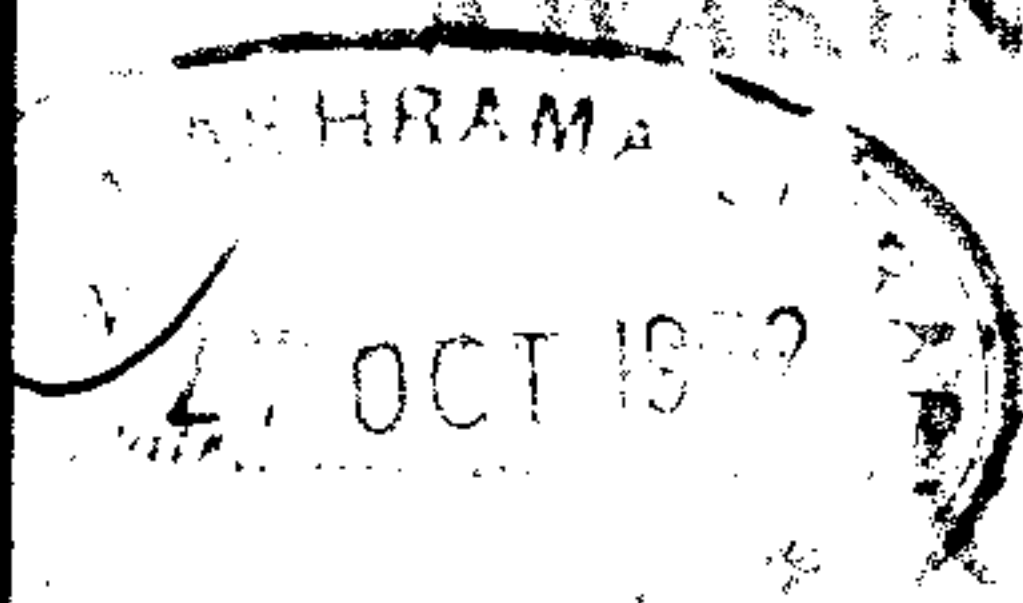


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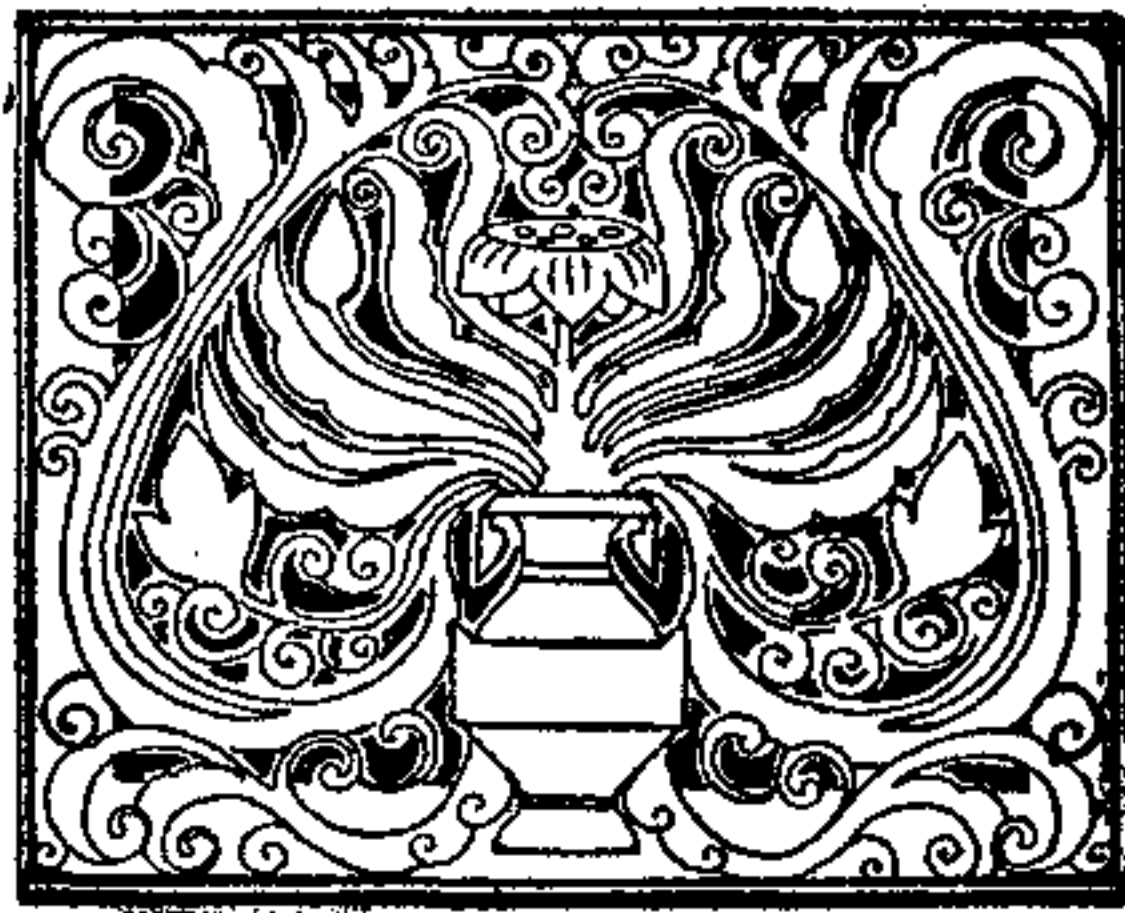
Prabuddha Bharata

1972

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Prabuddha Bharata

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

SEPTEMBER 1972

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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXVII

SEPTEMBER 1972

No. 9

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by a Brahma devotee): 'Sir, suppose a man has thought of God at other times during his life, but at the time of his death forgets Him. Would he, on that account, come back to this world of sorrow and suffering? Why should it be so? He certainly thought of God some time during his life.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'A man thinks of God, no doubt, but he has no faith in Him. Again and again he forgets God and becomes attached to the world. It is like giving the elephant a bath; afterwards he covers his body with mud and dirt again. "The mind is a mad elephant." But if you can make the elephant go into the stable immediately after bathing him, then he stays clean. Just so, if a man thinks of God in the hour of death, then his mind becomes pure and it gets no more opportunity to become attached to "woman and gold".'

'Man has no faith in God. That is the reason he suffers so much. They say that when you plunge into the holy waters of the Ganges your sins perch on a tree on the bank. No sooner do you come out of the water after the bath than the sins jump back on your shoulders. A man must prepare the way beforehand, so that he may think of God in the hour of death. The way lies through constant practice. If a man practises meditation on God, he will remember God even on the last day of his life.'

Question (posed by himself): 'Isn't it possible to think of God in the midst of the wicked?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Just think of the rishis of ancient times. They used to meditate on God in the forest, surrounded on all sides by tigers, bears, and other ferocious beasts. Wicked men have the nature of tigers and bears. They will pursue you to do you an injury.'

'One must be careful about these few things. First, an influential man who has much money and many men under his control. He can injure you if he wants; you must be careful while talking to him; perhaps you may have to approve what he says. Second, a dog. When it chases you or barks at you, you must stand still, talk to it gently, and pacify it. Third, a bull. If it runs after you with lowered horns, you must calm it with a gentle voice. Fourth, a drunkard. If you arouse his anger, he will abuse you, naming

fourteen generations of your family. You should say to him : "Hello uncle! How are you ?" Then he will be mightily pleased and sit by you and smoke.

'In the presence of a wicked person I become alert. If such a man asks me whether I have a pipe for smoking, I say, "Yes, I have." Some people have the nature of a snake: they will bite you without warning. You have to discriminate a great deal in order to avoid the bite; otherwise your passion will be stirred up to such an extent that you will feel like doing injury in return. The companionship of a holy man is greatly needed now and then. It enables one to discriminate between the Real and the unreal.'

Question (asked by a devotee): 'Can't God fulfil a devotee's desire?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'If it is His sweet will. But God doesn't take entire responsibility for a devotee unless the devotee is completely intoxicated with ecstatic love for Him. At a feast it is only a child whom one takes by the hand and seats at his place. Who does that with older people? Not until a man thinks so much of God that he cannot look after himself does God take on his responsibilities. Hazra doesn't inquire about his family. His son said to Ramlal: "Please ask father to come home. We shall not ask anything of him." These words almost brought tears to my eyes. Hazra's mother said to Ramlal: "Please ask Pratap¹ to come home just once. Also ask your uncle² to request him to come home." I told him about it, but he didn't listen to me.

'Is a mother to be trifled with? Before becoming a sannyasi Chaitanyadeva worked hard to persuade his mother to let him renounce home. Mother Sachi said that she would kill Keshab Bharati.³ Chaitanyadeva did his utmost to persuade her. He said: "Mother, I shall not renounce home if you won't let me. But if you compel me to lead a householder's life, I shall die. And, mother, even if I go away as a sannyasi, you will be able to see me whenever you desire. I shall stay near you. I shall see you every now and then." Only when Chaitanya explained it to her thus did she give her permission. Narada could not go to the forest to practise austerity as long as his mother was alive. He had to take care of her. After her death he went away to realize God.

'When I went to Vrindavan I felt no desire to return to Calcutta. It was arranged that I should live with Gangama.⁴ Everything was settled. My bed was to be on one side and Gangama's on the other. I resolved not to go back to Calcutta. I said to myself, "How long must I eat a kaivarta's⁵ food?" "No," said Hriday to me, "let us go to Calcutta." He pulled me by one hand and Gangama pulled me by the other. I felt an intense desire to live at Vrindavan. But just then I remembered my mother. That completely changed everything. She was old. I said to myself: "My devotion to God will take to its wings if I have to worry about my mother. I would rather live with her. Then I shall have peace of mind and be able to meditate on God."'

¹ Hazra ² Sri Ramakrishna ³ The guru who initiated Chaitanya into monastic life.

⁴ A great woman saint of Vrindavan.

⁵ A reference to the proprietors of the Dakshineswar temple, who belonged to the fisherman caste, considered low in Hindu society.

ONWARD FOR EVER !

Consciousness is only one of the many planes in which we work ; you will have to transcend the field of consciousness, to go beyond the senses, approach nearer and nearer to your own centre, and as you do that, you will approach nearer and nearer to God. What is the proof of God ? Direct perception, Pratyaksha. The proof of this wall is that I perceive it. God has been perceived that way by thousands before, and will be perceived by all who want to perceive Him. But this perception is no sense-perception at all ; it is super-sensuous, super-conscious, and all this training is needed to take us beyond the senses. By means of all sorts of past work and bondages we are being dragged downwards ; these preparations will make us pure and light.... True religion is entirely transcendental. Every being that is in the universe has the potentiality of transcending the senses ; even the little worm will one day transcend the senses and reach God. No life will be a failure ; there is no such thing as failure in the universe. A hundred times man will hurt himself, a thousand times he will tumble, but in the end he will realise that he is God. We know there is no progress in a straight line. Every soul moves, as it were, in a circle, and will have to complete it, and no soul can go so low but there will come a time when it will have to go upwards. No one will be lost. We are all projected from one common centre, which is God.

Sri Aurobindo

DRUG ABUSE AND INDIAN YOUTH

EDITORIAL

In April this year the newspapers reported the death of a fourteen-year-old schoolboy in a New Delhi hospital where he was admitted in an unconscious condition brought on by an overdose of opium. This tragedy has served to convince us that India has indisputably become a part of the 'drug empire' over which the sun never sets. North America, Mexico, Europe, Middle East, India, S. E. Asia, Far East—almost every country is afflicted with this monstrous drug epidemic. Rank materialism and affluence generally bring on the predisposition for this plague and a global nexus of drug agents, smugglers, and pushers efficiently convey the contagion. The situation is alarming and tragic because within the last ten years drug addiction has spread from adults and college youths to school children. Last year all of the U.S.A., where drug abuse has become one of nation's top-ranking problems, was shocked when TV showed a six-year-old addict whose mental faculties were fast ebbing away from drug abuse. Thousands of parents and families are passing through heart-rending and sickening experiences because their sons and daughters and near relations are either hopelessly addicted to or felled by drugs. Naturally, governments and law-authorities, teachers and parents, physiologists and psychotherapists, sociologists and welfare workers have become deeply concerned about the drug problem.

Naturally, too, has the United Nations stirred itself to deal with the problem. The eleven-member International Narcotics Control Commission has received a new mandate to suppress the illicit drug traffic with more powerful international machinery for uncovering unlawful production and sale of narcotics.

Drug addiction among Indian students has shown up in the metropolis and in some

other leading cities. Like pop music and mod clothing, soon it may spread to small towns and rural areas. Because the problem at present is not as widespread and virulent as in other countries, we need not be tardy and sluggish in reacting to it. In planning our strategy and taking counter-measures, we can unhesitatingly draw on the experience and modes of operation of other countries. We will have to join hands with the international community in fighting the drug smugglers. But it is high time that the central and state governments, universities and schools, medical and health authorities, the public, and the student community itself put their minds and resources together and challenge this insidious monster who has evil designs on our present and future generations.

What Drugs Can Do to Our Young

The death of one small boy and the agonies of his parents, relatives, and friends are grievous enough to make us conscious of the problem of drug abuse among our youth. But the death is only symptomatic. Though reliable statistics as to the extent of drug addiction among Indian youth are not available, still it is universally acknowledged that drug abuse is fairly widespread in certain segments. To rouse ourselves to a determined action, it is necessary for us to know how innocently the abuse starts, how quickly it develops, what individual and social sufferings it brings, and how in certain cases it ends in mental derangement and death.

The instances we cite here are not imaginary, though they did not happen in India. They are from real life. But there is nothing to prevent similar things happening here, as the death of the New Delhi schoolboy has shown. Because drug addiction is a human problem and humanity is universal. Drug abuse is no respecter of national boundaries and political limits. Human welfare and

sanity are threatened by this devilish menace for which a white addict is as useful as a black, brown or yellow.

A teenage English girl wrote from a London prison to the authorities of a convent:

'The world of drugs is a lonely world of mental frustration, false happiness, and sickness. You enter it so simply with your first exciting smoke of hash. The next steps seem to come naturally, and before you know it you're hooked on heroin.'

'After my first fix I stopped being afraid of the needle and, despite the constant threat of blood poisoning, came to associate it with mental relief and pleasure. Eventually my body and life were ruled by heroin. I lived for nothing but my next fix. I was incapable of work so I started stealing to get money for drugs and finally landed in Holloway Prison. I'd have reached the bottom of hell if it had not been for the people at Spelthorne St. Mary. They helped me to help myself become a real person again.'¹

Art Linkletter is a radio and TV celebrity in the U.S.A. In October 1969 his youngest daughter Diane, aged 20, fell to her death from the window of her sixth-floor Hollywood apartment. Linkletter later wrote that 'Diane took her own life in a mood of irrationality, panic and despair that was the aftermath of a bad trip on LSD'. Because he is very well known and loved too, he received thousands of letters and telegrams, day after day, from small town and big cities, sympathizing with him. A staggering proportion of them conveyed similar stories of tragedies. Two such letters which he later published read as follows:

'Our son, a first-year medical student, took LSD after much coaxing by "friends" and out of curiosity. Little happened on the day that he took the drug. But a week later, driving on

¹ Sister Patricia, 'What I Tell Youngsters about Drugs', *Reader's Digest* (Indian Edition), August 1970, p. 35.

the Pennsylvania Turnpike, he had a recurrence.

