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Prabuddha Bharata

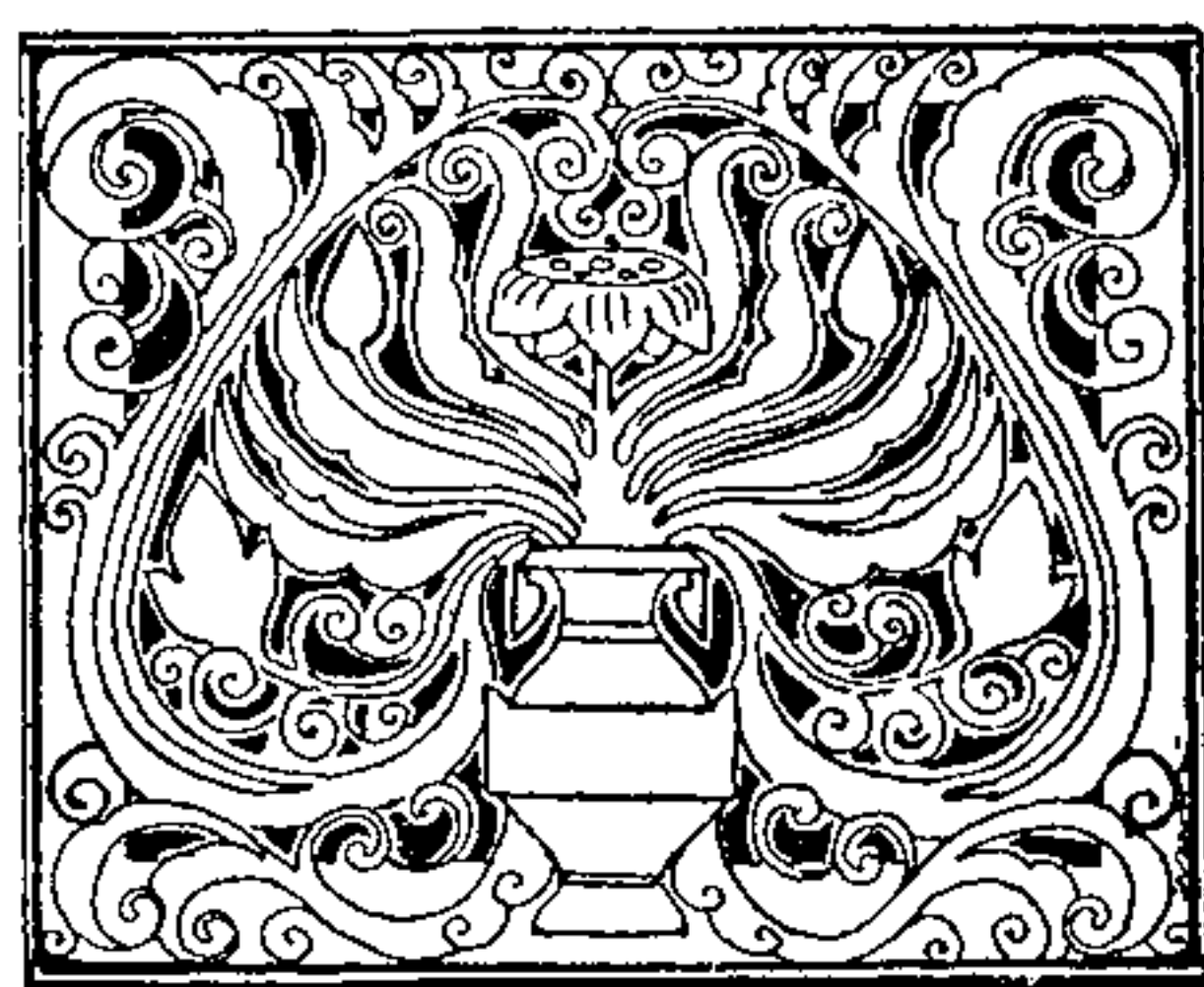
OR

AWAKENED INDIA



ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED





Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

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No. 9

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by a devotee): Can one see God ?

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Yes, *surely*. One can see both aspects of God—God with form and without form. One can see God with form, the Embodiment of Spirit. Again, God can be directly perceived in a man with a tangible form. Seeing an Incarnation of God is the same as seeing God Himself. God is born on earth as man in every age.'

Question (asked by M): Under what conditions does one see God ?

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Cry to the Lord with an intensely yearning heart and you will certainly see Him. People shed a whole jug of tears for wife and children. They swim in tears for money. But who weeps for God ? Cry to Him with a real cry.'

Cry to your Mother Syama with a real cry, O mind !
And how can She hold Herself from you ?
How can Syama stay away ?
How can your Mother Kali hold Herself away ?

O mind, if you are in earnest, bring Her an offering
Of bel-leaves and hibiscus flowers,
Lay at Her feet your offering
And with it mingle the fragrant sandal-paste of Love.

'Longing is like the rosy dawn. After the dawn, out comes the sun. Longing is followed by the vision of God.

'God reveals Himself to a devotee who feels drawn to Him by the combined force of these three attractions: the attraction of worldly possessions for the worldly man, the child's attraction for its mother, and the husband's attraction for the chaste wife. If one feels drawn to Him by the combined force of these three attractions, then through it one can attain Him.

'The point is, to love God even as the mother loves her child, the chaste wife her husband, and the worldly man his wealth. Add together these three

forces of love, these three powers of attraction, and give it all to God. Then you will certainly see Him.

'It is necessary to pray to Him with a longing heart. The kitten knows only how to call its mother, crying, "Mew, mew!" It remains satisfied wherever its mother puts it. And the mother cat puts the kitten sometimes in the kitchen, sometimes on the floor, and sometimes on the bed. When it suffers, it cries only, "Mew, mew!" That's all it knows. But as soon as the mother hears this cry, wherever she may be, she comes to the kitten.'

Question (asked by M): When one sees God does one see Him with these eyes ?

Sri Ramakrishna: 'God cannot be seen with these physical eyes. In the course of spiritual discipline one gets a "love body", endowed with "love eyes", "love ears", and so on. One sees God with those "love eyes". One hears the voice of God with those "love ears". One even gets a sexual organ made of love.'

At these words M. burst out laughing. Sri Ramakrishna continued, unannoyed, 'With this "love body" the soul communes with God.'

M. again became serious.

'But this is not possible without intense love of God. One sees nothing but God everywhere when one loves Him with great intensity. It is like a person with jaundice, who sees everything yellow. Then one feels, "I am verily He."

'A drunkard, deeply intoxicated, says, "Verily I am Kali!" The gopis, intoxicated with love, exclaimed, "Verily I am Krishna!"

'One who thinks of God, day and night, beholds Him everywhere. It is like a man's seeing flames on all sides after he has gazed fixedly at one flame for some time.'

'But that isn't the real flame", flashed through M.'s mind. Sri Ramakrishna, who could read a man's inmost thought, said: 'One doesn't lose consciousness by thinking of Him who is all Spirit, all Consciousness. Shivanath once remarked that too much thinking about God confounds the brain. Thereupon I said to him, "How can one become unconscious by thinking of Consciousness?"'

Question (asked by a devotee): What is the vision of God like ?

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Haven't you seen a theatrical performance? The people are engaged in conversation, when suddenly the curtain goes up. Then the entire mind of the audience is directed to the play. The people don't look at other things any longer. Samadhi is to go within oneself like that. When the curtain is rung down, people look around again. Just so, when the curtain of maya falls, the mind becomes externalized.'

Question (asked by Brahma devotee): What are the means by which one can see God ?

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Can you weep for Him with intense longing of heart? Men shed a jugful of tears for the sake of their children, for their

wives, or for money. But who weeps for God? So long as the child remains engrossed with its toys, the mother looks after her cooking and her household duties. But when the child no longer relishes the toys, it throws them aside and yells for its mother. Then the mother takes the rice-pot down from the hearth, runs in haste, and takes the child in her arms.'

DYNAMISM COUPLED WITH SERENITY

EDITORIAL

I

From the moment we are up in the morning till we go to roost we are consciously in the sphere of action. No sooner are we awake than our eyelids open presenting the panorama of objects to our view, the ears become receptive to sounds, the limbs begin their movement and the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing commence their course. We are engaged for the whole day, each in his own way. First and foremost every one attends to the physical needs; the body claims legitimately—and we delight in giving it—a good deal of our consideration and care. The claim is justifiable to the extent of keeping it healthy and fit for work. But what happens generally is that a man identifies himself with it so much that he dotes and puts a high premium on it, all his pleasures and hopes are centred in it. Nothing is more detestable to him than the thought of death and so he strains every nerve to keep life going. The deep-seated longing for continued living, rather eternal life, is ingrained in every man.

For the present every day is a day of hectic activity—physical, vocational, intellectual, cultural, social, economic and political. At no time in the history of humanity is it more complicated and problematic than today. Modern man is on the move with

frightful rapidity as if mounted on an unmanageable merry-go-round swirling at dashing speed. What is the motive behind this drive? His incessant activities are directed towards the acquisition of wealth, fame, power and objects of enjoyment. In the ultimate analysis joy, unending joy, is what everyone seeks. This search for unmixed happiness is the motive force for the moves that he makes in any department of life.

Besides, he wants knowledge, more knowledge, infinite knowledge. For what? To have control, power over nature; to gain freedom from the fetters of nature. We vehemently resent limitation of any kind. Deep within us is imbedded the desire for freedom; all our endeavours to acquire knowledge are but an expression of our yearning for liberation from the least tinge of ignorance. Realm after realm we conquer, braving storms and sacrificing even pet notions if they are proved wrong, with a view to attaining mastery over everything, near and far. There is no man but has an innate thirst for knowledge, indwelling craving for freedom, total freedom. Various liberation movements, and individuals' resistance to any type of coercion or bondage, are manifestations of this instinctive urge for unfettered freedom.

Thus, behind all our acts, thoughts and

feelings, there is an inherent urge for eternal life, unmixed happiness and unfettered freedom. The crucial question that arises is whether we could ever have fulfilment of it in the world even after all our trials and tribulations, spectacular successes and achievements. Death shows no discrimination in levelling beings, great or small; it lays its icy hand on master and servant alike. Mighty movements and empires crumble before the relentless march of time. Every one is born, it is obvious, on condition that he should quit the world however reluctantly, when the call of death comes. A little experience brings home to us that our search for unalloyed happiness is a wild-goose chase. From time immemorial man has left no stone unturned to get sorrowless joy, only to meet with utter failure. It is in the very nature of pleasure to be mixed with or accompanied by pain. How unstable is freedom? One moment we feel we have attained full freedom, but alas, the next moment gives the lie to it when we find ourselves in the grip of forces thwarting it.

This analysis may seem lop-sided, placing undue weight on the scale of pessimism; it may even be indicted on the charge of robbing one of incentive for action. However, a discerning mind will consider it as neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but as bare truth, sheer statement of fact as experienced by man all through for countless ages. Its validity is acknowledged by men of sound experience rather than youths to whom the world is a glittering, golden glow. Both the optimistic and pessimistic doctrines tend to deprive one of objectivity and right perspective. To gain objectivity what is needed is perception of the actual facts uncoloured by prejudice, passion or personal opinion. An appraisal of the world as it impinges on ourselves, our senses and intellect, and as we confront it in everyday life, sets us in proper perspective. We shall then comprehend everything in its relative position

and dimension, being neither overwhelmed by its glamour nor disheartened by its distractions. The world will cease to cheat or enchant us any more and we shall grow wise enough to be neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Consequently our thoughts and actions will be imbued with a balanced outlook born of perspicacious perception and shorn of fanaticism or feverish frenzy.

Evidently the world we live in is a strange amalgam of life and death, joy and sorrow, freedom and bondage. None can escape from the jaws of death; pleasure and pain are the lot of every one. Such being the facts of life, what is the meaning of our inner prompting for deathless life and sorrowless joy? Should we abandon our fond hopes for eternity and infinity, regarding them as meaningless cant? Is there not the Self which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute? On these fundamental spiritual questions the sciences are understandably incompetent to enlighten us. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna :

'The *ṛṣis* directly realized the Self. One cannot know the truth about God through science. Science gives us information only about things perceived by the senses, as for instance: this material mixed with that material gives such and such a result, and that material mixed with this material gives such and such a result. For this reason a man cannot comprehend spiritual things with his ordinary intelligence. To understand them he must live in the company of holy persons.'¹

So we have to turn to the sages and saints who have delved deep into the meaning of life and experienced the reality of Brahman—the Self of the universe including man. Their wisdom is enshrined in the scriptures. Harken to the story of the sage Bhṛgu's experiential knowledge of

¹ 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1944, p. 355.

Brahman, as recorded in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (III. 6. 1) : 'He knew that Bliss is Brahman. For truly beings are born of Bliss ; having been born, they are sustained by Bliss ; they move towards and merge in Bliss.' The same Upaniṣad (II. 7. 1) enlightens us on the source of joy : 'He who is self-creator (Brahman) is verily the source of joy. For a man experiences happiness by getting that source of joy. Who indeed could breathe, who could live if this Bliss did not exist in his heart ? This one indeed enlivens (people).' Here is a highly hopeful, redeeming and transforming answer—an answer that knocks the bottom out of our littleness, sorrows and frustrations. Bliss—infinite Bliss of Brahman—is our very nature. We are born of It, sustained by It, move towards and merge in It. We could not have breathed or lived but for It. The little joy that we enjoy through our senses and intellect in the world reflects very hazily and meagrely the immeasurable Bliss of Brahman. Our inner urge for unending happiness is but indicative of the eternal Bliss of Brahman. By the same token it is manifest that our secret longing for deathlessness is an intimation of the immortality of Brahman. It is therefore suicidal to stifle or silence our longing for eternity or infinity with respect to life, happiness, freedom and fearlessness simply because it is not feasible of fulfilment through the senses or intellect. What is needed is an accentuation or deepening of the longing in the direction of Brahman together with making determined efforts to follow Its trail until realization of Brahman in this human life is a *fait accompli*.

