions of the Congress of the History of Religions were held.



5. The Sorbonne, about 1900.



You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face although the world may look at you with blood-shot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing in you which resides in the heart and says: Forsake friends, wife, all; but testify to that for which you have lived and for which you have to die.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Violence is impractical because the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy ends up leaving everybody blind. This method is wrong. This method is immoral. It is immoral because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for everybody.

MARTIN LUTHER KING