'He brought his car to a stop, stripped completely, folded his clothes neatly, got out of the car feeling that he could outrace, barefooted, anything on the highway.

'A camper-car hit him and hurled him into the air. He suffered a partly crushed skull. Only after a long month of anguish were we given hope that he would make it back.'

The letter went on to say that the boy lost the sight of one eye and had a silver plate in his head. Perhaps he resumed his studies. Perhaps not.²

The second one was from a small town in America's Pacific North-west and it was so typical and so sad:

'My daughter left home on the night of July 8; I've never seen nor heard from her since. I hadn't the slightest idea that she was on drugs; now I know she was. What caused her to run away, and where is she? She didn't take any of her clothes, only what she had on. Sometimes I think I will lose my mind. I go into her room. There's her wallet, her skis, the jewellery box her brother brought her from Vietnam. Why? Why did she feel she had to leave? I can't find any answer. She would have been 18 this November.'³

Invited by George Bush, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Art Linkletter some time later discussed the drug problem in New York City before a special U.N. audience.

Drugs and the Harm They Do

'Habits', said a great thinker, 'are like cobwebs in the beginning and cables in the end.' The drug habit is no exception. It all starts very innocently, for experimentation, for getting a little 'high', to get a kick. The

² Art Linkletter, 'My Daughter Died of Drugs', *Reader's Digest*, June 1970, pp. 67-8.

³ *ibid.*

reach for drugs, some authorities assert, is usually found in the wish to increase experiences and enjoyment. Someone will tell a boy or girl that getting a little high is harmless. It might begin with smoking a reefer-cigarette of cannabis. Many young people know about cannabis and its various names—hash or hashish, marijuana, hemp, pot, grass. But doing anything once is neither satisfying nor keeping abreast of fashion. Reefers give the drug sensation and open a door, as it were. A wish to go through with it may arise and goad the experimenter to try it again. Usually there is the 'devil's henchman' beckoning one to step across. What he will offer will be something stronger, and the unwary will go through that door. And hash *makes one unwary.*

There is an opinion going round that marijuana is harmless and non-addictive. Some scientific opinion is forthcoming in its favour. But there is an equally powerful scientific circle which does not support the view. The experience of those who have had to work with young marijuana-users supports the second opinion. Dr. Walter Lehmann, an American doctor who directs a rehabilitation programme for drug addicts in Connecticut, has the following opinion on marijuana:

'Marijuana can cause muscular incoordination, distort the perception of time and space, impair the memory as well as the ability to make judgements and to take decisions. Take enough of it and it can induce hallucinations as intense as those of LSD. Marijuana, though not physically addictive, can lead the user to become psychologically dependent on it, and it can induce paranoid and schizophrenic responses needing emergency psychiatric care.'⁴

He also quotes two other authorities on this subject:

⁴ Dr. Walter Lehmann, 'Hard Facts About Marijuana', *R.D.*, August 1971, p. 38.

'Dr. Keith Yonge, president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association and head of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, says that all the psychotropic (mind altering) drugs—including marijuana—induce changes in personality functioning and that there is some evidence that they may include lasting changes in the chemical processes of the brain cell. Dr. Henry Bruyn, director of student health services at the University of California, describes states of acute panic, prolonged psychoses, recurrent hallucinations and hysterical episodes following the use of marijuana alone.'⁵

But the scrupulous specialist does not fail to warn us that 'we are dealing with a highly controversial subject, one about which there is strong disagreement among reputable scientists and doctors'. That marijuana does no significant damage *may* be true if it is taken in small doses. But where are those adepts in self-mastery among the young pot-smokers? Dr. Lehmann points out from his own experience that of nearly a thousand youngsters addicted to hard drugs with whom he has worked all but one started with marijuana! In a period, says an authentic source, when 43,000 Americans died in war in Vietnam, 1,40,000 others died at home from drugs!!

Once a user leaves behind cannabis or pot, he becomes hooked on something strong and later on real hard drugs. From amphetamines through barbiturates to heroin, the path is pleasant, laid out with glittering vistas, but leads only to infernal sufferings. One of the most dangerous drugs is LSD or 'acid', a hallucinogenic that stimulates schizophrenia. Also, it is totally unpredictable: it may give one the most glorious feelings or the horrors, bring on euphoria or the urge to commit murder or suicide. LSD is not physically addictive, we hear, but that should not mislead anyone. A drug, simply because it is non-addictive physically,

should not be taken to be harmless: it can be a killer. But most pathetic is the fate of those who are addicted to heroin and its derivatives. If they fail to get their 'fix', they suffer terribly. They get violent stomach gripes, shake from head to foot, and vomit. A fix is the only thing that matters to them then. And where will young boys and girls get the money for procuring these costly drugs? They have to resort to dishonest and unclean ways and means. They cheat, steal or prostitute themselves for the money to buy the 'fix' and keep slithering deeper into the soul-deadening bog.

One of the most formidable drug-addiction pitfalls which any normal child and youth can hardly circumvent is the juvenile urge to do the 'in' thing. Getting a little high, he or she will be told, is harmless—and the 'in' thing to do. From sporting sideburns to participating in glue-sniffing, the youth wants to conform in everything. Parents, teachers, and society—all have to adjust themselves to them. If the young boys and girls learn a little to think for themselves—they raise hell against parental and pedagogic control—, and do not fall in step with the 'caste-rules' of the youth, it will not be long before the drug culture becomes a thing of the past. It takes courage and spinal strength to brush away the mental cobwebs regarding drug-use-myths and to avoid entanglement in the cables of drug-addiction.

Some Measures to Overcome the Drug-epidemic

At the outset, let us hold off dogmatism and stiff puritanical pontifications about drug-abusing youth. What we need to bring in are love and sympathy, understanding and open mind. True, the modern youth are misguided and are treading a dangerous and uncharted path. But history shows that the youth have always been like that, aggressive, experimenting, off-beat. If the elders

⁵ *ibid.*

are really wise, morally tough, and farsighted; let them prove it in their lives, through setting examples. Let us avoid that sort of unconscious hypocrisy which, in the words of the famous anthropologist Dr. Margaret Mead, makes adults 'stand with a cigarette in one hand and a cocktail in the other criticizing young people for using marijuana'.⁶ Alcohol, as a TV commentator once quipped, is America's 'national drug'. So also is it of almost all countries including India. Let the elders try to change themselves without giving a chance to the youngsters to retort *tu quoque*.

But all are unanimous on this point that, while the adult has grown to maturity, settled in life, and has nearly made his goal, a tender boy or girl has not even matured physically and mentally. Not to speak of entering the life and succeeding in it. But, alas, the human sapling has been struck by the drug-blight which is slowly wilting the body, mind, and soul. Who can say that the wilt will be limited only to one generation and will not cripplingly affect the unborn generations? We must act now, and act speedily, sagaciously, and efficiently.

First, it is self-education for the parents, guardians, and the teachers that becomes necessary. They must equip themselves with all authentic facts about the drugs and their different physiological and psychological effects on human beings. Let no one take the youngster to be uninformed and unreceptive. When he challenges you on a certain point, you must be able to reply in a way that appeals to both his head and heart. Authoritarian retorts might break him and not bend him. He may suddenly become uncommunicative and distrustful.

Second, never allow the bridge of communication between you and your children

to collapse. No matter how much time you have been spending with your children, advises Art Linkletter, try to spend more. Talk to them more, for example, at the dinner table. It will not be easy but it has to be done. When the child knows that you are its sincere well-wisher, it will open up.

Third, look for the best in your children, praise them judiciously, and trust them. There is hardly a child which does not respond to love and trust. But if you are permissive, see that you become firm.

Fourth, if your child comes to you and admits that he or she is experimenting with drugs, do not over-react. 'The panic-reaction,' warns Linkletter, 'the heavy-handed moralistic counter-attack will only breed antagonism.' That the child thought of taking you into confidence is itself a hopeful sign. It means that he is really asking for help. The reaction should be such that the child feels reassured he is as close to your heart as ever and that he can secure your help and protection to fight the habit.

Fifth, the school, the college, and the community should organize anti-drug programmes, film-shows, seminars etc., where professional and competent men from the fields of medicine, psychology, and social science will acquaint the youth with the nature of drugs and their ruinous effect on human body and psyche, and social life.

Finally, we must get the students themselves involved in the anti-drug campaign. There is quite a section among student population which has strong reservations against drugs. If such young people are given the necessary perspective and backing, we will have as our ally the mightiest force we can think of to fight the drug menace. As writers on this topic have frequently pointed out, no young person really wants to use drugs. They start because it is fashionable. If it can be made the fashion not to use drugs, well, what hope has drug-addiction of survival? We can only refer our readers to such a pro-

⁶ Vide Donald W. Calhoun: *Social Science in an Age of Change* (Harper & Row, New York, 1971), p. 485.

gramme set afoot in Los Angeles, California, about five years ago.⁷ Its achievements are impressive and it claims that 'it provides what many experts feel is the most effective answer yet to a problem that has so far defied all efforts to control it'.

What Answer Has Religion to Offer?

Not all those who take to drugs do so out of a blocked-up religious hankering. We hear almost all drug-users claiming that what they seek is 'expansion of consciousness' or 'a contact with reality' or 'to love everybody'. Of course, religion claims to accomplish them for its votaries. We no doubt admit the sincerity of a good number of young men. For example, one young man made a noteworthy statement in reply to a query by Jean Houston, Dept. of Philosophy, Marymount College, New York:

'Why do I want to take LSD? Because I'm tired of the clock time and the ruled space. I feel that my life has been progressively dehumanized by the accelerating frenzy with which the events of time and the places of space bombard my mind. There are days when I just like to stop this time-space hurdy-gurdy and get off. Maybe an LSD trip can take me to that place where it finally slows down and comes to a stop. And what do I expect to find there? No time, no space, all time, all space, and with it may be some meaning.'⁸

These words are typical of a religious hankering. Man feels a tremendous discontent with and dislike for this slavery to time and space, this sense-bound existence. How to break away from it? Not through 'psychedelics', or 'moksha-medicines' as Aldous Huxley has called them. 'Psychedelic'—meaning mind-manifesting—was first coined by Osmond. But does it really mani-

fest mind or consciousness? From reading all the descriptions of drug trips—for instance, *Heaven and Hell* by Aldous Huxley—, we come to know that psychedelic drugs produce vivid visual sensations, with dazzling kaleidoscopic colours, and a vibrancy of image. Auditory effects are less frequent. Taste, touch, and smell seem largely uninvolved. On the whole, it is an on-looker's world. This sort of thing is extolled as expanded perception, augmented consciousness, and so on. It is in fact more appropriate to call it 'sensedelic', since hallucinogenic episodes are more sensual than mental.

Patañjali, the father of yoga, states that miraculous powers and extrasensory perceptions can be attained by birth, chemical means, power of words, mortification, or concentration. Some Hindu mendicant ascetics are known to use marijuana or cannabis to induce concentration and expand consciousness. But such yogis tend to remain enslaved to the drugs, and they are not considered to be spiritually greatly evolved. Patañjali, as a scientific yoga teacher, felt it his duty to mention a fact but does not give it any importance. His whole yoga-edifice is built up squarely on a strong ethical foundation, on the fact that the self of man has all powers potentially present in it, and is meant to free the self of all dependence, physical, chemical, or psychological.

According to Vedāntic teachers man is already deluded, hypnotized, and is seeing hallucinations of various types. What he needs is de-hypnotization, coming out of the delusion that he is the body, mind, and ego. He has to break through the cage of time-space-causation by knowing his transcendental spiritual nature. Thus alone he can really expand his consciousness, come in touch with reality, and love one and all. Psychedelic drugs only heighten one's perceptive activity, impair the mind, and enslave the user. That is the very opposite

⁷ Vide James Shuman, 'An Anti-Drug Programme That Works', *R.D.*, Nov. 1971.

⁸ Quoted in *The Mountain Path* (Sri Ramana-shramam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India), Vol. IX, no. 1, p. 2.

of what Vedānta seeks to teach. It says that you cannot satisfy a man by feeding his spiritual hunger with a chemical diet. Ātman, the spiritual essence in man, is of the nature of bliss, consciousness, and reality. Man's sole duty is to realize this blissful Ātman by controlling and transcending body and mind.

We will only mention here the example of the Sage of Dakshineswar who was found to be always overflowing with a supernal bliss. He used to exclaim sometimes, 'Oh, the bliss of divine ecstasy! Oh, the bliss of divine drunkenness!' and dance about in supreme joy. He had a disciple by name Surendra Mitra who was an inveterate alcoholic. What the Saint one day said to this disciple may prove to be the best weapon to conquer the drug-habit cultivated because of a thwarted religious hankering:

'Look here, Surendra! Whenever you drink wine, offer it beforehand to the Divine Mother. See that your brain doesn't become clouded and that you don't reel. The more you think of the Divine Mother, the less you will like to drink. The Mother is the Giver of the bliss of divine inebriation. Realizing Her, one feels a natural bliss.'⁹

Questions Before the Indian Youth

Analysing the causes that have led to the drug cult among American youth, Art Linkletter observes:

Experts on human behaviour grope for reasons to explain the drug cult. It is said that ours is a pill-oriented society; that our affluent youth can afford to disregard the traditional values of self-

discipline and self-denial; that it is natural for young people to seek thrills and rebel against authority.'

Well, can these causes explain the drug-addiction among Indian youth? Only to a slight extent. Our society is neither pill-oriented nor affluent. Seeking thrills and rebelling against authority are more and more becoming evident among Indian youth. But certainly not to the extent they are in the West.

The Indian youth should stop the mindless imitation of their Western counterparts. Let them not take the 'trip' from reality but face it, and work hard so that the whole country takes the 'trip' from poverty to prosperity. Millions upon millions of hungry brothers and sisters, living in wretched slums and subhuman conditions, call upon the country's youth to solve their problems of poverty and misery. Can the youth afford to turn away by 'turning on'? The challenge of facing and throwing back poverty from Indian soil offers more thrilling 'trips' than mind-devastating drugs. Let not the country's youth fail their countrymen in the hour of dire need. Otherwise they will incur the displeasure and curses of their posterity.

If the drug addiction has come upon them because of religious frustration, it is time they went back to our ancient teachers, saints, and sages for overcoming their feeling of frustration. Even today India has enough genuine spiritual men who can help the young to satisfy their spiritual hunger. If the youth from the affluent society can find the spiritual food in this country today, why should our own un-affluent youth starve?

⁹'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4, 1947), p. 528.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora
25.6.1915

My dear D. . . . ,

Always practise the remembrance of the Lord ; once habituated, this becomes easy. And know this to be the root of all welfare.

With my love and best wishes,

SRI TURIYANANDA

Dear. . . . ,

. . . . Don't you allow the mind to become disturbed. In time the Lord, on His own, will set everything right. You go on with His prayer wholeheartedly. What will you gain by moving here and there ? Try to see Him in your own heart ; you will be transformed into infinite consciousness. . . .