II

A doubt might creep in: Brahman was realized by sages in the Upaniṣadic age. But is this possible in this age? Has anyone in modern times himself realized It and shown the path for men like us living in the

workaday world and shouldering the heavy and complex burdens peculiar to our time? As if in anticipation of this question and motivated by sincere solicitude for our welfare, Sri Ramakrishna, of the modern period of history, not only realized Brahman but also dedicated the rest of his life to disseminating the diverse ways suited to our age. It is an interesting and edifying story how he became identified with Brahman and absorbed in that Bliss, believe it or not, for six months; how after that he forwent the unitive experience and came down in order to share the spiritual treasures with others; how he moved in the streets of Calcutta, the then metropolis of India, and brought home to the people the simple, spiritual paths relevant to present-day conditions, actuated by no other desire than to do good to the world. He breathed in God, moved in God and lived in God; he knew nothing but God. His life is indeed a luminous evidence of the validity of the spiritual verities even today. Armed with the authority born of his own experiments and experiences in the field of religion, his words of wisdom shed new light on the scriptural statements.

However, what is of relevance to us is Sri Ramakrishna's deep love and concern for man as is evidenced by his coming down from his transcendental state to our mundane level, drawing our attention to our divine destiny and inspiring us to move forward and onward to the supreme goal of God-realization, regardless of however low and undeserving we might consider ourselves to be. Although he is no more physically with us, his ambrosial words live on imbued with the same concern, power and relevance as when they were uttered less than a century ago. They have a modern bearing and universal dimension. Some of his profound utterances are set down with a fidelity comparable to that of Boswell. But to get the benefit of his delightful dis-

coveries, of his deeds of dedication, and of the deep but broad significance of his life and message, we have to listen to those persons who constantly lived with him and whom he trained to continue his mission for global welfare.

Among them Swami Vivekananda is specially gifted to understand Sri Ramakrishna. For the Swami himself admits, 'Sri Ramakrishna lived that great life; and I read the meaning.'² We have on record how Sri Ramakrishna transmitted power to Swami Vivekananda. To quote the latter's words:

'Two or three days before his leaving the body, he called me to his side one day, and asking me to sit before him, looked steadfastly at me and fell into *samādhi*. Then I really felt that a subtle force like an electric shock was entering my body! In a little while I also lost outward consciousness and sat motionless. How long I stayed in that condition I do not remember; when consciousness returned I found Sri Ramakrishna shedding tears. On questioning him, he answered me affectionately, "Today, giving you my all, I have become a beggar. With this power you are to do many works for the world's good before you will return." I feel that that power is constantly directing me to this or that work. This body has not been made for remaining idle.'³

As Sri Ramakrishna's able follower, Swami Vivekananda is indeed best fitted to interpret and diffuse the scriptural truths in the light of the Master's all-embracing and many-sided message to present-day humanity.

An example may be cited to illustrate Swami Vivekananda's insight into the import of Sri Ramakrishna's words. Some-

time in 1884 Sri Ramakrishna was explaining the essence of the doctrine of Vaiṣṇava religion to the devotees in his room. In the course of the talk, no sooner had he uttered the words 'compassion for all beings', than he went into *samādhi*. Regaining partial consciousness, he said, 'How foolish to talk of compassion! Man is an insignificant worm crawling on the earth—and he to show compassion to others! This is absurd. No, no; not compassion but service to man, recognizing him to be the veritable manifestation of God!'

Of those who listened to those words, Swami Vivekananda alone could fathom the meaning and comprehend the new light Sri Ramakrishna threw on the topic; for when he came out of the room, he said:

'Ah! What a wonderful light have I got today from the Master's words! In synthesizing the Vedantic knowledge, which was generally regarded as dry, austere and even cruel, with sweet devotion to the Lord, what a new mellowed means of experiencing the Truth has he revealed today! In order to attain the non-dual knowledge, one, we have been told so long, will have to renounce the world and the company of men altogether, retire to the forest, and mercilessly uproot and throw away love, devotion and other soft and tender emotions from the heart. Formerly when the *sādhaka* (spiritual aspirant) used to try to attain that knowledge in the old way, he used to regard the whole universe and each person in it as obstacles on the path of religion and, contracting, therefore, a hatred for them, he more often than not used to go astray. But from what the Master in *bhāvasamādhi* said today, it is gathered that the Vedanta of the forest can be brought to human habitation and it can be applied in practice to the workaday world. Let man do every thing he is doing; there is no harm in that; it is sufficient for him, first, to be fully convinced that it is God that exists, manifested before him as the universe and all the beings in it. Those, with whom he comes in contact every

² Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. VIII, 1959, p. 267.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, 1963, pp. 206-7.

moment of his life, whom he loves, respects and honours, to whom his sympathy and kindness flow, are all His parts—are all He Himself. If he can thus look upon all the persons of the world as Śiva, how can there be an occasion for him to regard himself as superior to them or cherish anger and hatred for them or an arrogant attitude to them, yes, or to be even kind to them? Thus serving the *jīvas* as Śiva, he will have his heart purified and be convinced in a short time that he himself is also a part of *Īśvara*, the eternally pure, awake and free, and bliss absolute.

‘We get a great light on the path of devotion too from those words of the Master. Until he sees God in all beings, the *sādhaka* has not the remotest chance of realizing true transcendental devotion. If the devout *sādhaka* serves the *jīvas* as Śiva or Nārāyaṇa, he, it is superfluous to say, will see God in all, attain true devotion and have the aim of his life fulfilled in a short time. Those *sādhakas* who adopt the Yoga of action or the royal road to the realization of God, will also get great light from those words. For, as embodied beings can never rest for a moment without doing work, it goes without saying that it is only the work of the service of *jīvas* as Śiva that should be performed and action done in that spirit will enable them to reach the Goal sooner than otherwise. If the divine Lord ever grants me an opportunity, I’ll proclaim everywhere in the world this wonderful truth I have heard today.’⁴

This lucid exposition explains not only how to render service but also how to practise Vedanta while attending to the duties and responsibilities of life, and how to realize God under modern conditions.

III

By virtue of his realization of Brahman, Sri Ramakrishna had the knowledge of the non-dual Self and experience of the indivi-

⁴ Swami Saradananda: *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, Tr. by Swami Jagadananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1952, pp. 821-22.

sible, infinite Bliss. It is in itself an education for us to observe how he reacted to beings in ignorance and folly. An instance will suffice. On the day when grass-cutters were permitted to take away grass from the spacious garden at Dakshineswar temple free of charge, an old man cut so much grass out of avarice that it was beyond his power to lift the load, let alone his capacity to carry it. Sri Ramakrishna watched the miserable plight of the indigent grass-cutter in his vain attempts many a time to lift the big bundle on his head. His folly drew the remark from Sri Ramakrishna: ‘Ah, the Self, the knowledge infinite, abides within and so much foolishness and ignorance without!’ Behind the veil of ignorance without, it was the Self, the infinite knowledge within, that was revealed to Sri Ramakrishna.

Immortal bliss is the birthright, the essence, of every man. It is indeed derogatory to the dignity of man if oblivious of it he binds himself down and makes himself miserable under some plea or other. Sri Ramakrishna deplores the unwisdom of the individual soul—which stands on the threshold of Divine bliss—to allow itself to fall into the trap of *Māyā*. He illustrates this by means of a simile:

‘At the doors of large granaries are placed traps containing fried rice (*moori*) to catch mice. The mice, attracted by the flavour of the fried rice, forget the more solid pleasure of tasting the rice inside the granary, and fall into the trap. They are caught therein and killed. Just so is the case with the soul. It stands on the threshold of Divine bliss, which is like millions of the highest worldly pleasures solidified into one; but instead of striving for that bliss, it allows itself to be enticed by the petty pleasures of the world and falls into the trap of *Māyā*, the great illusion, and dies therein.’⁵

⁵ *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1938, p. 29.

To avert this spiritual death, he instructs us: 'Meditate upon the Knowledge and the Bliss Eternal, and you will have Bliss. The Bliss is indeed eternal. Only it is covered and obscured by ignorance.'⁶ Mark that the Bliss is all the while there, but hidden to the spiritually blind. The object of religion is, negatively, just to unveil It and positively, to be aware of It. The man who does so, realizes the Bliss Eternal, while he who does not, invites mundane misery mixed with joy evanescent. 'The soul enchained is man, but when free from the chain (Māyā), it is the Lord'⁷ is another saying of Sri Ramakrishna. It means that man is divine; he realizes God—his own higher Reality—when freed from the fetters that bind him. His life has meaning and purpose to the extent that he makes the manly endeavour to break the bonds and manifest his divine potentiality. So avers Sri Ramakrishna, 'He is born in vain who having attained the human birth, so difficult to get, does not attempt to realize God in this very life.'⁸

IV

In this age of staggering speed and space travel, one runs the risk of being thrown about and smashed to pieces if one is devoid of poise and, what is more important, peace of mind. Where should we seek for peace—the peace that passeth understanding and produces poise? Are we to climb mountain tops covered by shining snow, or plumb the ocean bed, battling with voracious sharks? Is it in churches or scriptures? The following lines written by Swami Vivekananda give a clue:

O'er hill and dale and mountain range,
In temple, church, and mosque,
In Vedas, Bible, Al Koran
I had searched for Thee in vain. ...

A flash illumined all my soul;
The heart of my heart opened wide.
O joy, O bliss, what do I find!
My love, my love, you are here,
And you are here, my love, my all!⁹

It is not there, but here, in the heart of one's heart. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. ii. 12-13) reveals the truth: 'Eternal happiness is for those—and not for others—who are discriminating and who realize in their hearts Him—who being one, the controller, and the inner Self of all—makes a single form multifarious. Eternal peace is for those—and not for others—who are discriminating and who realize in their hearts Him who—being the eternal among the ephemeral, the consciousness among the conscious—alone dispenses the desired objects to many.' The perennial peace is perceived in their hearts as the Self, as the inner Self of all.

It then follows that centred in the Self—all-pervading and unshakeable—a man can whirl at whizzing speed without fear of falling and can meet the complex situations of modern life with ease and equanimity. With his whole being delighting in Brahman, such a man is a shining example of intense activity coupled with profound serenity. He is the Yogī portrayed by the dynamic but deeply calm personality Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (IV. 18): 'He who even while doing action can keep his mind calm, and in whom even when not doing any outward action, flows the current of activity in the form of contemplation of Brahman, is the intelligent one among men; he indeed is the Yogī; he indeed is the perfect worker.'

If the ideal of the dashing, death-defying dynamism of our space age is to be meaningful and creative, it needs to have its roots in Self-knowledge marked by unperturbed peace, unbounded bliss and unfettered freedom.

⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

⁹ Swami Vivekananda: op. cit., Vol. VII 1963, pp. 448-49.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

AUM

Ramakrishna Sevashrama
Kankhal P.O.
May 18, 1914

My dear—

I duly received your letter of the 16th Vaisakha.¹

... Nothing can score off the *Prārabdha Karma*², but undoubtedly it is wiser to think of God instead of paying overmuch attention to what happens to the body. We have heard and seen Sri Ramakrishna saying—‘Let affliction and the body know their affairs, O my mind, you stay in bliss,’ that is to say, if the disease of the body causes you suffering, be not fitful on that account. The suffering of the body will follow its own course. But you stay in bliss, in other words, fix your mind on God, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, without being concerned about the body. Let what is to happen to the body happen, but on that account do not forget God.

May we also be able to tread this path shown by him and become blessed : this is our earnest prayer to him. ...

Sri Turiyananda

¹First month of the Bengali calendar.

²Action done in a previous life which has begun to bear fruit in the present life.

From

Prabuddha Bharata

75 Years Ago

ŚUKA AND THE STEAM ENGINE OR THE WORLD'S PROGRESS

Let us fancy, and fancying has been our work ever since the world began, that the great rishi Śuka comes back to our midst to have a look at the nineteenth century civilization. Doubtless, there would be much which he could not make out, much which he, in his good old days, would not have even dreamt of. Especially, if he go to England or America, he will see things

which, if he were an ordinary man, might boundlessly excite his curiosity and interest. The busy steamships ploughing the main, the busier traffic of nations, the huge workshops and manufactories which form a leading feature of the modern day world, electric trains, telegraphs, telephones, talking machines and other vast and wonderful inventions and contrivances of the age—What will Śuka think of these? Supposing he is led to one of the great industrial exhibitions of the day, will he not get stupefied with wonder? The answer is, ‘Not likely.’ All the machines and manufactories of the world and all the wonderful inventions of the age will hardly succeed in eliciting from him a word of surprise, and if an enthusiastic Locksley speak to him of the fairy tales of Science, and spread before him the vision of the wonders that would

be—'heavens filling with commerce, argosies of magic sails—pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales' and 'the parliament of man and the federation of the world,' he might smile and say, 'What if these be? These are no wonders; you are but children.' Even if all the stars in heaven were made by the sheer might of man to shine in the day, and he were enabled to cross from Mars to Venus and from Venus to Mercury as easily as from one room of a house to another,—nay, even if he were enabled to make a million new stars and launch them all into space, it is not likely that the philosophic calmness of our Śuka would be disturbed with curiosity or wonder. Ask him if the world has not become better than it was in old days, and he would laugh and say, 'What do you take the world to be? It is the Supreme Self, the Ātman, changeless and eternal, shining through a vast variety of conditions (*Upādhis*), created by Māyā (energy). Māyā is constant and so your world neither grows nor decays. But this Māyā, these *Upādhis*, and this world are only the dreams of the ignorant. To the wise all that is is God: all that is is God.'

What could Śuka mean? The Upanishads say:—

He who dwelling in the earth is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who within rules the earth is thy soul, the Inner Ruler, immortal.

He who dwelling in the waters is within the waters, whom the waters do not know, whose body are the waters, who within rules the waters is thy soul, the Inner Ruler, immortal.

