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ETERNAL VALUES
FOR
A CHANGING SOCIETY

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN
BOMBAY

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By

THE PRESIDENT
RAMAKRISHNA MATH
P.O. BELUR MATH
HOWRAH, WEST BENGAL

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS

PUBLISHED BY

ADVAITA ASHRAMA, CALCUTTA

The Advaita Ashrama published in the past some of the lectures of Swami Ranganathananda. The present volume contains all of them and a few more speeches and writings, arranged in a logical order to enable the readers to grasp the central idea running through them all, which the name of the volume suggests. One of the main contributions by Swami Vivekananda to modern thought was to show that society can change in infinite ways in response to historical necessities; but that is no reason why the eternal values underlying all human endeavour should be discarded or even changed. Nay, he was emphatic that these alone can ensure stability at the same time that they supply the driving power for progress. In his conception, spirituality is a dynamic force expressing itself as an unfailing basis of continuous advancement towards the only human goal—God-realization—through varied activities on the social and other planes.

The book is an answer to many basic social, political, economic, and spiritual problems that beset the modern age; and we are sure that the readers will hail it as a timely publication.

Acknowledgement of the sources has been made at the proper places, and our thanks go to all who have permitted us to use these materials.

November 1958 PUBLISHERS

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

We are happy to place before our readers in East and West this important book *Eternal Values for a Changing Society* by Swami Ranganathananda. The book comprises the speeches and writings of the Swami during the last thirty-six years in India and abroad.

A senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, which has its Headquarters at the Belur Math, District Howrah, West Bengal, Swami Ranganathananda is a member of its Board of Trustees and of the Governing Body of its closely allied institution, the Ramakrishna Mission. Born on 15 December, 1908, in a middle-class Hindu family in the sylvan village of Trikkur, Kerala State, the Swami bore the name of Śaṅkaran in his pre-monastic life. After completing his High School education in the neighbouring village of Ollur, during which the study of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature inspired him with the ideals of renunciation and service, young Śaṅkaran renounced the world and, receiving the blessings of Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at the hill station of Ootacamund *en route*, joined the Ramakrishna Order in its Mysore branch in July, 1926, at the early age of seventeen and a half. And he spent the next twelve years—the first nine in the Mysore, and the next three in the Bangalore, branches of the Order—under the loving training and care of Swami Siddheswarananda, the founder, later, of the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna in Gretz, France. In 1929, he was initiated into *brahmacharya* by Swami Shivananda at the Belur Math and became a full-fledged probationer of the Order under the new name of Yati Chaitanya. And four years later, in January, 1933, Swami Shivananda initiated him into *Sannyāsa* or monastic order, and conferred on him the monastic name of Raṅganāthānanda. Absorbed as he was in a disciplined life of meditation, study, and monastery services, his Mysore experience provided the firm foundations for all his subsequent life and work in the holy Order.

During the last year of his stay in Mysore, he was the Warden of the ashrama's hostel for school and college students. While in Bangalore, he was closely associated with hundreds of students and teachers of the city and conducted moral and religious classes for the prisoners, including *satyāgraha* prisoners, of the Bangalore Central Jail. This was followed by three years in Rangoon as Secretary and Librarian of its Ramakrishna Mission Society, during which he undertook extensive lecture tours in Burma, and six years in Karachi—the then capital of the

Indian province of Sind and now the main seaport city of West Pakistan—as the President of its Ramakrishna Math and Mission branch. At Rangoon and Karachi, he not only continued his close association with students and teachers as their friend and guide, but also exercised his beneficent influence over vast sections of the general public. His regular weekly study classes, held at the Rangoon and Karachi branches, on the Upaniṣads and the Gītā, and occasional lectures and discourses on other spiritual, philosophical, cultural, and educational themes, used to draw record crowds of men, women, and students belonging to diverse faiths and nationalities.

While in Karachi, apart from various philanthropic activities, the Swami also organized the raising of large funds from public donations and despatching over 1,250 tons of rice by special steamer to Calcutta to relieve the distress of the victims of the Bengal famine of 1943.

From 1949 to 1962, Swami Ranganathananda was the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission branch in New Delhi. Here he built up a spacious public library and auditorium, a large university students' text book library, and a magnificent temple dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna. In the humanitarian field, he organized bands of dedicated workers engaged in the fields of hospital social services and leprosy relief. His Sunday morning discourses at the Delhi University and his Sunday evening discourses in the premises of the Ramakrishna Mission, which used to attract large audiences—the number at the Mission rising sometimes to over two thousand—became outstanding features of the cultural and intellectual life of India's capital city. During these years in Delhi, and later in Calcutta, the Swami undertook repeated lecture tours within India addressing universities, colleges, schools, cultural institutions and administrative training academies and groups. At the request of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, he also undertook extensive lecture tours covering Japanese universities and several South-East Asian countries in 1958 and several times thereafter and seventeen European countries, including Czechoslovakia, Poland, USSR, and Spain between April and August 1961.

The Swami has given several broadcast talks at the invitation of the All India Radio. He addressed the annual Convocations of the Calcutta University in February, 1966, on *India's Educational Vision* and of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, in June, 1967, on *The Indian Philosophy of Social Work.*

A collection of his speeches and writings under the title *Eternal Values for a Changing Society* was published in 1958 by the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta-14; a second impression of the same was brought

out two years later. With the kind permission of the Advaita Ashrama, we are now happy to bring out an enlarged edition of this book incorporating many of his important speeches and writings, which were not included in the earlier editions, and most of his speeches and writings subsequent to 1958.

This volume of the Swami's speeches and writings, bearing the significant title of *Eternal Values for a Changing Society,* can be taken, in view of its subject matter and treatment, as a companion volume to his book *The Message of the Upaniṣads,* published by us earlier and a revised second edition of which is also being published now along with this book.

May 1971. PUBLISHERS

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

In the book, Devanāgarī characters are transliterated according to the scheme adopted by the International Congress of Orientalists at Athens in 1912 and since then generally acknowledged to be the only rational and satisfactory one. In it the inconsistency, irregularity, and redundancy of English spelling are ruled out: f, q, w, x, and z are not called to use; one fixed value is given to each letter. According to this scheme:

a	stands	for	अ	and	sounds	like	*o*	in	c*o*me
ā	,,	,,	आ	,,	,,	,,	*a*	,,	f*a*r
i	,,	,,	इ	,,	,,	,,	*i*	,,	b*i*t
ī	,,	,,	ई	,,	,,	,,	*ee*	,,	f*ee*l
u	,,	,,	उ	,,	,,	,,	*u*	,,	f*u*ll
ū	,,	,,	ऊ	,,	,,	,,	*oo*	,,	c*oo*l
ṛ	,,	,,	ऋ	,,	may be pronounced like *ri* in *ri*ng				
e	,,	,,	ए	,,	sounds	like	*a*	in	c*a*ke
ai	,,	,,	ऐ	,,	,,	,,	*i*	,,	m*i*te
o	,,	,,	ओ	,,	,,	,,	*o*	,,	n*o*te
au	,,	,,	औ	,,	,,	,,	*ou*	,	c*ou*nt
ṁ	,,	,,	(*anusvara*)	and	sounds	like	*m*	in	so*m*e
ḥ	,,	,,	(*visarga*)	,,	,,	soft	half	*h*	

, (apostrophe) stands for ऽ (elided a (अ)).

k	stands	for	क्	and	sounds	like	*k*		
kh	,,	,,	ख्	,,	,,	,,	*kh*	in	sil*k h*at (uttered quickly together)
g	,,	,,	ग्	,,	,,	,,	*g*	,,	*g*o
gh	,,	,,	घ्	,,	,,	,,	*gh*	,,	log-*h*ut
ṅ	,,	,,	ङ्	,,	,,	,,	*ng*	,,	si*ng*
c	,,	,,	च्	,,	,,	,,	*ch*	,,	chur*ch*
ch	,,	,,	छ्	,,	,,	,,	*chh*	,,	chur*ch*-*h*ill
ja	,,	,,	ज्	,,	,,	,,	*j*	,,	*j*ug
jh	,,	,,	झ्	,,	,,	,,	*dgeh*	,,	he*dgeh*og
ñ	,,	,,	ञ्	,,	,,	,,	*n*	,,	si*n*gle (a palatal n)

ṭ	stands	for	ट्	and	sounds	like	*t*	in	cur*t*
ṭh	,,	,,	ठ्	,,	,,	,,	*th*	,,	ho*t-h*ouse
ḍ	,,	,,	ड्	,,	,,	,,	*d*	,,	bir*d*
ḍh	,,	,,	ढ्	,,	,,	,,	*dh*	,,	re*d-h*ot
ṇ	,,	,,	ण	,,	,,	,,	(cerebral n)		
t	,,	,,	त्	,,	,,	,,	*t*	,,	French
th	,,	,,	थ्	,,	,,	,,	*th*	,,	*th*umb
d	,,	,,	द्	,,	,,	,,	*th*	,,	*th*ough
dh	,,	,,	ध्	,,	,,	,,	*th*	,,	brea*th*e *h*ard
n	,,	,,	न्	,,	,,	,,	(dental n)		
p	,,	,,	प्	,,	,,	,,	*p*	,,	*p*un
ph	,,	,,	फ्	,,	,,	,,	*ph*	,,	to*p-h*at
b	,,	,,	ब्	,,	,,	,,	*b*	,,	*b*at
bh	,,	,,	भ्	,,	,,	,,	*bh*	,,	ab*h*or
m	,,	,,	म्	,,	,,	,,	*m*	,,	*m*an
y	,,	,,	य्	,,	,,	,,	*y*	,,	*y*oung
r	,,	,,	र्	,,	,,	,,	*r*	,,	*r*ust
l	,,	,,	ल्	,,	,,	,,	*l*	,,	*l*ump
v	,,	,,	व्	,,	,,	,,	*v* or *w*	,,	le*v*y, *w*ater
ś	,,	,,	श्	,,	,,	,,	(palatal s)		
ṣ	,,	,,	ष्	,,	,,	,,	*sh*	,,	*sh*ip
s	,,	,,	स्	,,	,,	,,	*s*	,,	*s*un
h	,,	,,	ह्	,,	,,	,,	*h*	,,	*h*ome

The following points may also be noted:

(1) All Sanskrit words, except when they are proper nouns, or have come into common use in English, or represent a class of literature, cult, sect, or school of thought, are italicized.

(2) Anglicized Sanskrit words like 'kārmic', 'sāṁsaric', 'Arhathood', etc. are romanized.

(3) Current geographical names, except in cases where their Sanskrit forms are given, or in special cases where the context requires it, and all modern names from the commencement of the nineteenth century are given in their usual spelling and without diacritical marks.

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Part One

THE ESSENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE

THE subject of Indian culture is a theme difficult to expound in the course of a short talk. The long history of this culture, its different expressions, and its rich variety make it difficult to deal with it in the course of a few minutes. The subject is interesting for a special reason. Every ancient culture holds some interest for all of us; but when the culture is a continuing culture, that interest becomes much more contemporary, much more topical. In the case of the study of ancient cultures like the Babylonian or the Egyptian, or even the ancient Greek, we study them more from a historical point of view, just to enrich ourselves from the experiences of the past. But the study of Indian culture is of special significance to us, because it is still a living factor in the life of nearly one-seventh of the human race. How this culture arose nearly five thousand years ago, how it developed and was enriched in subsequent centuries, and, finally, how it has come down to us as a rich human legacy is therefore a very fascinating and rewarding study.

Indian Culture : A Historic Panorama

Says Will Durant (*The Story of Civilization,* Vol. I: *Our Oriental Heritage,* p. 391, opening paragraph of the section on India) :

'Nothing should more deeply shame the modern student than the recency and inadequacy of his acquaintance with India. Here is a vast peninsula of nearly two million square miles; two-thirds as large as the United States, and twenty times the size of its master, Great Britain; 320,000,000 souls—more than in all North and South America combined, or one-fifth of the population of the earth;

an impressive continuity of development and civilization from Mohenjo-daro, 2900 B.C. or earlier, to Gandhi, Raman, and Tagore; faiths compassing every stage from barbarous idolatry to the most subtle and spiritual pantheism; philosophers playing a thousand variations on one monistic theme from the Upaniṣads, eight centuries before Christ, to Śaṅkara, eight centuries after him; scientists developing astronomy three thousand years ago, and winning Nobel prizes in our own time; a democratic constitution of untraceable antiquity in the villages, and wise and beneficent rulers like Aśoka and Akbar in the capitals; minstrels singing great epics almost as old as Homer, and poets holding world audiences today; artists raising gigantic temples for Hindu gods from Tibet to Ceylon and from Cambodia to Java, or carving perfect palaces by the score for Mogul kings and queens—this is the India that patient scholarship is now opening up, like a new intellectual continent, to that Western mind which only yesterday thought civilization an exclusively European thing.'

The UNESCO sponsored book *Traditional Cultures in South-East Asia,* published by Orient Longmans, gives the following definition of culture (quoted in the article on 'The Future for Traditional Cultures' by Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri in the *Unesco Chronicle* for May 1959) :

'Culture means the total accumulation of material objects, ideas, symbols, beliefs, sentiments, values, and social forms which are passed on from one generation to another in any given society.'

The subject of culture is generally divided into two categories, namely, material and mental. We can study Indian culture from these two aspects. All early developments of a culture relate to its development in its material aspect. So far as India is concerned, we are not able to tell where, or at what date, this culture started. Dating in Indian history, especially as we go back, becomes extremely difficult; but from the data gathered patiently by historians and research workers, we have come to know that, when the Indian people first appear on the horizon of history, they have already acquired a developed form of material culture. The *Ṛg-Veda*, their first written record, and which is also the first written record of mankind, gives us the picture of a people who have already settled down to a life of agriculture, village handicrafts, and village organization, and who exhibit a good deal of the love of life, of poetry, and of war.

So to deal with the material culture of these people in its early beginnings is rather difficult. Going back further still, if we accept the viewpoint of several eminent historians that the Indus Valley civilization is pre-Ṛg-Vedic, even so, that civilization also appears on the horizon in its developed form as a highly sophisticated urban culture. Thus it is extremely difficult to deal with the earliest beginnings of Indian culture. But one thing strikes us, and it is this: when this cul-

ture makes its *debut* on the stage of human history, it discloses a state of social evolution long past the primitive stage, and poised for a mighty advance on the plane of mind and thought. For the Ṛg-Vedic Indians, whom historians call Indo-Aryans, were an energetic race of people; they were deeply religious; and they had leisure. These conditions led them to invest their surplus energies on the plane of mind.

We know from the science of anthropology that, when a group achieves a measure of stability and security in the material base of its culture through settled agriculture and industry, thus allowing for a certain amount of leisure, it tends to invest this surplus leisure in the higher plane of man's inner life, thus giving rise to the second aspect of its culture, namely, mental culture. In the *Ṛg-Veda,* we are already face to face with this emergence of the life of mind, the life of thought, not merely in the field of literature, but also in the field of bold philosophical speculation, asking questions about the nature of the universe and the meaning of human existence. Starting very early in the life of the Indian people in the Ṛg-Vedic period, this philosophic temper and inward bias was to grow in range and volume in later centuries so as eventually to become the dominant characteristic of Indian culture.

The Vedic Weltanschauung

The vast and varied Vedic literature gives us an insight into the mind and mood of India of those days. The thoughts and insights gained by the gifted minds of the Vedic period became the foundation and the stimulus of all later developments of culture and thought in India. They have bequeathed a *Weltanschauung* which has sustained India for centuries, and which is dynamic even today.

To understand Indian culture, we have to get an insight into this *Weltanschauung.* Every culture and civilization has behind it the inspiration of a philosophy. The understanding of that philosophy is necessary for the comprehension of the mind and mood and processes of its culture or civilization. 'A civilization without a philosophy', says Hegel, 'is like a temple without the holy of holies'.

Indian culture in its long career has experimented with life in its diverse aspects and levels. It has not neglected any of the values of life, but it has concentrated more on some than on others. Politics, economics, art, science, religion, and philosophy—all these have been enriched by its contributions; but its greatest and most unique contribution is in the field of religion and philosophy. To treat Indian culture and outlook as other-worldly, as some western writers have done, is

thus not true to fact. Other-worldliness, transcendentalism, is undoubtedly its characteristic feature; but at the base of this transcendentalism is a robust positivism with zest in life, and its expression in art, literature, music, and dance.

Says Dr. Brajendranath Seal (*The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus,* 1915, Foreword, p. IV) :

'The Hindus no less than the Greeks have shared in the work of constructing scientific concepts and methods in the investigation of physical phenomena, as well as of building up a body of positive knowledge which has been applied to industrial technique; and Hindu scientific ideas and methodology (e.g. the inductive method or methods of algebraic analysis) have deeply influenced the course of natural philosophy in Asia—in the East as well as the West—in China and Japan, as well as in the Saracen Empire.'

India has been known to other nations as a land of wealth and philosophic wisdom; both trade with India and communion with her mind and thought were much sought after. These facts go to show that the people of ancient India took keen interest in man as a member of society, man struggling to overcome external obstacles, man seeking delight in social and personal existence. This is an aspect of culture which we find prominent in the India of the *Ṛg-Veda,* and which, though relegated to second place in later ages in the wake of new thought developments, was never treated as a value of no consequence in any period of its long history.

The Mind and Mood of the Indo-Aryans

The picture of the Indo-Aryan creators of this culture depicted by the *Ṛg-Veda* reveals to us a race of sturdy people bubbling with youthfulness and vivacity, energy and zest. They were endowed with love of life, capacity for work, and a gift for poetry, and, later, for philosophy as well. There is no touch of pessimism in the atmosphere of the *Ṛg-Veda.* Transcendental elements are undoubtedly there, yet there is no indication of hankering or passion for anything transcendental, except a keen desire to go to heaven after death; but this heaven is but an idealized form of the sensuous life on earth, and a welcome change from the humdrum life here below. The Ṛg-Vedic Indians were frankly worldly, and they were not apologetic about it. In this, they bear close kinship to people who belong to our contemporary civilization. Both are positivists, who bend even religion to positivistic purposes.

But the Indo-Aryans were not content to live at the level of their bodies. Their dynamic and restless minds could not long remain content with an easy and pleasant life. With stability achieved at the

material and social level, their mental life began to experience deep stirrings and questionings, which slowly led them to question their erstwhile philosophy of facile optimism, and to forge ahead to wider horizons of thought and deeper levels of experience. Towards the end of the Vedic period, Indian history entered its most creative period through the Upaniṣads, which, so far as the whole subsequent history of India is concerned, is also the most decisive and pervasive. In the Upaniṣads, we see the mental life of man reaching the summit and surveying from that height the whole field of experience below.