You should study the scriptures with a good amount of effort, and so also in your meditation and prayer you should remain attentive. Contemplation of the Lord is the essential thing—know the scripture to be an aid in it.

Ever your well-wisher,
SRI TURIYANANDA

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora
29.7.15

Sri. . . . ,

. . . . Wherever you are, pray to the Lord with your whole heart. In that case, through the Lord's grace the mind will become steady. Otherwise, you go anywhere, it is all the same. Without prayer you won't get peace anywhere, know this for sure. If the relief work is taken up, then your visit there will not be in vain. Conveying my good wishes to . . . , tell him that the Lord's will alone will be fulfilled. What can man do after all ? But if one can merge one's own will in His will and remain in a spirit of self-surrender, then there won't be any fear. Everything will then be to one's own good. There is not the least doubt in it. . . . What more to write ?

SRI TURIYANANDA

THE LORD MY REFUGE

Almora
12.8.15

Sri D. . . . ,

I am sorry to hear that many of you are suffering from fever over there. What can be the Lord's will ? This time, in many parts of East Bengal many

calamities have occurred, and are occurring. May He bring about what is auspicious!—that is my sincere appeal and prayer to Him.

I am happy to hear that you are somewhat better now. Remember and think of the Lord as much as possible. If you once cultivate the habit of it, then everything becomes easy, undoubtedly. Slowly you have to practise and cultivate love for Him. Knowing everything as transient and worthless if you can completely offer your mind and soul only to Him, then divine love will dawn in the heart. If genuine love for Him is roused but once, there won't be any more fear. If you take refuge in Him, then He will accomplish everything....

Accept our love and good wishes.

SRI TURIYANANDA

RELIGION AND SUPERCONSCIOUS REALIZATION

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN HINDUISM

It is a grievous tragedy of our modern times that we Hindus who have inherited a great culture and religion are forgetting our moral and spiritual values. There is a craze to imitate the West in economic achievement. We need food, we need clothing, we need an amount of material prosperity—but never at the cost of moral and spiritual values embodied in our religion and philosophy.

What do we mean by religion? The Sanskrit word for religion is really *darśana*. This word *darśana* has a two-fold meaning. It means seeing or realization. It also means the path or discipline leading to this realization. By religion we mean both. The word *darśana* is also used to mean philosophy. In Hinduism we have six systems and all these are called *darśanas*.

In Hinduism religion and philosophy have been inseparable and even almost synonymous. The common aim of both being the intuitive vision of Truth, they fulfil each other. As Prof. Max Müller has very truly

observed, the two have worked together harmoniously in India alone, where religion derives its breadth of vision from philosophy and philosophy its spirituality from religion. Religion is the practical form of philosophy, and philosophy the rational form of religion. The Hindu philosophers were primarily men of spiritual realization. And therefore their systems, based as they are on transcendental experience, lead to the same goal, if followed with sincerity and devotion.

There is the story of a drunkard who was climbing a lamp post, shouting all the while. The police naturally caught him and dragged him to the magistrate, who asked him, 'What's the matter with you?' The man replied, 'What could I do, Sir? I was followed by three crocodiles. I had to save myself by climbing the lamp post.' In our waking state we see many things and imagine countless others. In our dreams also we perceive many things which are real to us as long as we dream. All this is perception, *darśana*, but not necessarily true. So the problem is to distinguish right percep-

tion from the false. In Indian philosophy there is a great deal of discussion about the criterion for valid perception. The scientist wants to know the truth of physical objects. He too has his experimental verification of the facts he perceives. The psychologist has his *darśana* too. He discovers with the help of his *darśana* the laws of thought. The spiritual aspirant wants to have direct experience of God or Ultimate Reality. This is what is called *aparokṣānubhūti* (immediate experience).

We think too much of our sense-perceptions. We think we are perceiving the outside things directly. Never. The stimulus comes from outside objects to the eye. From there the message is carried to the mind, and then to the self which is the knower. What an indirect process! And we are accustomed to calling it direct perception. Real direct perception or *aparokṣānubhūti* is that in which truth is directly revealed by the light of Self or Ātman. This inner light shines through the mind and the senses. It can also shine by itself. This is superconsciousness. It is sometimes called *turīya*. Our experience generally covers three states of consciousness—*jāgrat* or waking, *svapna* or dreaming, and *susupti* or deep sleep. As distinct from these three there is the fourth state called the *turīya*. It is not exactly a 'state' like the other three. It is a form of transcendental consciousness of which the other three states are partial manifestations. In that state the soul realizes that it is a part of the Infinite Spirit.

SAGES OF SUPERCONSCIOUS REALIZATION

The joy that comes to us through sense perception brings in its train no end of misery. At first it may be like nectar but later on it leads to frustration and disappointment. Intellectual pleasures are, no doubt, higher than this but they do not give us ultimate satisfaction or fulfilment. When we are in meditation, or when we sing the

glory of the Lord, we feel an inner joy. This happiness is very good but it may not last long. But the joy that comes to the seeker in the transcendental state of consciousness abides with him for ever. It is the real happiness of which the other forms of happiness are but shadows. Even if that higher spiritual experience is not complete, even if one has only reached the threshold of superconsciousness, the memory of the joy once realized lingers and forces the aspirant to struggle to reach the highest state and enjoy everlasting bliss.

All religions have their origin in superconscious realization. The experience of the superconscious made Jesus the Christ adored of millions of people. It made Mohammed, a poor camel-driver, the Prophet of Islam. It made Nimāi Paṇḍit, the great scholar fond of intellectual gymnastics, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the messenger of divine love. Coming to modern times, we find Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya, a poor temple priest in Calcutta, transformed by superconscious realization into the prophet of harmony of all religions. Of course, these men were not ordinary men. Many of us have heard of God but we do not really know what that term means. Through spiritual practice some may get some glimpses of divinity. And there are others who are not satisfied with these fleeting glimpses. They dive deep into themselves and discover God as the Soul of all souls. Just as soul exists in the body, so God exists in all souls—unattached but controlling all. God is both immanent and transcendent. The devotee assumes various relationships with the Divine and enjoys supreme bliss of communion with Him. When we say that the devotee looks upon God as the Master, the Friend, the Mother, or the Beloved, it should not be understood in a gross sense. Religion is, as Swami Vivekananda says, 'the eternal relation between the eternal soul and the

eternal God.’¹ This idea is conveyed in terms of human relationships.

But there are others who transcend even this state. They discover the unity of all existence in Brahman. The soul is lost in the Supreme Spirit and there remains the One without a second. You know the parable of Sri Ramakrishna about the salt doll which went to measure the depths of the ocean. In the process of measuring it dissolved and became one with the ocean out of which it had originally come.

One who attains to direct superconscious experience is called a *ṛṣi* or seer. Everybody is a seer. One who perceives sense objects is a seer. One who perceives distant stars and planets is a seer. One who can know the thoughts of others is a seer. One who discovers the laws of thought and workings of human mind is also a seer. But, as distinct from these, the word *ṛṣi* is used in the case of one who has intuitively experienced the transcendental Truth. This power of intuition, called *divya-cakṣu* or ‘divine eye’ in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is latent in all men.

IGNORANCE AND ITS CONQUEST

What prevents us from developing this ‘divine eye’ forthwith? Vedāntic teachers say it is ignorance. Patañjali also speaks about ignorance as that which clouds the vision of Puruṣa, the Self. In the *Yoga-sūtras* we read: ‘Ignorance is taking the non-eternal, the impure, the painful, and the not-Self for the eternal, the pure, the happy, and the Ātman or Self, respectively.’² Under the intoxication of ignorance truth becomes worse than fiction.

There is a story about this. A man was drinking in a bar which was reeking with liquor smell and fumes of cigarettes. Unless you have seen anything like that in the

West, you cannot have any idea how horrible it can be. But drunkards enjoy that. Now, the man was drinking for hours and hours until he had to go out. So the porter took him out of the hall and helped him to come out. As the tipsy fellow came to the outside door, he said, ‘What a funny smell is this?’ The porter said, ‘Sir, this is pure air.’ The drunkard had been so much accustomed to the foul smell inside that the smell of fresh pure air outside appeared funny to him.

How to overcome this ignorance and attain superconscious realization is the next question. Ignorance is not known as such. It manifests itself in various ways. First of all comes egoism. This eclipses the real Self or Ātman. Then comes desire or attachment. When these are checked or thwarted they give rise to anger and fear. Man is bound to the world by ignorance, egoism, and the instincts. Modern psychologists speak of complexes. According to one classification there are three types of complexes: the sex-complex, the ego-complex, and the herd-complex. Spiritual life does not even begin unless one learns to go beyond the hold of these complexes. This is the meaning of spiritual struggle. It is not possible to overcome the hold of instincts in a day. We are our own obstacles. External obstacles are nothing compared to those we create within. Our whole personality must be overhauled. How to do this? Vedānta opens before us four main ways of doing it. These paths are called Yogas.

KARMA-YOGA AND RAJA-YOGA

First of all comes Karma-yoga. Here the main emphasis is on detaching the will from the result of action. This is what is called working without motive. This is not as easy as many people imagine. It requires tremendous will power. But there is an easier way of detaching oneself from the

¹ *The Complete Works* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas), Vol. III (1960), p. 4.

² *Yoga-sūtras*, II. 5.

fruit of one's actions. This is to surrender the fruit at the feet of the Lord. You know the two most sublime lines at the very beginning of *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad* : *īśāvāsyam idam sarvam* etc. The whole world belongs to God. Realizing this one should give up every form of desire. "The Lord gives and the Lord takes, Glory be unto the Lord", wrote Swami Vivekananda, echoing the words of the Hebrew sage. When the mind gets purified through Karma-yoga, the Self shines forth.

Then comes the path of meditation or Rāja-yoga. Here the main struggle is to prevent thoughts about sense objects from arising in the mind, and make the mind flow along higher channels. For the vast majority of people this is simply an impossible feat. To attempt it without previous preparation may bring tremendous reactions. Hence Patañjali, the chief exponent of this path, has made it a graded series. First of all come *yama* and *niyama*, that is, following certain rules of conduct and ethics. One should practise at all times non-injury, truthfulness, chastity, non-covetousness, and non-dependence on others. Learn to stand on your own feet. Practise cleanliness and contentment. Read and think deeply and assimilate the ideas. Surrender everything to God, the Teacher of all teachers. After attaining success in all these, one may practise sitting in a particular posture and learn to control one's breath, which means control of the flow of cosmic energy in the body and mind. This is what is called *prāṇāyāma*. Some people give excessive importance to this but are often unable to handle the forces playing within them. The result may be temporary or permanent unsettlement of brain. Patañjali gives only a minor role to *prāṇāyāma* in his scheme of spiritual life. The next two steps in Rāja-yoga are: withdrawal of senses from the external objects and fixing the mind on some idea. When this inner concentration deepens

one realizes oneself as the Puruṣa or Self.

BHAKTI-YOGA

The third path is Bhakti-yoga. Here also there is need for discipline but the main emphasis is in giving a Godward turn to one's impulses. Attachment to the world should be changed to love for God. If you want to be angry be angry with the obstacles standing in the way of your spiritual progress. Fear should be replaced by self-surrender to the Divine. Along with that one should constantly remember the Lord. For this the devotee takes the help of sound symbols called *mantras*. *Mantras* are short formulas. Then there are the hymns and devotional songs which are longer. With the help of all this the devotee must think of the Lord constantly. Then, through His grace, one overcomes all the obstacles in spiritual life and gets the vision of Him.

JNANA-YOGA

When we come to Jñāna-yoga we find that a higher standard of morality, higher qualification, is demanded of the aspirant to embark on the spiritual adventure called Self-realization. He should be self-controlled, must have infinite patience and faith, and must be able to practise concentration. He should be able to discriminate between the real and the unreal and should be able to give up all desires for enjoyment here and hereafter. Finally, he must have *mumukṣutvam*, that is tremendous longing to be free from all limitations. It is not very easy to have all this. In old age people may show a certain amount of detachment and calm but these may not be real. They may be having strong desires but not the physical capacity to fulfil these. So sometimes the old people may feel more miserable. To one such I told a story. A person who was a great golf enthusiast died and went to heaven. The first question he asked on reaching heaven was, 'Have you got a golf

course here?' 'Golf course in heaven!' came the reply; 'it never happens.' 'Then I don't want to be in heaven. I will rather go to the other place.' So he was guided to the *other place*. As he entered, his guide pointed out and he saw wonderful golf links. He said, 'But, my dear fellow, where are the golf clubs?' His guide replied, 'Well, we have only got the golf course, we don't have the clubs and that's the hell of it.'

Jñāna is not book knowledge. The Upaniṣads speak of two kinds of *vidyā* or knowledge. One is *aparā* or lower and the other is *parā* or superior. *Aparā-vidyā* is that which one gets through sense perception and inference. Reading comes under this. *Parā-vidyā* is direct intuitive experience of the Ultimate Reality. The whole aim of Jñāna-yoga is to gain this superconscious experience, and not to indulge in hair-splitting arguments about philosophical points as it often becomes. One begins with *śravaṇa*, that is, reading or hearing from a guru about spiritual truths. These truths have been aphoristically expressed in the four great *mahāvākyas* (great statements) of the Upaniṣads. But one should not stop with hearing alone but should think deeply on what one hears until a deep conviction about the nature of the Truth and the possibility of attaining it is gained. This is called *manana*. Very often people never do this, even about the ordinary things they read. I am reminded of a story. A teenage girl was invited to dinner and she was sitting by the side of an eminent astronomer. His prepossessing appearance attracted the girl a little and so she asked him, 'What is the profession you are following?' In a humble way he said, 'I study astronomy.' The girl was disappointed. She thought the venerable looking

gentleman would give a better answer. She said, 'What, at this age you are still studying astronomy! I finished my astronomy last year.' Her knowledge of astronomy had ended with the reading of a few books. After *manana* comes *nididhyāsana*. By this is meant a higher form of meditation which is a direct enquiry into the nature of the Self. It is actually a deep inner search for the Reality by the process of *neti, neti*, 'not this', 'not this'.

All the great religions of the world have shown the paths to superconscious realization. The great mystics and saints of Christianity and the Sufis and contemplatives of Islam have left behind accounts of their struggles and attainments. The common feature of all these religious paths is the stress on ethical life and intense longing for the vision of transcendental Truth. Ordinary people do not have this great soul-hunger or love of God. That is why they make very little spiritual progress. But in the great saints and mystics of the world we find their whole minds given to God. Another characteristic of these great men is their love and compassion for their fellow beings. Having tasted the immortal bliss of superconscious realization they want to share it with others. They want to help others also to attain that blessed state which Vedānta calls *mukti* or liberation. A life of service is always a life of sacrifice. But the great ones gladly pass through troubles and tribulations which they take over from others. We cannot judge these souls, we do not have any standard to judge them by, and in trying to judge them, we usually misunderstand them. Little do men realize how dark human life would have been without the light these great ones have shed on it.