He who dwelling in the fire is within the fire, whom the fire does not know, whose body is the fire, who within rules the fire is thy soul, the Inner Ruler, immortal.

* * *

It is one and the same Self that is in the earth, in the waters, in the fire, in the man,

in the stone and in the animal, but it is in them under extremely different conditions. Man is different from the animal as such, the animal is different from the stone as such, the wind is different from fire as such, but as pure Existence man, animal, stone, wind, fire are all one. All things that are, have *ipso facto* this element of Existence, and this Existence is not a mere dead one, for the whole world is instinct and bristling with life. The stone that lies as dead is not really so; it has a life and a consciousness peculiar to itself. It is this underlying existence, this ultimate inner life and consciousness pervading all through the universe, which is called the Self. Under certain conditions, (*Upādhis* as they are called in Sanskrit) it appears as a man, under others as a stone, under others as a beast, under others as a star, and so on. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'As a man you are separate from the woman, as a human being you are one with the woman. As a man you are separate from the animal, but as living being, the man, the woman, the animal, the plant are all one: and as existence, you are one with the whole universe. That existence is God, the ultimate unity in this universe; in Him we are all one.' This common unity manifests itself in an infinite variety of conditions, and forms what is called the universe. All the endless differences which we see are differences only of conditions, of circumstances. Indeed, the world is nothing but a mass of conditions superimposed upon the Self, and creation means nothing more than the superimposition of these conditions, or, to speak from a different standpoint, the manifestation of these conditions.

[Speaking of today it is equally doubtful if Śuka would utter a word of surprise on today's wonders: moon-flight, synthesis of gene or eighteen days in heaven. —Ed.]

(Excerpts from the Editorial of Sept. 1896).



WHAT
INSPIRES ME
MOST IN
HOLY
MOTHER'S
LIFE

SWAMI PARAHITANANDA

Holy Mother's life is extraordinary. As an historical event it is extraordinary. But for the moment I am not referring to its singularity in large. Why is it extraordinary as an example of holy life, considered apart from its role in the Sri Ramakrishna *līlā* (divine play)?

It is extraordinary because it is so ordinary. One is reminded of Caussade's illuminating words in speaking of certain of those who are called by God to live in the state of perfect self-abandonment:

'... Their life, though most extraordinary in its perfection, shows nothing exteriorly except what is quite ordinary and common: they fulfil the duties of religion and of their state; others apparently do the same. Examine them in other matters; there is nothing striking or peculiar; only ordinary things happen to them. What distinguishes them is not perceptible to the senses; it is the dependence on the supreme will in which they live which seems to arrange everything for them. This will keeps them always masters of themselves through the habitual submission of their hearts.'¹

In such a life as Holy Mother's—

'The ordinary becomes extraordinary,

and this is why nothing seems extraordinary. For this path [of utter self-abandonment] in itself is extraordinary and it is quite unnecessary to adorn it with irrelevant marvels. It is itself a miracle, a revelation, ... but it is a miracle which, while it renders marvellous all our everyday life of the senses, has nothing in itself that is marvellous to the senses.'²

How, in Mother's life, does the ordinary become extraordinary? In two ways, I suggest. The first way is within the context in which her life is seen as a human life, albeit a holy one. Here we can find the answer for ourselves if we ask the further question, what is truly extraordinary? The Divine alone is truly extraordinary. Hence, when the divine will is seen equally in all the events and duties of every moment, those events and duties, whether normal or not are transfigured. They become, to the inward eye extraordinary, even though to the outward eye ordinary, because they are now shot through with the Divine. The transfiguration lies in the seeing. The precondition for this seeing of the divine plan in every movement of life is that we have made God 'our very own', to use one of Holy Mother's favourite phrases. This, she tells

¹ *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*, translated by Algar Thorold, Burns and Oates, London, 1959, pp. 61-62.

² *Ibid.* p. 104.

us, comes about through persevering practice of being immersed in loving thought of God. Formal practices like repeating the name of God are necessary for preparing the mind, making it suitable soil for the love of God to grow in.

With what shall we see the divine action in the circumstances of the present moment? Can it be seen only with the eye of full illumination? No, I do not believe so. It is seen with the eye of faith (*viśvās*) also.

At first sight, to say this seems to contradict what Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Is not faith wholly "blind"? What then are its eyes? Say either "faith" or "knowledge".'³ But there is no contradiction if we do not lift his comment out of the situation which occasioned it. We are justified in speaking of seeing with the eye of faith provided it is made clear that we are not using 'seeing' in its ordinary senses. When we see with the eye of faith we do not see anything clearly at all. It is a seeing and knowing that is not ordinary seeing and knowing.

Then why speak at all of seeing and knowing by faith? Why confuse the matter? The fact is that it is a confused matter. Though when we see and know by faith, we do not see and know in the empirical sense, yet we have certainty. It is not a non-cognitive state. When Sri Ramakrishna contrasted faith with knowledge, he contrasted it with empirical or ordinary knowledge. But that faith was opposed to spiritual knowledge he certainly did not teach, as shown by his remark: 'Knowledge relating to God keeps pace with faith. Where there is little faith, it is idle to look for much knowledge.'⁴

Let us continue on this line a little

longer; for we cannot go far, when confronted with Holy Mother's life, without needing to speak of faith (*viśvās*). A master of devotional psychology, St. John of the Cross, says of faith that it has to do with truths—

'revealed by God Himself, which transcend all natural light, and exceed all human understanding, beyond all proportion. Hence it follows that for the soul, this excessive light of faith which is given to it is thick darkness, for it overwhelms greater things and does away with small things, even as the light of the sun overwhelms all other lights whatsoever, so that when it shines and disables our visual faculty they appear not to be lights at all... Even so the light of faith by its excessive greatness, oppresses and disables that of the understanding...'⁵

Now let us notice the consistency of this with a striking remark made by Swami Vivekananda at Thousand Island Park. First he says: 'Faith is not belief'; meaning that faith is a matter of certainty, not of thinking that something is probably so. Then he goes on: faith '*is the grasp on the Ultimate, an illumination*'.⁶ A 'grasp on the Ultimate' and 'an illumination' obviously involve knowledge of some kind, even though not of a normal kind; but, as St. John of the Cross has implied, so long as our measure of knowledge is what the senses and understanding reveal, this illumination of faith is thick darkness.

These considerations suggest that we may not be on the right track if we insist on too definite a distinction between seeing the ordinary as extraordinary with the eye of spiritual illumination, and seeing the ordinary as extraordinary with the eye of

⁵ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, translated by E. Allison Peers, Image Books, New York, 1958, p. 82.

⁶ *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, Vol. VII (1964), p. 60, (Italics the writer's.)

³ *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1949, Saying No. 495

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 500.

faith—since faith itself is a kind of illumination. To recall what was said earlier, it is because the ordinary is seen as ordained by God in every detail and at every moment, that it becomes extraordinary. And as it is God who has ordained it—whether this be known clearly by illumination or obscurely by faith—it must be the best thing for us; since we also know by the same illumination or faith, as the case may be, that God's only design is to make us feel that He is our own, that He is our very being.

With this knowledge will necessarily go love. If the duties and trials of the moment are the best thing for us, the best means for our own purification of mind, there is reason for loving them. Everything is for the best when we look at it in this light. And if everything without distinction is a means for the best, everything is a means of joy.

This last is difficult to swallow. But thinking on these lines we can begin to see how, beneath all the ordinariness and vexation of her daily life, Holy Mother could have peace and joy, and be a source of peace and joy, and knowledge to others. From her example we can begin to see where the sure, short road to our own spiritual development lies: not so much in seeking extraordinary spiritual states—greatly to be prized as they may be should we be blessed with them—, not so much these as in lovingly fulfilling the duties of our state and humbly accepting troubles as they come to us from moment to moment—knowing that, because they come from God, they must be the infallible means for the removal of the specific defects which beset our particular psychical make-up. To write of Holy Mother's natural, but none the less exemplary, practice of this attitude always and everywhere, is easy: to follow it ourselves is not.

Lastly, let me make brief reference to the second way in which, in Holy Mother's life, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Of this it is difficult to write; and to speak of following her in this is meaningless, for here we have to do with the superhuman. Yet something should be said to compensate for having treated of her life, or more exactly, of a phase of it, as though hers were the life of a saint—one who achieved liberation by her own efforts, under the grace of God.

The reader who has studied Mother's life, or who simply has devotion to her, will probably have guessed what I am going to refer to. It comes to this. If Holy Mother was Mother Kālī Herself; if she was indeed the Divine Mother of the Universe who had freely, of Her own mercy, covered Herself with Her own māyā—then all the adversities and actions of her life, however ordinary, must have been extraordinary. For in them the Divine directly involved Itself and engaged Itself. What the meaning of it all is, we do not know. It is entirely beyond understanding. If we are responsive in the matter at all, the appropriate response is one of faith. If we do make this response, it is because our grasp on the Infinite is equal to the challenge. The Infinite in that event comprising the life of Holy Mother, calls to the Infinite in us. It meets with a response if the Infinite in us is not too thickly covered by Māyā; in other words, if a certain threshold of single-mindedness has been reached.

How is what has just been said related to Holy Mother's exemplification of self-surrender, which was discussed in the earlier part of this note?

Given the fact that Holy Mother's life was divine, then her mode of spiritual discipline and life bears the stamp of authority. The Divine chose to be *spiritual* in that simple, hidden way of absolute self-

surrender to God. For that reason it has a special meaning for us today. Let us make no mistake: this is the same way that Sri Ramakrishna himself first practised, and later extolled as appropriate for many people in modern times—the way of spiritual childhood; for that is what Holy Mother's way, the way of self-abandonment, is. Sometimes he changed its outward form but retained its essential feature, as when he taught the way of 'giving the power of attorney'. One can see that this may have been more acceptable to those who were at first too sophisticated to take to the idea of childhood.

* * *

In the foregoing we first took Holy Mother to be a spiritual aspirant like ourselves and found her practising the way of loving self-surrender. The naturalness and inconspicuousness of her practice of it was noticed. The light thrown on certain as-

pects of devotional life was what chiefly concerned us then.

Subsequently we found that Holy Mother could not be fitted into so neat a scheme. Somehow, beyond our understanding, she was what she had surrendered herself to: she was the Divine in a way in which we are not. We can believe that this is a fact revealed directly and immediately by grace to special souls. For the rest of us, if our receiving-set is sensitive enough, it is something to be 'embraced with passionate inwardsness', that is, with faith.

We are thrown back on Sri Ramakrishna's declaration: 'She is Sārādā, Sarasvatī; she has come to impart knowledge.' And 'she is the communicator of the rarest wisdom.' Out of a love and wisdom not to be found in an earthly mother, she has shown us how to be spiritual, how to fulfil our lives, in a way that is practicable for many of us, whatever our native equipment and mode of life.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE BOHEMIANS

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

I

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* defines *avatāra*, i.e. incarnation of God, as follows: Firstly, He re-establishes religion by restoring virtue; secondly, He protects the good; and thirdly, He destroys the wicked. We say that Sri Ramakrishna was an *avatāra*. Then he should have these characteristics. Let us consider them one by one.

It is a well-known fact that the nineteenth century was a period of chaos in the religious history of India. So many religious sects arose and passed into oblivion. Christianity came and tried to replace the traditional life-current of the Hindus

through conversion. Science came with its argumentation against religion and spread faithlessness. The glittering western materialism allured us by presenting its own ideal: 'Eat, drink, and be merry.' Sri Ramakrishna came in that transitional period and successfully established the religion of the age. He showed the harmony among the religions of the world.

Secondly, he protected all—good or bad, pious or sinful, destitute or drunken. For this reason, at a later date, charges were levelled against Sri Ramakrishna. They were: that Sri Ramakrishna 'did not show sufficient moral abhorrence of prostitutes';

and that he did not hate those who were intemperate in their habits etc. Max Müller, the famous western *savant*, refuted conclusively all these charges in the book *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*. On the second accusation, Swami Vivekananda remarked: 'Heaven save the mark!... A formidable accusation, indeed! Why did not the Mahāpuruṣa kick away and drive off in disgust the drunkards, the prostitutes, the thieves, and all the sinners of the world!'¹

Thirdly, somebody may argue: we do not find, in the life of Sri Ramakrishna, that he destroyed the wicked. On the other hand, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, both Incarnations, killed many demons. It is true. We know from the life of Sri Ramakrishna, that he did not utter a single harsh word to anybody. His life was sublime and body frail. To all appearances he did not destroy any demon or wicked person; but he had a wonderful power of eradicating wicked tendencies in others. The subtle is more powerful than the gross. It is very easy to kill a man but very difficult to kill his evil propensities. We see in our own life that it is not very difficult to control our physical movements, but how difficult it is to check passion and anger! So Sri Ramakrishna, instead of killing wicked people, destroyed their evil tendencies. Thus the third condition of the *Gītā* is fulfilled in his life.

II

Now we are going to depict a beautiful and interesting chapter of the life of Sri Ramakrishna. It is fascinating. How that soft-natured fragile man would tackle the terrible Bohemians!

The great actor-dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh was an out and out Bohemian, de-

bauchee, and rebel against God. Sri Ramakrishna's divine power transformed Girish. As a result, that virile, reckless man became just like a lamb and lost his immoral tendencies. Sri Ramakrishna remarked that thenceforth people would be astounded to see the change in him. Once Girish came to see Sri Ramakrishna at Cossipore when the latter was suffering terribly from cancer. Sri Ramakrishna, showing Girish his vomit, which was full of blood and pus, said: 'Just see that (pointing to the vomit). And people tell me I am an *avatār*!' Instantly Girish replied: 'This time even the ants and insects will become free by eating all these things. This is the only cause of your disease.' Casting a tender glance towards all, Sri Ramakrishna remarked: 'See his unsurpassable faith!' Girish, in later life, admitted: 'There is no sin which I have not committed; but still, there is no end to the grace I have received from the Master.'