The Philosophic Legacy of the Indo-Aryans

This spirit of inquiry which possessed the Indo-Aryan mind led them to question experience, to question the environing world, to question their gods and the tenets of their traditional faiths; they did not fear to doubt when rational, certain knowledge was hard to come by. They illustrate the truth of the creative role of scepticism; in the pursuit of truth, such scepticism is but the prelude to rational faith. When they sought for the truth of the external universe, they found it baffling; inquiry only deepened the mystery. The *Nāsadīya-sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda* records the impact of this mystery on the Indo-Aryan mind. That mind discovered early, as modern thinkers are slowly discovering today, that the mystery of the external world will only deepen and not diminish, in spite of advancing knowledge, if the mystery of the inner world is not tackled. For a complete philosophy of reality, there is need to have the data from both the fields of experience, the outer and the inner.

In constructing a philosophy of external nature, we rely on the data supplied by the senses; we start with these data, but very soon we are compelled to go beyond them on the wings of speculation. Early Indian speculations in the field of cosmology are bold and daring, and they bear close kinship with the cosmological speculations of modern scientific thought. Early Indian scientists, like the modern scientists, posited a self-evolving cause behind the entire universe. An important corollary of this is what Indian thinkers refer to as the non-difference between cause and effect; effect is only cause in another form; the effect is the gross form of which the subtle form is the cause. All things and events in nature, including man, are subject to this cause and effect process. Nothing happens arbitrarily or haphazardly. By rational, objective investigation, man can unravel the cause or causes of events, and gain control over nature's processes.

A second point of close kinship between the two is the concept of evolution. The Indo-Aryans advanced the theory of the universe be-

ing the product of an evolutionary process, and not the creation of an extra-cosmic deity. They believed in cosmic as well as organic evolution. The universe is not static, but dynamic; cosmic energy passes from the undifferentiated to the differentiated state. Their concept of nature was far more comprehensive than even that of modern science. It included not only the physical and biological, but also the mental and spiritual aspects of the universe of experience.

A third point of kinship is that there is no place for the supernatural in Indian thought. The conflict between mind and matter, and that between natural and supernatural, so characteristic of modern western thought, are unknown to Indian thought. Fourthly, the modern theories of the conservation of energy and the unity of matter and energy, which are revolutionary discoveries in modern thought, are integral parts of Indian philosophical thought. And, fifthly, the vastness of cosmic time and space as well as the relativity of both is another important point of contact between ancient Indian thought and modern scientific thought.

These few examples are enough to show the rational bent and speculative daring of these early Indian thinkers. In the Upaniṣads, we get a glimpse into the workings of their minds. They were unhampered by the tyranny of religious dogma or political authority, or even the pressure of public opinion. They sought truth with a single-minded devotion, rare in the history of thought. In the words of Max Müller (*Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 182):

'It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedānta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India thousands of years ago, a system that even now makes us feel giddy, as in mounting the last steps of the swaying spire of an ancient Gothic cathedral. None of our philosopers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone after regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Ātman or Brahman.'

The Upaniṣads and Modern Scientific Thought

In the Upaniṣads, we can study the graceful conflict of thought with thought, the emergence of more satisfactory thought, and the rejection of the less adequate ideas without a tear. Hypotheses are advanced and rejected on the touchstone of experience and not at the dictate of a creed. Thus thought forges ahead to unravel the mystery of the world in which we live. Only a small minority of thinkers participated in this great adventure; they were gifted with a deep passion

for truth and for the happiness and welfare of humanity. It is no wonder that what they achieved in the speculative field can stand comparison with the advanced scientific cosmology of the modern age.

But these Indian thinkers were not satisfied with their intellectual speculations. They discovered, as the modern scientists are discovering today, that, in spite of such speculative knowledge, the universe remained a mystery, and that the mystery only deepened with the advance of such knowledge. One of the important components of that deepening mystery of the universe is the mystery of man himself. The Upaniṣads became aware of this truth; this is also the central truth emphasized in twentieth-century physical science. To both, man is the greatest mystery—holding the key to all other mysteries.

With the dawning of this awareness, philosophy took a new and revolutionary turn in ancient India; from being speculative, it became experiential. The external universe comes into the field of experience only in its observable aspects; this is only a fraction of the total reality; beyond it lies the infinite expanse of the unobservable. Twentieth-century physical science is concerned only with this observable aspect of the universe; but it has become aware that the data of this observable universe includes also the ever-present datum of the observer. Modern science does try to peep into the unobservable on the basis of the observable. But all such attempts are speculative ventures which make the mystery more incomprehensible. In the words of Sir James Jeans (*The New Background of Science*, p. 68):

'Physical science set out to study a world of matter and radiation, and finds that it cannot describe or picture the nature of either, even to itself. Photons, electrons, and protons have become as meaningless to the physicist as X, Y, Z are to a child on its first day of learning algebra. The most we hope for at the moment is to discover ways of manipulating X, Y, Z without knowing what they are, with the result that the advance of knowledge is at present reduced to what Einstein has described as extracting one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible.'

What is the significance of the presence of this datum of the observer in the data of the observed and observable? It seems to hide a profounder mystery than the external universe, both from the theoretical and the practical points of view. If the self is inextricably involved in the awareness of the not-self, an inquiry into the nature of the self becomes not only a valid but also an indispensable scientific inquiry. If the mind as knower is involved in our knowledge of the external world, an inquiry into the nature of the mind and the nature of knowledge becomes an integral part of the scientific investigation

into the nature of reality. As remarked by Sir Arthur Eddington (*Philosophy of Physical Science,* p. 5):

'We have discovered that it is actually an aid in the search for knowledge to understand the nature of the knowledge which we seek.'

Says Lincoln Barnett (*The Universe and Dr. Einstein,* pp. 126-27):

'In the evolution of scientific thought, one fact has become impressively clear: there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. All highroads of the intellect, all byways of theory and conjecture lead ultimately to an abyss that human ingenuity can never span. For man is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature. The farther he extends his horizons, the more vividly he recognizes the fact that, as the physicist Niels Bohr puts it, "we are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence". Man is thus his own greatest mystery. He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. He comprehends but little of his organic processes and even less of his unique capacity to perceive the world about him, to reason and to dream. Least of all does he understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty: the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception.'

The Challenge of the Mystery of Man

From these and other considerations advanced by eminent scientists, it is clear that modern physical science in its theoretical aspect is face to face with this tremendous mystery of the self of man. The same situation obtains in the modern biological sciences also. Evolution today is conceived as a universal phenomenon. Nature reveals a movement from an undifferentiated energy mass into a differentiated cosmos; cosmic evolution rises to the organic level, which again rises to the human level. What is it that is disclosed by this tremendous fact of evolution? In the nineteenth century, this subject was not discussed very deeply. The century is notable for establishing the *fact* of evolution; and this is achieved against much opposition from an entrenched mass of theological dogma and prejudice. During the hundred and odd years since the publication of Darwin's monumental works *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man,* biology has made great strides, especially in the study of the *course* of evolution and, to a lesser extent, of the *significance* of evolution.

These advances since Darwin formed the theme of the discussions at a conference of leading scientists, held under the auspices of the Chicago University in November 1959, to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species.* The proceedings of this conference, available in three-volumes under the general title *Evolution after Darwin,* acquaint us with these revolutionary advances,

which have a bearing on the nature of reality and the destiny of man. Writing in the opening article of volume one on 'The Emergence of Darwinism', Sir Julian Huxley tells us that, at the time when Darwin's books were published, 'the main need was to establish on a firm basis the *fact* of evolution and its scientific comprehensibility. In recent years, however, we have turned our attention to the *course* of evolution; and as a result, have been enabled to reach a number of important conclusions about the evolutionary process in general, and our own place and role within it in particular' (*Evolution after Darwin,* The University of Chicago Centennial, Vol. I, *The Evolution of Life*, p. 17).

Sir Julian Huxley further tells us that, in its progress from the inorganic to the organic or biological stage, evolution achieved novel features of great significance (*ibid.*, p. 19):

'The great novelty of the biological phase was the emergence of awareness—psychological or mental capacities—to a position of increasing biological importance.

'Eventually, in the line leading to man, the organization of awareness reached a level at which experience could be not only stored in the individual, but transmitted cumulatively to later generations. This second critical point initiated the human or psycho-social phase of evolution. ...

'In broadest terms, the biological phase of evolution stems from the new invention of self-reproducing matter; the human phase, from that of self-reproducing mind.'

Pointing to the theoretical and practical significance of this human phase, Huxley says (*ibid.*):

'In the light of these new facts and ideas, man's true destiny emerges in startling new form. It is to be the chief agent for the future of evolution on this planet. Only in and through man can any further major advance be achieved —though equally he may inflict damage or distortion on the process, including his own evolving self.'

Discussing the aim of human evolution as 'greater fulfilment', Huxley continues (*ibid.*, p. 20):

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

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

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

Man : The Central Mystery of the Universe

Thus from the side of both the sciences, of matter and of life, man becomes the central mystery of the universe. Through one of the fruits of her own evolution, namely, man, nature has disclosed the outlines of the deep mystery that lies in her depths. Herein lies man's uniqueness both as an item of evolution and as the key to the mystery of nature. Hence the importance of developing what Huxley calls 'a science of human possibilities'. It was such a science, the science of religion, which India sought and found in her Upaniṣads, and which she integrated with the sciences of matter and life to emerge as the unifying philosophy of the Vedānta.

When we speak of any culture, we have to ask one important question: What is the concept of man in that culture? Among the various cultures that have come down to us, we have two broad divisions: one, the Greek or the Greco-Roman, and the other, the Indian. In each of these two cultures, we see a distinctive view of man and his highest excellence. The concept of man and his excellence can serve as a good measuring rod to assess the culture of a people. Apart from the material bases of a culture, which are generally common in almost every developed culture of the past—a certain measure of economic and social security through settled agriculture, simple handicraft, and effective social organization—the most important determinant of a culture is the direction of its mental life, the questions it asks of experience and the answers it receives. These stirrings in the mind of man signify the beginnings of a conscious and deliberate control and guidance of life's forces. This new trend in evolution could not have proceeded far, had man been subject to the pressures of nature in his external life. If he had had to fight for his very existence, like the rest of the animal creation, he would not have developed even the desire, much less the capacity, to scale the heights of evolution on his own. Herein is the significance of his achievement of the rudiments of material culture. He can now advance evolution into the higher field of mind and thought; this is the special field of human evolution, where quality replaces quantity as the central criterion of progress. In this, he receives help from his unique capacity for speech and the transmission of accumulated experience. He is thus endowed with a cultural inheritance over and above his genetic inheritance. With the aid of these, the mental component of culture advances from generation to generation. Says Julian Huxley (Lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision, *ibid.*, Vol. III, *Issues in Evolution*, p. 252):

'Man is therefore of immense significance. ... He is a reminder of the existence, here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its

energy equivalents, of a trend toward mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

It was this advance of evolution into the higher fields of mind and awareness, and into what Huxley terms 'the science of human possibilities', that took place in the India of the Upaniṣads. The fruits of that advance have an undying quality about them; they have nourished India for ages; and they have already proved their appeal for man in the modern age as well.

The practical urgency for tackling the subject of the mystery of man today has been hinted at by Huxley in the passage referred to earlier. That urgency arises from the fact that, with the enormous powers that modern technology has placed in his hands, man becomes for the first time the agent of evolutionary advance or the only possible destroyer of his civilization and of the rest of nature. Man creates a world-wide civilization; he willy-nilly destroys it. Does not this tragic paradox highlight the mystery that is man and the need to discover the creative possibilities lying deep within him, and to evolve the techniques capable of educating him into becoming the fairest flower of evolution and the saviour of his undoubtedly rich civilization? 'We are in the middle of a race', says Bertrand Russell, 'between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends.... Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow' (*The Impact of Science on Society,* pp. 120-21).

Scientists like Eddington have posed certain questions wherein this mystery stands sharpened in the context of the total mystery of the universe.

In a BBC broadcast some decades ago, Eddington posed this question: 'What is the truth about ourselves?' and proceeded to answer: 'We are a bit of star gone wrong.' That is the first answer from the purely astrophysical point of view. Again, answering in terms of nineteenth-century physics, he said: 'We are a bit of machinery, puppets that strut and talk and laugh till time turns the handle beneath.' We are like machines, wound up and wound down by inexorable time.

But these two answers did not satisfy Eddington. So he finally added: 'But there is one elementary inescapable answer: We are that which asks the question.' Here is thrown a profound hint. We are the subject; we are the self; we cannot be equated with mere objects. We have a profound dimension within us, which refuses to be reduced to

physical or mechanical or merely objective categories. Modern Existentialist philosophy registers this protest of the human self against the total mechanistic philosophy of nineteenth-century science.

The modern age is witnessing a growing urge in man everywhere to realize his true self; he is keenly feeling the need to make his knowledge flower into wisdom; he is experiencing a nameless hunger for the infinite and the eternal; he is in search of the universal dimension of his personality, from where he can send out tendrils of love, waves of what sociologist Sorokin terms altruism, to his fellow-beings. It is against this background of modern thought and aspiration that the contributions of the Upaniṣads to Indian culture in particular, and to the human cultural legacy in general, become significant.

The Charm of the Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads as we have seen, reveal an age characterized by a remarkable ferment of thought and inspiration. The physical and mental climate which made possible this ferment is an interesting study. Economically, there was no pressing problem weighing on the mind of man in the India of that age. The country was vast; the population was very small. There was plenty of well-watered, fertile land available. There was unlimited economic opportunity for everyone. Much of India was then covered with forests. Even several centuries later, at the time of Buddha in the middle of the first millennium before Christ, the population of northern India has been estimated by some authorities like Rhys Davids to have been only between 15 and 20 millions. The vastness of the country, the fertility of its soil, copious rainfall, rolling pasture lands, and the sparseness of the population—all these betoken the presence of stable economic conditions; none need be poor except he who is lazy or physically handicapped.

The Indian peasants and artisans were noted for their virtues of hard work and simple habits. We do not hear much about poverty in those days. Poverty appeared in India much later due, firstly, to foreign invasions accompanied by looting of national wealth on a large scale, and secondly, to insecurity arising from the first. The Indian village organization, which originated from the early Indo-Aryans, has come down to our own times standing the test of the vicissitudes of millennia of history. The entire social *milieu* of the Indo-Aryans was ripe with great potentialities, for that society had found leisure to think and to ask questions. The Indo-Aryans had the choice to utilize the leisure either to conquer the outer world or the inner. With their undoubted mental gifts, they could have bent their mental energies to

the conquest of the world of matter and the enjoyment of its fruits. The ideological expansion of such a culture generally results in an aggressive lateral movement, political and economic, and often military. This is the normal way of all cultures rising from the material to the mental level. The products of such mental culture are the physical sciences, technology, economics, history, politics, literature, the arts, logic, grammar, speculative philosophy, conventional religion, and imperial expansion through war. The theme of this mental culture is *man in society,* his growth and expansion in the world of space and time. It aims at continuous refinement of his life at the sensate level. This is illustrated not only in the history of Greco-Roman culture, but in the Chinese, the ancient Middle Eastern, and the modern Western cultures as well.

The Upaniṣads and Indian Culture

This normal development is found happening in the case of Indian culture also. But very early in its career, it became aware of a strange new field of human experience, namely, the *within* of nature as revealed in man, as revealed in his consciousness and ego sense. Even in the *Ṛg-Veda,* we find the Indian mind experiencing intimations of something divine and immortal within itself. It gathered volume and power as years rolled on until, in the Upaniṣads, it became a flood issuing in a systematic, detached, and scientific pursuit of truth in the depth of experience. The Upaniṣads convey to us an impression of the tremendous fascination that this new field of inquiry held for the contemporary Indian mind; and that fascination has continued to hold India's mind in thrall even to this day.

The Upaniṣads gave a permanent orientation to the incipient Indo-Aryan culture by their emphasis on inner penetration, by their wholehearted advocacy of what the Greeks centuries later formulated in the dictum 'man, know thyself', but at which they themselves stopped halfway. All subsequent developments of Indian culture were powerfully conditioned by this Upaniṣadic legacy. This stress on inward depth had one supreme consequence for Indian culture, in that all its expansive outward movements throughout history were non-aggressive; every word of its message for man 'has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it', as remarked by Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, p. 106).

The essence of a culture is revealed in the type of man in whom that culture finds its own highest excellence manifested. A culture is worldly, if worldly success is what its most admired hero represents. If there is any truth in calling Indian culture spiritual, it derives from

the fact that the most admired hero of the Indian people has been, and is, the man of God. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought,* pp. 381-82):

'The ideal man of India is not the magnanimous man of Greece or the valiant knight of medieval Europe, but the free man of spirit, who has attained insight into the universal source by rigid discipline and practice of disinterested virtues, who has freed himself from the prejudices of his time and place. It is India's pride that she has clung fast to this ideal and produced in every generation and in every part of the country, from the time of the *ṛṣis* of the Upaniṣads and Buddha to Ramakrishna and Gandhi, men who strove successfully to realize this ideal.'

As the Greeks and the others specialized in the subject of man in society, India specialized in man in depth, man as the individual. Each has its glory and grandeur; each has its limitations, which exactly render one the complement of the other. Dealing with this special bent of the Indian mind in his lecture on 'The Powers of the Mind', Swami Vivekananda says (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, pp. 20-21):

'This is the peculiarity of the Indian mind that, when anything interests it, it gets absorbed in it and other things are neglected. You know how many sciences had their origin in India. Mathematics began there. You are even to-day counting 1, 2, 3, etc., to zero, after Sanskrit figures, and you all know that Algebra also originated in India, and that gravitation was known to the Indians thousands of years before Newton was born. ... At a certain period of Indian history, this one subject of man and his mind absorbed all their interest. And it was so enticing, because it seemed the easiest way to achieve their ends. Now, the Indian mind became so thoroughly persuaded that the mind could do anything and everything according to law that its powers became the great object of study. Charms, magic, and other powers, and all that, were nothing extraordinary, but a regularly taught science, just as the physical sciences they had taught before that. Such a conviction in these things came upon the race that physical sciences nearly died out.'

India versus Greece

It is here, therefore, in this Upaniṣadic legacy, that we have to seek for the essence of Indian culture. If the thought ferment of a period can become the determinant of all subsequent movements of a culture, the study of that thought ferment is the surest means to penetrate to the soul of that culture. We are familiar with an almost similar phenomenon in western history. In the fifth century before Christ, ancient Greece experienced a tremendous thought ferment for a brief period, which became the most powerful determinant of the development of western civilization. To quote E. M. Forster (Preface to *The Greek View of Life* by Lowes Dickinson):

'Greece hadn't science, it is true, and she had no global commitments, but she encompassed within the tiny circuit of her city states much that affects and

afflicts the modern man in his relationship to society. And because her writers were intelligent and because they were sensitive, she has been able to send us news on these urgent matters which is still fresh, although it is over two thousand years old.'