INDIAN THOUGHT AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DR. S. P. DUBEY

The traditional thinking of India is said to be spiritualistic, world-negating and pessimistic. But if we review the history of Indian philosophy, religion, and culture, this does not seem to be true. Philosophically, except the Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, all other systems are expressly realistic. Even Advaitism of Śaṅkara is interpreted to be realistic by many scholars. Right from the pre-historic culture found in the excavations of the Indus valley, through the Vedic Āryans, up to the modern thinkers like Tilak and Aurobindo we find the continuous flow of a positive attitude towards life and the world. Our ancient India produced not only the Upaniṣads full of transcendental wisdom and, according to some, the *śūnyatā* (nihilism) doctrine; she produced pioneer pieces of literature in various fields. She produced the *Artha-śāstra* of Kauṭilya, *Nāṭya-śāstra* of Bharata, *Kāma-sūtras* of Vātsyāyana, *Yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini and the like. Over and above all these, she produced the *Bhagavad-gītā* which has presented the most impressive and effective technique of life under the stress of war.

But, it may be asked, why India did not produce the industrialized society in spite of all these achievements, wealth, and weather? There must be something lacking behind all these which hindered such progress. The German sociologist Max Weber examines these factors in his book *Religion of India*. The British economist Barbara Ward states that to an Indian for whom the world is ultimately *māyā* the scientific discoveries are equally illusive and cannot be recognized of permanent value. To a Christian, on the other hand, these things are important because he believes in one

life and is asked to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. God has made man in His own image and this world is the stage where man can realize his ideal. Undoubtedly, this concept has been the cause of the birth of the technological society in the West. In his famous work, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber shows how Christianity in its Protestant form (more specifically Calvinism) has been the basic factor behind the structure of the modern society. It was not Judaism, nor Zoroastrianism, Islam, or Catholicism that was the crucial factor for such development. It was the Protestant thinking which was mainly responsible for the birth and growth of the modern form of the Western society. Gradually the Protestant religion is changing into a secular industrial society around the north Atlantic world and trying to change the face of the earth by replacing the old by the new. Secular technology is now becoming gradually a religion by itself and as several religions are said to be flourishing by killing their parent religions, technology is claiming to abolish even the most liberal forms of Protestantism. In fact today all the major religions of the world, both Palestinian and Indian groups, are in growing danger in the face of this new religion.

When the West was beginning to give birth to Protestant Christianity and later to the technological society, India was in the grip of Muslim and European domination. Her prosperity was being sucked and when she was set free the day-before-yesterday, there were only numerous hungry children fighting with each other on communal grounds. The Britishers had established few industries in order to serve their own ends and the free India tried to imitate the

'masters' in most of the cases when they had gone. Under the spell of Nehru there was unbounded emphasis on industrialization of the subcontinent. Suddenly Bhakra, Bhilai, Durgapur, and Trombay took the place of Kashi and Kanchi (the Hindu places of pilgrimage). It was a tremendous transformation of the tradition towards modernization. But the onslaught of the Chinese and later border clashes with the neighbouring Pakistan diverted the energy from prosperous ends to defensive measures, which is a logical proposition of the technological ethic. Nehru wanted the country to be like the United States or at least like Japan. His dream was not fulfilled. Many people may, and should, regret this. But the visionaries of India did not dream of the technological society and they do not seem to approve it. I am thinking here of persons like Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi, and Vinoba. They can see the use of technology when it is a means to achieve certain ends, as a servant to the mankind. But behind the uses they could see the abuses of technology as it becomes an end in itself. The logic of technology does not permit it to remain as a means; it attains the supreme position of being an end and man himself becomes the means for it. And once we opt for it, we are going to be its servant, and not the master.

In the present context the problem for India is threefold. The first problem is our poverty. Here poverty is wedded to population. It is not the problem in the North America because that land is underpopulated and with immense resources. In India the old agricultural method is not able to produce enough to feed new mouths born every day and living longer because of improved life-saving drugs and health services. Therefore we come for rescue to technological methods so that everybody is given enough to eat. But the second problem is to feed technology itself. It is such a grow-

ing giant, born in a foreign land, that the Indian raw material is not sufficient for its regular maintenance and growth. We have to depend on foreign countries for many equipments and the capital. But the economic aids are almost always flavoured by political interests and pressures. For a non-aligned country like ours it is not possible to expect such aids for long. There are other problems as well. The most important from our point of view is that the traditional India does not fully work according to the ethics of technology. Though we admit that technique means efficiency in performing all acts (the *Gītā* states it as follows: *yogah karmasu kauśalam*), this efficiency was usually applied to the otherworldly ends. The *Mīmāṃsā* applied it for performance of rituals, the Yoga used it for concentration and so on. But even if we admit that India should have gone industrialized long back, does this hypothesis solve the problems of the modern man? In fact the so-called modernization is creating immense unforeseen problems. The computerization of industries may be good for the underpopulated countries. But for this country it certainly creates unnecessary unemployment. We have yet to decide whether total modernization is good or not, and whether partial industrialization is possible. The problem becomes more clear in the West where technology has already become a problem. The problem is being tackled in the West because for those countries it has become more acute. But we also cannot remain aloof for long. The global technology leaves its impact all over. Can we retain our tradition in the wake of such challenges? We shall have to examine our tradition as well. How much of it is still meaningful, and what portions are dead? Further, we have always been proud of our all-embracing culture. Can we still maintain it in the face of extreme poverty and extreme modernization? Can our tradition be still

helpful in working out a middle path of the Buddha and guide us in maintaining a balance between complacency and craziness?

To an average Indian, or to a person almost everywhere, technology is certainly an ideal at the moment. But as to some Indian visionaries, to several Western thinkers also it has become clear that technology is posing immediate danger to the mankind. The intercontinental missiles, nuclear weapons, pollution of air and water, drug-reactions etc. are some of the examples which alert not only the thinkers, but the laboratory-men as well. Some of the more conscientious thinkers are sensing the explosions which will soon bring doomsday rather than the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Even the younger generation in the United States is fast becoming aware of it. The hippie movement is a healthy, though immature reaction of the suffocation of the industrialized man. We can see the mature expression of such reflections in the writings of the historian Arnold Toynbee, theologian Paul Tillich, scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and metaphysician Charles Hartshorne. The French sociologist Ellul paints a very suggestive picture of the modern situation in his book *The Technological Society*. If technology has presented unbounded joy for us, it has also brought unlimited miseries and dangers. We can see that the heart-transplantation is extending the span of human life, but we also see that many more persons are dying in road-accidents daily. Thus the claim of the technological man to create his own future which may contain some surprises even for him may have both the aspects equally potentially present. It may have a bright future and it could be even a dark one. Who knows?

Coupled with the physical extremes there are ideological extremes of the technological era. In addition to technology, the Judaeo-Christian tradition has given birth to

the rival ideologies as well. These are the two camps of nationalism and communism. Both have the same hypothesis of man-worship and matter-worship as against worshipping something within or something beyond the man. Nationalism glorifies the capitalists who form the backbone of the national economy. Communism elevates the leaders who pretend to liberate the mankind from poverty and suppression. Both these ideologies have tried to abolish each other and dominate the whole world. Some attempts are being made to make compromises but the inner convictions are so polar that the attempts end in failure. However, one thing is clear. Both of them have crept into the Indian soil. But both, because of their foreign origin, do not seem to be applicable here in their original form. The pressures from both the sides, whether positive or negative, constantly challenge our non-alignment policy. Can the doctrine of the *pañcaśīla* still be maintained? Can we still remain non-nuclear in the face of continuous dangers from the theocratic Pakistan and 'Maocratic' China? Should India change herself completely in order to meet the present challenges? Is our past heritage of some help in meeting such challenges or does it remain an obstacle in our march towards a bright future? These and some similar questions have to be asked and answered by every Indian living within and outside the country today. It is essential to examine the fundamental pre-suppositions of our tradition and see whether they are valid even now or have become outdated and need surgical operation. We always stand to destroy the deadwood and welcome the novel good (*purāṇamityeva na sādhu sarvam...*). We shall have to see how far the old foundation can stand the load of the new structure. All this needs some patient and penetrative thinking from several directions and we should give our thoughts towards this without much delay.

INDIA AT THE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

BY J. V. NASH

[Seventynine years have elapsed since the momentous World's Parliament of Religions was held at Chicago in the September of 1893. The shock waves produced by that great event are still working to shape the universal religious outlook of men and women, churches and creeds in different parts of the world. Those who are familiar with the biographies of Swami Vivekananda know many details about the Chicago Parliament of Religions. Even they may not know that, though many nations were represented at the Parliament, India 'had the most numerous and impressive of all foreign delegations'. We are glad to reprint below an informative article by J. V. Nash entitled 'India at the World's Parliament of Religions' which highlights the sayings and doings of the Indian delegation including Swami Vivekananda. The writer, like the Chairman of the Chicago Parliament, has kept Swamiji until the end! The article is reproduced by the courtesy of *The Open Court* in which it appeared in June 1933.

Our readers will find a few errors—for instance, the centenary of Sri Ramakrishna's birth is said to be in 1933; 'Ram Dohan Roy' 'Narasima Chaira'—in the article which we have not attempted to correct. The article is reproduced exactly as it came to our hands. —Ed.]

After the lapse of forty years, the World's Parliament of Religions, which met at Chicago in September, 1893, stands out as a significant landmark in the progressive evolution of human relations. Here, for the first time, there came together, in a spirit of brotherhood and good-will, representatives of different forms of organized belief from all the far-flung quarters of the earth. The occasion was unique, also, in the fact that the Roman Catholic Church was officially represented by many of its highest dignitaries. For the work of organizing the Parliament, much of the credit was due to Dr. John Henry Barrows, a Presbyterian clergyman of Chicago, who served as Chairman of the General Committee.

Let us imagine ourselves among the audience of some 4,000 persons who packed the spacious Columbus Hall, in the then newly erected Art Institute building on Michigan Avenue. It is the morning of September 11, and the waiting throng has been singing "Jerusalem, the Golden". At ten o'clock, ten strokes on the new Liberty Bell (sym-

bolizing the ten great religions) announce the opening of the Parliament.

A hush falls upon the vast assemblage as the colorful procession comes into view. Cardinal Gibbons, in scarlet robes, arm in arm with the Hon. C. C. Bonney, President of the World's Congress Auxiliary, and immediately followed by Mrs. Potter Palmer and Mrs. Charles Henrotin, officials of the Woman's Branch of the Auxiliary, heads the long line of delegates as, two by two, they march down the aisle of the auditorium and up to the platform.

"The sight," says a contemporary account, "was most remarkable. There were strange robes, turbans and tunics, crosses and crescents, flowing hair and tonsured heads.... Buddhist monks were attired in garments of white and yellow; an orange turban and robe made the Brahman conspicuous; and the Greek Archbishop of Zante, from whose high head-gear there fell to the waist a black veil, was brilliant in purple robe and black cassock, and glittering as to his breast in chains of gold. Dharmapala, the reformed

Buddhist, was recognized in his woolen garments; and, in black clothes, hardly to be distinguished from European dress, was Mozoomdar, author of the 'Oriental Christ,' a most touching history of a soul struggling homeward to God. In a golden bond of friendship, the oldest of the religions of the world greeted the youngest of the religions."

Many nations were represented at the Parliament. But it was India, the ancient Mother of Religions, that had the most numerous and impressive of all foreign delegations. Its personnel included the following:

Siddhu Ram, Mooltan, Punjab.

Vichand Raghavji Gandhi, Honorary Secretary of the Jain Association, Bombay.

Professor G. N. Chakravarti, Allahabad.
Swami Vivekananda.

B. B. Nagarkar, of the Brahma Somaj, Bombay.

Manilal Ni Dvivedi, Bombay.

P. C. Mozoomdar, of the Brahma Somaj, Calcutta.

Jinda Ram, Attorney and Temperance Leader, Muzaffargah.

H. Dharmapala, of Ceylon, General Secretary, Maha Bodhi Society, Calcutta.

Jinanji Jamshodji Modi, of the Parsee Community.

Narasima Chaira, Brahman, of Madras.

Lakeshnie Narain.

Miss Jeanni Serabji, Parsee Christian.

There were also present two Christian missionaries from India—Rev. Maurice Phillips, of Madras, and Rev. T. E. Slater, of Bangalore.

The addresses of the various representatives of Mother India are noteworthy for their spiritual insight, their broad human sympathy and tolerance, and their intellectuality. India certainly has reason to take satisfaction in her spokesmen at this historic gathering.

At the opening session, the first speaker

to bring greetings from India was P. C. Mozoomdar. He received a tremendous ovation when, following the venerable Greek Archbishop of Zante, he rose to address the audience. He began as follows:

The recognition, sympathy, and welcome you have given to India to-day are gratifying to thousands of liberal Hindu religious thinkers, whose representatives I see around me, and, on behalf of my countrymen, I cordially thank you. India claims her place in the brotherhood of mankind, not only because of her great antiquity, but equally for what has taken place there in recent times. Modern India has sprung from ancient India by a law of evolution, a process of continuity which explains some of the most difficult problems of our national life. In pre-historic times our forefathers worshiped the great living spirit, God, and, after many strange vicissitudes, we Indian theists, led by the light of ages, worship the same living spirit, God, and none other.

Egypt, Greece, Rome, even Israel, he went on to observe, have passed away as nations, while India, "the old mother of nations and religions," after weathering many storms, and in spite of repeated waves of invasion and loss of political independence, lives on with no diminution of her spiritual vitality.

In his concluding remarks he said: "No individual, no denomination, can more fully sympathize or more heartily join your conference than we men of the Brahma Somaj, whose religion is the harmony of all religions, and whose congregation is the brotherhood of all nations. Such being our aspirations and sympathies, dear brethren, accept them. Let me thank you again for this welcome in the name of my countrymen, and wish every prosperity and success to your labors."

H. Dharmapala, the spokesman of the Buddhists, compared the Parliament of Religions to the memorable religious convention

assembled by the Emperor Asoka some 2100 years before, saying:

At that time Asoka, the great emperor, held a council in the city of Patna of 1000 scholars, which was in session for seven months. The proceedings were epitomized and carved on rock and scattered all over the Indian peninsula and the then known globe. After the consummation of that programme the great emperor sent the gentle teachers, the mild disciples of Buddha, in the garb that you see on this platform, to instruct the world. In that plain garb they went across the deep rivers, the Himalayas, to the plains of Mongolia and the Chinese plains, and to the far-off beautiful isles, the empire of the rising sun; and the influence of that congress held twenty-one centuries ago is to-day a living power, because you everywhere see mildness in Asia. Go to any Buddhist country and where do you find such healthy compassion and tolerance as there?

Why do I come here to-day? Because I find in this new city, in this land of freedom, the very place where that programme can also be carried out. . . . Yes, friends, if you are serious, if you are unselfish, if you are altruistic, this programme can be carried out, and the twentieth century will see the teachings of the meek and lowly Jesus accomplished. . . . And I hope that the noble lessons of tolerance, learned in this majestic assembly, will result in the dawning of universal peace, which will last for twenty centuries more.