Surendra Nath Mitra was a drunkard. When he was requested to meet Sri Ramakrishna, he said: 'I can go; but if he speaks nonsense, I shall simply twist his ear.' This man, later, became one of the care-takers of Sri Ramakrishna, and was the first patron of the original Sri Ramakrishna Math at Baranagore.

Sri Ramakrishna's personality was so loving, attractive, free, and unsophisticated that nobody would feel ashamed before him. Even the wives of the Bohemians would come to him and complain against their husbands. Thus, one day the wife of Kalipada Ghosh (popularly known as Dānā Kālī) complained to Sri Ramakrishna about her husband's wanton, sottish, and lavish ways. Sri Ramakrishna felt her agony and pacified the Bohemian's deserted wife with love and affection. He gave his word that her husband would soon be changed; and so indeed was the case. Kalipada was a bosom friend of Girish and

¹ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. IV, 1962, p. 419.

the devotees would call them 'Jagāi and Mādhāi' (the ruffians who persecuted Caitanya and Nityānanda but later were changed into devotees).

One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Kalipada to open his mouth. As soon as he did so, Sri Ramakrishna wrote something on Kalipada's tongue with his finger. Thenceforth a curtain fell on the dark chapter of Kalipada's life. He became a new man. Later, just by uttering the name of Sri Ramakrishna, he would weep out of spiritual emotion. When Girish and Kalipada danced in ecstasy, the devotees would remark that Sri Ramakrishna's touch could make the impossible possible; that now the iron had become gold; and that Jagāi and Madhāi had become gems among the devotees.

III

Now we shall describe another interesting incident in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. It is recorded in Bengali by Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in his memoirs (*Smritikatha*). The English translation is as follows:

Sri Ramakrishna, now and then, used to visit the devotees' houses at Calcutta. One day he went to the house of Yogin-mā (a lady disciple of his) at Nebubagan, Baghbazar. Hiralal, the brother of Yogin-mā, did not like his sister's going to Dakshineswar. We heard that when Yogin-mā invited Thakur (lit. God), i.e. Sri Ramakrishna, to her house, Hiralal brought a famous gymnast and wrestler named Manmatha, of Gosainpara, just to frighten him. How strange! When Manmatha appeared before Sri Ramakrishna and heard one or two words from him, he fell at his feet and told him, weeping: 'My Lord, I am guilty. Please forgive me.' Thakur said: 'All right. Come one day to Dakshineswar.'

I had a close acquaintance with Manmatha. He came and requested me:

'Please accompany me to Dakshineswar. Thakur has told me to go there.' He then fixed a date and we went there by carriage. We took *rasogollā* (sweets) from Nabin Maira (a confectioner) for him.

It will not be irrelevant to say something about Manmatha. I have already said that he was an expert gymnast. He had such strength that, single-handed, he could face a hundred people. Every Saturday, two groups of boys of Vidyasagar's school (Shyambazar Branch) would fight between themselves. One day the Baghbazar group took Manmatha with them. But the other side, i.e. the Shyampukur group, was also very strong, and many of them were wrestlers. When the fight started, Manmatha's companions ran away; so he alone could not withstand such a big group and as a result he fell with his face downwards. The opponents took the poles of their parallel-bars and mercilessly hit him on the back. The Shyampukur group, now pleased with themselves, exclaimed: 'Bravo Manmatha! You have defeated us by receiving such heavy blows. Perhaps there is no one here in Calcutta who could stand up after having got such a terrible beating.'

There was an amateur theatre party at Baghbazar. In *Sarat-Sarojini*, the famous drama which that party used to put on, Manmatha would play the role of a dacoit. When he appeared on the stage with a roar, dressed in a red silk cloth and shaggy wig, the audience would tremble with fear.

At that time, Manmatha was steward of Priya Mitra, the only son of the then famous rich man Kirti Mitra. Manmatha was an out and out Bohemian. He gave up his sacred thread. He would eat forbidden food.

When I took Manmatha to Sri Ramakrishna, he endearingly received him and began to talk with him. I told him: 'Sir, this man is a notorious ruffian and even the gangs of strong boys are frightened of

him. Sometimes he is hired by a big fighting gang.' At this, Thakur touched his body with the second finger and said: 'Hello! Is it a fact? Oh, how hard your body is!'

Thakur heard that Manmatha had given up the sacred thread. So he asked: 'Why don't you wear the sacred thread?' Manmatha replied: 'Sir, I feel uneasy, since it gets soaked with perspiration. So I have given it up.' At this, Thakur told him: 'You wear that sacred thread again.'

Then Thakur took him to the path used for circumambulating the Kālī temple. Standing there in a solitary spot he blessed him and said: 'Come again any Saturday.'

Next time, we went to Thakur by boat. We took *rasogollā* for him as before. That day also Thakur talked with Manmatha. Most probably on both these occasions, we had another companion named Panchanan.

Thus Manmatha went twice to Thakur. Later on, he used to take me now and then to 'Mohan Villa', the palatial house of Priya Mitra. I would go into his bedroom and speak about Sri Ramakrishna. Manmatha was very simple and would sing many songs with devotion. He used to take me in such a way that Priya Mitra might not see me.

He would not speak openly to anybody about the grace which he had received from Sri Ramakrishna. Outwardly nobody could find in him any sign of it. Later I heard from Swami Shivananda in the Uttarakhand (Himalayas) about the unthinkable change effected in Manmatha by the grace of Thakur. Swami Shivananda told me: 'Manmatha used to stay at his maternal uncle's house, near the Siddheswari temple in Baghbazar. While passing through that street, we would stop a while hearing his cry "Mother, Mother". He is now a totally different man. That muscular body is completely broken. His head is covered with bushy hair and that too is

full of lice. When those insects fall from his head, he tries to put them back where they were. You will be astounded to see him now.'

After staying some years in Tibet, in 1890, when I came back to the Baranagore monastery, one afternoon Manmatha appeared there, barefooted, wearing a piece of cloth, and crying with folded hands 'Priyanath, Priyanath!' (O, my Beloved One!). At that time, Swamiji, Swamis Ramakrishnananda, Niranjanananda, Shivananda, Advaitananda, and Abhedananda, were present at the monastery. Then we were singing devotional songs and talking about Thakur. When Manmatha came, Swamiji tried to make him sit on our bed, but he sat on the floor and with folded hands he began to say, 'Priyanath, Priyanath!' Neither did he stop for a single moment nor speak another word.

Then I took him into our shrine and tied some *prasāda* in his cloth with the hem. He refused to take the *prasāda* with his hand, and still repeating 'Priyanath, Priyanath!' he left the Math.

Again after five years, I returned to Bengal. Then our Math had been shifted to Alambazar. The house was two-storied building. It was much bigger and more spacious than the Baranagore Math. It had many rooms. Like the Baranagore Math, the monthly rent was rupees ten only. Nobody dared to rent it, because two young girls had committed suicide there by hanging themselves.

Then Swamis Ramakrishnananda, Premananda, Saradananda, Shivananda, Sachchidananda and Subodhananda, were at the Math. Swami Abhedananda accompanied me from Jaipur to attend the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. After coming to the Math, I saw some new faces. They were all young and educated, and would come to the Math regularly. The

name of one of the boys was Sachindranath Basu. I would be delighted to see his smiling and enthusiastic face.

One day, at the house of Balaram Babu, this boy told me: 'Do you like to see the present condition of your Manmatha?' Then and there I went with him to the house of Manmatha and found that he was gazing towards the sun without blinking. He had no outward consciousness. He was dressed in a *gerua* robe. A white sacred thread was round his neck, and his large body was emaciated owing to severe religious austerities. He was completely indifferent to the outside world.

Seeing the condition of Manmatha, I got a shock. I was also amazed to realize the supernatural power of Sri Ramakrishna. That day I saw that what was not possible to attain through the severe austerities in the forest, could be accomplished by the grace of Thakur, even sitting in a room. As the scripture says: 'To the man of

renunciation, home is a hermitage.' After a few days I heard that Manmatha had died of cholera.

IV

Sri Ramakrishna came and played his divine play. His playmates came from different quarters. His love knew no bounds and his catholicity beggared description. Though his body was frail, he had such divine power that a single touch of his, a single glance, a single word, could turn a brute into a man and a man into a god.

The streams, brooks, canals, and impure drains—all mix with the Holy Gaṅgā. None can desecrate its purity. Sri Ramakrishna was like the Holy Gaṅgā. His spiritual tidal wave flooded all—saints and sinners alike. Those who came into contact with him got purified. Even the Bohemians found manna in the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna.

RELIGION OF MAHATMA GANDHI

DR. A. RAMAMURTY

Gandhi is neither a philosopher of religion, who critically evaluates the various religious concepts and presents them in a systematic and rational manner, nor a prophet with a revelation. He has not written any systematic treatise on religion, nor ever wanted to establish a religion of his own. He has no claims to the discovery of new religious truths. He only wanted to experiment in his own life the age-old truths of religion, to shed thereby new light and understanding on them. His mission in the sphere of religion is to interpret or rather to recreate the real significance of the traditional religious concepts in the light of his

own understanding and experience. He is a simple seeker of truth whose life is a shining example of the struggle to realize the same. His life, as he puts it, is an 'experiment with truth'¹ and it is for the world to draw conclusions from it.

In accordance with his conception of religion, which is comprehensive in its nature, so that no aspect of life can really remain outside the pale of its influence, Gandhi lived every moment of his life an ardent life of religion. As religion is the supreme

¹ Introduction to *Autobiography*, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad, 1940, p. 4.

concern of his life, we find in his life the fullest expression of the same. The influence of religion can be clearly perceived in all his thoughts and actions, to whatever sphere of life they may belong. To understand his religion is then to understand his life. Hence, his views on religion are to be discerned from his speeches and writings on various subjects, and those provide the material for this study.

Advancement of science and the scientific way of thinking helped man to achieve, more than anything, a new awareness of human problems. One such problem is the presence of different religious beliefs, each claiming to be absolute and perfect. This led to the comparative study of religions with the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and respect among different religions of the world. Though he was born and brought up in the Hindu religious tradition, Gandhi came into living contact with other religious traditions, mainly Christianity and Islam, which contributed towards his understanding of his own religion better and also in working for religious harmony.

Besides many factors, such as his early training in the traditions of Vaisnavism, the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy exerted its utmost influence on his religious thinking. Its influence, especially its inward approach to spiritual problems and its teaching of spiritual oneness and equality of all living beings can unmistakably be seen in all his thinking. All these helped Gandhi in developing his own concept of religion, and as a result we see in him a man who has deep respect for all religions without being alienated from his own faith.

True religion, according to Gandhi, is not any one of the several religions of the world, such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, etc. It is the basis of all such religions; the latter are only means to it, as true religion

finds its expression through them.² The different religions of the world are only imperfect revelations of it. What is true religion? It is the passionate search of the soul to find its true nature and also to realize its oneness with God, in realizing which it finds its fullest expression and fulfilment. It is God-realization by way of self-realization. In his own words, true religion is that 'which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within, and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.'³ Religion is thus the supreme concern of man and in attaining its ideal man achieves the highest end of his life.

Knowing God is not an intellectual exercise concerning His nature, attributes etc. It is experiential or intuitional. While not denying the due place of intellect or reason in God-realization, Gandhi is aware of its inherent limitations. Much learning is not religion. One may gain intellectual understanding of religion, but thereby one is not liberated from the bondage of flesh and ignorance. 'Bluster is no religion, nor is vast learning stored in capacious brains—the seat of religion is the heart.'⁴

Although true religion is one, beyond all thought and speech, and therefore cannot be fully apprehended through any one of the religions known to man, the same reveals itself in and through them. All the religions are founded on revelation, but the fact is that the different revelations do not agree with each other on many fundamental principles of religion. Even they contradict each other on some essentials of religion.

² *Harijan*, February 10, 1940.

³ *Young India*, May 12, 1920.

⁴ *Ibid.* October 18, 1921.

How can it be said, then, that this or that revelation is absolutely true? If one revelation is to be absolutely true the others must be false, for they are all the revelations of one and the same reality. If reality is one, different mutually-contradictory revelations purporting to be true of it, cannot all be true. Either all must be true or all must be false. Gandhi's approach to this problem is interesting. He accepts religious relativity; truth possessed by different religions is only relative. Reality, which is transcendental to human understanding, when it reveals itself to different people, is understood and interpreted in diverse ways depending upon their perfection and ability to do so, which vary from person to person. 'There is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many as it passes through the human medium.'⁵ Language also plays an important role in this process. It is primarily developed and suited to express earthly things, but when employed to express that which is transcendental, it fails to do so. People express their religious experiences through words (language) and these words—scriptures—are later interpreted by equally imperfect followers.⁶

Now, the problem arises when followers of different revelations fail to realize this and claim absolute validity for their own revelation. In the absence of such realization, every revelation and the interpretations thereof may appear to be absolutely true from the standpoint of its adherents. This cannot be true, as the same truth is revealed to all; the different versions of it being the creation of imperfect minds. This fact that no particular religion is in possession of absolute truth gives rise to the idea that all religions should strive towards perfection. Re-interpretation and reformation of the existing religious beliefs in the wake of

new experiences will then become an imperative condition of such an evolution.⁷

There can be no religion devoid of morality. A pure life, unruffled by passions and prejudices, is an essential prerequisite for religious experience. Generally, the place of ethics in Hindu religious tradition is that of a means to an end. To become morally perfect is not the goal of religion; the goal is to attain something higher. As against this, Gandhi asserts that religion and morality are not two things. They are synonymous. He says, 'morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms'.⁸ To be immoral is to become irreligious. One who is untruthful, cruel and wicked cannot have God on his side. Religion does not transcend morality; if it does it ceases to be religion.⁹ Both are interdependent, for morality is the basis of all things and truth is the substance of morality. The whole universe follows the law of God, and God's law is not different from Him.¹⁰ So, to transgress His law is disobedience to God. For this reason, no religion can ever have real significance if it is not concerned with the moral problems of man.