The concept of man in western culture is derived from the ancient Greek concept of man as essentially a member of a community. This is what one may call the *political* view of man. The *Ṛg-Veda* also upheld this concept and developed it not only to social, but also to cosmic proportions. There are similarities between the religious ideas of the Indo-Aryans of the *Ṛg-Veda* and the ancient Greeks. Both viewed religion from the political point of view. It was non-creedal, integrative of the divine and human order, community-oriented, and frankly this-worldly. Out of this view of man have arisen all political and social struggles to improve the lot of man, and also aggressive wars and revolutions.

The Greek mind did not grow beyond this view of religion. Though the Greek mystery religions rise above the political level, they were not integrated with the distinctively Greek outlook and thought, being foreign to both; neither did the Greeks experience the urge to subject these mysteries to that rational investigation which they so diligently and passionately applied to social and political phenomena, and in which their contributions were to become unique and lasting.

What the ancient Greeks neglected became the one ruling passion of the Indo-Aryans in the Upaniṣads. The great sages of the Upaniṣads were concerned with man in his depth, with man above and beyond his political or social dimension. It was an inquiry which challenged not only life, but also death, and resulted in the discovery of the immortal and divine Self of man, of which life and death are but shadows—*Yasya chāyā amṛtaṁ yasya mṛtyuḥ.*

No philosophy can achieve depth without tackling the problem of death. This was one of the major drawbacks of Greek culture. In the words of Lowes Dickinson (*ibid.*, p. 68):

'The more completely the Greek felt himself to be at home in the world, the more happily and freely he abandoned himself to the exercise of his powers, the more intensely and vividly he lived in action and in passion, the more alien, bitter, and incomprehensible did he find the phenomena of age and death. On this problem, so far as we can judge, he received from his religion but little light and still less consolation. The music of his brief life closed with a discord unresolved; and even before reason had brought her criticism to bear upon his creed, its deficiency was forced upon him by his feeling.'

Manliness versus Godliness

The Upaniṣads have given us a body of insights which have the quality of the universal about them. This universality derives from their impersonality. The sages who discovered them were rich and warm personalities who had depersonalized themselves in the search for truth. This explains the immortal quality of their philosophy and the immortal quality of the culture for which that philosophy stood sponsor.

Universality and humanism are two of the essential characteristics of Indian culture. Its concern is with man as such and not man cut up into caste, creed, sect, or race. The achievement by man of the highest glory and excellence is what it seeks. This glory and excellence is achieved by the increasing manifestation of man's spiritual potentialities through education; he receives such education by the disciplines of socio-political life from outside, and by the disciplines of religion from inside. The first discipline enables man to attain the social excellence of citizenship, in which man becomes the creator and enjoyer of social values and delights. This is a concept of man which, as we have seen, was upheld in the *Ṛg-Veda*, but was not much developed by later Indian thought; it was in ancient Greek thought that this concept found its legitimate development and expression. In fact, it became the sole preoccupation of the gifted Greek mind, which explains why the whole world is indebted to Greece for this unique contribution to human culture. Though this concept did not find adequate expression in India in the practical sphere of her culture due to specialization in another field, it yet finds an honoured place in her rational philosophy of man, the Vedānta, which recognizes in this human excellence a high manifestation of human spirituality. To struggle against and overcome thwarting obstacles, to establish a healthy environment, physical and social, in which man can rise to his highest social excellence, to enjoy the delights of culture and civilization—this is what constitutes the true manliness of man; this is to view him in his Promethean aspect.

While recognizing this glory and excellence of man, the Upaniṣads asked the question: Is there a glory higher still? They discovered that the ideal of manliness was an achievement within the sphere of nature, within the framework of relativity; they wanted to go beyond nature; they sought to realize the transcendental dimension of man—the dimension of godliness over and above manliness. This is ever the province of religion, not religion as an adjunct of the socio-political, but as the wholly spiritual, in which human awareness goes beyond the body, the senses, and the environing world; in which man realizes himself as the

immortal Self, beyond finite time, space, and causality. The ancient Indian sages dared to take up this challenge; and the Upaniṣads are the unique record of the methods they adopted, the struggles they undertook, and the victory they gained in this great adventure of the human spirit. And this is conveyed to us in passages possessed of great vigour and much poetic charm. In seeking for the immortal, the sages conferred immortality on the literature which conveyed it and the culture which embodied it.

Their Synthesis in the Gītā

Though Indian culture specialized in one field, and comparatively neglected the other, Indian philosophy, the Vedānta, as stated earlier, did not fail to comprehend both in a sweeping synthesis. This is the Sanātana Dharma, Religion Eternal, in which the two values of manliness and saintliness are blended in a comprehensive spirituality, of which the most authentic voice is the *Gītā*. Coming in the wake of the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā* is the first successful attempt in man's cultural history to work out a complete philosophy of life, reconciling the secular and the sacred, work and worship. This central message of the *Gītā* is highlighted by Śaṅkara in the masterly Introduction which he wrote to his commentary on this great book: *Dvividho hi vedokto dharmaḥ pravṛttilakṣaṇo nivṛttilakṣaṇaśca jagataḥ sthitikāraṇaṁ prāṇināṁ sākṣāt abhyudayaniḥśreyasahetuḥ*—'The religion taught in the Vedas is twofold, conducive to the stability and maintenance of the world; one, of the nature of energetic action, and the other, of the nature of calm withdrawal; its purpose is to ensure the true welfare of (all) beings, worldly as well as spiritual.'

The Path to Godliness

Before such a synthesis could be achieved, there was need to penetrate the inner world to its depths. This is what the Upaniṣads did to such perfection, and gave to all humanity the greatest of all sciences—the science of the Self. India has ever since remained the torch-bearer in this field. The supreme technique in this field is meditation fortified by moral purity and passion for truth. It is the fruit of the Indian idea that religion is a matter of experience and not of dogma or creed. It is a technique which the Upaniṣads perfected, but whose hoary antiquity goes back to the Indus Valley culture, one of the legacies of which is a figure seated in the *yoga* pose of meditation. It was the technique used to perfection by Buddha in a later age; it continued as the central technique of the science of religion in India throughout the ages; and it received powerful endorsement and impetus in the modern age from the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

One of the Upaniṣads conveys the methods and results of this technique in a cryptic verse (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* IV, 1):

Parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūḥ
Tasmāt parāṅpaśyati nāntarātman;
Kaścit dhīraḥ pratyagātmānamaikṣat
Āvṛttacakṣuḥ amṛtatvamicchan—

'The Self-existent Lord created the sense-organs (including the mind) with the defect of an out-going disposition; therefore (man) perceives (things) outside, but not the Self within. A certain wise man, desirous of immortality, turned the senses (including the mind) inward and realized the inner Self.'

By inner penetration, meditation helps man to leave behind the body, the senses, the ego, and all other non-self elements which, being nature's products, are subject to time, and perishable. He thus realizes his immortal divine Self, of the nature of infinite existence, infinite knowledge, and infinite bliss. The body and the senses and the ego are but the instruments of the immortal Self for the experience of the world of time and space. These constitute the aspects of man, the known, in the depth of which is the real man, man, the unknown. The Upaniṣads are the great saga of this discovery. The sages were aware of the pioneering quality of their efforts and discovery, and its significance for all humanity. This awareness finds expression in the power of their utterances and the joy suffusing them.

India and the Lure of Godliness

This discovery of the divine in the heart of man had a powerful impact on the later developments of culture in India. The consequences of such a discovery cannot remain confined and isolated. For the first time, it opened up a new vast field of exploration, more alluring, more strenuous and risky, but more promising than the external world of space and time. And on the trail blazed by the great Upaniṣadic sages marched India, first one part, then another, until, in the wake of Buddha and his movement, the whole of India became possessed of the religious passion. It lured the gifted and the ordinary in the land to the attempt to scale this Everest of experience. This impressive procession of seekers and devotees down the ages, who renounced everything worldly in their search for truth, constitutes the unique feature of Indian cultural history; it is a feature which has not left unaffected even her intellectuals of all types, including the atheists and agnostics. Even in this modern age, that impressive procession has carried in its powerful cur-

rent the outstanding cultural leaders of the Indian people, men like Rammohun Roy and Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

The Spiritual Direction of Indian Culture

That the ultimate reality of man and the universe is spiritual through and through, that it is one and non-dual, that it can be realized by man, that this realization is the goal of human life, and that this goal can be reached through different paths—these constitute the fundamental ideas which have inspired Indian life; these have provided a spiritual base and a spiritual direction to Indian culture, and shaped the destiny of the Indian people. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 2):

> 'The destiny of the human race, as of the individual, depends on the direction of its life forces, the lights which guide it, and the laws that mould it.'

The Vedānta describes Brahman, the ultimate Reality, as *Sat-Cit-Ananda*, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. If bliss is a constituent of the ultimate reality of the universe, it becomes a constituent of the universe as well. As expressed by the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.7): *Raso vai saḥ; rasaṁ hyevāyaṁ labdhvā ānandī bhavati. Kohyevānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt yadeṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt. Eṣa hyeva ānandayāti*—'He (Brahman) is verily delight. By obtaining this delight, man verily becomes blissful. Who indeed would breathe, live, if in the space (of the heart) this bliss were not there? Indeed, it is He alone that is the source of bliss.'

The Aesthetic Component of Indian Culture

The Vedānta thus viewed the world as a product of the joy of God. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* therefore sings (II.ii.7-8):

> *Yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarvavit yasyaiṣa mahimā bhuvi;*
> *Divye Brahmapure hyeṣa vyomni ātmā pratiṣṭhitaḥ.*
> *Manomayaḥ prāṇaśarīranetā pratiṣṭhito'nne hṛdayaṁ sannidhāya;*
> *Tat vijñānena paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ ānandarūpam amṛtaṁ yat vibhāti—*

'He whose glory is (seen) in the universe, who knows everything, who understands everything—He, this Ātman, is established in the luminous space of the city of Brahman (the heart). He assumes forms of the mind, and leads the senses and the body. He dwells in the body, inside the heart. The wise ones, through realization, see Him everywhere—the one that shines as the blissful and the immortal.'

The world is *ānandarūpam amṛtaṁ*, blissful and immortal, as the verse puts it. The *Īśā Upaniṣad* describes God as *kavi*, the poet or seer (verse 8). The universe is his poem coming in waves and rhythms. It is *saundaryalaharī*, waves of beauty, in the words of Śaṅkarācārya. The image of God as Naṭarāja, the king of dancers, teaches us that the world is the product of the joyous dance of the supreme Deity.

These philosophical conceptions and religious realizations inspired and fostered the aesthetic mood and temper of the Indian people and the flowering of their artistic genius; India's contributions in the fields of literature and the fine arts constitute one of the most enduring and fascinating elements in her total cultural legacy. There is nothing of the negatively ascetic about it, though it is largely inspired by the religious motive; for that religious motive itself, as we have seen, was suffused with the values of beauty and joy.

Tolerance and Universal Acceptance

One of the important fruits of Indian philosophical thought was the broadening of the Indian religious outlook. The discovery of the spiritual unity of all existence, and the emphasis on spiritual realization as the goal of religion, fostered inter-religious harmony. India has the unique record of combining in her outlook and behaviour deep religious faith and feeling with broad tolerance and the spirit of acceptance. This can flow only from a conception of God which is infinite and all-embracing. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 317):

> 'Toleration is the homage which the finite mind pays to the inexhaustibility of the Infinite.'

To do honour to an infinite God in an infinite way is to practise active toleration and fellowship. India received this universality of sympathy from her Vedic seers in one of their greatest pronouncements: *Ekaṁ sat; viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is One; sages call it by various names', which Swami Vivekananda considers the Magna Carta of Religion. In the wake of the Vedic seers came Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, Śaṅkara and Ramakrishna, and a host of lesser luminaries, with their powerful voices in support of freedom in religion and sanity in inter-human relations. Says Kṛṣṇa (*Gītā*, IV, 11):

> *Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁstathaiva bhajāmyaham;*
> *Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ—*

'Through whatever paths men come to Me, I receive them through those very paths; all paths, O Arjuna, eventually come to Me only.'

As stated earlier, it was not merely the saints and sages, thinkers and philosophers who upheld this idea, but also the common people. This wholesome attitude was cultivated also by the political state. The most glorious example among a host of kings and emperors was Emperor Aśoka of the third century B.C., who spread this idea throughout his vast dominions through inspiring edicts inscribed on rocks and pillars. This idea of toleration as acceptance is of the essence of Indian culture. It is not dictated by political expediency or social policy. It is the fruit of its philosophy of reality, and forms an integral part of its *Weltanschauung.*

India's Welcome to Cultural and Religious Refugees

One of the most glorious aspects of India's cultural history relates to the treatment that her states and peoples gave to the religious and racial groups which came to India as refugees. Persecuted in their own countries, with their temples destroyed and fellow-religionists massacred, the Jews of Palestine and the Zoroastrians of Iran sought shelter in India, attracted by her traditions of tolerance and hospitality. And they found their hopes and aspirations fulfilled, for India received them with love and respect, and has continued to cherish them and their faiths ever since. In his opening address at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11 September 1893, Swami Vivekananda referred to this glorious chapter in Indian history, nay, in all human history, in these memorable words (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 3-4):

'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 am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who 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 am proud to belong to a religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

Assimilation and Synthesis

A culture sponsored and nourished by such a broad and tolerant *Weltanschauung* cannot be rigid and exclusive. Neither racial nor socio-political considerations form the central motive force of this culture; that motive force is spiritual. It is these former that breed rigidity and intolerance and lead to violence and war. The spiritual is always

universal and human. Because of this universal motive, Indian religion did not develop an all-powerful church and an exclusive tradition for its protection and sustenance. History teaches us that the rigidity of cultures proceeds largely from the exclusiveness of their religious traditions and political ambitions; much of this exclusiveness is derived from the awareness of racial superiority. The spiritual motive proceeding from the awareness of the divine in the heart of man cuts across all racial, creedal, and socio-political divisions, and embracess man in his integral wholeness. The love that flowed from the hearts of Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, Śaṅkara and Ramakrishna embraced humanity not in its segments, but in its totality.

Rigidity and exclusiveness are the source of perpetual inter-cultural conflicts. Rigid cultures behave with each other, in the words of Bertrand Russell, like billiard balls, whose only possible mutual relationship is collision. The resilience and adaptability of Indian culture has imparted to it a genius for assimilation and synthesis, which has made for the continued enrichment of that culture, and for its impressive continuity, through periodic renewals, down the millennia of history. Cultural rigidity is the product of the logical view of you *or* I. India, on the other hand, chose the spiritual view of you *and* I. In this, she was inspired by her spiritual vision of the One *in* the many. The fruit of this vision in the cultural field was a peaceful policy and programme of unity in diversity, instead of an aggressive striving for dull, dead uniformity.

This assimilative process set in very early in Indian history, when the Indo-Aryans came in touch, first, with the Indus Valley people and, later, with the rest of the indigenous population of India. The perfect synthesis of these two powerful cultural currents constitutes the central stream of Indian culture. That stream flowed on, receiving fresh accessions of strength through assimilation of new cultures and peoples. The river Gaṅgā is an apt symbol of Indian culture. It starts as a little holy stream in the heart of the Himalayas; it receives the waters of many a tributary in the course of its flow, to become eventually the mighty river of joy and blessing to millions of people. The Iranians, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Arabs, the Truks, the Mongols, and finally, the Europeans—all have contributed their quota for the enrichment of Indian culture. All the major religions of the world have also poured their ideas and visions into the stream of this culture.

The Modern Renaissance of Indian Culture

It is true that the process of assimilation of these varied elements is not complete; all assimilation involves the vitality of the central cul-

tural tradition and its hospitality to the incoming cultural forces. There has been a weakening of this central cultural tradition since about A.D. 1000. This did not, however, halt the assimilation process, but only slowed it down. Today, India is experiencing a revitalization of her culure and an intensification of the assimilation process. And, under the stimulus of the modern national renaissance, whose outstanding sponsors and leaders—Rammohun Roy, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Tagore, and Gandhi—were universal and human in their outlook and sympathies, this process bids fair to become pervasive and total, so as to make India the home of a happy synthesis of all the finest cultural legacies of humanity. Describing Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as 'universe souls', Romain Rolland introduces them to his western readers as the foremost of the heroes of the modern renaissance in India (*The Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 8):

'From the magnificent procession of spiritual heroes, whom we shall survey later, I have chosen two men who have won my regard, because with incomparable charm and power they have realized this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul. They are, if one may say so, its Mozart and its Beethoven—*Pater Seraphicus* and Jove, the Thunderer—Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.'

The Future of Indian Culture

This trend towards a total synthesis is based on the conviction voiced by Vivekananda that Indian culture, though undoubtedly great in its own way, is partial and incomplete. This is true of all existing cultures which bear this stamp of incompleteness due to specialization. Vivekananda took Indian culture in the direction of what he had achieved in his own person, namely, an appreciation and assimilation of modern cultural values with a view to evolving it into a truly human culture. He stood at the confluence of the past and the future, and of the East and the West. Says Romain Rolland (*Life of Vivekananda*, Chapter IV, 'Civitas Dei—The City of Mankind', p. 310):

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four *yogas* in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards Unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'

With an impressive and long past behind her, and with new youthfulness and dynamism acquired from her modern renaissance, India and her culture can look forward to a more glorious and fruitful future. Speaking on India's gift to the world, Swami Vivekananda throws light

on her future in the light of her own historic role (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 108-10):

'Everyone born into this world has a bent, a direction towards which he must go, through which he must live, and what is true of the individual is equally true of the race. Each race, similarly, has a peculiar bent, each race has a peculiar *raison d'etre*, each race has a peculiar mission to fulfil in the life of the world. Each race has to make its own result, to fulfil its own mission. Political greatness or military power is never the mission of our race; it never was, and, mark my words, it never will be. But there has been the other mission given to us, which is to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate, as it were, into a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of the race, and that concentrated energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world whenever circumstances are propitious. Let the Persian or the Greek, the Roman, the Arab, or the Englishman march his battalions, conquer the world, and link the different nations together, and the philosophy and spirituality of India is ever ready to flow along the new-made channels into the veins of the nations of the world. The Hindu's calm brain must pour out its own quota to give to the sum total of human progress. India's gift to the world is the light spiritual.... Slow and silent, as the gentle dew that falls in the morning, unseen and unheard yet producing a most tremendous result, has been the work of this calm, patient, all-suffering spiritual race upon the world of thought.'