Vichand R. Gandhi, the spokesman of the Jain communion of India, brought to the Parliament the official greetings of the high priest of his religion, Moni Atma Ranji. He said in part:

I represent Jainism, a faith older than Buddhism, similar to it in its ethics, but different from it in its psychology, and professed by 1,500,000 of India's most peaceful and law-abiding citizens. . . . This spectacle of the learned leaders of thought and religion meeting together on a common platform, and throwing

light on religious problems, has been the dream of Atma Ranji's life. He has commissioned me to say to you that he offers his most cordial congratulations on his own behalf, and on behalf of the Jain community, for your having achieved the consummation of that grand idea, of convening a Parliament of Religions.

Professor G. N. Chakravarti spoke for the Theosophists of India:

I came here to represent a religion, the dawn of which appeared in a misty antiquity which the powerful microscope of modern research has not yet been able to discover; the depth of whose beginnings the plummet of history has not been able to sound. From time immemorial spirit has been represented by white, and matter has been represented by black, and the two sister streams which join at the town from which I came, Allahabad, represent two sources of spirit and matter, according to the philosophy of my people. And when I think that here, in this city of Chicago, this vortex of physicality, this center of material civilization, you hold a Parliament of Religions; when I think that, in the heart of the World's Fair, where abound all the excellencies of the physical world, you have provided also a hall for the feast of reason and the flow of soul, I am once more reminded of my native land."

He declared that his society has universal tolerance for a fundamental principle, and he took great satisfaction in seeing the Parliament of Religions open its arms to representatives of diverse points of view, and allowing himself—"a heathen," as he said—to speak from the same platform. Toward the close of his remarks he expressed this thought:

The East enjoys the sacred satisfaction of having given birth to all the great religions of the world, and even as the physical sun rises ever from the East, the sun of spirituality has always dawned in the East. To the West belongs the proud privilege of having advanced on the intellectual and on the moral

plane, and of having supplied to the world all the various contrivances of material luxuries and of physical comfort. I look, therefore, upon a union of the East and West as a most significant event, and I look with great hope upon the day when the East and the West will be like brothers helping each other, each supplying to the other what it wants—the West supplying the vigor, the youth, (the power of organization, and the East opening up its inestimable treasures of a spiritual law, which are now locked up in the treasure boxes grown rusty with age.”

B. B. Nargarkar, of Bombay, spoke of the development of the Brahmo Somaj (Theistic Church):

The Brahmo Somaj is the result, as you know, of the influence of various religions, and the fundamental principles of the Theistic Church, in India, are universal love, harmony of faiths, unity of prophets, or rather unity of prophets and harmony of faiths. The reverence that we pay the other prophets and faiths is not mere lip loyalty, but it is the fundamental love for all the prophets and for all the forms and shades of truth by their own inherent merit. We try not only to learn in an intellectual way what those prophets have to teach, but to assimilate and imbibe these truths that are very near our spiritual being.

The speaker concluded by pleading for a fruitful blending of the East and the West:

In the East we have a number of systems of philosophy; a deep insight into the spiritual nature of man.... Catch hold very firmly of what is permanent of the Eastern philosophy. Lay it down very strongly to the heart, and try to assimilate it with your noble Western thoughts. You Western nations represent all the material civilization. You who have gone deep into the outward world and tried to discover the forces of outward nature, you have to teach to the East the glory of man's intellect, his logical accuracy, his rational nature, and in this way it is that in the heart of the church of the new dispensation—call it by whatever name you will—you will

have the harmony of the East and the West, a union between faith and reason, a wedding between the Orient and the Occident.

Miss Jeanni Serabji, a Christian of Parsee parentage, was one of the closing speakers on the first day's program. The lady told briefly of her pleasure in being present at the Congress. Her somewhat evangelical address was filled with earnest feeling. "When we meet one another in our land," she remarked, "the first thing we say to each other is 'Peace be with you.' I say it to you in all sincerity, in all love. I feel to-day that the great banner over us is the banner of love. I feel to-day more than ever that it is beautiful to belong to the family of God, to acknowledge the Lord Christ."

The sessions of the Parliament of Religions extended over a period of seventeen days. At the various ensuing sessions carefully prepared papers on special subjects were read by a number of the representatives of India.

On the second day, Rev. Maurice Phillips, of Madras, spoke on "The Ancient Religion of India and Primitive Revelation"; and Manilal Ni Divedi, of Bombay, discussed "The Religious Belief of the Hindus." A few excerpts from this illuminating address will be of special interest:

Hinduism is a wide term, but, at the same time, a vague term. The word Hindu was invented by the Mohammedan conquerors of Aryavarta, the historical name of India, and it denotes all who reside beyond the Indus. Hinduism, therefore, correctly speaking, is no religion at all. It embraces within its wide intention all shades of thought, from the atheistic Jainas and Bauddhas to the theistic Sampradaikas and Samajists and the rationalistic Advaitins. But we may agree to use the term in the sense of that body of philosophical and religious principles which are professed in part or whole by the inhabitants of India.

In discussing the God-idea as contained in the Vedas, he said:

In the Vedas there are marks everywhere of the recognition of the idea of one God, the God of nature, manifesting himself in many forms. This word, *God*, is one of those which have been the stumbling-block of philosophy. God, in the sense of a personal creator of the universe, is not known in the Veda, and the highest effort of rationalistic thought in India has been to see God in the totality of all that is. And, indeed, it is doubtful whether philosophy, be it that of a Kant or a Hegel, has ever accomplished anything more....

I humbly beg to differ from those who see in monotheism, in the recognition of a personal God apart from nature, the acme of intellectual development. I believe that is only a kind of anthropomorphism which the human mind stumbles upon in its first efforts to understand the unknown. The ultimate satisfaction of human reason and emotion lies in the realization of that universal essence which is the all. And I hold an irrefragable evidence that this idea is present in the Veda, the numerous gods and their invocations notwithstanding. This idea of the formless all, the Sat—i.e., esse-being—called Atman and Brahman in the Upanishads, and further explained in the Darsanas, is the central idea of the Veda, nay, the root idea of the Hindu religion in general.

The speaker concluded with the thought that there should be worked out a genuine science of religion, universal in its scope and application.

On the third day of the Parliament, P. C. Mozoomdar presented a paper discussing in detail the work of the Brahma Somaj, which was founded by Ram Dohan Roy, a man of Brahman caste, learned not only in Sanskrit but also in Arabic and Persian. While still in his teens, he made a journey to Tibet and studied there the lore of the lamas. In later life the title of *Rajah* was conferred upon him. It is interesting to note that the year 1933 is the centenary of the death of this noted leader, the father of the Theistic Hindu Church, which he esta-

blished in 1830. The word *Brahmo*, the speaker explained, means "worshiper of God," and *Somaj* means "society."

"While on the one hand," continued Mozoomdar, "he established the Brahma Somaj, on the other he coöperated with the British government to abolish the barbarous custom of *suttee*, or the burning of widows with their dead husbands. In 1832 he traveled to England, the very first Hindu who ever went to Europe, and in 1833 he died, and his sacred bones are interred in Bristol, the place where every Hindu pilgrim goes to pay his tribute of honor and reverence."

Mozoomdar described the social reforms for which the Brahma Somaj has worked, such as inter-caste marriage and the remarriage of widows. It seeks inspiration from Bible and Koran as well as from the Hindu scriptures: it emphasizes both public morality and personal religion, "throwing ourselves entirely and absolutely upon the spirit of God and His saving love." It stands for "a new dispensation," for "the harmony of all religious prophecies and systems unto the glory of the one true, living God."

Rev. T. E. Slater, of Bangalore, spoke of "Concessions to Native Religious Ideas." "Hindus," said this speaker, "by instinct and tradition are the most religious people in the world."

The Parsees the religious community of about 100,000 centering in Bombay, which preserves the ancient faith of Persia (whence their name is derived) as taught by Zoroaster—had an able spokesman in Jinanji Jamshodji Modi. "The greatest good," he observed, "that a Parliament of Religions, like the present, can do is to establish what Professor Max Müller calls 'that great golden dawn of truth that "there is a religion behind all religions."'. . . . If this Parliament of Religions does nothing else but spread the knowledge of this

golden truth and thus make a large number of men happy, it will immortalize its name." In his scholarly paper he discussed the philosophy of Zoroastrianism. He emphasized the tolerance of the Parsees and their cordial relations with those of other faiths.

Sunday, the seventh day of the Parliament, there were sessions in the afternoon and evening, many of the delegates occupying Chicago pulpits in the morning. B. Nagarkar offered an informative paper on "The Work of Social Reform in India." He told of the social programs in which the Brahmo Somaj has been interested, emphasizing especially schools for both boys and girls. "The religion of the Brahmo Somaj," he asserted, "is essentially a religion of life—the living and life-giving religion of love to God and love to man. Its corner-stones are the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the sisterhood of woman.... While we advocate that every religion needs to be reformed, we also most firmly hold that every reform in order that it may be a living and lasting power for good, needs to be based on religion."

On the eighth day, H. Dharmapala read the first section of his paper, "The World's Debt to Buddha," which he concluded on the following day.

On the eleventh day, Miss Serabji gave a talk on "The Women of India."

The next day, P. C. Mozoomdar spoke again. His subject was "The World's Religious Debt to Asia." He quoted Professor Tyndall as once having remarked to him, "True religion once came from the East, and from the East it shall come again."

Narasima Chaira, described as a learned Brahman who spoke perfect English, was another speaker on the program of the twelfth day. In very plain terms he declared that Christian missionary effort in India had failed, if the conversion of Hindus be considered the test of success. He acknowledged freely the noble motives of the mis-

sionaries. "The religion which a conquering nation," he continued, "with an exasperating consciousness of superiority, condescendingly offers to the conquered, must ever be disgusting to the recipient, however good it may be." He thought that the missionaries would have a better chance of success if they adopted more of the humility of Christ's apostles.

On Sunday, September 25, Vichand R. Gandhi discussed "The Ethics and History of the Jains," and B. B. Nagarkar spoke on "The Spiritual Ideas of the Brahmo Somaj."

H. Dharmapala was on the program again the next day, with a paper entitled "Buddhism and Christianity." He showed the similarity, in many ways, between the moral teachings of the two religions, and referred to the evidence for the penetration of Buddhist teachings into the Greek world before the birth of Christ.

The final session, on the evening of September 27, brought to an impressive close the deliberations of the Parliament of Religions. There were brief farewell addresses by a long list of speakers.

Thus far I have avoided any mention, beyond the listing of his name among the representatives of India, of the most popular and dynamic figure in the Parliament. I have reference, of course, to the Swami Vivekananda. (In civil life his name was Narendra Nath Dutt, A. B. Vivekananda, his religious name as a Sannyasin, or Hindu monk, is Sanskrit and means "Bliss in Discrimination.")

At the sessions of the Parliament, after his first appearance, it was customary for the Chairman to keep Vivekananda until the end of the program in order to hold the audience through long and sometimes tiresome hours of reading and speaking by less gifted individuals. I have reserved Vivekananda until the close of this article, for the reason that had I mentioned him earlier, the temptation to forget about the other speakers

would have been almost irresistible. To have slighted them, however, would have been unjust, as they were persons of character and ability.

Unfortunately, the space now remaining is quite inadequate for a suitable discussion of Vivekananda. But my readers will perhaps forgive me, by reason of the fact that in a previous issue of *The Open Court* (December, 1925) I made this Hindu religious genius the subject of a special article. It is entitled "The Message and Influence of Vivekananda," and to it I must refer those who wish a more extensive review of the part which he played in the Parliament of Religions.

There I have told the romantic and colorful story of this modest yet eloquent and magnetic young Sannyasin, the favorite disciple of that great spirit, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, with whom his name is indissolubly linked.

I have already alluded to the fact that the year 1933 is the centenary of the death of Ram Dohan Roy, the founder of the Brahma Somaj or Theistic Church of India. It is also the centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who died in 1886, and the seventieth anniversary of the birth of Vivekananda, whose life prematurely closed in 1902, when he was not yet forty.

Coming to Chicago without credentials, representing no special religious group, never having made a public address, and without even a prepared speech, he took the Parliament by storm. On the opening day he was seated with the other delegates on the platform. Again and again when the Chairman would have introduced him, he whispered "Let someone else speak first." At last, about five o'clock in the afternoon, he could escape no longer. I quote from my article to which I have referred:

When he was introduced, he looked out upon a yawning audience which had sat

through a tiresome day of manuscript reading. He hesitated, nervously. Then a sudden access of power and eloquence came upon him, and he began to speak. As by an electric shock, the assembly became galvanized into eager attention. Before half a dozen words had left his lips, the great hall was shaking with storms of applause as in a political convention, and when his brief extemporaneous address was concluded everyone began asking, "Who is this brilliant, eloquent, handsome, magnetic young Hindu, the Swami Vivekananda?"

Probably never in any similar gathering did so short a speech create so profound an effect. It consisted of only six brief paragraphs. After saluting the audience as "Sisters and Brothers of America," he waited for two minutes until the applause subsided, and then began:

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world: I thank you in the name of the mother of religions: and I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to the different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.

I belong to a religion into whose sacred language, the Sanskrit, the word *exclusion* is untranslatable. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. We have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, a remnant which came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I be-

long to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation.

He went on to say:

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the *Gita*: "Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form I reach him, they are all struggling through paths that in the end always lead to me."

In conclusion, he pleaded for an end to sectarianism, bigotry, and fanaticism. "Had it not been for this horrible demon," he declared, "human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But its time has come, and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell to all fanaticism, to all persecutions with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."

Vivekananda made several other addresses at the Parliament. He was one of the speakers at the closing session, and in his farewell remarks he said:

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character.

After the Parliament adjourned, Vivekananda was so overwhelmed with demands for speaking engagements and the conducting of class groups for the study of Hindu philosophy, that he was kept in the United States two and a half years. He met leaders of every type of religious thought, from orthodox clergymen to Ingersoll, the famous agnostic, who remarked to him that if a non-Christian religious teacher had ventured to visit America fifty years earlier he probably would not have escaped with his life. Friendly crowds greeted him every-

where. He spoke in Jewish synagogues as well as in Christian churches. In Detroit, on his second visit to America, the crush at the Temple Beth-El, where he was to speak, was so great that a panic was feared. At the Harvard Graduate School of Philosophy he easily held his own under a cross-fire of questions from probably the most sophisticated audience in America.

Returning home at last by way of Europe, on reaching India he received a series of ovations that a conquering general might have envied. His work in America had, however, proved a heavy tax upon his strength. In 1899 he was seriously ill. It was hoped that a sea voyage might restore his health; accordingly, he planned another visit to America. One who saw him when he spoke in Detroit, on July 4, 1900, remarked: "He had grown so thin, almost ethereal,—not long would that great spirit be imprisoned in clay." As it turned out, the end came on that very day two years later.

On his return to India, however, he was able to devote his brief remaining time to labor in the spreading of his gospel. An institution near Calcutta still serves as a center for the carrying on of Vivekananda's work. Vedanta societies sprang up in leading American cities. The education of Indian youth, particularly of the girls, was one of the objects closest to the heart of Vivekananda. "Education," he declared, "is what they need."