Similarly, morality loses its ground without religion and becomes meaningless. Why we should be moral cannot be satisfactorily explained without understanding religion. Pursuit of truth creates in man a sense of good and bad, without which they simply remain social conventions with no foundation other than individual or social convenience. 'A moral life without reference to religion', as Gandhi puts it, 'is like a house built on sand. And religion divorced from morality is like sounding brass; good only for making noise and breaking heads.'¹¹ Morality, according to Gandhi, is not a con-

⁷ Ibid. p. 38-40.

⁸ *Glorious Thoughts of Gandhi*, by N. B. Sen.

⁹ *Young India*, November 24, 1921.

¹⁰ *Harijan*, March 23, 1940.

¹¹ Ibid. December 24, 1938.

⁵ *Harijan*, December 15, 1936.

⁶ *From Yeravda Mandir*, 1945, p. 38-40

ventional code of ethics regulating this or that particular aspect of human behaviour. It is the subtle law of God which, as the substratum of things, governs and regulates the whole universe. It is similar to the Vedic concept of *ṛta*, which is the life-breath of the universe. It gives direction to life, and the latter finds its meaning in regenerating itself in conformity with that universal principle.

According to modern thinking, religion is one thing which is most private to an individual. It is purely an affair between the soul and its Maker who is not within the temporal order. This type of thinking led to the secularization of all the worldly institutions which man has invented. A line of demarcation has been drawn between sacred and secular. The truly sacred, according to this view, has nothing to do with secular, and *vice versa*. Thus, religion is considered to be one of the many aspects of human life, deserving that much attention only. Consequently, human life is compartmentalized, with nothing to give meaning and significance to it as a whole. As against this, Gandhi offered an all-inclusive concept of religion, which is as a way of life that inspires and influences every act of human behaviour and stimulates every thought. It integrates the different aspects of life which otherwise remain discrete and discordant. It gives us an integral insight into the nature of things and also provides us with a basic value, whereby the whole human behaviour is viewed as a meaningful whole, a preparation for something higher.

There can be no religion, according to Gandhi, outside the problems of life. Without its inspiring insight the various activities of mankind remain baseless like structures without firm foundations. In this context, we can appreciate Gandhi's contention that politics, economics, sociology etc., should be viewed in relation to religion, or

as means to it.¹² We can understand this thesis better by understanding how Gandhi explained the possible relationship between religion and society. Within the social sphere, religion can foster a spirit of oneness and equality of mankind. Echoing Vedanta, he says that though men differ in diverse ways, spiritually they are all equal, as the Self which is within all is one. Realization of this spiritual equality can help mankind in becoming free from various social prejudices arising out of notions of superiority and inferiority. As all men are spiritually equal, to discriminate between them is sinful. To assume superiority to one's self or to one's community or nation over others is irreligious. Gandhi narrates how, because of such an understanding, he could identify himself with the meanest of the mean and the lowest of the low, and serve them.¹³ To see God in all His creation and serve Him through them is the goal of religion, wherein lies the social significance of it. Thus, religion, as the realization of the spiritual oneness of mankind, if pursued can solve many of the problems arising in different spheres of life with harmony and peace. Without such a unifying vision, human perspective loses its integrity, and things which should contribute towards the progress and fulfilment of man turn out to be death-traps and work for his ruin.

The goal of religion, according to Gandhi, is liberation of the soul from the bondage of flesh and ignorance. It is to experience God and also to realize one's oneness with Him. 'What I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years', says Gandhi, '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 speak-

¹² Ibid. December 24, 1938, p. 393.

¹³ *Young India*, December 15, 1933.

ing and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end.'¹⁴

God is not a person. The gods men imagine are anthropomorphic. They are imagined according to the spiritual needs and maturity of the worshipper. They differ from man to man depending upon the predicament in which the seeker finds himself. Many such gods are created and destroyed by man, but the basis for such an imagination is to be found in all men and in all times. It is man's inborn quest to know that which is unseen and yet the real foundation of all that he experiences. The different theories invented by man to satisfy that quest may be unfounded, but the quest remains. The reason for such a quest is that man is convinced of the existence of something over and above what he empirically experiences, and whose existence cannot be denied without denying himself. 'There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything.'¹⁵ This mysterious power is God. It is truth and truth is God. Gandhi makes a subtle and important distinction between 'God is Truth' and 'Truth is God'. The first definition is sound and irrefutable. Even an atheist who may be able to deny the existence of God cannot deny truth; for truth is the basis of himself also.¹⁶ All those who are committed to truth are religious, according to this view. It makes religion universal. It also removes the barriers between religion, philosophy and science. Many great men are atheists, but they are committed to truth. God is love; God is morality; God is fearlessness. He is in all and all are in Him and yet He is above all. He resides in all of us and knows us better than we ourselves. He is beyond human grasp; nevertheless as if to

please His devotees He assumes many forms.

Truth is what one's conscience or inner voice reveals.¹⁷ One's heart is the seat of truth; one should prepare to receive it. In that case, it may be argued that everyone may claim truth for his own convictions and consequently, truth may become capricious and individualistic. But, Gandhi says, before trying to hear one's conscience, one should become a zero or empty one's self of all impurities and all traces of ego. One should approach God in all nakedness, that is, stripped of all individuality.¹⁸ Only then one can intuit truth unmixed with falsity. This preparation consists in acquiring certain virtues among which love and non-violence are supreme.

Similar to the force that binds the atoms together to form an orderly cosmos, there is some soul-force that binds all living beings together and creates harmony among them. The same force can be seen operating between father and son, brother and sister, etc. That is what Gandhi means by love.¹⁹ The love that we normally experience with our near and dear ones should be extended to cover all creation. In loving all creation, even his enemies, man attains the highest, as love is the nature of God. Love implies service and sacrifice. A mother's love for her children is an example. Her love for the child prepares her for any sacrifice. Sacrifice is disinterested service, as in service one expands one's ego. As God is immanent in His creation, to see Him is to serve Him through His creation.

True love is opposed to violence. Violence and love, like darkness and light, cannot coexist. Where there is true love violence in any form cannot prevail. The mature expression of love is non-violence, and non-

¹⁴ Introduction to *Autobiography*, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Young India*, October 11, 1928.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* December 31, 1931,

¹⁷ *Ibid.* December 31, 1931.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* December 20, 1928.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* May 5, 1920.

violence is love in action. To have no ill will or hatred towards the whole of creation is the fullest expression of non-violence. No single creature in the universe is created to subserve or satisfy man. Non-violence is the ultimate goal of evolution.²⁰ Clash and conflict, violence and aggression, are found in the process of evolution; but non-violence will ultimately prevail. We are slowly, but surely moving towards that goal. This is the essence of all religions and every prophet has avowed it.

The attitude of Gandhi towards other religions may now be stated. Till recently, due to lack of understanding of other religions, the attitude of one religion towards other religions was one of suspicion, and even hatred. This was based on the feeling of superiority of one's own religion over other religions. Religious relativity, in which Gandhi believes, upholds the validity of religious pluralism. Theoretically it is possible to argue in favour of one religion, as truth is one. Nevertheless, religious pluralism is valid in practice.²¹ Truth reveals itself through human media, and in discerning it man knowingly or unknowingly imposes his own limitations on it. Since limiting factors differ from man to man, there is valid scope for the plurality of religions.

As was stated earlier, true religion is above all particular religions; the latter are only attempts to realize it. Thus, when no one religion is in the possession of absolute truth, there is no meaningful scope for the feeling of superiority of one over others. A faith may be dearer to its followers and may also appear to be the only true religion, but there can be many such viewpoints. This realization naturally leads to religious tolerance and also to a give-and-take attitude. Tolerance is not an appropriate word to express it, as it implies the feeling of supe-

riority. A superior one somehow tolerates the existence of an inferior one. The right attitude is one of respect and appreciation.²² One should not degrade one's faith in comparison with other faiths, for that may lead to change of faith. To change one's faith is not the correct attitude; one should enrich and reform it.

Almost all the major religions of the world are based on the spiritual experiences of their founders. The scriptures in which these experiences are preserved are not rational systems with logical consistency and coherence. Based on these experiences, religious systems are built later. One who is interested in systematizing religious intuitions is concerned with the inner consistency and rationality of the things presented. These systems may help a seeker of truth in avoiding various pitfalls on his way to truth, but are not in themselves sufficient to make one religious. To have an intuitive experience of God and at the same time to possess the ability to represent the same in thought is a rare combination. A system builder need not be religious in the sense of having direct experience of God, and on the other hand, one who has such an experience may not try to represent the same in thought. Thus, we find a marked difference between a religious doctrine and a piece of revelation.

Experience is valid to reasoning. Faith is based on experience—it is faith in the authority of the revealed books. Reason is only probable, and cannot give us the certainty of experience or of faith. Moreover, the aim of religion is not to achieve an intellectual understanding of God, but to intuitively experience Him. Religion is not and cannot be a disinterested pursuit of truth, like philosophy. It is a committed approach in which the entire personality of a devotee is involved. A thorough

²⁰ *Harijan*, August 11, 1940.

²¹ *Ibid.* February 2, 1934.

²² *Ibid.* November 28, 1936.

understanding of the principles of religion may not be able to evoke religion in man as faith does. To analyse and understand intellectually the various concepts of religion is academic and the purpose is to gain knowledge. Whereas, the aim of a devotee is to have an encounter with God. Thus, two types of people—religious philosophers and seekers of truth—pursue religion with two different goals of knowledge and communion respectively. Similarly, they adopt two distinct methods of exposition and experience.

Thus, from a purely logical standpoint—

the one from which many try to understand religion—what is based on faith and experience may appear to be full of contradictions. Conversely, from the standpoint of faith, a well reasoned out doctrine may be anything, but have no truth in it; it may be just a systematic presentation of words, logically well knit. The validity or otherwise of an experience can be judged from the standpoint of another experience. As long as one is satisfied with arguments and cannot go beyond them, one has no right to criticize an experience, especially religious experience which is not common to all.

THE CONCEPT OF WORLD PEACE IN ANCIENT INDIA

DR HARIPADA CHAKRABORTI

World peace is one of the pressing problems of the present day, as reflected in the workings of the U.N.O. It was also perhaps equally so in the ancient period, as evidenced by the ancient literature, full of references to peace and war. India is proud of its ancient culture which teaches the entire world its golden lessons on world peace. Let us examine it, as referred to in the Vedic literature.

The *R̥g-Veda* (5.60.5) teaches us that all men are brothers; there is no question of superiority or inferiority by birth. God is the Father of all beings and this earth is their mother. This lesson, if accepted by the nations of the world, leads to peace and prosperity. Elsewhere (*R̥g-Veda*, X.191-2, 4) it arouses in us the most sublime thoughts :

*Sam̐ gacchadhvaṃ sam̐ vadadhvaṃ sam̐ vo
manāṃsi jānatām*

Devā bhāgam̐ yathā pūrve sam̐jānānāupāsate

Samānī vā ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ

Samānam̐ astu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati

Here, men are taught to lead their activ-

ities to one common goal for which they should have a common speech; their minds should be of one accord to grasp the knowledge of various sciences fully; and they should, like the ancient seers, worship God alone who is the only real object of devotion.

Devotion to God is the surest path to peace. The *Sāma-Veda* (2.520) sings the following prayer :

‘O God, Thou art our Father and Thou art our Mother. So we bow before Thee alone for peace and bliss.’

If all men were truly devoted to God and look upon Him as parents, they would naturally cultivate universal brotherhood, and this world would be a paradise, free from all feelings of enmity and hatred.

The *Yajur-Veda* also contains the prayers for peace in this universe, as follows :

‘Om śanno Devī-rabhīṣṭaye āpo bhavantu pītaye,
śam̐ yo-rabhi-śravantu naḥ’ (36.12).

‘Om Dyauḥ śānti-r-antarikṣam̐ śāntiḥ; Prthivī
śānti-r-āpoḥ śānti-r-oṣadhayaḥ śānti-r-vanas-

*patayaḥ ; śānti-r-viśve-devāḥ śānti-r-Brahmā
śāntiḥ śānti-eva śāntiḥ sā mā śāntiredhi'*
(36.17).

The all-pervading Mother is invoked here to bless the cravings of the soul of the seer and to make this world full of bliss and peace from pole to pole. Here it is a prayer for universal peace. May peace reign supreme in heaven, in the intervening space and in earth, may the waters, herbs, trees, all the gods and Brahmā, in brief, the entire universe, be in peace and harmony ! Elsewhere (*Yajur-Veda*, 16.41) God is invoked as the source and giver of permanent peace :

*'Om namaḥ sambhavāya ca Mayobhavāya ca
namaḥ Śaṅkarāya ca ; Mayaskarāya ca namaḥ
Śivāya ca śivatarāya ca.'*

God is conceived here as the fountain of peace and the Lord of bliss.

The *Atharva-Veda* (19.9.4-6) also draws our attention to the regulation of our speech, mind and senses as the best of the measures for the attainment of peace. Here the sage warns us that our speech, mind and senses, when misused or abused, create terrible havoc in this world, but he assures us as well that their best use gives us abiding peace : *Yai-r-eva sasṛje ghoram tai-r-eva śānti-r-astu naḥ*. And their best use consists in using them for the acquisition of right knowledge, for rendering good deeds and for meditation on God. Elsewhere (3.30.1 and 7) the same Veda exhorts us to have concordance in our hearts (*sahrdayam*), unanimity in our minds (*sām manasyam*), and freedom from hatred (*avidveṣam*) in our behaviour. We must love each other just as the cow loves her calf. God enjoins on all of us to be mutually helpful, to be united in mind, to have common ideals and to cultivate friendly feelings, ever increasing every morning and evening : *sāyam prātaḥ sāumanaso vo astu*.