THE APPEAL OF VEDĀNTA TO MODERN MAN

INDIA is noted for her long cultural history unbroken for over five thousand years. During this impressively long career, she has experienced life from every conceivable angle, height, and depth. This has invested her cultural life with a rare quality of richness, variety, and maturity, as a result of the guidance it received from a broad *Weltanschauung* or world-view and the sustenance it received from religion and the spiritual motive.

What is that religion or philosophy—for both are inextricably connected from the Indian point of view—which has comprehended and sustained every aspect of her culture and life? India herself has given no particular name to this religion or philosophy, though she has evolved and fostered in later ages within her mother-heart a large number of cults and creeds bearing specific names and forms.

The terms 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' were coined by nations outside India, especially the ancient Iranians, to designate the people and religion of the country (India) to the east of the river Sindhu or Indus.

The term 'India' itself is a Greek and modern western derivation from the older Iranian term 'Hind'. Indian thinkers themselves called their religion by the general but significant term 'Sanātana Dharma', 'Eternal Religion'.

We can study the emergence of the central features of this Sanātana Dharma in the Upaniṣads, or Vedānta, which are the closing portions

of the Vedic literature. It is not a set creed or dogma that is set forth in these Upaniṣads; in them we are in the presence of that earnest passion and mood in the search for truth in nature, life, and experience, characteristic of all true science; and fearlessness pervades that search and the announcement of the insights gained.

A dispassionate and intelligent study of the way ancient India raised this enduring structure of religion, as well as the nature and content of that religion, with its limitless and all-comprehending spirituality, can be a very rewarding intellectual and spiritual discipline to men and women today.

The Vedic age of ancient Indian history was drawing to a close. The atmosphere was charged with a mood of questioning and inquiry; the spirit of freedom was in the air. The interest of the Indian mind was shifting from the study of the external world to the study of the internal world, from external physical nature to the inner nature of man.

The previous study could not give conclusive answers to the pressing problems of thought—the nature of the universe, of man, and of his destiny. Perhaps, the study of man, it was felt, might help to unravel the mystery of existence; even otherwise, it offered a new and mysterious field of investigation.

This phenomenon in the history of ancient India is paralleled by a similar interest in the subject of man and in his inner being evinced by thinkers in the modern age.

The inner world constituted by the mind of man, with its facts of consciousness, the moral sense, the feeling of individuality, logical and rational powers, the states of waking, dream, and sleep, and a vague sense of deathlessness and survival, offered a challenge to the gifted thinkers of the day, and they accepted this challenge and wrestled with it individually and in groups with a persistence and objectivity rare in the history of philosophic thought.

The impressive record of these endeavours and the truths and insights gained therefrom have been preserved for humanity in the immortal literature, the Upaniṣads, which form the closing portions of the vast and varied Vedic literature. Since they contain the philosophy, the quintessence of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads are also known as Vedānta.

Vedānta is the product of a fearless quest of truth by minds which were 'undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or

critics to appease' as Max Müller terms it (*Three Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy,* p. 39).

And the search was thoroughly objective and detached; free from the moods and predilections of personality, thought forged ahead step by step under the stimulus of a passion for truth and in a perfect atmosphere of freedom; diverse facts of the world of internal nature were noted and classified; theories were advanced, challenged, subjected to verification, and finally accepted or rejected, unhampered by fear of authority or love of dogma; accepted beliefs were questioned, sometimes rediculed, often rejected without a tear; and there emerged the beautiful edifice of thought known as Vedānta, impersonal in approach and therefore universal in spirit, whose rationality and spirituality have made it a synthesis of science and philosophy, religion and ethics in one.

This was the fruit of the intellectual and spiritual ferment which swept over a portion of India at that time—the regions comprised in modern eastern Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and western Bihar. The best minds of the age were involved in it, sages and kings, men and women, and youths.

The Upaniṣads give us a picture of a dynamic age; an arresting procession of students and teachers in quest of truth and wisdom; an impressive record of their dialogues in small groups and large assemblies; a flight now and then into the regions of the sublime caught in snatches of poetry, vigorous and graceful; an array of beautiful metaphors and telling imageries serving as feathers to their arrows of thought in flight—these varied features of the Upaniṣads invest them with the beauty and charm of enduring literature and the loftiness and vigour of lived philosophy.

The *ṛṣis* or sages of the Upaniṣads discovered the laws that govern the inner world, much as physical scientists discover the laws of external physical nature. The laws or the facts which they seek to explain, are not 'created' by the scientists; they are as beginningless as the universe itself, but they were unknown to man till he gave himself a discipline in detachment, objectivity, and precision born of a passion for truth, which constitutes the scientific mind and temper.

The scientist is but the 'discoverer' of the laws of nature; and knowledge of these laws enables him to control the forces and workings of nature. The same is the position which Indian thought accords to these sages or *ṛṣis* who discovered the spiritual truths recorded in the Vedas,

aided as they were by minds sharpened by intellectual, moral, and spiritual discipline.

Says Swami Vivekananda in his address to the Chicago Parliament of Religions (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 4-5, 5th Edition):

'By the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so it is with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forget them.

'The discoverers of these laws are called *ṛṣis* (sages), and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women.'

This ṛṣihood, this capacity to discover spiritual truths, is not a national Indian monopoly; Indian thought holds that it is a universal phenomenon. In fact, Vedānta or Sanātana Dharma holds that it is this very effort and its culmination that constitutes religion; religion is *anubhava*, realization, and not a matter of mere belief or conformity, creed, or dogma.

Vedānta has taught India to recognize in non-Indian sages like Christ or Lao Tse, St. Francis or Eckhart, authentic expressions of man's highest spiritual experience. One of the enduring fruits of Vedānta has been peace and harmony, tolerance and acceptance.

This flows from its teaching of the non-duality of the ultimate Reality and the possibility of different approaches to it. The *Ṛg-Veda* gave eloquent expression to this great idea in its famous line: *Ekaṁ Sat; viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is one; sages call it by various names.'

This sentiment was taken up and amplified by every subsequent age of Indian thought—from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*, through Buddha and Aśoka, Śaṅkara and Akbar, down to Sri Ramakrishna in our own age —until it has become a most distinguishing mark of the Indian religious and cultural outlook.

Another important teaching of Vedānta is the innate Divinity of man. To the purified vision of the Vedāntic sages man appeared as Divinity struggling for expression through the psycho-physical organism. Purity, knowledge, and freedom are his essential nature.

The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, assures Jesus. The story of evolution is the story of the manifestation of this Divinity through suitable changes in the environment and in the organism. This evolution is thwarted or helped by adverse or favourable natural conditions in the early stages and by social and personal factors in the later ones.

The spirit in man, in the march of evolution, overcomes all obstacles to its free expression and achieves civilization, culture, and spiritual enlightenment stage by stage. Christs and Buddhas represent the final goal of this long travail of evolution.

And that introduces us to the third significant idea of Vedānta that the goal of life is spiritual realization, the fullest manifestation of the Divine within, in life and conduct. Food and clothing, shelter and security, power and knowledge, politics and society, are not ends in themselves, says Vedānta. They are but the means while the end is the fullest development of man, the complete manifestation of the perfection already in him. The exhortation of Jesus expresses this idea and this hope: 'Be ye therefore perfect even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

Vedānta views the life of man in its wholeness. Its theme is Man —Man in search of fullness of truth, beauty, and goodness. Part of this search is in the external world; but the most significant part of this search lies in the internal world; the first gives social welfare through the applications of the physical and social sciences; the second gives spiritual freedom through the disciplines of morality and religion.

There can be no conflict between the two—the secular as against the sacred—as they both refer only to different stages in the growth of the same individual. And Vedānta emphasizes this idea of growth, development, and realization as the central characteristic of life at all levels—physical, mental, moral, or spiritual. Its absence constitutes stagnation and death at any level. Hence its constant refrain, in the adaptation given to the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I. 3.14) by Swami Vivekananda, is: 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.'

Vedānta arose out of the literature of the Upaniṣads. At a later age, it found its best and most dynamic expression as a comprehensive spirituality through Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*. Still later, it found another significant development as the spirituality of renunciation and compassion in the great Buddha; twelve hundred years later still, appeared the brilliant philosopher Śaṅkara in whom Vedānta achieved its most rational formulation with the widest intellectual sweep.

He was followed, during the next eight centuries, by the great Ācārya Rāmānuja and a succession of large-hearted saints and reformers in whom Vedānta achieved a unique emotional enrichment through the infusion of the *bhakti* element and a long longed-for equalitarian stress through the flow of the God-ward passion as a man-ward love.

And in our own time, in the last century, Vedānta found two dynamic representatives in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda who gathered up all the past developments of this ancient thought to produce a sweeping synthesis of all human thought by joining to it the dynamic affirmations of modern scientific and social thought as well.

In spite of its hoary antiquity, Vedānta has been young and dynamic in every past epoch of history. But its most fascinating story is only just opening up in the context of modern world conditions created by science and technology in which the thinking humanity of the whole world has become its audience.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ETERNAL RELIGION

THE religion preached by the sages of India is known by a significant title—Sanātana Dharma, or the eternal religion. The conclusions of Vedānta form its philosophical basis. It justifies this high title by its dispassionate study of life and experience in their wholeness and totality, and by a persistent effort to evaluate all bits of life and experience against the background of that *Weltanschauung* or world-view. The sole aim of the thinkers of Vedānta was to see into the truth of things. And they pursued this aim with a passion, vigour, and objectivity, rare in the history of philosophic thought. This spirit of the Vedāntins has elicited unstinted praise from modern thinkers. Says Professor Max Müller in his *Three Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy* (pp. 39-40):

'Much of the excellence of the ancient Sanskrit philosophers is due to their having been undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease. They thought of nothing but the work they had determined to do; their one aim was to make it as perfect as it could be made. ... Need we wonder then that their work was done as well as it could be done, and that it has lasted for thousands of years?'

On the nature of the edifice of thought so built and the courage of the builders, he remarks (*The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, p. 182):

'It is surely astounding that such a system as the Vedānta should have been slowly elaborated by the indefatigable and intrepid thinkers of India, thousands of years ago, a system that even now makes us feel giddy, as in mounting the last steps of the swaying spire of an ancient Gothic cathedral. None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone in regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has

been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Ātman or Brahman.'

This passion for the highest Truth, coupled with a deep interest in human happiness and welfare, has transformed a metaphysics into a living faith, a world-view into a social philosophy. An idea and a vision become transformed into a 'lamp unto our feet and a light unto our soul'; Vedānta emerges as Sanātana Dharma. The book that registers this extension of the pure passion for truth into the wide channel of collective human welfare is the *Bhagavad-Gītā;* and its teacher Śrī Kṛṣṇa stands as the centre of this mighty change. This mood of the Upaniṣadic sages has been well expressed by a celebrated Vedāntic thinker of the eighth century A.D., Gauḍapāda, who says in his *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* (IV. 2):

Asparśayogo vai nāma sarvasattvasukho hitaḥ;
Avivādo aviruddhaśca deśitastaṁ namāmyaham—

'I salute this yoga taught by Vedānta which proclaims the unity of all existence, which promotes the happiness and welfare of all beings, and which is free from strife and contradiction.'

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* brings out of the deep spirituality of the Upaniṣads an emotionally satisfying religion centred round a personal God, a personal morality leading to purity, strength and gentleness of character, and a social ethics inspired with a passion for *bhūta-hita* (good of all beings) and *loka-saṅgraha* (social stability).

Sanātana Dharma is based on the Upaniṣads. The *Gītā* is the exposition of this Sanātana Dharma by a master mind who was *Vedāntakṛt* and *Vedavit,* in the words of the *Gītā,* one who had digested the thoughts of the Upaniṣads, the scope and meaning of which find embodiment in the *Gītā* in a complete philosophy of life. An old verse compares the Upaniṣads to a cow, Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the milkman, Arjuna to the calf, and the *Gītā* to the milk that is drawn; and the verse significantly adds that the milk so drawn is the nectar that will nourish the spiritually hungry of the world:

Sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā Gopālanandanaḥ;
Pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīrbhoktā dugdhaṁ Gītāmṛtaṁ mahat.

These Upaniṣads mark the highest development of Vedic thought in philosophy and spirituality. On account of this, and also on account of their being the concluding portions of the vast and varied Vedic literature, the Upaniṣads are also called Vedānta, the end or fulfilment

of the Vedas, both as books, the more important of which are ten in number, and as thought which is pervasive of them. The Vedas are called Śruti, a term which expresses their supreme trustworthiness in spiritual matters, being impersonal in spirit and universal in scope. The term Veda, according to Śaṅkarācārya, primarily means knowledge, beginningless and endless, capable of leading to liberation, and verifiable by one and all. Says Swami Vivekananda, addressing the Chicago Parliament of Religions (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, pp. 4-5, 11th Edition):

'By the Vedas no books are meant; they are the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. ... The discoverers of these laws are called *ṛṣis* and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women.'

Vedānta is both philosophy and religion. The Absolute of Vedānta is not a mere logical postulate. It is a *given* fact of experience, an actuality, the basis of all presuppositions of logical thought and common experience, but ever beyond the grasp of both. It is that 'which speech and thought fail to express, but through which speech and thought themselves express words and ideas' (*Kena Upaniṣad,* I. 5-6). It is the seer of thought and the witness of the universe. The highest Reality it teaches is at once the Absolute of metaphysics and the God of religion. It is the unity of reason and faith. It is the reality in man, the Ātman or his real Self, behind his ego or apparent self. As Īśvara, it is the personal God of religion, the highest reading of the Absolute by the human mind, the sum total of all souls, human and non-human, whose limited expression in time and space is this world. Thus Vedānta speaks of one and the same reality as Brahman in its metaphysics, as Ātman in its epistemology and mysticism, and as Īśvara or Bhagavān in its religion. It is the One in the many, and, though One, sages call it by various names. This great idea of divine unity is beautifully expressed by the *Bhāgavatam* (I. ii. 11):

Vadanti tat tattvavidaḥ tattvaṁ yat jñānam advayam;
Brahmeti Paramātmeti Bhagavān iti śabdyate—

'Knowers of Truth declare that it is one and the same non-dual Reality that is variously called Brahman, Paramātman, and Bhagavān.'

Brahman as Ātman, as the Reality behind the ego, gives us a God who, unlike the extracosmic God of monotheism, is not outside of us nor we of Him. He is the Soul of our soul, our very Self. He is the *pratyagātman,* the Inner Self; He is the *antaryāmin,* the Indwelling One, the Inner Ruler. The finitude of man is underwritten by the in-

finitude of God. Man is divine, and his redemption is, therefore, implicit in his very being. He is not sinful or wicked by nature. He is the child of immortal Bliss,—*amṛtasya putrāḥ*—(*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,* II. 5).

But this divine nature is remaining covered, lying forgotten. In nature as well as in man, there is this mantle of darkness that covers Reality, this *avidyā* or *māyā* which has made us forget our real nature. This veil of ignorance is thick or thin as the man is impure or pure. Its complete destruction is illumination or perfection. 'Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God' (Matthew, V. 8). Every advance in purity is a step in the tearing of this veil, while every impure thought or act thickens the veil and deepens the darkness. Herein lies the meaning of ethics and morality. Every moral action is, as it were, a blow struck on the citadel of our false self, and is a step towards the awareness of our true Self. Man is painfully aware of the bondage of finitude and the limitations of becoming; but in him is also a longing for freedom and the infinitude of being. Vedānta teaches that the soul is divine, only held in bondage by matter; perfection will be reached when this bond will burst, and the word it uses for it is, therefore, *mukti*—freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery. Man is thus a complex of freedom and bondage, of the infinite and the finite, of light and darkness. The awareness of the possibility of freedom by the side of the actuality of bondage makes man the only restless pilgrim among God's creatures, and converts his heart into an abode of constructive peacelessness. Accordingly, his heart has been the venue of a great struggle between these two forces ever since he emerged into self-conscious activity; and the history of human civilization is the arresting story, with its ups and downs, of this great struggle, occasionally projected on to the plane of his material environment with a view to changing and moulding it, but largely conducted in the field of his mental being, for fusing it and for forging ahead.

This truth of the ever-present purity and perfection and freedom of his being, on the one hand, and his apparent alienation from it due to the veil of *avidyā* or spiritual blindness, on the other, has been the one motive force in history, according to Vedānta, behind man's spiritual adventures, his hunger and thirst after righteousness, his struggles for the realization of political liberty and social justice, in short, behind all his endeavours to achieve civilization and culture. The brooding of the Spirit over the waters of Life produces social and political upheavals as much as scientific discoveries, moral achievements and spiritual realizations. This is the meaning of history in its comprehensive

sense, the stirring of the universal in the particular, the vibrations of the infinite in the finite, the struggle of eternity in the meshes of time. To the question as to the origin and nature of the universe, the Upaniṣads give the significant answer: 'From Freedom it comes, in Freedom it rests, and unto Freedom it returns.'

From the philosophical *Weltanschauung* of Vedānta flow certain important corollaries which have become fundamental features of Sanātana Dharma and the source of its spiritual vitality down the ages. They form the inspiration behind the Hindu view of life and explain its appeal to rational minds in all ages.

The first impact of this view is on religion; it becomes a matter of experience and not one of mere dogma or creed. The test of religion is *anubhūti*, realization. *Ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ*—'The Ātman is to be seen', says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II. iv. 5). Spirituality is the core of religion, the living and moving and having our being in God, as St. Paul puts it. If the divine Reality is our true nature, if it is not extracosmic and, as such, alien to us, man's hope for a fuller and better life becomes well founded; for he can become divine by realizing the Divine; and this is the purpose and goal of life, according to Vedānta. If God were outside of us and far away, we could content ourselves with just a belief in His being and conduct our life as best as we may in its light. Such a faith, while inspiring us with a moral fervour or a group discipline, may also breed narrowness of outlook and active intolerance. While proclaiming itself as a universal religion, it may function as no better than an aggressive tribal faith. It is more fitted to sustain man in his national egoisms and group loyalties than to inspire him with a Godward passion and a manward love. Religion at this level is a matter of injunctions and prohibitions, of belief and conformity. It does not light the inner fire, nor appease the hunger of the spiritual heart for the Bread of Life. Such a view of religion cannot explain the supreme phenomenon in history of men and women being moved by a strange hunger for spiritual awareness and certitude, by a feeling of homesickness for the infinite and the transcendental. The awakening of this hunger is the very beginning of religion, according to Vedānta; religion ceases to be a pious belief or a matter of conformity and convention at this stage; it becomes a spiritual adventure, with the delights and perils attendant on an adventure, and man enters into a world of wider horizon, larger perspective, and deeper meaning than what the low-roofed world of monotheism could provide. A hungry man cannot live on words, or even on a faith in food; he eagerly desires to get at the food and eat it; he will strain every nerve in that direction, and even court death in the attempt.