Though Vivekananda did a good deal of writing, he was, like many other spiritual leaders, most at home in extemporaneous address and informal conversation. Many of his talks were reported stenographically, but it is said that he did not care to look at the transcripts when they were handed to him for revision and approval. *Raja Yoga* (The Royal Way of Attainment) seems to be the only volume of his teachings published during his lifetime with his personal

coöperation. It was printed in America, as were two other volumes of his authorship: *Karma Yoga* (The Way of Work) and *Jnana Yoga* (The Way of Knowledge). *Raja Yoga* has gone through several editions and is still in print. After Vivekananda's death, his disciples (among whom were a number of Americans and English as well as natives of India) brought out a collected memorial edition, in seven large volumes, of Viveka-

nanda's various works, covering an extraordinarily wide range of subject matter.

To Vivekananda's mission is largely due the growing penetration of Hindu philosophy into Occidental thought and literature. The process has been much hastened by the advent of the new physics, following the discovery of atomic structure and the consequent downfall of the old materialistic conception of the universe.

ŚRĪ RĀMA—DHARMA PERSONIFIED

SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA

India is considered a *punyabhūmi* (holy land) whereas other lands are considered *bhogabhūmis* (lands of enjoyment). Every soul that hungers and thirsts after salvation either takes birth here or comes on pilgrimage to this land to learn about soul, God, and salvation. The one collective passion and preoccupation of the Indian people is the attainment of the freedom of the soul. Spiritual pursuit is dear to the heart of India. Countless millions from times immemorial have given up their hearth and home in search of God. A host of them have not only attained what they sought for but also have garnered invaluable treasures for posterity. Their experience is our heritage. The spiritual experiences they gained are enshrined in the Vedas. They treat of the nature and glory of the self and the ways and means of realizing it. The Vedas have two main divisions, the ritualistic and the philosophic. The philosophic portion is called the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are recorded in archaic Sanskrit and the subject-matter is very abstruse. Therefore they are accessible only to a select few of disciplined life and penetrating insight.

In order to make available to the common

man the invaluable spiritual truths contained in the Vedas, generous and talented sages have composed several works in the form of mythologies, epics, histories, moral manuals, and so on. They are the popular commentaries and elaborations of the Vedas. Such literature is classed under two broad heads, the *itihāsa* and the *purāṇa*.

The two most important *itihāsas* are the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. *Purāṇas* are legion. The most important and the best known is the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. *Itihāsas* are historical treatises. The *purāṇas* are ancient histories and are mostly in the form of stories. The aim of both these classes of literature is the propagation of spiritual truths. They together are even sometimes designated as the 'fifth Veda'.

Their search is for Truth. Truth is that which transcends time. They called it *satya* and *dharma*: *satya* as the thing in itself, and *dharma* as in relation to the phenomenal universe. *Dharma* is that which supports and sustains. The changing must have an unchanging substratum. That is *dharma*, that is *satya*.

In the ritualistic portion of the Vedas, this *dharma* assumes the form of *karma*, the due

performance of one's duties, in a manner conducive to the attainment of the final goal of spiritual enlightenment. When we come to the philosophic portion, namely, the Upaniṣads, the same *dharma* is termed Brahman, Truth-in-Itself. *Karma* is the means and Brahman is the goal. Means are many as the needs, capacity, and competence of the seekers are varied.

The material and spiritual forces have to be sustained in a certain balance for the harmonious growth of life. But as the wheel of time turns on, the forces of materialism grow stronger and the others weaker. Then the balance is disturbed and life gets disrupted. The eternal sustaining Principle of the universe manifests Itself then to correct the imbalance. One such manifestation of *dharma* is Śrī Rāmacandra. Another is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here we are to remind ourselves of the greatness of the paragon of *dharma* called Śrī Rāma. Before we take up that topic, a word about the manner in which *dharma* expressed through Kṛṣṇa was depicted by Vyāsa in the epic, the *Mahābhārata*, and in the *purāna*, the *Bhāgavatam*.

In the *Mahābhārata*, Vyāsa treats of *dharma*. In order to persuade greedy pleasure-seeking man to follow the path of virtue and rectitude, he held out before him a bait. Vyāsa said: 'Follow *dharma*; pleasure and prosperity will result therefrom.' But later on it was found that this indirect method had failed to produce the desired result. Vyāsa had hoped, through the examples of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, to instil into the mind of man that pleasure and prosperity were not after all worthwhile goals of human life but *dharma* for its own sake is. Nonetheless, the native greed and lasciviousness of man are too strong for him to heed Vyāsa's implied exhortations. Man found Duryodhana a better exemplar for his immediate purpose and turned a deaf ear to Dharmaputra, the virtuous Pāṇḍava hero. In order to remedy this mistake, Vyāsa

wrote the *Bhāgavatam*. There at the outset he declares: '*Dharma* unadulterated, *dharma* for its own sake, which will land you in eternal felicity is what I am going to deal with in this.'¹ *Dharma* is no more the handmaid of Mammon or Cupid but the true guide to bliss eternal.

Thus *dharma* in the form of proper performance of one's duties prepares one to seek for *dharma* that is Brahman. That Brahman manifests Itself at times and appears before mankind as embodiments of *dharma*. Śrī Rāma is one such. Śrī Rāma's advent is in the *tretāyuga* which is next to *kr̥tayuga* or the Golden Age. In the *tretāyuga*, unrighteousness just starts its work of destruction. *Dharma* is said to have four legs. Penance, purity, mercy, and truthfulness are the four legs whereon *dharma* supports itself.² In the first *yuga* all four legs are in perfect condition. As ages roll on, *dharma* diminishes and the Lord has to come down to set right the imbalance. In the *tretāyuga*, as the decay had only started, a perfect example of a virtuous life was all that was necessary. So we find Śrī Rāma a paragon of virtue. Mārīca tells Rāvaṇa who sought the former's help in kidnapping Sītā that Rāma is *dharma* personified, is merciful and truthful.³

Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are the most popular incarnations. Kṛṣṇa from the moment of his appearance to the last manifested mighty divine powers and prowess. He is seldom shy to affirm and assert his divinity. But not so Rāma. He is very shy to show his divine attributes. His disguise is nearly perfect. Very rarely does he or his biographer, Vālmīki, give an inkling into his real nature.

¹ धर्मः प्रोज्झितकैतवोऽत्र परमो ... वेद्यं वास्तवमत्र वस्तु शिवदं तापत्रयोन्मूलनम् ।

² तपः शौचं दया सत्यमिति पादाः प्रकीर्तिताः ।

³ रामो विग्रहवान् धर्मः साधुः सत्यपराक्रमः ।

He played his human part so well that many students and critics of the *Rāmāyana* contend that Rāma was no incarnation at all, that he was only a virtuous man. Somehow some people do not like the theory that God assumes human form; some men feel that it is an affront to admit that there can be any being above man. Some are allergic to the very idea of God. So, in order to show that Śrī Rāma was only common clay, they argue that those passages in the Vālmīki's *Rāmāyana*, wherein the poet alludes to him as an incarnation of God are all interpolation. They subject the epic to their critical scalpel and present us with a truncated torso. They say that the first and last cantos are interpolations; so also several passages in the central body of the book. If that be so, hats off to those wise interpolators. This theory is only a ruse to get out of or get rid of facts which certain people do not relish or do not comprehend. Without any such subterfuge, the *Rāmāyana* as it stands is perfectly intelligible and spiritually valid.

Books of profound wisdom born out of the spiritual experiences of gifted sages lend themselves to various interpretations depending upon the level and locus of the student. The same vibration of light is received by different beings in different degrees. So also the scriptures. They can be interpreted semantically, symbolically, or spiritually. On the surface the *Rāmāyana* is the story of the Prince of Ayodhyā. But if one ponders deeper one can discern the yearnings of an exiled soul for the Over-soul in the relation of Sītā and Rāma. In the spiritual vision of an illumined soul, the whole of the *Rāmāyana* is the play of the Divine in the mundane world. Vālmīki is explicit in several places that Rāma is a divine incarnation. Rāma successfully concealed his divine descent most of the time. His passions and lamentations are incidental to the human disguise.

Let us look at a few instances wherein it

is clearly stated that Rāma is an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Daśaratha, who was issueless, performed the sacrifice for obtaining sons, under the supervision of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. The gods who were sought to be propitiated through the sacrifice graced the occasion to accept the offerings. Then the celestial denizens submitted an appeal to Brahmā, the Creator, for protection against Rāvaṇa. Brahmā replied: 'Gods cannot kill him. Men he despises. Hence only a man can rid the world of that scourge.' At that moment there appeared Viṣṇu. The gods made proper obeisance to Him and submitted thus:

'O Viṣṇu, for the welfare of the world, do You divide Yourself into four and be born as the sons of Daśaratha. You are our only refuge. Save us from the pestilence of a Rāvaṇa.'⁴

And Viṣṇu consoled them saying:

'Fear not. Best wishes to you all. For the sake of your well-being I shall kill that wicked demon and all his brood. And I shall spend eleven thousand years in the world of man guarding and guiding the world.'⁵

In accordance with this promise Viṣṇu took birth as the son of Daśaratha.

In the 'Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa', while describing the popularity of Rāma, Vālmīki says:

'He is the eternal Viṣṇu born among the humans, at the request of the gods, in order to compass the destruction of the haughty Rāvaṇa.'

Vāli who was laid low by Rāma's arrows says thus with his last breath:

'I came forward to fight the dual with Sugrīva disregarding Tārā's protests in order that I may die at your hands.'⁶

If Rāma were only a mere man, there is not much meaning in these words; for, what glory is there in meeting one's death at the hands of an ordinary man? Vāli knew Rāma's divine birth and hence it was that he wished to die at the hands of Rāma.

⁴ *ibid*, I, 15.19, 21.

⁵ *ibid.*, 28-30.

⁶ *ibid.*, IV, 18.59.

After the killing of Rāvaṇa, Brahmā and other gods came to Rāma and praised him as the Lord Eternal. Then Rāma made this equivocal reply: 'I think I am a man, Rāma, the son of Daśaratha. Do you tell me who and whence I am.'⁷ To this Brahmā decidedly replied: 'You are Lord Nārāyaṇa, the wielder of the powerful weapon, the discus.'

The very manner in which Rāma said that he is a man is suggestive of its repudiation. If he were actually a man he would not say, 'I think I am a man'; and he would not have asked Brahmā to declare his identity.

At the end of his earthly tenure, he went back, bodily, with the brothers to his *vaiṣṇava* glory.⁸

The poet assures that whoever reads with devotion a line or even a word of the *Rāmāyana* will go to the abode of Brahmā and will always be adored by him.

Thus we see that Rāma's birth, growth, exploits, and disappearance are all divine. A mere man's biography cannot confer celestial beatitude on the reader. Only the Lord's life and exploits have that power. It is that that makes the *Rāmāyana* a scripture and a sacred book. The experiences of innumerable devotees declare with one voice the efficacy of the repetition of Rāma's name. As is declared by Śiva to His divine consort:

'O My dear, I take delight in the name of Rāma. It is equal in glory even unto a thousand names of Viṣṇu.'

It is true that Vālmīki's Rāma has concealed his identity to a great extent. That was necessitated by the boon Rāvaṇa had acquired from Brahmā that he would not be killed by any being but man, whom Rāvaṇa considered beneath his notice. From the poet's point of view, that shows the measure of his success in depicting a human

drama out of a divine disport. It is Tulasī-dās, Ezhutacan, and Kamban that made explicit what Vālmīki had kept implicit.

Vālmīki had visualized Rāma as a perfect personification of *dharmā*: *Rāmo virgrahavān dharmah*. In fact this may be considered the main theme of the great book. But there are a few occasions which seem to be out of tune with the main melody. The two incidents which have provoked vehement criticism are the killing of Vāli and the banishment of Sītā. Many have whetted their scalpel of carping criticism on Śrī Rāma for these. It is not quite easy to maintain an impartial opinion in the midst of this din and bustle.

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were threading through the woods in search of Sītā. They came across Sugrīva and entered into a solemn alliance of mutual assistance. Both Rāma and Sugrīva were in similar misfortune. Both had been banished from their lands and both had lost their wives. Common misery made their bond of friendship strong and deep. Vāli was Sugrīva's elder brother and at the same time his arch-enemy. Vāli was very strong. Rāma undertook to restore to Sugrīva his wife Rumā who had been held captive by Vāli, and also to crown him king after killing Vāli. As advised by Rāma, Sugrīva challenged Vāli. In the first encounter Sugrīva was worsted. In the second encounter as both the brothers were locked up in mortal fight, Rāma sent a fatal arrow from behind a tree and laid Vāli low. Then follow Vāli's abuse of Rāma and the latter's reply and the final reconciliation. Now the question is: Was it proper on the part of Rāma to have hit one engaged in battle with another and that too from a concealed position?

Rāma and Sugrīva had entered into an alliance. Thereby the interests of the contracting parties became identical. Hence it was inevitable that Rāma should kill Vāli to promote Sugrīva's claims. But then the

⁷ *ibid.*, VI, 119.11.

⁸ *ibid.*, VII, 123.12.

question is, why did Rāma do it stealthily? Why did he not challenge Vāli for an open combat? Even for the basically barbarous work of war, there are certain codes of conduct among all civilized peoples. Why did Rāma violate them? To exonerate Rāma, certain other *purāṇas* advance a story that Vāli had received a boon from Brahmā that half the might of the combating opponent would go to Vāli in an open fight. But this is only an implied admission that Rāma's stratagem is not above criticism. There was nothing to prevent Rāma from challenging Vāli and shooting him down. Even if Vāli had acquired some such boon from Brahmā, it could not have been beyond the wits of an incarnation to supersede or circumvent it. But Rāma chose this dubious way. Why? None can offer any satisfactory answer. After the first encounter Sugrīva had made bitter complaints to Rāma. The only thought that was uppermost in Rāma's mind at the time was to make amends for the initial hesitation and impress upon Sugrīva his—Rāma's—reliability and constancy in friendship. In the upsurge of this thought, perhaps other considerations were overlooked. Anyway this is an instance wherein Rāma goes below his own standard of honour and rectitude.

But this episode has another redeeming side. If Vālmīki were writing only a fable, he could have very well avoided this stain from an otherwise unsullied character of his hero. The poet did not do so. He reported it faithfully. It gives credence to the historicity of Vālmīki's hero. The very fact that this one incident has raised such a huge cry of criticism is itself an acknowledgement of Rāma's superhuman excellence in all other respects. Therefore this one stain only adds to the beauty of the portrait as the *śrīvatsa*⁹ mark on the person of Viṣṇu.

⁹ A particular mark or a curl of hair on the breast of Śrī Viṣṇu.

Now let us take up the other point, the banishment of Sītā. Rāma returned from the forest after fourteen years of banishment and was crowned king of Ayodhyā. Rāma ruled the country justly. All were happy; none had any complaint. Sītā and Rāma lived as an ideal couple. Ere long Sītā was in the family way. As was the custom, Rāma asked Sītā what she would have as her *dohada*, the fond wish of a pregnant woman for any particular object. Sītā desired to spend some time in the company of the holy sages doing *tapas* (austerity) near the Ganges. Rāma promised to have her wish fulfilled and that he would make arrangements for it the very next day.

Later in the day, Rāma received reports of happenings in the country. A spy reported that there was a canard spreading in the land casting suspicion on the character of Sītā who was abducted by Rāvaṇa and was forcibly confined in his capital for one year. Rāma summoned his brothers, told them the disturbing news, and ordered Lakṣmaṇa to escort Sītā the next morning to the other side of the Ganges and leave her there near Vālmīki's hermitage. Rāma was determined and Lakṣmaṇa could not but obey. Sītā was exiled.