Next about the Upaniṣads. Mere prayer

for world peace is insufficient. We must care for the means of its realization. A multitude of terrible forces of this infinite world is running in ten directions, but an eternal Being who remains calm, holding the reins of peace in the central position of these innumerable forces, maintains the balance of power and saves this universe from the jaws of death or destruction. This Being is described in the Upaniṣads as *śāntam-śivam-Advaitam*. The *mantra* of peace is resounding eternally even in the midst of the warring elements of this universe and He who is *śānta* (peaceful), presents Himself in numerous shapes of beauty or joy. It is interesting to note that this peaceful Being remains eternally in our inner self ; but how to realize Him ?

The Upaniṣads tell us that we should first of all make ourselves calm (*śānta*) and quiet to realize this perfect calmness. He who is calm (*śānta*) is none but the Good (*śivam*). The calm Being directs all terrible forces to something good in the shape of the fruits and flowers of nature and of life ; hence He is the Good (*śivam*). The first requisite for realizing this Good is that we must be essentially good, avoiding all bad. That means we must engage ourselves in good deeds. The Upaniṣad emphasizes that this *śānta* and *śiva* Being is one without a second (*ekam-advaitam*). But how to worship Him ? The Upaniṣads teach us the best lesson, that of love to all. He is the true seer who sees all beings as his own self. Here is the secret of world peace. We must love others as our own, curb our I-ness, uproot all thorns of conflict and widen the path of love to each and all. Whenever we go to strike others, we miss that sense of golden oneness (*advaitam*) and we give and get sorrows thereby. Thus this *mantra śāntam śivam-advaitam* contains within itself the secret science of realizing that Being by the paths of knowledge, action and love or devotion.

Ancient India chose to garland the ṛṣis (seers) with laurels as the best of mankind. But why? Because they were the seers, satisfied with knowledge of the highest Self; they were of regulated self (*kṛtātmāno*); they were averse to this object-world (*vītarāga*); and were perfectly calm (*praśāntāḥ*). They realized that omnipotent Being (*sarvagam*) and so they were self-possessed (*dhīrah*), they became united with all (*yuktātmānaḥ*) and they entered into all (*sarvam-evāviśanti*). Thus one's identification with all others was the *summum bonum* of human life in our ancient India, and that is the best way of attaining eternal peace or bliss. It is the duty of all individuals, nay that of all leaders and well-wishers of humanity, to accept and follow this principle for the attainment of peace, not only in individual life but also in the international life of this world so that abiding peace may reign supreme on earth.

The *Īśopaniṣad* teaches us the secret of world peace: '*Īśāvāsyam-idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat.*' We should look upon everything of this world as being enveloped by God. This feeling of the omnipresence of God makes us love all and this universal love leads ultimately to world peace. This concept of philanthropy and of equation with all was highly stressed in ancient India, as evidenced by the *Gāyatrī ṛk* also. That is why the *Īśopaniṣad* teaches us to enjoy this life or world with the spirit of resignation and never to covet anybody's wealth. To follow this advice of universal love means life or higher life, or we must meet great destruction or universal annihilation (*mahatī vinaṣṭih*).

Buddha also taught his disciples the process of loving the entire world (*mettibhāvanā*) by which one's soul might be gradually made perfect by selfless love to all. He advised us to think everyday:

'Sarve sattā sukhitā hontu, averā hontu, avyāpajjhā hontu, sukhī attānaṁ pariharantu, sarve

sattā mā yathā labbdha-sampattito vigacchantu.

This means: 'May all creatures be happy, free from enemies, uninjured; may all pass their days happily; may they not be deprived of the wealth they have earned.'

Buddha's lesson of universal love is expressed best in:

'Mātā yathā niyaṁ puttāṁ āyusā ekaputtam-anurakkhe, evampi sarvabhūteṣu mānasāṁ bhāvaye aprimānam.'

'As the mother protects her only son even with her life, so one should cherish unlimited love to all creatures.' His rules of conduct (*śīlas*) are still honoured. An attempt is being made to follow them not only in individual life but also in the field of international politics. Hence their immense value for the maintenance of world peace cannot be gainsaid even in this age of atomic weapons.

The *Gītā* (V. 18) preaches that the man of knowledge looks upon the Brāhmaṇa, the Cāṇḍāla, the cow, the elephant and the dog with the eye of equality. Thus it teaches not only a sentiment of reverence for human life but also for inferior creatures, because elsewhere (18.61) it asserts that God lies in the heart of all creatures and surrender to Him is the key to peace *par excellence* (*parām śāntim*—18.62). This sense of equality, if fostered in the political world, is the surest remedy to cure all political diseases and is the only way to international peace on earth.

Aśoka's principle of '*dharma-conquest*' (R.E. xiii) and his missionary zeal to establish peace, both in and outside India, by sending peace-missions to foreign countries may be taken as a pointer to peace everywhere.

The book called '*Śāntiparvan*' of the *Mahābhārata*, which deals with politics after the tragic war is over, implies obviously that politics should lead to peace. Caṇḍī, the Divine Mother, is identified with

peace among all creatures (*yā devī sarva-bhūteṣu śānti-rupeṇa saṁsthitā*) in the *Markandeya Purāṇa* and receives the obeisance of her devotee, showing thereby the earnest craving of ancient India for world peace.

Hence let us revive that old spirit of the Upaniṣads, submit ourselves to the Lord as the universal Father (*pitā no'si*) with the prayer: '*Mā mā hiṁsih*', 'Do not kill us, save us from death.'

May there be peace throughout the world!

A TRAVELLER LOOKS AT THE WORLD—III

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Question: Is world-weariness causing the average American to practise authentic spiritual disciplines and seek spiritual experience?

Answer: There are very few opportunities for this kind of serious religion and for attaining to authentic spiritual experience. They are not able to satisfy their hunger. The Protestant churches of various denominations, for example, do not have the capacity to give this kind of spiritual food to modern Americans, nor do they provide the right kind of opportunities. Churches are sometimes full. That is because they have changed their policy. Instead of giving religion, they recommend some social action, some protest against the Vietnam war, or some such thing. All the church programmes consist of that sort of thing—what they call social action, social involvement. At many places I had to say, people come to receive spiritual nourishment from the churches. If the churches are not meant to fulfil that function, what else are they meant for? There are other institutions to give man the other types of nourishment and involve him in other types of activity. If the churches do not give the things of the spirit, man is left empty. Even the Catholic churches

have changed their approach. They also are engaging themselves increasingly in social-action programmes to the neglect of the spiritual.

What man seeks in America today is not a social-action programme, but spiritual nourishment by which he can feel fundamentally nourished. It is like watering a tree. In many lectures I pointed out, 'You do not water a tree by watering the flowers and fruits of a tree: you water a tree in a fundamental way by watering the roots of the tree.' There is a root nourishment for the human personality, and that is religion. If that is given, other things are automatically taken care of. There have been a few contemplative orders. They also are getting thinner and thinner day by day. Some of them are being closed down. But they also are a protest, swinging like a pendulum to the other extreme. Vedanta does not advocate that way either.

One of the subjects chosen by many universities was 'Spiritual Life in an Industrial Age'. The *Gītā* teaching is: In the midst of your work, realize your own spiritual nature. That is the technique, that is practical spirituality. That is what Americans need, with an occasional experience of deeper communion through a spiritual retreat. That will bring great inner nourish-

ment. When they experience it, they say it is wonderful.

This is true in India also. Many of our youths understand by religion what they saw their grandfather or grandmother doing—taking a bath in the holy Ganges early in the morning, going to the temple, offering some flowers, and so forth. The young people have no faith in that. When they come to know what religion means—a real communion with your own inner Self—they understand that it is something wonderful. They want to have more of that experience. Even in India we need this experiential approach to religion, this sense of communion. There is great need for these things, and students and teachers are eager for that kind of experience, even those who are not generally understood to be religious in the normal sense of the word.

Question: In what way can India help the West and the West help India without either's being egoistic or condescending?

Answer: This is the great work that was initiated in an enduring way by Swami Vivekananda towards the end of the last century. He was the first who taught India that no culture in the world is perfect. Each culture is just an experiment in culture; so that we have to learn from each other. He told India that Indian culture is great in many respects but it is not perfect. It has its limitations. It has specialized in certain fields and that specialization means that certain other aspects of human life have been neglected. India has paid a heavy price for specializing in the inner life of man. Our external life became neglected. The problems of modern India are essentially problems of man's external life; whereas in the West it is the reverse. Their inner life is neglected. Their external life is prosperous.

In many questions and answers *this sub-*

ject came up. They said, 'Don't you think, Swami, you have your own problems in India?' I said, 'Yes, we have serious problems; but the difference between your problems and our problems in India is this: We have a soul, a pure and mighty soul. We are in search of a good and healthy body for its expression. Our former body was so weak, unfit to express the infinite soul of India. So we have to try to develop a body politic, healthy and strong. In the case of the West, you have a fine body and you are in search of a soul. Don't you think it is more difficult to find a soul than a body?' They said, 'Yes.'

The problem of finding a body is easier than that of finding a soul. In two generations, we can build up our industrial strength for economic development. There is no magic about it. Western help is there. Swami Vivekananda saw that this was the situation with respect to man in the East and the West. So he told India, You have an eternal soul, give it a fine body. Stress the dignity of man. Don't look to caste and creed. Infinite possibilities are there; let them be expressed. Economic improvement, social improvement, everything will come. What a grand message he gave to India. He said: In order to implement this, take the help of the West. Sit at the feet of the West. Learn humbly what the West has to say; for, all the problems of the Indian body are problems that will dissolve only by India's assimilating the spirit of the West today. This was his great lesson to India.

On the other hand, he said to the Americans: You have achieved a great society but you are in distress within, your inner lives are empty. Here India will help you. Your development has failed to strengthen the inner man. Take lessons from India. Thus, by mutual exchange of ideas and values, we shall develop not a western culture nor an eastern culture but a human

culture in the future world. That is the great contribution of Swami Vivekananda: Equality between the East and the West, equality between their cultures, and cross-fertilization of cultures, thus developing a human culture out of all the racial and national cultures that we have had until now. What he said can be a lesson for all of us in the East and West; he said: Teach yourselves; teach everyone his real nature. Call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, everything great and glorious will come, when the sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.

Thus will the wants of humanity in East and West be removed. Vedanta takes man to total fulfilment. Its message is as relevant in America as in India. This is a wonderful idea which we have to help to work out in the coming decades. Perhaps before 2000 A.D. a good deal of this give-and-take will have taken place, because it has been going on intensively in post-war periods. Ideas are travelling fast here and there. People are travelling all over the world. There are 7000 Indian students in the United States today. What are they doing? Taking the best that America can give, most of them come back, though some of them stay on there. When they come back they bring the message of that vigorous Greco-Roman spirit of which Swamiji spoke, that Promethean spirit which will help India. It has been helping India in a large measure. Similarly when some Americans come to India they see it in the spiritual perspective. Our own Vedanta work is going on in the West. Other institutions also are working.

A tremendous give-and-take is going on. This is a vital period of the world's history. Exclusivism in culture and religion will all vanish, and more human ties will develop, binding together the strength of the West,

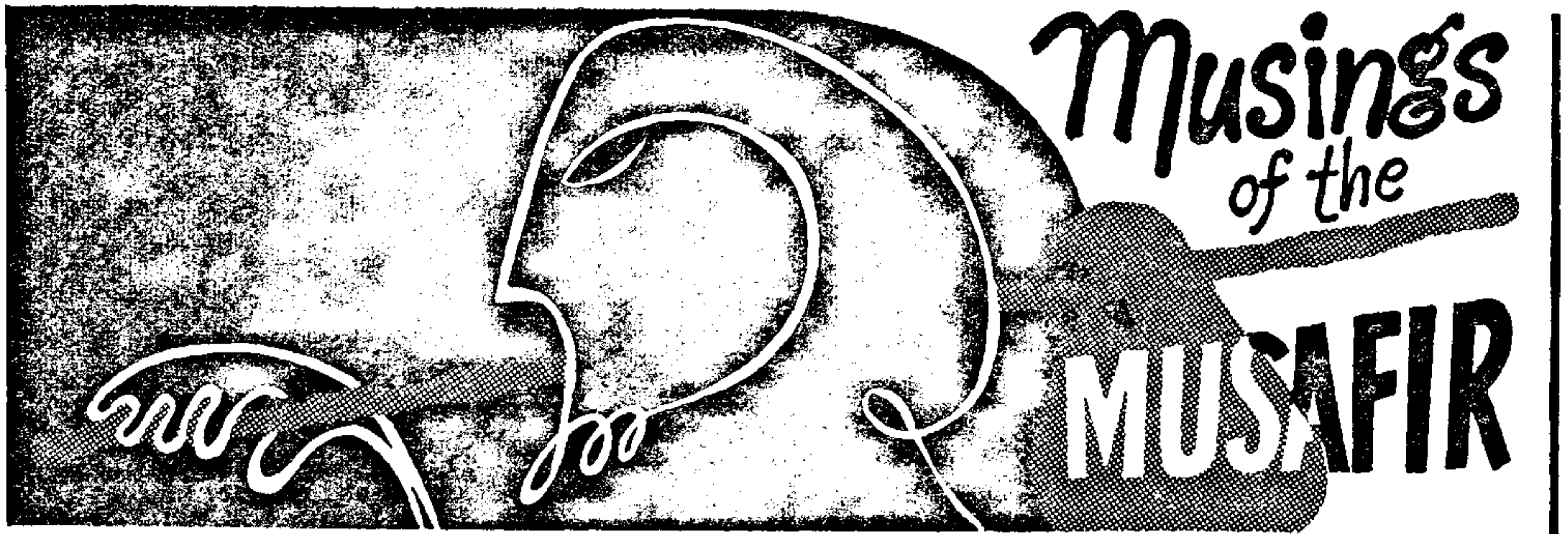
which is science and technology, and the strength of the East, which is inward life and spirituality. This is the ideal Swamiji placed before us.

Question: Just now you spoke of the Indian students who are studying in America. How do they represent the essentials of Indian culture? What is the quality of that representation? And what can be done by way of improvement?