The conception of religion as an awakening of the spiritual hunger involves also the conception of the struggle to satisfy that hunger. We are at once introduced to the concept of *sādhanā,* spiritual practice, which converts religion from a thing of opinion and assent to a matter of conviction and endeavour. The spiritually awakened ones, says the *Gītā* (VI. 44), transcend the sphere of the words of scripture; to them creeds and formulas are as stones to a hungry man. The statement of Jesus that the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life conveys a meaning only to them. How can the words of scripture satisfy us when what we seek is the meaning behind all words and all thought? The Spirit, in forging ahead, leaves all these familiar landmarks far behind. The conception of *sādhanā* is thus fundamental to the Hindu view of religion; it is the dynamics of religion.

Infinite becomes the scope of religion so defined, and diverse the forms in which it finds expression. The meaning and scope of religion so understood have been embodied by Swami Vivekananda in the following well-known statement of Vedāntic faith (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, p. 257, 11th Edition):

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.'

The whole object of Sanātana Dharma is to help man by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God, and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect even as the Father in Heaven is perfect, constitutes religion according to the Hindu sages. Religion, they hold, involves a ceaseless struggle, largely moral and spiritual, to purify one's emotions and thoughts, to compass, in the language of Christian mysticism, the death of the 'old man' within us. It is the *practice* of religion that is here insisted and not merely the *profession* of it. In the absence of this struggle, the Hindu sages find nothing to choose between the profession of the faithful and the denial of the faithless. This insistence on *sādhanā* makes religion for the Hindu a spiritual adventure *here* and *now,* and not a cheque for post-mortem cashing. It rules out at once mere belief and conformity as tests of faith. The only genuine test of faith is its capacity to set the soul on fire. The soul afire with faith and hungry for God cannot live on the air of professions or the stones of dogmas and creeds. Its bread is spiritual realization, and its way, the way of restless longing, ceaseless struggle.

There is one rich word in Indian thought which expresses the entire gamut of this longing and struggle. That word is *yoga,* the way of union with the Divine. As understood in Vedānta, this word conveys the simple and clear meaning of spiritual practice in its various forms, as well as its temper and approach, all worked out with the precision and clarity of a science. There is nothing mystical in the sense of misty or mystifying about *yoga,* though it cannot be denied that the handling of it by charlatans and quacks has resulted in giving it a bad odour. But sages like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have appeared in recent times and restored to it its ancient dignity, purity, and appeal—so much so that *yoga* today means, in its various expressions, the science of religion, the art of the spiritual life.

This view of spiritual realization as the aim of religion as distinct from belief or scholarship, and this insistence on *sādhanā* as the means thereto, has saved religion in India, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, from the vice of snobbery (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought,* p. 322):

'The emphasis on the goal of spiritual life bound together worshippers of many different types and saved the Hindus from spiritual snobbery.'

The second impact of the Vedāntic world-view on life is harmony and positive fellowship. Sanātana Dharma teaches not mere toleration but universal acceptance. The Hindu dislikes the attitude of superiority and patronage implied in the idea of toleration. He has learned the art of sympathy unspoilt by the vice of patronage; he has understood the meaning of fellowship. Says Swami Vivekananda in his Chicago speech (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, p. 15, 11th Edition):

'To him all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association and each of these marks a stage of progress; and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher, gathering more and more strength till it reaches the glorious sun.'

This is acceptance or active toleration based on understanding, sympathy, and reverence, and leading to harmony and active fellowship, unlike the usual variety of tolerance proceeding from pride or indifference or both, and leading to contempt or sufferance.

The third fruit of Vedānta has been its liberating influence on mind and thought. Itself the product of a rational endeavour, it has released the human mind from creedal anchors and allowed it to reflect on life and experience and find truth. Its terms of reference for thought is not a set dogma or a few untested assumptions, but experience it-

self, the totality of all actual and possible experiences which it classifies into the three categories of waking, dream, and dreamless sleep. The reality it preaches is what it finds in experience after a sifting inquiry, the reality of the pure and changeless Self beyond all cause and effect. The presence of the Divine in man and nature makes life a travelling not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. All knowledge, therefore, is within the province of Vedānta, be it secular or sacred, material or spiritual. It actively promotes natural science as much as religion, itself being the consummation and synthesis of both. Philosophic knowledge is the synthesis of the knowledge of the Self and the not-Self, says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII. 2). The Upaniṣads treat *Brahma-vidyā* or philosophy as *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhā* or the Science of sciences (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* I. i. 1).

THE SPIRIT OF THE UPANIṢADS

THE closing period of the Vedic Age in ancient Indian history is marked by an intense activity on the plane of thought when some of the greatest of our thinkers and sages, individually and in groups, wrestled with the problems of life and experience. The impressive record of these endeavours has been preserved for posterity in the Upaniṣads which form the closing portions of the vast and varied Vedic literature. Containing as they do the quintessence of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads are also known as Vedānta.

One of the most important features of the Upaniṣads is the fearless quest of truth characteristic of them. We come across students and teachers discussing and expounding basic problems of religion and philosophy 'undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease', as Max Müller terms it (*Three Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy,* p. 39), and with an earnestness and thoroughness rare in the history of philosophic thought. They considered no sacrifice too great in their search for truth. Not to speak of earthly pleasures and heavenly charms, they dared to achieve the still more difficult and rare sacrifice which the seeker after truth is called upon to make—the sacrifice of pet opinions and pleasing prejudices.

A second important feature of these Upaniṣads is the atmosphere of freedom pervading its quest of truth. Thought forges ahead from step to step under the stimulus of a passion for truth and in an atmosphere of perfect freedom; and in the process of a graceful conflict and exchange of views and theories unhampered by fear of authority and

love of dogma, there emerges the beautiful edifice of thought known afterwards as Vedānta, whose rationality and spirituality have made it a synthesis of philosophy and religion in one.

An arresting procession of students and teachers, an impressive record of their dialogues in small groups and large assemblies, a flight now and then into the regions of the sublime recorded in songs of freedom, graceful and direct, an array of beautiful metaphors and telling imageries serving as feathers to its arrows of thought in flight—these varied features invest the Upaniṣads with the beauty and charm of enduring literature and the greatness and strength of lived philosophy.

The principal Upaniṣads are accepted as ten in number. They are: *Īśā, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya,* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka.* Among these, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya* are the two longest ones. The *Kena, Māṇḍūkya,* and *Taittirīya* are specially important, each of them expounding an essential aspect of the Upaniṣadic thought.

The *Īśā Upaniṣad* provided the fundamental theme of Vedāntic thought—the divinity of man and nature and the inherent spirituality of life when, in its very opening verse, it made the famous proclamation:

Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat—

'Whatever there is in this world should be enveloped with God.'

The *Aitareya* contains a discussion leading to the spiritual character of the Absolute. The *Praśna,* as its name implies, deals with philosophical problems in a general way through the medium of a dialogue, while the *Muṇḍaka,* after analysing knowledge into the higher and the lower (*parā* and *aparā*), bursts into songs of freedom and delight as it soars into the region of *parā vidyā.*

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* stands in a category all alone. Blending in itself the charm of poetry, the depth of mysticism, and the strength of philosophy, it contains a more unified exposition of Vedāntic thought than is found in any other Upaniṣad. Its appeal is heightened by the two characters that adorn its dialogue, young Naciketā, the student, and old Yama, the teacher. It is an arresting instance of young pulsating life, inquisitive and fearless, knocking at the doors of Death, the terrible and extracting from it wisdom that lies beyond life and death.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is a veritable forest of thought and inspiration. Four illustrious personalities stand out prominently from

its pages—two men and two women—Janaka, the philosopher king, Yājñvalkya, the philosopher sage, the highly spiritual Maitreyi who was Yājñavalkya's wife, and the gifted woman philosopher Gārgī who appears as Yājñavalkya's prominent opponent in debate. This great Upaniṣad majestically expounds with much rational argument and telling illustration, through the mouths of these personalities, the central theme of Vedāntic thought—the unity of Being and the inherent divinity and purity of the human soul. It dares to characterize the Absolute as the Fearless and describes its realization as the attainment, here and now, of the state of absolute fearlessness and fullness of delight (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* IV. 4.24).

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we are introduced to lovable truth seekers like Satyakāma, Śvetaketu, and Nārada and great teachers like Āruṇi and Sanatkumāra. Through a masterly and detailed exposition, this Upaniṣad distinguishes the appearance of becoming from the reality of being, and sings in refrain the identity of the individual with the universal. It also prescribes a knowledge of the true nature of the Self as the panacea for all the ills of life: *Tarati śokaṁ ātmavit*—'The knower of the true Self crosses all sorrow' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* VII. 1. 3). Through the deeply human story of the discipleship of Indra and Virocana under Prajāpati, this Upaniṣad also helps to distinguish materialism and its bitter fruits of selfishness and strife from spirituality and its elevating results of peace and fellowship. It summons the human understanding to an adventure after the latter, warning it at the same time against the pitfalls of the former.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* discusses the nature of individuality through a thoroughgoing study of personality which it analyses into five *kośas* or sheaths—the material, the vital, the psychical, the intellectual, and the intuitive—in the innermost core of which it finds the real Self of man, the Ātman, ever pure, ever free, and of the nature of *Sat-Cit-Ānanda.* In an earlier chapter, after introducing the absolute Reality as the origin, ground, and goal of the world of experience, it proclaims the identity of the world with that Reality.

The *Kena Upaniṣad* takes up this notion of the ultimate Reality as the origin, ground, and goal of the world and purifies it of all touch of relativity and finitude by revealing its character as the inner Self behind all perception and thought. In so doing it also reveals the ultimate Reality of the Upaniṣads as a *given fact* of experience—the ever-present subject of all experience and not as a mere speculative or logical presupposition.

And lastly, when we come to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*—the shortest of the Upaniṣads, with only twelve verses, amplified and expounded by two great philosophers of a later day, Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara—we seem to be gathering up the results of all these various investigations in a brief and sweeping effort at a rational synthesis of all experience —physical or vital, mental or spiritual—to arrive with a fresh certitude, following the royal road of rational inquiry, at the self-same truth of the divinity of man and the solidarity of all existence.

Astounded by the boldness and sweep of thought of the Indian sages, Max Müller, after giving expression to his feeling of reverent admiration for the lofty and enduring edifice of thought which they built, remarks as follows (*The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy,* 1919, p. 183):

'And this is the feeling which I cannot resist in examining the ancient Vedānta. Other philosophers have denied the reality of the world as perceived by us; but no one has ventured to deny at the same time the reality of what we call the ego, the senses, and the mind, and their inherent forms. And yet, after lifting the Self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and Ātman, these Vedānta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as a *sine qua non* for the attainment of the highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home, and restores it to its true nature, to its true selfhood in Brahman.'

The Upaniṣads view life as an adventure of the spirit in the world of time and space. In a famous passage of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* this is elaborated with the help of a significant imagery—the imagery of the chariot (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* III. 3-9). Man, with his equipment of body, the senses, mind, and intellect finds his best symbol in a chariot with its horses, reins, charioteer, and the rider. Such a chariot is meant to be put on the road and driven to its appointed destination. The success of the journey depends less on the smoothness of the road than on the strength of the chariot, the vigour of the horses, the toughness of the reins and the discernment of the charioteer. Weakness in any of these links will spell disaster for the whole venture. Life is a creative adventure. It finds its fulfilment in the course and at the end of a dynamic process and not in the context of a static complaisance. 'All expansion is life; all contraction is death', says Swami Vivekananda. In its long journey to the temple of the unity of Being, man experiences varying stages of excellence of truth, beauty, and goodness, physical or mental, individual or social. At the summit he is promised the *summum bonum* or what the Upaniṣad terms as *tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ*

padam, the highest state of Viṣṇu or Brahman. But this long and arduous journey through life needs for its success an effective training of the personality. And that training is indicated in a memorable verse of this Upaniṣad (III. 9) where we are asked to combine strength of the body and vigour of the senses with force of will and conviction, clearness of vision and calmness of judgement:

Vijñānasārathiryastu manaḥ pragrahavān naraḥ;
So'dhvanaḥ pāram āpnoti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam—

'He attains the highest end of life's journey who has an enlightened intelligence as charioteer and a tough determination as reins.'

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 2.3), in a similar strain, summons us to the battle of life, equipped properly. Take up the armoury of Upaniṣadic thought, it says, and sharpening the arrow of self by thought and meditation, shoot at the target of excellence with unerring precision:

Dhanurgṛhītvā aupaniṣadaṁ mahāstram
śaraṁ hyupāsāniśitaṁ sandadhīta;
Āyamya tadbhāvagatena cetasā
lakṣyaṁ tadevākṣaraṁ somya viddhi.

And the Upaniṣad significantly bids us god-speed in our arduous journey from darkness to light: *Svasti vaḥ pārāya tamasaḥ parastāt* (*ibid.*, II.2.6).

The Upaniṣadic search for the meaning of life and experience, guided as it was by a pure passion for truth and untarnished by the predilections of personality, has imparted the quality of universality to its philosophy and perenniality to its message. Unlike philosophies elsewhere and other systems here, Vedānta is a living philosophy; and from the time it was first expounded in that dim antiquity down to our own times, it has been the spiritual inspiration behind the movements of India's soul. The presence of that inspiration in a concentrated measure has ushered in memorable creative epochs in Indian history. The ages of the *Gītā*, Buddha, and Śaṅkara in the past and of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the present are such landmarks in our ancient and modern history. The Upaniṣads are not interested in forging rules and laws for the conduct of our daily lives. If they had done so, they would have reduced themselves to the level of systems that have their day and then disappear; for rules and laws that nourish one age tend to choke a later age.

The Upaniṣads addressed themselves to the discovery of the timeless Reality in man and nature and to providing the food of spirituality

to him to quench his nameless and perennial thirst for the eternal. The work of forging laws and rules to guide man's daily conduct and behaviour it left to the Smṛtis and Dharma Śāstras in the past, as it would leave it to the constitutions and social consciences today. Its theme is freedom and its message fearlessness. It summons men and women to the mighty adventure of the spirit in all its phases, to the realization by each one of his or her essential spiritual and divine nature and the transcendence of the limitations of finitude. It explains every great movement—social, religious, or political—nay, the phenomena of life itself, as an expression of the urge to freedom inherent in every organism—the infinite caught in a cell or a body, a social scheme or a political system, in a texture of relations or in the network of relativity. Freedom is the ground and freedom is the goal of all life according to Vedānta, and its constant refrain therefore is, in the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (III.14):

Uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata—

'Arise and Awake and, approaching the great ones, enlighten yourself.'

In thus placing emphasis on the fundamental and the perennial and wisely relegating to the Smṛtis the temporal and the parochial, the Upaniṣads not only ensured for themselves an immortal hegemony over human life and destiny, but also imparted to the Indian cultural experiment a resilience and adaptability which has ensured its immortality as well. To the Upaniṣads we owe that impressive record of toleration characteristic of our cultural and religious history. To them we owe the periodical renewal of our springs of life when they seem all but choked and about to dry up. To them also we owe the absence of the heavy hand of an all-powerful Church and an infallible dogma on the national life and mind, allowing for the emergence and unhampered functioning, in succeeding eras, of free spirits whose procession down the ages is an impressive feature of India's long history.

THE CHARM OF THE GĪTĀ

THE Song Celestial, as Edwin Arnold has called the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* has exercised its fascination on the hearts of men and women ever since it was first sung on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, a place hardly eighty miles from Delhi, the city from where I am addressing you now. Many famous books of the world have exercised their fascination on the human mind, some of them deeply and abidingly. They belong to the class of 'Literature Immortal'. But among all such, the *Gītā* holds a unique position; for its appeal has a universality not found elsewhere. If a book appeals to a scholar and thinker, it may not appeal to the common man; if it appeals to both, it may fail to evoke the response of a man of affairs. What stirs the feeling and emotion of one may leave the intellect and reason of another cold, and *vice versa.* The universality of a book or of anything else consists in its appeal to different types and grades of mind and mood, irrespective of race or creed. And the *Gītā* precisely belongs to this category. If we take a cross-section of humanity which has responded to its charm, we shall find in it a cross-section of human temperaments, endowments, and moods; among its votaries can be found intellectuals of a high order, simple men and women of piety and faith, and practical men of affairs, as also men and women drawn from a variety of races and creeds. Vyāsa, Śaṅkara, and other *ācāryas* of ancient India, and Swami Vivekananda, Lokamanya Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, and Mahatma Gandhi in our own time, have responded to the intellectual vigour, emotional appeal, and spiritual depth of this great book. As in the past, so in the present, it continues to draw the hearts of millions and millions of Hindus of all sections and sects. In modern times, its empire in the

hearts of men and women has extended beyond the geographical limits of India; men of the calibre of Emerson and Carlyle, Walt Whitman and Thoreau, and an ever-increasing circle of the common man and woman of the modern West have come under the spell of this music of ancient India.

It was a prophecy that Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India, made in the eighth decade of the eighteenth century when he entered the following remarks in his Introduction to the first English translation of the *Gītā* by his friend, Sir Charles Wilkins:

'The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive when the British Dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.'

Exactly two weeks ago (i.e. 26 January 1950, when the Indian Constituent Assembly proclaimed India a Sovereign Democratic Republic), that perishable empire founded by him in India ceased to be, as anticipated by him. The empire of the sages of India, on the other hand, has been widening ever since he wrote those fateful lines. The love of truth and intellectual energy of the modern West have contributed much to the wide diffusion of these thoughts in the modern world. The activity of renascent India in this line begins with the historic appearance of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. Since then that empire has been making spiritual conquests in many a heart and intellect of the modern world, including the England of Warren Hastings himself. The march of this empire needs no armies in its front, nor diplomats in its rear; for, it is the march of the 'Wheel of Dharma' which silences, according to the Aśokan inscriptions, the war drums of human separation and sounds the music of human unity. In the words of Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 274):

'Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world.'

This is the real India with a continuity and persistence all its own, and it has exercised a mesmerism on the contemporary world at every epoch of her long history. With the peaceful ending of that empire of Warren Hastings, this India has a chance to come to its own, and an opportunity, not restricted as in the past, but thanks to modern science, world-wide.