The question now is: Was it proper for Rāma to discard his devoted wife like that? There were three ways of meeting the situation. One: Rāma knew that Sītā was perfectly chaste and the rumour was absolutely baseless. By the conviction of his conscience he could ignore the rumour and live with Sītā as before. But then the trouble would be this: The scandal would spread like wild fire. The subjects would become suspicious. And disaffection would spread among the people. A scandal should be scotched at the very start. A stitch in time saves nine. Hence it would not have been wise to ignore it. The second course open to a man in such a predicament is to give up the throne rather than banish an honest wife. A lesser

person than Rāma probably would have done that. That is what King Edward VIII of England did. But nobody considers that as a laudable example because that was forsaking one's public duty for the sake of personal pleasure. If Rāma had done it, we would have had no occasion to discuss this issue, because, there would have been no *Rāmāyana*. Rāma is a noble king. He is the model for his subjects, nay for the whole world. He would not compromise his solemn duty for personal profit or pleasure. Therefore the third and the only other way open to him was sending Sītā away and that was what he did. It was harsh, it was cruel. Rāma did not decide on it light-heartedly. Only after due and deep deliberation did he do it. In fact, thereby he suffered more than Sītā, for the onus of decision was his. He never, however, banished Sītā from his heart. During the *aśwamedha*-sacrifice which he performed later, the queen's place was occupied by a golden image of the immaculate Sītā.

If in the Vāli episode Rāma suffers from a lowering of his own standard of *dharma*, in the Sītā-banishment episode he excels his own strict adherence to *dharma*. And *dharma* is a jealous master. He has to be served one-pointedly. Then only will he confer his smile of grace on the votary. Lust and lucre are the two primary adversaries of all noble aspirations. By his repeated refusal to accept the throne by any devious method Rāma proved that mammon was no match for him. By banishing Sītā, Rāma showed *kāma* the god of love, held no sway over him. Verily, Rāma was *dharma* personified. *Dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ*—'Serve *dharma*, it will save you'.

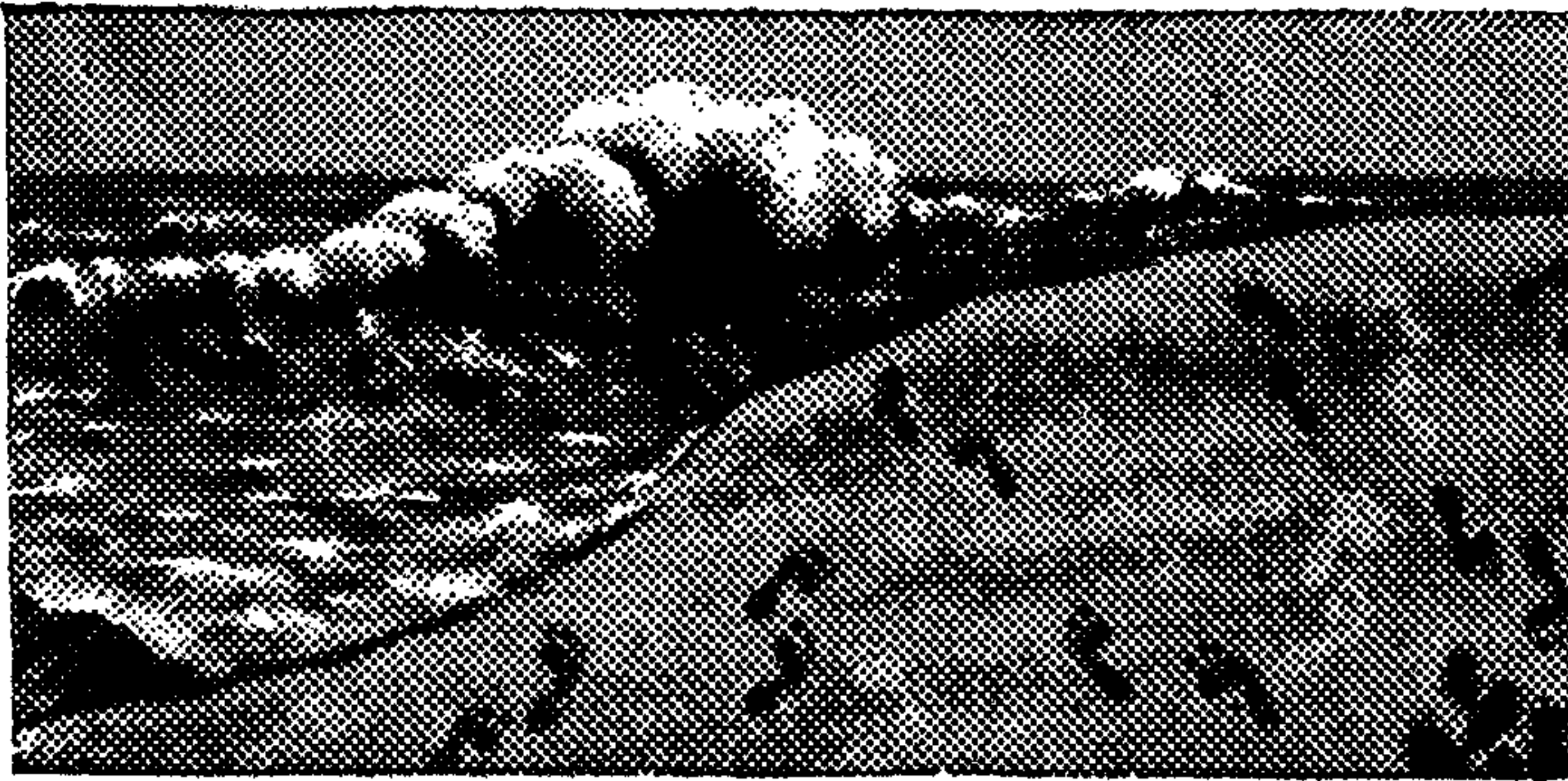
'Śrī Rāma is the only refuge for the whole world. Who can save you but Rāma? Rāma removes all the blemishes of a sinful age. Offer salutations unto Rāma. Yama, the god of death, trembles at the name of Rāma. Everything is under Rāma's control. O Rāma, You are my only refuge; may I have unbroken devotion unto You.'

SRI RAMA'S COMPANION-IN-DHARMA

Sita ... is the ideal of womanhood itself, and she wields undisputed sway, in millions of hearts, over the kingdoms of love and sorrow, and stainless womanly honour and pride. Though beautiful and queen, she never chose ease. To her the simple lives of saints and scholars were more joyous than all the luxuries of courts. She knew every mood of the forests, joining in their praise in the early morning, when birds wake and blossoms open and the dew is fresh; and bowing her soul with theirs in the evening adoration. She shared a throne, yet never forgot that for their people's good, and not for their own pleasure, do sovereigns reign. She knew the highest human happiness, and was not blinded by happiness. She knew the deepest and bitterest sorrow, and lived serene amidst her sorrow. Such was Sita, Queen of Ayodhya, crowned of love, veiled in sorrow, and peerless amongst women.

—Sister Nivedita in

Cradle Tales of Hinduism



HUMAN TRENDS

DEVELOPING PEOPLES AND INFLUENCES OF DEVELOPMENT

Some of the newly-developing peoples of North-east India (beyond Bengal) have in recent years been drawn to western things and western ideas. In other parts of the world also this attraction that the West has for developing peoples is a trend. The irony of the situation is that they are drawn to a pattern of life—the western—with which many westerners are themselves seriously dissatisfied. And even if there were not a widespread revolt of western youth as evidence, that there is something wrong with the western set-up is shown by the prevalence there of mental illness, crime, divorce, anxiety, loneliness, and extensive pollution of the natural environment.

Apart from theories about the cause of the magnetism that the western world exerts on developing peoples, there is a historical fact that cannot but be relevant to it, and especially so when peoples composing the Indian nation are subject to it. One hundred years ago the educated youth, and quite a proportion of the intelligentsia, of Bengal were as strongly drawn to western ideas as the peoples of N. E. India now are. Who challenged the western presumption to act as guide to India in cultural and religious matters? Who took the force out of the magnetism then?

Certainly no one man did. More precisely, perhaps: no man at all did. Still, if

we have to give a name, we shall be least wrong if we give the name of Sri Ramakrishna. Vivekananda, Gandhiji and others undoubtedly had something to do with the matter. But who moved them to move people? It was Ramakrishna, if it was anybody at all, who brought India back to her senses and began the process of making her stand on her own feet.

But there is another, more recent, historical fact that compels us to think that the childlike sage of Dakshineswar can be a guide in helping people discern what is only glitter and what is really gold in western life. We must remember that it is not with the material benefits of science that the youth of the West are dissatisfied, but with the mentality and values that the use of modern inventions tends to foster. Now, in which direction are they turning for guidance and inspiration?

India, more than anywhere else, is the magnet—or rather Indian religion, philosophy, and art. And the drawing-power of what does go from India, in all its depths and breadths and shapes and sizes, comes of the coherence given it by Sri Ramakrishna and that disciple of his who went to the West in 1893 and gave warning of things to come. In short, Ramakrishna reversed the direction of the East-West attraction in matters relating to life's deeper levels, leav-

ing India attracted by, and ready to learn from, the West on material and social levels.

It is not suggested that the magnetism of Ramakrishna's person will or should replace the magnetism of the West: it is suggested that the magnetism of his ideal will replace the dogmatism of those who in the past set themselves up as the true guides of the peoples of N. E. India in all matters including religion.

In *what* does the magnetism of his ideal consist? It consists, negatively, in its lack of dogmatism; and, positively, in its conspicuous measure of common sense. On the positive side it consists of more than this, but we must here be content to point to a few of the obviously-valid features of this ideal.

Let us take a concrete instance from N. E. India. On the uplands east and west of the Shillong-Cherrapunji axis live a very likeable people, the Khasis. Now, does common sense tell us that the Khasi is to become an imitation westerner? Common sense tells us that, on the contrary, his true destiny is to reach his full stature as a Khasi, and that to do this he should be prepared to learn from all, to cooperate with all, always provided he is not required to give up his faith in the essential health of the religion and culture which mothered him and his people.

The very education which the Khasi has been receiving from the westerners enables him to see that there is no compelling reason why he should listen to the westerner in matters of religion rather than to those with closer cultural affinities. Indeed, now that more reliable information on the religions and histories of non-western nations is readily available, can even the Christian, in all honesty, still believe that Christianity is the only way to salvation? And, it hardly needs saying, the Hindu and Buddhist, the Chinese and Japanese, the Jew and Muslim, cannot do so. Indeed, nowadays there are

many Christians who are more open-minded on this point. When more than two-thirds of the world do not share this belief, there can be no intrinsic reason why Christianity should be admitted to be the sole vehicle of saving knowledge.

If this last contention be granted, then it will have to be granted that no one does know what the pattern of the Khasi's full development will be in any detail. To try to impose a preconceived pattern of religious belief on the Khasis would not seem to be truly serving the Khasi cause, and in the long run may injure the cause in the name of which the pattern is imposed. It should be evident that the truly-Khasi pattern cannot be planned in advance but only discovered in the living; and secondly, that the Khasis are the only people who can do this. Thinking more carefully, it is clear that the process will be not so much a simple search for a pattern laid up in a supersensible world of Forms, as a dialectical process in which the Khasis partly create and partly discover their destiny.

The religions of the world tell us that the purpose of human existence is direct experience of Reality, or God. A study of Sri Ramakrishna leaves us in no doubt that the particular religions are means to that end: belonging to any one of them is not the end itself. The end of religion is something beyond religion, namely union or communion with God. Bearing this in mind it is not difficult to see why he advised us to look rather to the points of agreement between religions, leaving the differences to take care of themselves. Paying much attention to labels leads to emphasis on differences. The result is that religion does not serve its purpose for us: the means—belonging to a particular religion—becomes more important than, and distracts our attention from, the end—God-experience.

When we go about seeking to convert people to our own beliefs, inevitably labels,

differences, get stressed. This divides people and leads to ill-feeling. To some extent this has happened among the Khasis, for previously they were a united people. Fortunately a harmonizing and uniting ideal is also now in the field. Moreover, the education the Khasis are having will help them evolve their own synthesis of the influences that are reaching them.

Everything that is taken from the West has to be judged by this standard: will it enable us to realize our full potentialities as Khasi men and women? And will it enable us to make our destined contribution to the brotherhood of peoples making up the Indian nation?

Western science and industry will clearly be useful because they make the struggle for physical survival less arduous. But it should also be obvious that in religion, philosophy, psychology, and art India, and therefore any people of India, has little of consequence to learn from the West. Why? Because far the greater part of what is good in western ideas is already here, somewhere in the treasury of Indian culture. And is it not a fact that many educated minds of the West have lately been turning to India for ideas and inspiration?

Even within Christianity the influence of India has been felt. Ecumenism is one of the focal points of the intensive dialogue that has been going on within Christianity. Christian sects are trying to settle their differences; and Christianity as a whole is trying to broaden its attitude to non-Christian religions. It is sure that the example and attraction of Hinduism has been a crucial factor in the causation of this *aggiornamento*, this bringing-up-to-today, of the Church. In the Indian example Ramakrishna's part is crucial too; for he was the first to put to practical and extensive test

the Indian idea that the different religions and cults are truly paths to the fulfilment of life, if followed earnestly; and that therefore there is not just one true religion.

We can be fairly sure what Sri Ramakrishna's general approach would have been with regard to the Khasi religion. The central tenet of the Khasi religion is what is central to almost all religions: God is infinite and omnipresent. On this Ramakrishna would have concentrated attention. If he had occupied himself with less essential features of Khasi religious practice at all, it would not have been to damn them. To have this belief is no doubt to be religious to some extent; but to reach the goal of life it is not enough. One must have the ever-present intuition of God's infinity and omnipresence: only then will religion have fully served its purpose.

What the Khasi can and should be prepared to learn from other religions is how to make himself fit to receive the grace of this transforming God-intuition. Ramakrishna definitely says that one sure way is through Christ; but he says that there are other ascertained ways also, and that the way that suits one person may not necessarily suit another.

Plainly Sri Ramakrishna has special relevance to N.E. India's Westward trend. And his relevance is the greater in view of the Eastward trend of many westerners in serious matters; for the Vedānta, which is at the centre of that to which they are drawn, has its living embodiment in him. If the magnetism of the Vedāntic message is sufficient to attract some of the best minds and hearts of the West, this suggests that there is real gold for N.E. India on its doorstep.

—S. P.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Tr. by Swami Nikhilananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1947. References: Questions 1, pp. 599-600; 2, p. 522; 3, pp. 536-7.

The words quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' are from: *The Complete Works*, Vol. I (1962), pp. 415-6.

Drug addiction among youth and school children has become a threatening global problem. It has made its ugly appearance in India, and that in the metropolis. We know that learned and over-cautious doctors in this country still hesitate to speak on this important subject. We also hesitated long to give it our editorial attention. But the death of a New Delhi schoolboy owing to drug abuse has made us bestow some thoughts on this important theme, in the Indian context but with a human perspective.