Answer: It is a very unfortunate situation. Most of the Indian students, and for that matter, other Indians in the professions also, including foreign services, though they are physically Indians, are not so mentally. They have so little of India in them. Many of them realize this defect only when they go to the West, because the West is asking them questions. Westerners want to know something of India's culture and philosophy but these people have nothing to give. Then it is that these Indians feel the inadequacy of their own education. It is unfortunate that, generally speaking, our education does not give us any insight into the fundamentals of our own culture. I saw in some places in the United States this kind of Indian youth, who is sometimes apologetic for his own country and culture. But he is realizing more and more that to be an Indian, however inadequately, is better than trying to imitate somebody else. That is what it is coming to. But it will take time.

Our Indian educational system should ensure that students get some idea of the philosophy and culture of India. They need not know all the details. That there is a philosophy of man in Indian culture; that its implications have been worked out; that they are worth working out in all parts of the world; that modern science and technology will help us to work them out in an integrated way—these fundamentals

(Continued on page 447)



THE SECRET OF ALL EXCELLENCE

Thus teaches the *Dhammapada*:

'When the learned man drives away vanity by earnestness, he the wise, climbing the terraced heights of wisdom, looks down upon the fools, free from sorrow he looks upon the sorrowing crowd, as one that stands on a mountain looks down upon them that stand upon the plain. Verse 28

'Earnest among the thoughtless, awake among the sleepers, the wise man advances like a racer, leaving behind the hack. Verse 29

'By earnestness did Maghavan (Indra) rise to the Lordship of the Gods. People praise earnestness; thoughtlessness is always blamed. Verse 30

'A Bhikshu who delights in reflection, in earnestness, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, moves like fire, burning all his fetters, small or large. Verse 31

'A Bhikshu who delights in reflection, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, cannot fall away (from his perfect state)—he is close upon Nirvana.' Verse 32

It is one thing to be learned, another thing to be wise. It is not impossible to be a learned fool. But it is not possible to be wise and foolish. The wise man no longer has any occasion to think: Oh, why did I do this? Why did I not do that? But the unwise seldom ceases to be repentant. His own actions always question him. And he always questions his own inaction. He is afraid of what he has done, and suspicious of what he has not done.

The test of wisdom is in going beyond doubts, burnings and sorrows of life. All the happenings of the world continue to be the same but the wise man is not affected by them any more. His learning, through

the alchemy of his awakened understanding, has gotten transmuted within himself unawares. His music is never out of tune. He never takes a false step. He is incapable of uttering a wrong word. He has not to calculate in order to be earnest. He has not to weigh in order to be right. In darkness he is never without light. In peril he is always resourceful. His fears are gone. He has nothing to lose and little to gain. He is not in a hurry but always dynamic. He wins comfortably without having to compete. His sympathy is for everybody for he has no vanity left in him.

Having no sorrows of his own he has a distinct feeling for the sorrows of others.

The wise man has only one secret by which he has attained everything—earnestness. Earnestness is that inner disposition of respectful and persevering self-application by which a man transforms himself into a nobler and greater being who is no longer a slave to his senses, but is inspired by pure intellect.

The wise man is a very different person from others in that he is never indifferent to truth, auspiciousness and beauty. He takes infinite pains—yet without a feeling of irksomeness—to practise the ideal. It never occurs to him: Well, every one does this, then why do I not do this? His mind works in a different way. What others do or do not do is none of his concern. His gaze is fixed on what is worth doing according to the necessity of truth, goodness and universal weal. His proneness is not to sloth and sleep but to awakening.

His understanding can decipher the script of the midnight stars. Along on the milky way he does not feel himself a stranger. Could it not be that he is at home, when he is a bit away? He is awake to welcome the first glimmer of the light of the dawn. He knows the tenderness of the face of the sky before the sun rises. He follows the process of the day and night with progressive awakening within himself. It is not that he does not sleep. But he has mastered the technique of carrying forward awakening through all physical preoccupation. The secret of his restful dynamism is in the quality of his awakening. This awakening helps him to see what is hidden, apprehend what is not manifest, work for warding off the difficulty which is not to be seen yet and prepare for the welcome of the unborn blessing. He furthers the way of life and forwards its goal through a process of familiarization. The distant is constant with him and the end is the means. Therefore, in the midst of all he is singular, unsorrowing and blissful.

No true advancement was ever made in this world in any sphere of life except through earnestness. Given earnestness, we have everything for attaining any objective; minus earnestness we attain little in spite of having everything. Our noble projects, personal and collective, often so miserably fail in such great number because of the lack of earnestness. So this technique of handling oneself purposively, which is known as earnestness, is any day more important than all the technology in the world, for machine may fail but man must not. The problems of this world are certainly greater because the importance, of self-operating techniques is not so well understood. When purity of motive is combined with earnestness in a person, he is a beneficent force of incalculable power. This is the secret of all excellence too.

Powers cry within us to be awakened. But if we hug the very chains which fetter us who then can help us? Out of life we can raise a golden harvest, but if we leave the field of life fallow, or if we sow thistle instead of corn, how can our expectations be fulfilled?

The most important lesson to learn is to delight in what will bring us to light and to be afraid of what will bring us to ruin. We have such a fascination for what is disastrous to us! The decoy we consider a friend and the true friend we discard.

But he whose power of discrimination has been awakened and understanding clarified, he develops an insight into what is truly beneficial for him and what is ruinous. His inner awakening beacons by the vision of the goal makes him inwardly light-footed. And so he scales the peaks of attainment gracefully and quickly to the wonderment of all.

If you like candy you like to keep it in your mouth. If you delight in earnestness, you keep it in your life-process and continue to grow in earnestness. You are never

dismayed by contrary forces, for within you has grown the certainty of faith through the negation of thoughtlessness. Fear is never commendable in any undertaking of life. Complete fearlessness is one of the noblest objectives of life. But fear of thoughtlessness which is the root of all sin and iniquity is true wisdom. If you would not like to have a cobra around your neck you cannot be blamed for cowardice. If you do not dash across a thoroughfare and get run over by a speeding car you cannot be branded a weakling. Man has the inalienable right to preserve himself in a manner needed for the attainment of wisdom and illumination. When earnestness is buttressed by the enlightened fear of thoughtlessness a man is secure on the way. Pitfalls there may be, but he will not fall. He has arisen once for all.

THE TRUE PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURE

SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, was established in 1938 with a threefold aim: (i) proper interpretation and appraisal of Indian Culture, (ii) study of different cultures of the world with a view to promoting mutual understanding and appreciation of different viewpoints and (iii) study of mankind's cultural heritage from the universal standpoint. A School of Humanistic and Cultural Studies, a School of Languages, an International Scholars' Residence, an International Guest House, a free Students' Day Home, international symposia and conferences, lectures by Indian and foreign scholars and a library are some of its activities. A vision of a new kind of school or international university called School of World Civilization was made known by the Institute's founder Swami Nityaswarupananda on the 15th of April 1970 when he gave a talk on 'the True Perspective of the Work of the Institute'. This article is adapted from his speech.—Ed.

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture embodies the ideas and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. All their teaching is based on spiritual unity as the basis of all man's activity. Every endeavour of man is to be seen as a striving towards the expression of this eternal spirit within. The diverse and contradictory pursuits of various people and various nations may thus be reconciled within an all-embracing unity. Surrounded as we are today by strife and bitterness, this teaching is urgently required to bring us to a state of unity, brotherhood, and peace. The work of the Institute is therefore educational in character and universal in scope.

India is, in a way, an epitome of the world. There is urgent need today for the integration of India, just as there is urgent need for the integration of the world. Integration means 'wholeness', 'becoming one', and the only way in which either India or the world can find integration is by accepting the fact of spiritual unity as the basis of all thought and activity. The power that is in man is one with the power behind the universe. It is the same reality that is manifested through man. Belief in the power of the spirit of man has now to be given new expression in modern terms and in the context of modern problems. Belief in the power of the spirit of man must now be made to flow through all the channels of life, political, economic, social, and every other. Every activity of man, his work, his creativity, his struggles and strivings, all must now be seen as expressing and, at the

same time, leading him back to that one spirit which is the reality of the universe.

This, in brief, was Swami Vivekananda's message to modern India. India, he said, would die unless she were able to bring that power of the spirit into every aspect of her national life. This was her national ideal, and she must live up to it.

With this warning he gave another. In order to bring that power of the spirit into her national life, India must see that spirit as universal and therefore see herself as an integral part of the whole world, with something to give to the world and something to take from it.

What India has to give to the world is nothing less than the message of spiritual unity as the basis of all activity. True human relationships must be grounded in the knowledge of the underlying oneness of existence. This knowledge alone can provide the real basis of universal human understanding and unity.

THE INSTITUTE'S THREEFOLD AIM

This Institute of Culture was established with the object of giving practical expression to these three aspects of the teaching of Swami Vivekananda, and they were embodied in the three aims of the Institute as follows:

Firstly, the Institute will make an intensive study of Indian culture in order to present a proper interpretation and appraisal of it, and its full implications in the political, economic, and social life of the country in the context of the modern world. The Institute will present Indian culture as the true basis for strengthening the bonds of unity between the different parts of the country and as the basis for national integration. It will emphasize that the great spiritual traditions embodied in India's cultural heritage stand today as the recognized foundation on which to build the India of the future and that India must fulfil her

role in the comity of nations only on the basis of her own distinctive culture. The genius of Indian culture is the spirit of assimilation. India's future strength depends on her ability to adapt herself to modern world conditions and to imbibe and assimilate all that is worthy in other cultures. The work of the Institute will be a significant pointer to the means of consolidating in India's national life these principles and ideals of cultural life and thought.

Secondly, the Institute will study the different cultures of the world in order to reveal the universal dimension of each and its unique contribution to the overall thought of humanity. This study will also reveal the fact that there has been continuous give—and—take between the different cultures of the world. This study will thus develop mutual understanding which will lead to mutual enrichment particularly if allowed to fulfil itself in India's traditional appreciation of different viewpoints as but diverse expressions of the same basic truth.

Thirdly, the Institute will organize the study of mankind's cultural heritage from the universal standpoint in order to reveal the fact of world culture as a unity of which the individual cultures are facets. The object of this study is to develop a consciousness of the human race as a whole, its spiritual solidarity and the unity of its civilization; and to create an allegiance to mankind as a community and thus provide a stable basis for true understanding and co-operation among peoples with diverse political, economic, social, and religious systems that they may live peacefully together.

Because these three aims are interdependent they have been likened to a threefold cord. Each strand has a distinctive place within the whole, but none is independent of the others; the three together intertwine and interact, lending strength and support to each other.

The Institute was established in 1938. It

had very meagre resources and had to struggle hard for many years before it achieved some standing as an educational institution. It was not until 1961, when the present building was opened, that the Institute was really in a position to take up work that would be effective in fulfilling its aims. The building had been planned to fulfil in every detail the requirements of the Institute's comprehensive programme of work.

An East-West cultural conference, held to mark the opening of the building, served to establish the level at which the Institute might begin to function. The theme of the conference was 'Reactions of the Peoples of East and West to the Basic Problems of Modern Life'. The conference was held in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and leading scholars from eastern and western countries participated in it. The conference concluded with a resolution in which the Institute was cited as a prototype of cultural centres to be established in all major cultural regions.

Immediately after the conference the Institute opened its School of Humanistic and Intercultural Studies which was intended to provide an intensive study of the great contemporary civilizations and the problems common to them in an emerging world civilization. Inspired by the ideal of the solidarity of mankind, the aim of the courses in the School was to cultivate a world point of view in addition to existing regional points of view. By improving and broadening humanistic teaching, it was hoped in this School to elucidate the problem of the unity of civilization, and to promote the development of all cultures in a spirit of absolute acceptance and tolerance which would guarantee their coexistence and mutual enrichment. It was envisaged that scholars and students representing the different cultural areas of the world would live together in the Institute's campus and pursue the study of

mankind's cultural and scientific development from the universal standpoint. The Institute would thus be the centre of an international community representing the cultures and civilizations of the world.

THE BASIS OF GLOBAL UNITY

Going back to the idea that every endeavour of man is a striving towards the expression of the eternal spirit within, it seemed to us that here we have the very basis of global unity. Neither the body, nor the mind, nor the senses constitute man's real nature. The real nature of man is the spirit beyond them. It is existence itself. It is therefore universal and not limited. It is infinite, one, not many. Humanity is thus essentially one.

Man's civilization, his various achievements which are his attempt to give expression to that one spirit within must therefore also be regarded as a unity. Civilization is one. It is one human civilization and not a multiplicity of disparate civilizations. Each individual civilization or culture thus becomes a facet of one grand human civilization.

Taking this universal standpoint, a scheme of education was visualized. It would give to the world this new attitude of global unity, so that from this attitude could spring the understanding necessary to change man's mentality from one that merely causes tension and strife to one that will release man from his narrow attitudes and feelings and give him a sense of human community.

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

In other words, the education for world civilization which is visualized will change man's psychology. The way man looks at himself, his conception of his own nature, governs all his other concepts. Thus a profound sense of unity, within himself and within the world around him, will lead man forward to the understanding that, in spite of outward appearances, individuals, nations

are interrelated and interdependent. Then he will see that differences in thought and ideas and ways of life can be accepted because varying ideas are but varying expressions of the same basic reality and are therefore enriching experiences.

What is needed therefore is a reorientation of man's view of himself. He must be given a new psychology. Science and technology have proved that the world is an indivisible whole. Its parts are interrelated and interdependent, so that what happens to one part ultimately affects the whole. Progress in one part cannot succeed unless it ultimately spells progress for the whole.

As Swami Vivekananda says: 'One atom in this universe cannot move without dragging the whole world along with it. There cannot be any progress without the whole world following in the wake, and it is becoming every day clearer that the solution of any problem can never be attained on racial, or national, or narrow grounds. Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole of this world, every aspiration must go on increasing till it has engulfed the whole of humanity, nay, the whole of life, within its scope.'