The India of the Vedas and of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of Buddha and Śaṅkara, of Aśoka and Akbar is now politically free. After centuries of political

immobilization, she has found her soul and her voice. The world around her, as much as her own children, are deeply interested in the march of her feet and the accents of her voice. There is no doubt that at this hour our hopes are mingled with fears. Will she, in her new-found freedom and power, stray into the path of what Nietzsche admiringly termed 'violence of deed and demeanour', and disturb with her powerful tread the already distracted world? Will her new-found voice, catching the infection of the jarring world around, fail to ring in accents of hope and cheer for man and his civilization? Will she not continue to be the witness to the deepest reality in man and nature and thus be a beacon-light to a world enveloped in darkness but seeking light? Will she not be true to her historic mission of peace and friendship, renunciation and service in this unfolding epoch of world history? In short, will not Free India discover herself in her true spirit and temper, and courageously set to music the tune of human unity and solidarity that is haunting the ears and hearts of millions in the modern world?

The answer to these questions will be furnished in the course of the next few decades. But if faith in the past of India is any guide in anticipating her future movements, we can definitely assert in advance that India will fulfil the expectations the world has of her. The past in this case is reinforced by the present through the dynamic national experience expressed in Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi. The ideology and influence proceeding from these spiritual giants are the forces that are steadily but silently moulding the national mind in the light of the universal and human in its spiritual legacy, and helping India to rediscover and pursue her historic world mission in the modern context. And in quest of a light to guide her footsteps in this great national and international adventure, India has discovered her ancient Vedānta with a new comprehension and comprehended its finest exposition in the *Gītā* with a new insight. This new comprehension of and insight into the meaning and scope of our national philosophy is the spiritual legacy of Swami Vivekananda to this new epoch of our history.

It is a happy augury that Vedānta as expressed in the *Gītā* is having a profound attraction for the thinking mind of India today. Unlike philosophies elsewhere and other systems here, Vedānta is a living philosophy; it has saved India twice in the past from spiritual death, according to Swami Vivekananda. India has always borne in her mind and heart the impress of this philosophy. But we have to confess that her vast body-politic bore other impresses, specially in recent centuries, which are often not very edifying nor appropriate to her Vedāntic mind

and heart. The present epoch is destined to witness the steady emergence of a body-politic in India based on the Vedāntic ideals of human dignity, equality, and unity, leading to the evolution, for the first time, of a complete Vedāntic civilization on the Indian soil.

This consummation will largely be achieved through the inspiration provided by the spirituality and social ethics of the *Gītā* which will find in this an application intended by its great teacher, but neglected and overlooked by his people in the past epochs. An understanding of the fundamentals of this Vedānta and the attitude it brings to bear on life and its problems will help us to capture the mental climate of the *Gītā* of *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the mood of the India of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi, which is the India of the future.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GĪTĀ

1. *The Bhagavad-Gītā : A Universal Gospel*

THE *Gītā* is not an original work in the sense in which we usually understand the term, though it is a supremely original statement of what Aldous Huxley calls 'The Perennial Philosophy'. It is a continuation of the ancient philosophy that we find in the Upaniṣads. The *Gītā* summarizes the essential teachings of Vedānta and presents them in a popular manner. That is why it has become the scripture of the vast masses in this country. When we study the *Gītā*, we are not merely studying the Upaniṣadic philosophy, but also the ethical implications of that philosophy. We want ethical guidance, and the *Gītā* provides it. A metaphysics which speaks of the highest Reality without reference to everyday life will not be of much use to us. Therefore, the sublime ethical implications of Vedānta are elaborated in the *Gītā*.

Apart from the ethics of conduct, there is another element in the *Gītā* which is *bhakti*, devotion to God. The *bhakti* of the *Gītā* is the expression of the religious mood at its highest and best. It is love of God out of the fullness of one's heart and not out of its emptiness, as it is in its early stages. It is this that makes the devotee of the *Gītā* an embodiment at once of fearlessness and gentleness. The twelfth chapter is a mighty saga in praise of the perfection of character through this path of spiritual discipline.

From all these considerations the *Gītā* has assumed an importance in our life, and that importance is increasing day by day. In his preface to the English edition of the *Gītā* by Charles Wilkins, Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India, declared thus:

'The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive, when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist and the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.'

Since these lines were written the *Gītā* has been establishing an ever-widening empire in the hearts of men and women both in the East and the West. Its appeal to the thinking minds of the modern world, as its appeal to the thinking minds of India in the past, is in sharp contrast to the indifference and often hostility displayed by the modern mind to the scriptures and prophets of the world. The source of this power lies in the two important features of its message—its rationality and its universality.

Before going into the *Gītā* proper, it is necessary to say a few words by way of introduction. Most of you must be knowing something of the *Gītā* and its place among the scriptures of the Hindus. When I use the word Hindu, while studying Vedānta, I use it for want of a better word. Because most of these scriptures and philosophies were elaborated long before there were any other religions in the world —Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim. These distinctions did not exist then. The great sages elaborated their concepts of religion with no such distinctions. It is necessary to keep this point in view. Today when we use the word Hindu, it is to demarcate some class of people from some other classes. But when I use this word with reference to the *Gītā* this demarcation does not exist; only because the sages gave their sublime thoughts not to any particular class of people, Hindus as opposed to all other people, but to all the people who wanted guidance without reference to any community or race. Keeping this point in view, we have to approach these ancient books and their teachings. It is the religion of man that is taught there, and not of this community or that. Ethics, morality, and metaphysics are propagated for the welfare of humanity and not of any sections thereof. This universality of outlook is thoroughly emphasized in all our ancient works; so much so, the great law-giver Manu develops his Code keeping in view the true welfare not of Hindus only but of humanity in general. It is the *Mānava Dharma-śāstra*—the Ethical Code of Manu for the guidance of his progeny, Man. It is for man in general—any part of the world he may be inhabiting and to any race he may belong. If man

wants to attain happiness and welfare, he has to follow certain ideals and certain methods, and these ideals and methods are universal and these are promulgated in this book. Their applications may vary from age to age and country to country. Similarly in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, and later in the *Gītā*; their teachings are not sectional or parochial in their import and appeal. Sects and creeds may use them with profit, but cannot exhaust them, for they deal with human nature; their theme is man's aspirations and struggles after Self-realization. The division of humanity into various religions and sects is only a later story.

So, when we read through the *Gītā*, we clearly find that its teachings are addressed to all humanity—to all men and women who are struggling to realize the higher expressions of their soul. This is what is given by this philosophy and religion. This ideal is also emphasized in the nature of the dialogue which is characteristic of the *Gītā*. This dialogue is between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In our ancient scriptures, Arjuna is considered as the incarnation of Nara, the archetypal Man, and Kṛṣṇa of Nārāyaṇa—the supreme indwelling Lord. It is not that Kṛṣṇa is imparting his teaching here to any particular sect, but to man, through his disciple, Arjuna. In the *Gītā*, therefore, God is face to face with Man—Nārāyaṇa with Nara—and this is what constitutes its solemn and sublime setting.

In our country, for several centuries, the Hindu mind has been directed to narrower and narrower circles of thought; even the universal thought of the *Gītā* has been sought to be limited in these narrow grooves. Even Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been sought to be imprisoned in a creed, be it Vaiṣṇavism or something else. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a universal teacher. He made no distinction between Vaiṣṇavism or Śaivism or any other 'ism'. Today we require this rhythm of universality which transcends all creeds and classes, and embraces one and all and gives the same kind of inspiration to one and all. Therefore, the *Gītā* is to be viewed in its own setting—as a commentary on Vedānta given by one who was universal and human, that is, Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. Universal teachings cannot be given by anybody but a universal man; and they cannot be understood also by anybody but a universal pupil. If one who is limited by creeds studies the *Gītā*, he will find there only a narrow teaching—an echo of himself—and his conception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa will be conditioned by his limited mind. This has been done in the past; but what we now require is an open mind, a universal attitude to life; then alone will the *Gītā* open out its best to us—its spirit of universality and practicality. This accounts for the wide influence that the

Gītā exercises on the people of this country and outside. The people in this country and outside find in the *Gītā* something which will strengthen their faith and their spiritual endeavour *in their own way.* Whether they be Christians or Muslims or Hindus of various denominations, the *Gītā* intensifies their *śraddhā* in their own faith. Its universality is of a special type. It is not an imposition, but an invitation. The *Gītā* belongs to everyone in his or her own way. Such a universal message we require to mediate between the various religions that prevail at present.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, in the introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* gives us his views as to the nature of the *Gītā* dialogue. There are various views as to how the *Gītā* came to be taught. The very orthodox section holds that all these verses are as they were spoken between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. They stick to the letter; but, as the Bible says, 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'. It is most unreasonable to expect that in a battlefield questions and answers should go on for such a long time and that, too, in verses. Rational people do not accept this view. The great Śaṅkarācārya, who is considered to be the fountainhead of the present orthodoxy, has not accepted this view. He says in his commentary that when Arjuna was confused and perplexed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave him some effective advice, and this advice was put by Vyāsa into 700 verses. This is the view of Śaṅkarācārya, and this seems to be quite reasonable.

We find that a great teaching or a great ideology often takes its birth under the stress of circumstances and environments. This is true with regard to the birth of many a vital idea or movement in any part of the world. The birth of the great Marxist ideology in the nineteenth century—one that is now moving masses of men and women in various parts of the world—is an instance in point. The ideology took birth at a time when society was waiting for it. It is a development out of the accumulated previous conditions. It took shape in the middle decades of the last century. The idea of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity', which was the war-cry of the French Revolution, took its birth during the stress of the mid-eighteenth century in France. Similarly, when we study the *Gītā* and the conditions that obtained at the time of the *Mahābhārata,* and also the circumstances that made for the appearance of the teaching of the *Gītā,* we find there were strong reasons for the promulgation of the ideas of the *Gītā.* In the early days we had the Vedic literature and the ritualistic religion associated with it. So also we had the Upaniṣads and the philosophic religion taught therein. Both these come to us in mutual antagonism. The

Vedas in their ritualistic portion promise happiness in this world and in the heaven after death. So much so, a person who wants the good things of this life and wants a place elsewhere after death tries to attain it by sacrifices to various gods as understood at that time. Later, there was a protest against this heaven-philosophy by the Upaniṣads. When we study the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* we find that by the first boon Naciketā wants to gain something relating to this world. By the second boon he wants to know how to attain to heaven. But he is not satisfied with these. The protest in the Upaniṣads takes us to a higher purpose and function, and that is why the third boon of Naciketā relates to life's problems as viewed by a lofty philosophy and ethics. It is only by an inquiry into the Reality behind life that this problem can be solved. This is the special function of the Upaniṣads. Thus, for the first time, this question is brought to the forefront in the Upaniṣads. At the same time, this disparity between this-worldly life and the other-worldly life grew, and there was a great need for a synthesis; and this synthesis the *Bhagavad-Gītā* attempts in its teachings. The Vedas teach us *karma* or ritualistic sacrifices etc. to secure a fine place in heaven after death. Coming to the Upaniṣads, there is a reaction, and they have nothing to do with *karma* or sacrifices etc. The ideal is to realize the Reality by meditation; there is no place for action. But in the *Gītā,* we find Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own reconciliation of the demand for action and the demand for thought and meditation. No life can be perfect without reconciling these two opposing forces. The man who says 'I shall act without reference to thinking' will not succeed, and the man who merely indulges in thinking without reference to action will not also be perfect. Therefore, the times demanded a synthetic philosophy, and that is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave in the *Bhagavad-Gītā.* In every chapter of the *Gītā* we come across the terms and concepts which were familiar in the pre-*Gītā* age. Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes them up, but gives them his own meaning and interpretation and presents a constructive philosophy which reconciles the claims of action and thought. This we find specially in his interpretation of action and inaction in the fourth and eighteenth chapters.

Secondly, the Upaniṣads speak of a Reality which is the fruit of a sustained philosophical inquiry, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to bring out the ethical implications of this philosophy. Man wants a good deal of guidance. If philosophy does not give it, he looks for it elsewhere. We want the guidance of philosophy so that life may be lifted up to a higher level. The aim of the *Gītā* is to lift up life from the ordinary to a higher level of ethical and moral values and place it under the guidance of a sublime philosophy.

The second chapter gives us the whole scheme of the philosophy of life as conceived by the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. This is how the Upaniṣadic thought developed and evolved till it found a new and original formulation by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*. As a friend, philosopher, and guide of humanity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave his message of a lofty metaphysics and practical ethics which has sustained and will continue to sustain humanity through the ages.

The Upaniṣads contain the highest and the most sublime statement of Indian thought. Max Müller refers to the boldness of the thinkers of ancient India who built up a mighty edifice of philosophic thought, led on by their love of truth and reason, and undeterred by any fear of blame or lure of fame. When we are in the Upaniṣads, we are face to face with a vast ocean of thought, and the *Gītā* is the attempt made for the first time to put this thought into a systematic form of a practical spiritual message.

The *Gītā* belongs to the *Mahābhārata*, which records events that happened in India about the fourteenth century B.C. This is the conclusion that modern scholars have arrived at. Whatever be the precise date, there is no doubt that it is very ancient. The chronology of ancient Indian history is uncertain, and it is only from the period of Buddha in the seventh century before Christ that some sort of chronology becomes available; previous to that everything comes under ancient Indian legendary history. The formulation of the *Gītā* can be considered to be a few centuries before Buddha. There are great ideas in the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, but these were not properly understood by the people, and Buddha came and gave the thought a new form to make people understand the real spirit of the ancient teachings.

The formulation of every great idea has created an epoch in this country, and there has been a mighty personality behind each such epoch. Every national epoch has been the result of the working out of a mighty idea preceded by a mighty personality who gave it to the people. We had Buddha in the sixth-seventh century B.C. and later Śaṅkara in the eighth-ninth century A.D., and we are still living in the light of these great masters. Coming to modern times, in the nineteenth century, we have had great luminaries amongst us, and we are today fortunate to have guidance from them and their ideas. Anybody who studies Indian history is struck with this unique fact that every epoch has been preceded by the formulation of a mighty ideal of thought and life, behind which there has been a great personality as the focal point of inspiration. There is something unique in this

historic phenomenon which has been responsible for the continuity and vitality of our culture. This continuity you find nowhere else except in China. Five thousand years of history is behind us; we are the same ancient people; and the same ancient ideals are moving us today. What is it that makes for the permanence of this culture on the world's stage? So many civilizations came on the world's stage and vanished like ripples on water; but in the midst of all these vanishing civilizations there are only two—India and China—which are permanent.

This should make us think deeply as to what constitutes the source or sources of our cultural vitality. There was a time when Greece and Rome played with pomp and vigour on the world's stage; much earlier, there were Babylonia and Egypt; and today, there is England, already down the road, and there are Russia and America. Those who once played mighty roles have vanished; the countries and their physical features are there, but the continuity of culture is lost,, the heritage is broken. Facing ancient Greece and Rome was India, and India is there to greet the new-comers on the world's stage, and she will be there to greet others that are to come in future. This is a fact of history, and as students of Indian history it is our duty to inquire into this fact and learn the lessons that it holds for us. This leads us to an inquiry into the origin and sources of our culture. The thoughts proceeding from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, reinforced by the ideas of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Śaṅkara, and others, have provided the basic inspiration to our cultural values, loyalty to which has been responsible for the continued vitality of our people and our culture. As a people, we had our ups and downs—no progress is continuous—everywhere there have been ups and downs. But the peculiar fact about India is that whereas others fall and never rise again, we fall and rise again; whereas others live and die and never rise again, India only seems to die and rises again rejuvenated, more glorious than before. The Christian missionaries who came to India in the nineteenth century thought that India was dying, never to rise again. They made this statement on the analogy of the Red Indians, the Mexicans, and the Incas who had once built up great civilizations in America, but had perished at the touch of the white man and his religion. Even we seemed disposed to accept this judgement of the missionaries. But today we and they feel differently. Not merely are we not apologetic about our civilization and culture, but we are facing the world in an aggressive way, aggressive used in the ideal sense. Any culture is said to be living when it overflows. Expansion is life and contraction is death. For the last thousand years we were greeting death; we were building narrow walls around ourselves. But, then, since the

last hundred years, we have broken through these narrow walls; we are now facing the world and spreading our ideas in distant parts of the globe. It is the same ancient people and the same ancient culture, but rejuvenated and strengthened. This is significant. Whereas other countries make noise and go to sleep to die away, we but go to sleep to rise again to face the world with renewed vigour.

Take our history; what do we find there? We find a great man rising about every thousand years. Each of them comes to renew the vigour of the same ancient ideals, maybe with a little different emphasis according to the needs of the time. That is why there is an unbroken continuity of our culture. India has survived many a vicissitude. This must make us humble. Let it be constantly kept in view that our culture is preserved because of these great personalities, whom we look upon as *avatāras* or incarnations of God. Whatever be the attitude we take with regard to these great men, whether as *avatāras* or otherwise, they come when the national life is at its lowest ebb, and their touch breathes a new life into the almost dead bones and muscles of the nation. God alone can give life; call them God or God-men, they breathe life into the dead bones and muscles of the people. One such great man is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the whole history of India we do not find another such great personality so supremely dynamic as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who have read the *Mahābhārata* will bear this out. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is loved by one and all. When Kṛṣṇa comes to Indraprastha, the Delhi of ancient times, you find thousands of people gathering to greet him. Even as we find our people welcoming their great leaders today, you find people crowding on the parapet walls and, looking through the windows, showering flowers on him, as he passes through the roads of the city. Everyone, from the sage to the ordinary peasant, is full of respect for him. He is the greatest of Kṣatriyas, and yet is humble. He goes to make his obeisance to the righteous before undertaking any major task. He is the friend of the lowly and the lost. When he comes to Indraprastha he stays with the poor Vidura forsaking the splendour of the imperial court of Duryodhana. He is mighty and kings bow down to him, and yet he does not want any kingdom for himself. He is the *gopāla* or cowherd loved by the lowly cowherds. He is loved by the young and old, men and women, the learned and the ignorant. In the India of his time, everywhere you find the influence of Kṛṣṇa. His presence was felt by every section of the population.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a dynamic personality and his teachings also are dynamic; they are a mass of strength-giving ideas. We have to under-

stand this Kṛṣṇa. Up till now, we have had only the Kṛṣṇa who evoked our tears and our softer sides. But the Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā* comes to lift up a people and make them dynamic. There is a Bengali song which invokes Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the *sudarśana cakra* to come to the succour of fallen India:

Avanata bhārata cāhe tomāre
Eśo sudaraśanadhāri murāri.

This is the Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā*.