'Religion and Superconscious Realization' by Swami Yatiswarananda is based on a few of his talks delivered in Bangalore in August-September 1959. It deals with the development of the spiritual yearning, the four yogas which strengthen it and help its culmination in the superconscious awareness of the highest truth.

In 'Indian Thought And The Technological Society', Dr. S. P. Dubey, Dept. of Post-graduate Studies and Research in Philosophy, University of Jabalpur, makes a thought-provoking analysis of the Indian

predicament where modern technology and its seductive glitters encounter an old and time-defying tradition that has much to be preserved and a lot more to be discarded. He poses many searching questions and wants 'every Indian living within and outside the country today' to answer them.

The story and personality of Śrī Rāma continue to inspire and guide vast masses of Indian humanity. A fine portrait of this hero and god as painted by Vālmīki comes through in 'Śrī Rāma—Dharma Personified' by Swami Siddhinathananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. The Swami also discusses convincingly the two controversial points of slaying Vāli and the banishment of Sītā which seem to trouble many who read the marvellous epic.

In this month's 'Human Trends', 'S.P.' makes a common-sense-guided and objective study of certain trends in north-eastern India beyond Bengal. There is nothing wrong in learning what is good and beneficial from other nations and cultures. But thoughtless imitation—which seems to be a dominant but dangerous tendency in India at present—is pernicious. And in the realm of religion, philosophy, psychology, and art, India has enough and to spare. What 'S.P.' so rightly points out—'If the magnetism of the Vedāntic message is sufficient to attract some of the best minds and hearts of the West, this suggests that there is real gold for N.E. India on its doorstep'—with reference to the north-eastern region might well be found relevant to some other Indian regions also.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

VINOBA—His Life and Work: By SHRIMAN NARAYAN, Published by Popula Prakashan, 35C, Tardeo Road, Bombay 34, 1970, pp. xvi+370, Price: Rs. 36/-.

An authentic and well-documented biography of Acharya Vinoba Bhave has been a long-felt need and Shriman Narayan's work answers this need very efficiently. The place of Vinobaji in Indian life needs to be determined on the basis of the impact his philosophy and action have created and are likely to create on future generations also. A Sanskrit scholar and a polyglot (although it is doubtful whether he has a working knowledge in languages other than Marathi, Hindi, Sanskrit and English, even if he 'knows' them), Vinobaji is eminently suited for a re-interpretation of Indian philosophy for the consumption of the Indian masses. The broadbased catholic structure of Indian Philosophy has offered itself for diverse interpretations and Vinobaji asserts that his presentation follows the traditional path of the ancient seers and scholars.

Spiritualism, we are often reminded, is the basic potential virtue of the Indian nation and Vinobaji's mission is patterned precisely on this foundation. That Gandhiji chose him as his spiritual heir is by no means the most important trait of Vinoba. He has developed some unique ideas and qualities in himself to claim an independent status, which is saying a lot about Vinobaji, considering the fact that not many followers of Gandhiji could lay claim to such an achievement. The happy thing about Shriman Narayan's biography is that it throws abundant light on diverse aspects of the multi-coloured life of Vinobaji. The impression one gathers after reading the book is that the best part of Vinobaji's personal life is over and that the institution of Sarvodaya created by him and standing alongside of the 'Jai Jagat' slogan coined by him is for the Indian people to nourish and reap the benefit of. It is to the credit of the author that he has achieved a fair balance in the presentation of Vinobaji's philosophy and politics in about equal proportions.

While congratulating the author upon his commendable work as a biographer, one naturally takes note of his many subjective conclusions. This cannot be considered a factual error in that the biographer here has a lot of philosophical material to handle. But the author could have done better justice by not being too enthusiastic to

present Vinobaji as a hero and destined to be a hero. Even apart from this sentimentalism of the biographer, there are some contestable points, as when the author opines (p. 76) that Vinobaji's interpretation of the *Gita* excels the one by Tilak, or when he avers (p. 43) that Vinobaji did not read the *Sakuntalam* as it is non-spiritual. Vinobaji's interpretation of the concept of *swadharma* (p. 76) likewise leaves a student of Indian philosophy in doubt as to its correctness. The worse part of it is that he reinforces his interpretation with misleading analogies. Vinobaji's discourse on *samnyasa* and *yoga* (p. 81) also suffers from some serious oversimplifications. His analysis of fasting as a means to self-purification does not stand to reason when viewed in the background of his practice (p. 75). In spite of the fact that the author has had to cope with such material, he has presented it with deep sympathy and even admiration. Minor mistakes in Sanskrit quotations there are but they can all be made out by any reader. The Glossary at the end will be very helpful for foreign students while the Bibliography will be found useful by everyone interested in the study of the contemporary Indian political scene. The Index could have been more exhaustive and the price is almost prohibitive.

DR. G. RAMAKRISHNA

THE INTUITION OF ZEN AND BERGSON, BY MINORU YAMAGUCHI, WITH A FOREWORD BY HEINRICH DUMOULIN, Herder Agency, Enderle Bookstore, Mr 3, Kojimachi, 6-Chome, Chiyodaku, Tokyo, 102, Japan, 1969, Pages 235, Price not mentioned.

Of the modern philosophers it was Bergson who drew our attention to the superior value of intuition. Under-rating reason, he moved in a new direction in evolving his philosophy of change. Among the ancient systems of philosophy, some schools of Buddhism advocated the philosophy of change. The supremacy of intuition was taken over by the practising Buddhists of the Yogacara and Madhyamika systems of thought. There a central place was given to *dhyana*, a word which became Zen in the language of the Japanese Buddhists. The Zen school came into limelight with the publication of the works of the great scholar and mystic, Suzuki. The Zen experience is a kind of mystic experience, and as such we have few intelligible accounts thereof. Minoru Yamaguchi has attempted to render

an intelligible account of Zen experience. In the first two chapters the author gives a brief account of Zen and Bergson. Next he draws our attention to the personal experiences of Zen masters. This is followed by three chapters where a comparative study of the thinking-methods and of intuition is presented succinctly. The last chapter, which is the most valuable one, gives an account of the synthetical aspects of continuum and intuition.

Both Zen and Bergson are monistic. The transcendental aspect, however, is more prominent in Zen which is able to break monism and immanentism. Zen asserts absolute monism.

This is a great book on the subject.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

THE WAY OF POWER : BY NICHOLAS RODEREY, Published by Philosophical Library, New York, 1969, pp. 187, price \$ 6.00

The author who was a lawyer, educator, and industrialist, views with compassion modern 'society in crisis' which has lost its old moorings in religion and morals and is wandering aimlessly with no life-purpose. He suggests ways and means by which meaning, purpose, and direction could be found afresh by modern society in the 'right type of philosophy and religion.

The section headings in the book are catching. They are 'Beyond Physics', 'Day of Suffering', 'Every Day', 'Day of Joy'. It is not easy to guess from these titles what the contents of the sections are. However, each section when read aright is stimulating.

The book is a series of affirmations. The entire volume is the expression of the courageous struggle of the author to find meaning in human life, and endow that life with a purpose in the midst of the aimless and listless drift of modern society. Science, by raising the superficial question, 'How does the universe function?' bypasses the deeper questions, 'Why does it function? And why does it exist at all?' Science by its obsessive concern with the mechanistic, deterministic and positivistic aspects of natural phenomena, has blinded altogether man's vision of deeper significance of eternal values in human life. Our author tries to restore the blurred vision to its pristine clarity. The great values of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are given their legitimate place. But because of the author's unusual style and peculiar way of presenting philosophical arguments, readers may not readily see the valuable contributions in pt. I (pages 1-58). But they are there,

The pt. II of the book (pages 59-184) conveys the author's message to the citizens of the present misled world. Life of man as lived so far is all vanity; yet in the midst of this vanity purpose must be found; life is one long sorrow and suffering; yet in the midst of this deep sorrow, joy must be found; modern life has enormous power at its disposal unleashed by science and technology; this power has corrupted life; in the midst of this corruption, wisdom, virtue and love must be found. But where and how to find these? Here the author fails us. True, he speaks of God and immortality, but fails to connect these with his message. The only worthwhile life-purpose is God-realization or Self-realization; the only true joy in this sorrow filled world is the *ananda* (bliss) conferred by Self-realization and *true wisdom*, by *true beauty* which is holiness, and by *true love*, which are all the outcome of the same Self-realization.

Great as the book is, it does not attain the peak of greatness, which could be reached only by following the path of Advaita. The book needs to be supplemented by the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta.

PROF. P. S. NAIDU

TOWARDS SARVODAYA ORDER : BY K. G. MASHRUWALA, Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 14, 1971, pp. 150, Price Rs. 5/-.

The Navajivan Publishing House of Ahmedabad has been devotedly carrying out its plan of publishing important books on Gandhian thought and Gandhian economics. The book under review is a collection of the writings of the late Sri K. G. Mashruwala during his editorship of the *Harijan* from 1948 till his death in 1952. Sri Mashruwala was one of the few faithful disciples of Gandhiji and like Sri J. C. Kumarappa was a staunch advocate of the Gandhian economic programme which has now come to be known as the Sarvodaya economic programme.

The Sarvodaya economics must be understood in the context of its total view of life. In the words of the author :

'The *Sarvodaya* philosophy is not merely a particular method of production, distribution, and consumption of wealth. It is a whole view of life, correlated with philosophy, religion, ethics, education, and amity both at home and abroad. Its economic programme cannot be criticized singly, even as any one of its items cannot be decided upon in isolation of others.' (p. 65).

But this is not a plea for shielding Sarvodaya

economics from criticism on purely economic grounds. The Sarvodayists claim that their economics is defensible in itself and is realistic in so far as it takes into account the real conditions of Indian life. Sarvodaya is not against industrialization but is opposed to such heavy industries as adversely affect indigenous trade and professions and prosper at the cost of the village artisan.

The book explains and discusses from the Sarvodaya point of view such varied topics as Khadi and handloom, ghee and vanaspati, industrialization and its limitations, currency and inflation, taxation and controls etc. It is a good introduction to the Sarvodaya philosophy and its economic programme.

DR. S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA

THE POLICY ORIENTATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE: BY HAROLD D. LASSWELL, Published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Hospital Road, Agra 3, 1971, pp. 129, Price Rs. 20/-.

The book is the compilation of lectures delivered by Dr. Lasswell in the University of Patna in 1967. In nine ably written chapters the author

discusses all factors associated with policy orientation in political science. Political science is dynamic and ever changing which presupposes constant policy orientation to suit new situations and challenges. In this task he has used all existing theories by famous political thinkers and brought psychological, sociological and above all a practical approach to bear on the subject which makes his findings so valuable. The questions of power, leadership, and personality have been very lucidly discussed.

The book in future editions should be provided with a proper index to make it really more useful. Also it may be further enriched if the findings of Earl Russell (in his *Power, a New Social Analysis*) and Jean Meynaud and Alain Lancelot *Les Attitudes Politiques*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris) are incorporated in future editions of this otherwise really valuable and useful work.

We recommend it to the scholarly world and to all top administrators associated with policy orientation in different states.

DR. PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

NEWS AND REPORTS

DEDICATION OF THE WOMEN'S RETREAT HOUSE AT THE VEDANTA RETREAT, OLEMA, CALIFORNIA

On the birthday of Bhagavan Buddha, Sunday, May 28, 1972, the new Women's Retreat House in the Vedanta Society of Northern California's Retreat at Olema was dedicated with a ceremony in which twelve Swamis participated. The Retreat House will serve an important and rapidly growing need of many followers of Vedanta in the United States for secluded and serene surroundings where they may devote themselves to spiritual practice and study.

The Vedanta Retreat at Olema provides an ideal combination of quiet, privacy, natural beauty, and accessibility. The property, purchased by the Vedanta Society of Northern California in 1946 at the instance of the late Swami Ashokananda, is located 35 miles north of San Francisco and covers 2,000 acres on the wooded slopes of the low

Coast Range Mountains that border the Pacific. The plan for the overall development of the Retreat includes a temple compound, a large monastery, a men's retreat, a women's retreat, and various small chapels. Planning for the Women's Retreat House, which is the first unit to be constructed, was started in the winter of 1970-71.

The building, designed by Mr. Gunnar Andersen, a noted architect, is a one-storey, frame structure, with redwood board-and-batten sidings. Its roofs (it has many) are of reddish brown tile. The various parts of the house, though connected, are set off from one another for the sake of privacy and quiet. A spacious living room, a dining area, kitchen, laundry, and caretaker's quarters form its largest part; its

meditation room, its most important part, stands alone; its third and fourth parts together house eight single bedrooms, each with a private bath, outside entrance, and porch.

Nearly 500 people attended the Dedication ceremony, and the occasion was particularly blessed by the presence of Swami Vividishananda, leader of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center of Seattle, Washington; Swami Asheshananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon; Swami Shradhdhananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of Sacramento, California; Swami Sarvagatananda, leader of the Vedanta Societies of Boston, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island; Swami Nityabodhananda, leader of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center of Geneva, Switzerland; Swami Bhashyananda, leader of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, Illinois; Swami Swahananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of Berkeley, California; and Swami Asaktananda, Swami Chetanananda, and Swami Amohananda of the Vedanta Society of Southern California.

A huge blue canvas marquee or canopy was erected over the main porch and patio of the building, forming an auditorium and spacious worship platform. The pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda that were to be installed in the meditation room, as well as those to be hung in the living room, had been placed on the altars with vases of many coloured flowers set before them.

The first part of the programme consisted of a worship, conducted by Swami Asheshananda, with the assistance of Swami Asaktananda. Vocal music, accompanied by organ, and individual chanting from Sanskrit scriptures by Swami Bhashyananda, Swami Sarvagatananda, and Swami Chetanananda, were offered during the puja. The pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and

Swami Vivekananda were then carried in procession to the meditation room by the Swami and there installed. During the procession, the *Isa-upanishad* was chanted by Brahmacharins Jay and David.

Opening the second part of the programme, Swami Prabuddhananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, welcomed the Swami and guests. Swami Vividishananda then formally dedicated the Women's Retreat House. During the course of his short talk, the Swami said: 'The face of our Lord and Master, Sri Ramakrishna, the Essence of the teachings of Vedanta, comes to my mind. He is here with us, and I implore his grace. May he bless us and this institution. I also implore the grace of our Holy Mother, who embodies the most extraordinary mother love. May She shower her blessings on this Retreat House and on the devotees present here. And may our illustrious leader, Swami Vivekananda, who initiated the Vedanta movement in this country and who was the founder of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, bless us and this House.' The Swami also invoked the blessings of Swami Turiyananda, Swami Trigunatita, and Swami Ashokananda, all of whom had played a large part in establishing the Vedanta work in Northern California.

Swami Chidrupananda, president and assistant minister of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, then called upon each of the assembled Swamis to address the gathering. The closing chant was given by Swami Sarvagatananda. At the conclusion of the programme, a hot lunch was served at long buffet tables set under a grove of oak trees not far from the building.

After lunch, the house was open for inspection by all. And thus, late in the afternoon of this auspicious day, the Dedication of the Women's Retreat House at Olema came to a close.