Now therefore the time is ripe for a planned, full-scale attack upon the psychology of modern man to prepare him to accept the fact that the world is interdependent and interrelated, and that wherever there is expansion in love or progress in well-being, individually or collectively, it springs from the perception, the realization, and the putting into practice of the eternal truth—the oneness of all beings.

EDUCATION FOR WORLD CIVILIZATION

Such a full-scale attack upon man's psychology can only be made through a new type of education which embraces and makes detailed use of mankind's various cultures. Attempts are constantly being made to define the word 'culture'. The

simplest approach might be to regard it as the product of man's cultivated thought as expressed in such fields as literature, sociology, the arts, religion, philosophy, politics, economics, law, and so on.

These, then, are the fields, within each culture of the world, that must be used in the attempt to reach the point where thought is cultivated, the growing-point of that culture's thought.

The point, in each culture, where thought is cultivated will be that culture's basic idea, a universal truth to which it gives particular emphasis, and which is thus its genius or life-force. The life-force of each culture will be discovered through the study of its various fields of thought.

This new type of education, which may be called 'education for world civilization' calls for a carefully planned confrontation of cultures. This confrontation will take the form of an educational programme in which scholars and students from all parts of the world will participate. The outcome of the educational programme will be not skin-deep knowledge imparted from teacher to student, but a living experience, enjoyed by teachers and students alike. Through an active process, in which everyone present is engaged, each individual will enter into ways of thinking, feeling, and living different from his own.

Now, having viewed each culture from its own standpoint, the standpoint of its own special genius, the participant will experience a deep change in his mentality. His prejudices, his narrow attitudes and feelings will be swept away and he will begin to think in a new way. He will develop an inward sense of being a member of the human race simultaneously with being a member of his own nation and culture. He will find himself engaged in a radical revision of his own cultural heritage. He will have become a citizen of the world and henceforth will look at things from a world

perspective. A vital reorientation of his mind and personality will have taken place.

Now he will recognize and appreciate the value of all cultures, and will lose the narrow perspective of his own particular culture or creed and view horizons that transcend and pass beyond the boundaries of his own limited world.

This mutual confrontation of the genius or life-force in each culture, and of the universal elements contained in the various fields of activity, will also reveal to him the fact that all the cultures are complementary to each other, each making a valuable contribution to the overall thought of man and the process of civilization. It is then that the meaning of world civilization will be made clear to him, for he will see that world civilization is, in fact, the sum total of all the achievements of the human race, in whatever age and in whatever field.

This new type of education does not yet exist anywhere in the world. How, then, can it be brought into existence?

THE SCHOOL OF WORLD CIVILIZATION

To bring it into existence a new kind of school or international university, called a School of World Civilization was visualized. In this international university every nation would be represented through its own department within the campus. The School will conduct integrated interdisciplinary and intercultural studies which will impart to the student a consciousness of the human race as a whole, its spiritual solidarity, and the unity of its civilization.

This School, however, is not presented as an end in itself, but as a prototype of many such schools placed, in the future, at strategic points throughout the world. Beginning at the topmost scholarly level, the influence of these schools will permeate down through college and school levels to the nursery level, thus bringing about, in time and throughout the world, a complete

change in the mentality of every educated person.

The scheme was printed in 1967 under the auspices of the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco and sent out by the Indian National Commission to the National Commissions of the different countries of the world.

UNESCO'S DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

In 1966 Unesco issued a Declaration of the principles of international cultural co-operation. The principles were expressed in eleven brief statements or Articles which proclaimed the dignity and value of every culture of the world and viewed these cultures 'in their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences they exert on one another', as 'part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind'. Article I stated, in part, that 'every people has the right and the duty to develop its culture', and the aims of international cultural co-operation were stated to include the enrichment of cultures and the development of peaceful relations and friendship among the peoples, and bringing about a better understanding of each other's way of life.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECLARATION

It is, indeed, of the utmost significance that the question of international cultural co-operation is now in the forefront. The idea of international co-operation on the cultural level carries far greater significance than that on any other level. On other levels international co-operation has clearly defined limits, but culture is a term whose meaning extends far into the deepest reaches of man's thought. International cultural co-operation therefore signifies that the nations of the world will work together not merely on the framework, but on the very foundation of civilized living.

How the nations think carries far greater

weight, in the long run, than how they conduct their political, economic, and social affairs. In fact they are now beginning to understand that political, economic, and social goals cannot be achieved unless the thought is made to fit the deed. Numerous attempts have been made to bring unity in the world, but these attempts have failed because they depended upon a mechanical manoeuvre, and ignored completely the varied mentality of those called upon to take part.

And yet, at the same time, with each day that passes, the modern world finds itself forced more and more, by its own momentum, to treat itself as a unity. The discovery has been made that each part of the world is affected by every other part; that progress is not progress until it covers the whole world.

While it is science and technology that have brought about this new understanding that the world is a whole and must be treated as a whole, science and technology have also demonstrated that they are not ends in themselves. The power and the security they offer have been proved false. Nevertheless power and security are fascinating goals and they now possess men's minds more firmly than any other aspiration. The result is that in spite of much physical progress, mentally man is now drifting apart.

'Since wars begin in the minds of men,' says Unesco's Constitution, 'it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

The minds of men, then, are to be the field of international cultural co-operation.

The realization that the mind is to be the field of action is, indeed, a great step forward. It marks a reorientation away from dependence upon temporary methods of amelioration and a reaching out towards a radical approach to progress.

When the mind is the field of action the

only possible activity is education. The call for international cultural co-operation is therefore a call for education from the universal standpoint.

Unesco's Constitution also recognizes that peace must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. It calls for 'the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace', regarding this as 'a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern'.

The idea of international cultural co-operation may now be analysed into two main factors. In the first place it depends upon the introduction of a new type of education which, being based on the universal standpoint, will produce the future citizen of the commonwealth of mankind. Secondly, it depends upon the mutual assistance and concern of every nation.

This, then, is the significance of Unesco's call for international cultural co-operation which, in turn, lends added significance to what is now the Institute's scheme for a School of World Civilization.

WHAT INDIA CAN DO TO IMPLEMENT THE DECLARATION

The Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco is preparing to hold a seminar on the subject of international cultural co-operation with special reference to what steps India can take to implement the Principles set out by Unesco's Declaration.

We may hope that the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco will take the necessary steps to request Unesco to bring into being this School of World Civilization which will play a dynamic role in developing a consciousness of the human race as a whole, its spiritual solidarity, and the unity of its civilization. Education at this School will create an allegiance to mankind as a community and

provide a stable basis for true understanding and co-operation among peoples with diverse social, religious, economic, and political systems that they may live peacefully together.

It is clear that the ideas underlying the School of World Civilization spring directly from the aims of this Institute of Culture. The task before the Institute now is to develop it into a miniature School of World Civilization in which to study mankind's cultural and scientific development from the universal standpoint with the collaboration of representative scholars and students drawn from the different cultural areas of the world.

INDIA'S GIFT TO THE WORLD

Through this Institute India now has the opportunity to play an influential role in international cultural co-operation. By doing this India will strengthen herself, for she cannot give what she does not possess. India's role must be viewed in the context of her own cultural background and her cultural relationship with the other countries of the world.

Throughout the centuries of world history, India has made a contribution to the development of world civilization. Today the world finds itself in urgent need of the very insights which are the basic characteristic of Indian thought.

India's spiritual insight of the oneness of human existence and the underlying unity of the different systems of thought now provides the world with that firm foundation on which alone a stable commonwealth of nations may be built.

Yet India today is apparently unconscious of the true role she can and should be playing among the nations of the world.

Since Independence, India has been begging from other countries for help relating to her food, health services, agricultural, industrial, and technological development, and even defence. This is necessary, no doubt, and for her material development India will have to do this for a long time to come. But this was done, and is still being done, like a beggar, in a spirit of utter dependence on other countries, and it necessarily has a most demoralizing and degrading effect on the national mind. This can only be offset by transforming the nation into a giver as well.

The Institute will now be the centre of a small international community representing the cultures and civilizations of the world. It will thus give India a unique opportunity to make her own distinctive contribution to world thought and, in doing so, realize her own mission. It is in this way that other countries will be made conscious of the importance of India's gift to them. This consciousness will help both India and other countries to realize their interdependence, and will restore the balance of their mutual relationship, leading to mutual respect and mutual enrichment.

It has been explained how the work of the Institute springs directly from the teaching of Swami Vivekananda. He saw clearly that these universal truths, this concept of universal oneness, must now be given to every individual throughout the world, and given full scope for expression in daily life in every field of activity. The opportunities before us are very great indeed. Therefore our responsibility is equally great. We have to rise to the occasion. There is no time now for exclusivism, for narrowness and pettiness.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The questions and answers are from :
'M'. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4, 1964. References : Question 1. p. 119 ; 2. p. 7 ; 3. p. 42 ; 4. p. 383 ; 5. p. 79.

The crucial problem that our space age poses is staggering speed shorn of mental calm, dynamism devoid of tranquillity. the editorial of this month indicates an effective way out of the present predicament. It traces man's longings and urges for infinity to the spiritual source and views human life in the context of the manifestations of divine potentialities.

'What Inspires Me Most in Holy Mother's Life', by a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, deals chiefly with an essential feature of devotional life, on which Holy Mother's own life throws light.

Swami Chetanananda of the Ramakrishna Order in his article narrates how Sri Ramakrishna transformed the Bohemians who came in contact with him.

The article 'Religion of Mahatma Gandhi' by Dr A Ramamurty, M.A., Ph.D., D.M. College, Manipur, is based on a paper read

out in a seminar organized by the Government of Manipur.

Dr. Haripada Chakraborti, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Viswabharati University, in his article shows that Indian ancient culture can teach 'the entire world its golden lessons on world peace.'

Questions answered by Swami Ranganathananda at a Brothers' meet at Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta after his return from a long lecture tour of nearly one year and a half in 25 countries continues to be serialized here from the month of July 1970.

The Musafir, who is by now familiar to our regular readers, continues his musings on the *Dhammapada*. What he writes from month to month may not be connected on the surface. One may begin with any month and the reader will not feel that he needs to know what the Musafir has written before, in order to understand the piece on hand. Yet all the Musafir's writings seem to be interlinked by his concern for the inner growth of man so that he may find himself growing in wisdom and thus a better master of the situations of his life. If the Musafir has been succeeding in this, perhaps he has been wise in sacrificing free lance writing for the discipline of the middle path, in step with today.

(Continued from page 437)

of the philosophy of man in Indian culture must be known to all students in India. Then, when they go abroad, they will be ambassadors of India and great helpers to their companions in the West. That is not

happening just now. Even our foreign services are very limited in what they do in this field.

(To be continued)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI, EDITED BY ARTHUR OSBORNE. Published by T. N. Venkataraman, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, 1968, pages 294, price Rs. 6.00.

The Saint of Tiruvannamalai was one of the greatest mystics of this century. His writings and sayings cover metaphysics, ethics, and religion. His utterances and his life do reveal him to be a *jīvanmukta*.

The present work is the third edition. Six important minor texts of Śrī Śaṅkara are rendered freely into Tamil by Sri Ramana Maharshi; and these are presented here in an English rendering. They include *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra*, *Ātma-bodha*, *Dṛg-dr̥śya-viveka* and *Vivekacūdāmaṇi*. Sri Ramana's poems and translations which cover nearly a hundred pages are stimulating. The first three prose texts deal with 'Self-enquiry', 'Who am I', and 'Spiritual Instruction'.

The book not only demands a careful study, but provides food for thought.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

A HISTORY OF THE ARYA SAMAJ: BY LAJPAT RAI (EDITED BY SRI RAM SHARMA), Orient

Longmans Limited, 3/5 Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-1 p. 217. Price Rs. 10.50.

This is a book published in connection with the birth centenary in 1965 of Lala Lajpat Rai the great national leader of India. The contents deal mostly with the life and teachings of Swami Dayananda and give some useful information regarding the programme and activities of the Arya Samaj from its very beginning. Inspired as he was, Lala Lajpat has given his own perspective on the matter in direct and simple language. One need not expect the standard of a historian in the book—neither the reflection, nor the objectivity. It is just a gleaned reproductions of certain facts and reportings with occasional comments of the author, in the form of history. Indeed as a movement of the recent-past Arya Samaj stirred up a new dialogue in the contemporary Indian history and civilization. It is good that public should know more about it in order to comprehend the spirit of renaissance and historical controversies within our heritage itself—bringing about a true vitalization of the country after a long time. For this, the book will be an useful compendium, to the general public.

S.B.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION, BHUBANESWAR

REPORT FOR 1967 TO 1969

The activities of this Centre during the period under review were as follows:

Spiritual and Cultural: The Math carried on its religious and cultural activities as usual. Besides regular puja, prayers, devotional music and Sri Sri Kali Puja in image, the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda were celebrated with special puja, discourses on their lives and teachings. Also the birthdays of Buddha, Jesus, Śaṅkarācārya and other prophets were observed. Regular weekly scriptural and religious classes were conducted at the Math premises as also at several localities in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack towns. Occasional lectures were delivered in several places at Bhubaneswar and outside.

Vivekananda Library and Free Reading Room: A public library with a free reading room was started in 1963. A textbook section was added to help the poor students. To encourage reading

habit among children, the library was provided with books for children. At the end of the period under review 7861 books were in the library, and 32,310 books were issued. The reading room received 7 dailies and 43 periodicals.

Charitable Dispensary: The Mission has been conducting a charitable allopathic dispensary since 1919. This has been of much help not only to the local people, but to the poor people of the surrounding villages and also to the pilgrims who come from various parts of the country. Total number of patients treated during 1967-68: 21816 of which 11210 were new cases; 1968-69: 21575 of which 11336 were new cases.

Vivekananda M. E. School and Free Upper Primary School: The total number of students as on 31st March 1967 was 194 boys and 70 girls in the U.P. School and 35 boys in the M. E. School.

Publication: A short life of Sri Ramakrishna was published in Oriya and some of Oriya books (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature) which were out of print, were reprinted during the years under review.