He is a person who has impressed himself upon the culture of this country in every aspect. Take away Kṛṣṇa, and everything of value in our culture vanishes. His impress is there on our art, literature, music, painting, sculpture, folk-dance, etc. Many a foreigner is struck by the rich cultural heritage of India. This culture took its rise as a little stream in the dim antiquity of the Vedas; during its unimpeded course through thousands of years of history, it has received accessions of strength and richness from many a tributary. And today in its essential form, it is a vast swelling ocean of virtue, purity, and power. Every Hindu can be justly proud of being a participant in this rich cultural heritage. Kṛṣṇa is one such who strengthened and enriched this culture. Long before the separation of humanity into the Hindu, Mussalman, and Christian was dreamt of, he was there. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa belongs to every child of this country, be he Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, or anybody else. A time will come when everyone in this country, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour, will recognize Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Śaṅkara as the architects of the nation's mind who handed down a rich cultural heritage to the people of India without any distinction. This culture is the common property of all communities. Just a few days back Dr. Soekarno of Indonesia, in an article contributed by him to *The Hindu* of Madras, has said that in the blood of every Indonesian the culture of India is there. So, it is not difficult to imagine a time in India when everyone will claim and look to the same ancient culture for inspiration and guidance.

When we realize our true condition, we realize the part played by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the culture of this country. Śrī Kṛṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata* is a mighty philosopher as well as a mighty man of action. Yet he was absolutely detached. He was respected by everybody—the mighty of the land, the sages, the women, the children, and the peasants.

The *Gītā* is the teaching of such a mighty and dynamic personality; and he has infused his mightiness and dynamism into his teaching.

Such a dynamic teaching can be properly understood only by those who have a little of that mightiness in themselves. When little people take to a great idea they bring it down to their own level, as they cannot rise to its level. For the last thousand years we have produced nothing but soft literature. Swami Vivekananda says that the country preferred softening ideas, with the result that most of the literature of the last thousand years, if squeezed, produces only tears. In the hands of such people the *Gītā* also lost its mightiness. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa has no place in his teaching for any sort of weakness or sentimentalism. The very opening verse that he utters to admonish Arjuna is *Kutastvā kaśmalam idaṁ viṣame samupasthitam*—'Whence has this weakness crept into you at this critical juncture?' The Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* speak only of strength. Swami Vivekananda says: 'Strength, strength, is what the Upaniṣads speak to me from every page.' Weak minds can never understand or grasp mighty ideas. In their attempt to do so, they but dilute such ideas with their own littleness. But when we develop a little strength and vigour in ourselves, we shall find in the *Gītā* something that will stand us in every situation of life. For those who want merely a little soothing of nerves and are afraid to face the hard trials of life, a lot of material will be found in the Purāṇas. But those who want stimulation for the higher life through hard struggle and the facing of responsibilities will find it in the *Gītā* in ample measure. Only the mighty can understand the value of the *Gītā*. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'Only the elephant knows the strength of the lion and not the mosquito'. The *Gītā* is not meant to soothe us and put us to sleep, but to wake us up from our slumber and lethargy and goad us on to the highest self-realization and self-expression. The verses of the *Gītā* have a power to invigorate us and to make us think in fresh terms; they will not let us move in the old ruts.

2. *Arjuna's First Lessons in Discipleship*

Last time we discussed some of the aspects of the *Gītā* in relation to the context in which it was delivered, as also its place among the scriptures of the Hindus. In that connexion I referred to the special quality of the *Gītā* teaching and the personality of its teacher, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That was by way of introduction to the study of the *Gītā*. Today we shall enter into the subject itself, but before doing so we shall tarry for some time in its first chapter, which is a sort of introduction to the whole book.

In the first chapter we get the environment in which the *Gītā* was taught. It is a dramatic setting that we get there. In that great battle

of Kurukṣetra, famous in ancient Indian history, between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, the greatest hero Arjuna, with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as his charioteer, stands between the two arrayed armies and views the warriors on both sides. Suddenly a piquant situation develops: Seeing his own kith and kin facing him, Arjuna is overcome with grief. His nerves fail him. He lays down his mighty bow, *gāṇḍīva*, with the resolve not to fight against his own people. A sort of revulsion comes on him, and he determines that he will not fight; he thinks that it is better and more ethical to give up the attempt to fight and conquer his enemies, better it is to be defeated and slain by the enemy than to go forward in this line of resistance and war. It is a moving scene that is thus depicted in a telling manner in the first chapter of the *Gītā*. It is a conflict of emotions and ideals, love and duty, all in an environment of conflict and war—war within and war all round.

Whenever such a situation obtains, it becomes fraught with momentous possibilities. A crisis is the precursor of a creation; greater the crisis, better the creation, if the persons involved are of stern stuff. It sees the birth of a creative affirmation or a dynamic idea. This explains the perennial dynamism of the *Gītā* message.

It is very rare that common people get occasions to experience such intense conflict of emotions. We hardly get an occasion to be violently pulled in opposite directions—'to do or not to do'. But in the case of those who are born to achieve true greatness, there are several occasions when they are placed in such circumstances, when there arises a conflict of loyalties; and it is a hard thing for them to decide as to what is to be accepted and what rejected. This kind of conflict of duty comes with varying intensity to every sincere aspirant of the ethical life. On such occasions the human mind needs and demands some sort of effective guidance; it is such guidance that Śrī Kṛṣṇa offers us, from the second chapter onwards, in the *Gītā*.

When we take the first chapter, it is such a historic presentation of the ethical problem—the question of ethical choice, the problem of the conflict of duties. This problem and its discussion are there in our ancient thought, and they are there in every type of ethical thought in the world. The *Gītā* discusses this subject in the second chapter in the light of a lofty metaphysics; and it comes in for a more varied treatment in subsequent chapters when it deals with such topics as action and inaction, renunciation and action, *sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga*, etc. The presentation of the subject of duty in the very first chapter of the *Gītā* provides a basis for the building up of a mighty edifice of

metaphysics and ethics in the subsequent chapters. We have in the first chapter a dramatic element that furnishes so much of beauty and sublimity to the *Gītā* teaching. It adds an air of reality to the message of the *Gītā;* it imparts a touch of earnestness to the discussion. The discussion is not simply academic, in which case it would have become ineffectual and unrelated to practice. But, being born out of the fire of conflict and struggle, it issued forth in a message of permanent value to man. Here is a sincere seeker in a crisis, face to face with a great teacher. The seeker asks for practical guidance. Naturally, such a situation does not warrant a merely academic solution of the problem. It must take all the facts into consideration and give guidance then and there. It is this that the *Gītā* proceeds to do through the great teacher Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in this sense a participant and not a mere spectator who has nothing to do with the battle. This realism imparts to the *Gītā* a greater philosophic depth and moral sweep than what partakes of a mere academic discussion of ethical problems. This is its special appeal.

So, in the first chapter, we have this picture of Arjuna facing an army of relations and friends and teachers. He is moved to pity and grief and says: 'What is the use of fighting such a battle? I would rather be a mendicant than engage in this fight.' In moving words Arjuna presents his case, and even takes Śrī Kṛṣṇa to task for inducing him to fight: 'Do we not know the misery that is going to be caused? Since we know it, it is better that we desist from such a battle.' Arjuna then declares that he would not fight. There is so much conflict of feeling in Arjuna that he breaks down: his bow and arrow fall from his hands, his voice gets choked, and he sinks down in his chariot.

This kind of situation comes to us whenever we are faced with conflicting loyalties. In all such situations, when we are unable to decide our duty, and the circumstances become puzzling, we exhibit a type of behaviour similar to that of Arjuna. Our nerves fail us; but we do not detect it. We bring in arguments to support our behaviour; but they are false arguments which cannot stand the scrutiny of reason and philosophy. Philosophy with most people is, according to Bradley, the finding of bad reasons for opinions which they hold by instinct to be true. This is bad philosophy, the product of rationalization, but not of reason. This is the case with Arjuna; his nerves and judgement fail him at a critical time owing to an excess of attachment, delusion, and grief; it is rationalization that is seen at work when he invokes the aid of 'non-violence', 'non-resistance', and 'humanity' for withdrawing from the battle. The great virtues of non-violence and

non-resistance are brought in to help the tired nerves of Arjuna when he says that it is better to withdraw or die than to fight and kill. He appeals to Kṛṣṇa for support in his arguments. But, strangely enough, he does not get that support. Philosophy cannot support rationalization, for it is based on reason which takes all the circumstances and conditions of a problem into account before offering a solution. So, when Arjuna says, 'I don't want to fight', and seeks the support of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for his act, he is startled to find that he does not get it. Here philosophy is typified by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the moral conflicts and the confusion resulting therefrom are typified by Arjuna. The one is calm and collected, whereas the other is all confusion, shaken in his resolve to fight, and nerve-broken. Thus ends the first chapter, entitled, in the very telling words of the author, Vyāsa, *Arjuna-viṣāda-yoga*—'The *Yoga* of the Grief of Arjuna'. The calm reason of philosophy is face to face with the confused unreason of dynamic life. The product of this encounter is the philosophy of life contained in the seventeen subsequent chapters of the *Gītā*.

When we come to the second chapter, we are at the very dawn of true philosophy. The very first task of philosophy is to bring steadiness and confidence into the mind of the students. That is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa does to Arjuna. This is the significance of verses two and three of the second chapter:

Kutastvā kaśmalamidaṁ viṣame samupasthitam;
Anāryajuṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram arjuna—

'In such a crisis, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Ārya-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of heaven?'

Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayyupapadyate;
Kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa—

'Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pṛthā! Ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies!'

In these two verses we have the application of a mental tonic by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna; and that tonic was necessary before any teaching could be fruitful. When a person is grief-stricken and his nerves are shattered, no amount of teaching or advice whatever can bear fruit; and much less philosophy. A measure of calmness is necessary, a calmness that is dynamic and not merely passive. The spirit of the whole teaching of the *Gītā* can be derived from the latter of these two verses.

Says Swami Vivekananda in his 'Thoughts on the *Gītā*' (*Complete Works,* Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, p. 110):

'If one reads this one *śloka*—"*Klaibyam...parantapa*"—he gets all the merits of reading the entire *Gītā*; for in this one *śloka* lies imbedded the whole message of the *Gītā*.'

It is not merely for Arjuna, but for every person who is at his wit's end that this teaching comes to rouse him up. We require to be roused up again and again, for the mind has always a tendency to sink and slumber, but there is also the other capacity to rouse up the mind and apply it to the battle of life, which capacity is practically dormant in the majority of people. But this capacity is to be developed. If we cannot do it ourselves, we shall require somebody else to do it for us; that is what a great teacher, a scripture, or an ideal does for us. Śrī Kṛṣṇa played this part in the case of Arjuna. We require some great man to do it for us. Vedānta says that infinite resources are there in every individual: man is potentially divine, but he has to tap his inner resources; and a great teacher has the power to bring out this potential capacity from out of himself as well as from others. By the mere touch of a great teacher we begin to manifest great energy and power of which we were not even conscious before. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave that magic touch to Arjuna by the words *naitat tvayyupapadyate* —'Ill doth it become thee'.

In the sentiment contained in that famous short sentence we have the appeal, through psychology, to every individual to rise higher and higher, and to find new sources of strength within himself. The educational value of this appeal is supreme. How to help another person, how to make him stand on his own feet, is a great educational problem. How to undertake the task of making that person rise higher and find ways and means to develop his own life and power? In this larger context this consideration becomes relevant, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appeal is a general appeal. It has a positive content. The earliest method of inducing behaviour in another was through fear. This appeal to fear was to one's social and religious emotion. But the appeal to fear is fraught with danger; it entails much that is bad along with a bit that is good. In all religions you find this appeal to fear in the theories of hell and judgement etc., designed to induce good behaviour in the individual. This is a primitive conception in religion: that through the hope of heaven or the fear of hell men do good or abstain from evil. Coming to the social sphere, we find people desisting from evil for fear of the police and social boycott. This is what obtains either in a primitive society or religion or even in a civilized society. But

these appeals do not serve to bring out the best in the individual, for hope and fear only appeal to vanity. These have played their part in the evolution of humanity. Probably, at some stage humanity has need of their services. This is the utmost that we can say in their favour. But the least that we can say of them is that they are not the best means available for inducing correct behaviour. We may not be able to give them up for the reason that humanity is at varying stages of evolution. Behaviour based on fear is all that most people are capable of understanding as also behaviour based on the prospect of enjoyment or approbation. But when you come to educational psychology, when you come to the question as to what is really beneficial to the individual, the best is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa does when he appeals to the sense of self-respect of the individual. In all cultured families influencing the behaviour of children is done through this appeal to their self-respect and not to their sense of fear. In uncultured societies parents resort to the fear appeal either through ghosts or through darkness, which are sources of fear. But in all such cases what we seek is not the education or development of the individual, but merely the temporary influencing of his outward behaviour through methods that tend to leave permanent scars on the inner man. That proves their worthlessness as an educational method.

If we want to institute an appeal which is constructive and positive, which will help one to develop his or her capacities more and more, and make the person concerned stand on one's own feet, it must be based upon the notion of the self-respect of the individual. When we tell a child, 'This conduct of yours is not fit for you; I expect you to be better; this is not up to the mark', we are appealing to a positive element in the child. It is positive and constructive, and not negative and destructive. Modern psychology throws much light on this problem.

Modern psychology recognizes self-regard or self-respect as the foundation of character-building. According to McDougall, it is the master sentiment, and character is the product of the organization of sentiments and emotions round this master sentiment of self-regard. No character can be built without self-regard as the basis. Take away whatever self-regard a man has, and you can never make him a man or help him to develop his character. The difference between a man and a brute is this self-regard or self-respect. Men have been reduced to the level of brutes as a result of the taking away from them this precious quality of self-regard by social tyranny and social neglect. Take a slave; there is little of self-regard left in him; for society, by continued oppression, has all but destroyed this quality in him. The

instilling of this fundamental virtue in such a person is a difficult process. It will have to be done by those who are themselves free. That we can rekindle in him this virtue is because in becoming a slave he has only forgotten but not forfeited his real nature. A slave must therefore first develop self-regard as the very first step in self-development. The greatest harm, therefore, that one can do to another is to touch his self-respect. Whatever you do, do not destroy another's self-regard, for by that we pave the way for his ruin. This maxim is a sure and wise guide in all social relationships. Unfortunately, this is observed more in its breach than in its observance, for we are not capable of informing action with thought. We see masters treating their servants as if they are lifeless property. The servant works for the master, but he has not sold his soul to him. The master, through his thoughtlessness, injures the servant's self-regard. That is why sensitive servants complain to the master, 'You may beat me, but please don't abuse me and my forefathers', for abuse touches the very sensitive part of an individual—his self-respect. If we want to educate a man and do real good to him, we must preserve and develop this priceless quality in him. Modern theories of education are based upon this supreme psychological fact.

Psychology teaches the great value of this master sentiment in the formation of character. Teachers and parents who destroy the self-respect of their wards through their thoughtless dealings are enemies of society. The modern theory says that we are not dealing with pots and pans when we are dealing with children. We are dealing with delicate, vibrant, living personalities. We are dealing with unformed minds, and whatever we do sticks on; hence the need for expert care.

In this lies all the essence of Vedānta. Swami Vivekananda put it in his own memorable words (*The Complete Works,* Vol. I, Twelfth Edition, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

In our dealings with an individual, we are dealing with a vast reservoir of power which at present is lying dormant. But, given a proper training, it can develop into an immense flood. One who is

rightly trained is a powerful personality, and one who is badly trained is a truncated personality.

This great psychological truth is embodied in the appeal contained in Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to Arjuna: *Naitat tvayyupapadyate*—'This does not befit you.' The world knew who Arjuna was—one who had fought many a battle victoriously. Should he now be subject to fear and despair? Should he not rather try to pit his inborn heroism and goodness against the challenge of a trying environment, bringing out more and more of his inborn power and perfection in the process? This is true education in the hard school of life. And Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the guide of Arjuna in that profound educational process. It is education based on a profound philosophy. Vedānta and modern educational theory are in full accord here.

We shall come to the ethical implications of this Vedāntic teaching in the course of our discussion of the verses of the second chapter. Vedānta holds that if we express our real nature, we can never be criminal or wicked men. In committing sin or wicked acts we are not expressing our real nature, which is pure and perfect, but only our apparent nature which is centred round the ego. Ethical conduct, according to Vedānta, is the expression of one's own real nature. Man lives the true life when he expresses the divinity within him. Selfishness is not an expression of our real nature; it is only on the surface. When you express the surface nature you are not expressing your real nature. Only then am I perfect when I am living the true life, that is, when I am expressing my true self. That is the highest ethics according to Vedānta.

Arjuna's action has to be viewed in the context of the ethics of duty; and the ethics of duty, in the context of the metaphysics of the Real. Ethics leads us to the problem of Reality; that is metaphysics. The *Gītā* has tried to place ethics under the guidance of metaphysics. In modern times many thinkers ask us not to bring into ethics the question of Reality. That is what certain sections of positivists tell us. But in this country we discussed it long back and found that no problem could be discussed in thoroughness without bringing ultimate questions. About any action, if you ask, 'Why should I do it?', you enter into wider spheres of thought and discussion. The *Gītā* places ethics under the guidance of a metaphysics which deals with life in its totality. The second chapter of the *Gītā* deals with the subject of the true nature of the individual and of the supreme Reality and studies the nature of conduct and action in the light of this knowledge and wisdom. It weaves round the immediate problem of Arjuna a

philosophy and ethics of action which, in turn, becomes a guide to other men in all situations of life.

This applicability to one and all is the fruit of philosophy. Philosophy was not at the back of the advice to Arjuna, that advice could not have become applicable to others. The *Gītā's* advice, therefore, was not meant for Arjuna only. Its scope is universal; that is why, even after these three thousand years and more, it appeals to us. If it was a mere matter-of-fact advice and guidance, it would not have appealed to one and all. It might at best have retained a literary appeal, but not a philosophical appeal. But when you put the literary in the context of the philosophical, it becomes universal. That is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa has done in the case of the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā* lights the lamp of wisdom in the hearts of men and leaves them to solve their own problems. In a later chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would say that what he does to every individual is to light a little lamp of wisdom in his heart by which he would see truth and avoid error. He does not give the final decision for us. Philosophy does not decide things for us; it only offers to guide us. The Smṛtis do prescribe what we should do every minute of the twenty-four hours. But these minute prescriptions become soul-killing in course of time. They make us serfs and slaves. Philosophy releases mankind from these bondages. It gives only stimulation; it places a light in our hands by which to find our way. Anything more would take us away from our initiative. But man is weak; he says, 'I want all help; I want someone to come and take me by the hand.' Then come the Smṛtis. Here is no true ethics, but only routine ethics. It is a kind of complacency of mind which requires something to hang on to. True philosophy does not burden us with a huge number of books or a rigorous set of rules. It is like the light of a lamp. It just imparts wisdom. Philosophical guidance is the simplest guidance. Philosophy does not require us to elbow out other contents from life. We can understand philosophy without the aid of many books.

Some people say: 'Action and thought cannot go on at the same time. If I have to think of philosophy, I have to stop work. But you ask me to combine philosophy and action. This is impossible.' Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants us to combine both philosophy and life, for it is life that needs the guidance of philosophy. When there is no life, there is no guidance required. How shall we solve the problem? Some say: 'Cease from acting; congeal life to a point; that is the best solution of the problem. Take away the world, for it is the cause of all problems.'

But if there is no problem, what is the use of the solution? A solution is no solution in the absence of the problem itself. Another comes and says, 'There is no solution; so don't worry about the problem at all, but just go on acting and living with whatever zest you can muster'. It is here that Vedānta comes to our help. In all boldness it dares to face the problem and give us a solution. Unfortunately, even our people have not understood this aspect of Vedānta. What we understand is the Vedānta of books, the Vedānta of leisure. But this is only academic Vedānta. Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not teach this Vedānta. He taught the Vedānta of and for a battle-field. It is not a mere pursuit of leisure hours. It is a pursuit of excellence in the midst of difficult situations and struggles of daily life. This aspect of Vedānta has been mostly neglected in the later developments of ethical and religious ideas in our country. We have now to bring out this aspect of the *Gītā* in all its practical bearing.

The *Gītā* has a simplicity which we very often miss. We are accustomed to complicate things. We cannot appreciate simple things. The human mind wants, in the name of philosophy and religion, something striking in the form of books, dress, rituals, etc. Simple character or simple ethical beauty is not much appreciated. Simple beauty is not understood by ordinary men. Truth which is simple is clothed in a variety of ways, and we get not the naked truth but a dressed-up truth. When you come to the *Gītā*, you have the presentation of truth in all its simplicity which helps to take us through life's problems. It frees us from all attachments to joys and sorrows etc., so that we may be attached to truth only. It gives us absolute calm, and a freedom from all conditions—external and internal. We want this independence and freedom of the individual to be maintained at all costs. This is what philosophy seeks to confer on life. If we have this, what else do we require? One who attains this remains fresh in spite of life's aging, and retains the freshness of a new-born babe even unto death. He has philosophy to guide him. This is the true test of philosophy—a philosophy which helps us to pass through life's struggles without getting scorched, which helps us to remain as fresh at the end of the journey as at the beginning.

At the very beginning of the second chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given out these life-giving ideas. Those who have the requisite courage and strength of mind can easily understand the true teaching of the *Gītā*. A mind which is grief-stricken and attached cannot understand these mighty ideas. A tired mind cannot understand truth; it has to be made calm and strong before the advice can take root. Grief-stricken Arjuna

is first calmed and steadied and then is taught the wisdom of Truth. In a grief-stricken state we see things in a narrow perspective; when we are calm, we see things in their true perspective. That is why Arjuna says (II. 7): 'My mind is confused as to what conduces to my welfare; therefore, tell me clearly what pertains to my welfare, teach me what is right, now that I have taken refuge at your feet.'

In the eighteenth chapter (verses 72-73), after all the teaching was over, Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna, 'Are you satisfied? Is your mind calm and your doubt cleared?'

Kaccidetat śrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā;
Kaccidajñānasammohaḥ praṇaṣṭaste dhanañjaya—

'Has this (teaching) been heard by thee, O Pārtha, with an attentive mind? Has the delusion of thy ignorance been destroyed, O Dhanañjaya?'

Arjuna replies:

Naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta;
Sthito'smi gatasandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava—

'Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through thy grace, O Acyuta. I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will follow Thy word.'

The *Gītā* brings light and removes the umbra of confusion. The *Gītā* removed Arjuna's confusion; that is its originality and power. In the case of all of us also, it will have fulfilled its purpose only when it will have removed our confusions and doubts and enabled us to see life steadily and see it as a whole.

3. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa : The Ideal Teacher*

Striking a note of robust optimism, Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked Arjuna to shake off his weakness and to steady himself. It was the intention of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to make Arjuna's mind steady before he could give him any kind of wisdom, for a grief-stricken mind is not at all a fit receptacle for wisdom. Unless we get out of the depressed state and become calmer, we shall not be able to assimilate any lofty advice. This is seen in our everyday experience. Therefore, the first thing necessary was to pacify the mind of Arjuna and then only could he listen to and profit from reason and advice. So Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna in powerful accents (*Gītā*, II.3):

'Yield not to this kind of unmanliness, O Arjuna, for it does not befit you; give up this mean faint-heartedness and stand up, O scorcher of thine enemies!'

The result of this kind of rebuke was wholesome; it steadied the mind of Arjuna. For, as we proceed on, we find that Arjuna becomes calm and there is some sort of reason in his talk with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Now he begins to put forth his doubts in a more cogent language and without much sorrow and emotion. He says (*ibid.*, II.4):

'How shall I fight against Bhīṣma and Droṇa with these sharp arrows? They are fit to be worshipped by me; they are my elders and are respected by one and all.'

Again (*ibid.*, II.5):

'Instead of killing these high-souled ones, who are our *gurus*, I prefer to live a mendicant's life: by killing them who are running after wealth, I shall gain only enjoyments which are blood-smeared.'

Arjuna then surrenders himself to his teacher (*ibid.*, II.7):

Kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ
pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasammūḍhacetaḥ;
Yacchreyaḥ syāt niścitaṁ brūhi tan me
śiṣyaḥ te'haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam—

'With my nature overpowered by weak commiseration, with a mind in confusion about duty, I supplicate Thee. Say decidedly what is good for me. I am Thy disciple—instruct me who has taken refuge in Thee.'

Arjuna, in these words, places his problem before Śrī Kṛṣṇa and seeks his guidance. In the midst of imminent destruction outside and confusion within, the mind bows down to some higher power. Arjuna was fortunate in that he had Kṛṣṇa to show him the way. He places his problem before Kṛṣṇa: 'I am in confusion as to what is right and what is wrong. I am in the midst of a piquant situation; I seek your help. My nature is smitten by narrow-mindedness. I am unable to decide what is *dharma* and what is *adharma*. What is my present duty in reference to my true welfare? I want your answer taking into full consideration the circumstances of my case.' In all critical situations we shall have to seek a way leading to our true welfare and not merely what is pleasing to us. We want what is *śreyas* and not what is merely *preyas*. This we learn from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* where Yama tells Naciketā (II. 1):

Anyat śreyo anyadutaiva preyaḥ
te ubhe nānārthe puruṣaṁ sinītaḥ;
Tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādhur bhavati
hīyate arthāt ya u preyo vṛṇīte—

'One thing is *śreyas* (the good) and (quite) different, indeed, is *preyas* (the pleasant); having been of different requisitions, they both bind man. Good befalls him who follows the good, but loses he the goal, who chooses the pleasant.'

A fool takes what is pleasant and comes to grief in the end. He misses the true end of life. That is how Yama discusses a most important problem of ethics in the second chapter of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. Here Arjuna asks this question: *Yat śreyaḥ syāt ... me*—'What is it that will conduce to my welfare?' Of the two, pleasant and beneficent, please tell me what is beneficent and I shall do as you tell me. Decide for yourself what is to my welfare, for I am in confusion and do not know what is to my good; I am your disciple and I accept your decision. I accept you as my friend, philosopher, and guide.'

Thus the beautiful seventh *śloka* of the second chapter opens the way for the imparting of the wisdom of the *Gītā*. For here, troubled and confused, Arjuna surrenders to, and seeks the guidance of, Śrī Kṛṣṇa—confused mind surrenders to calm philosophy. It is not that we should surrender to every A, B, or C who comes to lord over us and destroy what little wisdom we possess. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. 5) warns us of this danger:

Avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ
svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitaṁ manyamānāḥ;
Dandramyamāṇāḥ pariyanti mūḍhāḥ
andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ—

'Fools, dwelling in the very midst of ignorance, yet vainly fancying themselves to be wise and learned, go round and round, staggering, like blind men led by the blind.'

From what we have seen of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we realize that he was a man of wisdom and the world around him looked up to him for guidance. It is no wonder, therefore, that Arjuna asked him for guidance. As I have pointed out before, Kṛṣṇa was always detached, deep in the midst of things, yet keeping his mind above things. Emerson, when discussing the ideal life, paraphrases a famous *śloka* of the *Gītā* and says that it is easy to lose oneself in the crowd or to be calm when alone, but the ideal man is one who, remaining and functioning in society, keeps his head in solitude. If when the world orders we weep and when the world orders we smile, it is but a very ordinary thing; but perfection comes only when even in a market-place the mind is kept calm. Otherwise it is one-sided development only.

While Arjuna is in confusion, Kṛṣṇa is calm and speaks with a smile, knowing fully well that he could remove it. So, to surrender to such a person is to ensure our progress. Here the disciple is a great soul and the teacher too; and when a great disciple is facing a great teacher, we expect the statement of a life-giving thought as the issue of that contact. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. 7) refers to this in these words: *Āścaryo vaktā kuśalo'sya labdhā āścaryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ*—'When a wonderful disciple and a wonderful teacher come together, there is born great wisdom.' Arjuna accepts, therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa as his guide. If, after examining the credentials of a person in all aspects and finding him worthy, we surrender ourselves to him, we are safe in his hands. On the contrary, if we give away our independence into the hands of any and every person without discrimination, there is every chance of our ruining ourselves. In this country we have to take special notice of this. Where there are many *gurus* and very few disciples, you do not know to whom to surrender. There is a beautiful verse in praise of Śaṅkarācārya containing a caustic remark about this state of things:

Guravo bahavaḥ santi śiṣyavittāpahāriṇaḥ;
Tamekaṁ śaṅkaraṁ vande śiṣyasantāpahāriṇam—

'There are many *gurus* who deprive the disciples of their wealth; but different from all such *gurus,* I bow down to the one *guru* Śaṅkara who deprives the disciples of their sorrows.'

Once we get such a teacher, there is no harm in surrendering ourselves to him, for we are not surrendering to any particular person, but to the wisdom incarnate in him. On the contrary, if we surrender to any and every person it will be harmful both to the teacher and the disciple. As Sri Ramakrishna expresses it in a parable: 'Once a water snake caught a frog but it could not swallow it. The frog was croaking in pain as the snake could neither swallow it nor leave it out. The snake also was put to great hardship. But if a cobra had caught the frog, it would have been silenced with one or two croakings.' If the *guru* is not a man of wisdom, both the *guru* and the disciple will suffer. The *guru* must have great power to digest his own as well as the student's miseries. He must be able to lift him up and save him.

In the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (verse 33), Śaṅkarācārya gives the qualifications of a true *guru*:

Śrotriyo'vṛjino akāmahato yo brahmavittamaḥ;
Brahmaṇyuparataḥ śānto nirindhana ivānalaḥ;
Ahetukadayāsindhuḥ bandhurānamatāṁ satām—

'Who is well versed in the Vedas, sinless, unsmitten by desire, and a knower of Brahman *par excellence,* who has achieved tranquillity in Brahman, who is calm, like the fire that has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no motive, and a friend of all good people who prostrate themselves before him.'

Every word in this verse is full of meaning and significance: *Śrotriyo*: A true *guru* must know the spirit of the Śrutis; not the mere letter but the spirit of the scriptures; he must have lived the life which the *Śāstras* (scriptures) teach *Avṛjino*: Free from sinfulness; only a sinless man can possess the saving power. And this belongs to one who has achieved perfection in morality and ethics. *Akāmahataḥ:* He should not be smitten by any desire, he must be absolutely free from the promptings of selfish desires; his sole desire must be to do good to others. *Brahmavittamaḥ*: He who is the best among the knowers of Brahman, one who is merged in God so that at any point you touch him, you get only God out of him. *Śāntaḥ*: Absolutely tranquil; you cannot bring tranquillity to another without yourself being tranquil. He need not even formally teach; but wherever he is he becomes a living temple, a living church, or a living mosque, because he has touched the feet of God. How does he attain it? *Nirindhana ivānalaḥ*: Like a flaming fire which has burnt itself out; the human mind is compared to a flaming fire; for desires are there like a burning fire and the objects of desires are like the fuel. The true *guru* must be a person in whom all fire of desire has burnt itself out. When the fire ceases to be fed by fuel, it is put out and it is all calm and quiet. That is the mind which has destroyed all desire, which has become *āptakāma, ātmakāma,* and *akāma*—'the mind which has fulfilled all desires, which has Ātman for its content of desire, and which is desireless in every other sense'. We have various desires and we want to satisfy them. But his heart is full. How does he become full? Because his desires pertain to the Ātman. *Ātmakāmatve ca āptakāmatā* 'By desiring the Ātman, man fulfils all desires'; it is the catalytic agent which destroys all other desires.

Desire in the heart of an individual is, from the psychological point of view, in the nature of a craving for fulfilment. Every one of our desires is prompted by a vacuum in our heart which craves for fulfilment. All desire, therefore, signifies a vacuum in our heart. It requires an action outside to satisfy it. There are thus two stages preceding every action. First, there is the feeling of a want within, an urge which seeks satisfaction. This urge takes the form of a desire for a corresponding object which is capable of conferring this satisfaction.

And lastly, there is the action for the satisfaction of the urge. Psychology lists about fourteen primary urges of man like hunger, sex, etc. Taking the most familiar one of hunger, for instance, we find its three stages in (1) the urge within, (2) the desire for an external object, and (3) the act of appropriating that object. The last stage, act, ends in the fulfilment of the urge. When the stomach is full, there is no hunger, there is no desire for food, and there is no corresponding activity to satisfy that urge. Activity, therefore, is conditioned by the urge within and the desire for the corresponding object without. In the absence of the urge, there will be no desire and no activity. Life is a round of activity because the heart is a volcano of urges and desires. If you can conceive of a hypothetical state of existence where these urges and desires are not there, you get a state free from all desire-ridden activities as well. Vedānta speaks of a state of perfection free from craving, desire, and desire-prompted activity. This desirelessness—*akāmatā*—comes from *ātmakāmatā*, the desire for the Ātman. Lest we mistake this state for emptiness of heart and death, Vedānta adds a third important characteristic feature of this state which connotes the fulness of being—*āptakāmatā*. The tranquil mind without any desire is compared to a beautiful calm lake without a single ripple on it. The tranquillity on the lake is disturbed by the throwing of a stone into it: the desires that arise in our mind cause waves in it. In ordinary life the mind is never calm except in deep sleep. Through meditation and self-control, we have to capture this calmness as a feature of our waking state. Even a bit of this tranquillity is a great asset in our daily lives. What to speak of the value and power of the fullness of tranquillity attained by a perfected soul! He is a teacher, *par excellence*, an ocean of motiveless compassion—*ahetukadayāsindhu*; his compassion flows in a steady stream to tranquillize the world; there is no self-interest to check it. It just overflows its bounds and seeks to tranquillize the minds of others around. It wants to impart its tone to others around it, to those who are confounded and confused. He works without any motive. The flow of his love does not depend upon anything on our part. There is no artificial attempt; it simply overflows. That mercy knows no kind of contractual relationship. *Bandhurānamatāṁ satām*—he is a friend of all who resort to him. Such a *guru* will be our unfailing friend, because whatever he does will be for good only.

Śaṅkara exhorts us to take shelter under such a person, if we can get one. Such a teacher can really do something to lift us up. But, unfortunately, such teachers are few and far-between; surrendering to anyone less than such is fraught with danger. And therefore, it is

good for us to learn to depend upon ourselves till we secure the shelter of such a guide. But, then, we can get help from lesser guides also. We can take lessons from any and everybody, provided we have a dynamic mind. A dynamic mind takes lessons from everything in nature. Everything in nature is a source of wisdom to such a person. For him every rock and brook is a *guru*. It is best, therefore, to learn to depend upon one's own clear understanding. To surrender one's independence to lesser *gurus* is absolutely foolish; Vedānta does not permit it. But in the case of Arjuna it was his good fortune that he was able to get a universal teacher like Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

So Arjuna takes refuge in him. In our case Śrī Kṛṣṇa may not come in flesh and blood and whisper to us in audible language; but his teachings come to us in clear accents. Short of his presence in flesh and blood, we can have recourse to his teaching and have every other advantage.

Again, humility is an essential condition for the acquisition of wisdom. It may not be so much necessary for worldly wisdom, but even there it is necessary to a certain extent. But when you come to spiritual knowledge, it is absolutely necessary; the little ego has to go. Arjuna's humility was born of strength, and so his humility is true humility. Such occasions do come to all when he or she feels the stress and strain of circumstances and the whole personality bows down and asks, in a mood of supplication, for wisdom. Arjuna is in such a mood when he is asking Śrī Kṛṣṇa in all humility to guide him. Arjuna is in the right mood for the seed of advice to sprout and bear fruit. In the absence of this humility and earnestness, ethical and spiritual quests lose their fruit-bearing power. All idle quests are sterile. A man, while passing by the road, flings an idle question, 'Is there God?', and does not even wait for an answer; he is indifferent. For him the question has no meaning. In the case of most people, questions regarding God and the spiritual life belong to this category. Without the backing of earnestness, questions and their answers lose their vitality and fruit-bearing power. The value of a teaching is heightened by the interest you take in the subject. In the case of Arjuna it was a burning question with him. Arjuna's question is born out of the crucible of the moral struggle. This vitality of the question makes for the tenfold vitality of the answer.

Thus begins the teaching of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The problem that is presented is a problem of confusion resulting from the conflict of moral duties. The wisdom that is imparted in the answer is meant to

remove that confusion. Did Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teaching remove the confusion in Arjuna's mind? Only if it did does it deserve our reverential acceptance. In the case of Arjuna we can very well say that the imparting of wisdom on the part of Śrī Kṛṣṇa did remove the confusion in his mind. In the eighteenth chapter Śrī Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna (*Gītā*, XVIII.72):

Kaccidetacchrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā;
Kaccidajñānasammohaḥ praṇaṣṭaste dhanañjaya—

'Has this been heard by thee, O Pārtha, with an attentive mind? Has the delusion of thy ignorance been destroyed, O Dhanañjaya?'

And Arjuna answers (*ibid.*, XVIII.73):

Naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta;
Sthito'smi gatasandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava—

'Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through Thy grace. O Acyuta, I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will do Thy bidding.'

How can doubts go without right knowledge? Doubt which is creative is the mother of all knowledge; and with the rising of knowledge, doubts are destroyed. This is the function of philosophy in relation to life. Life raises problems at every step; the mind is assailed by doubts and confusion; we turn to the wisdom of philosophy, as to a lamp, for guidance. Every individual is the possessor of a little wisdom which helps him to negotiate life's placid waters. But this little wisdom and light fails us when storms and stresses set in. It is then that the human mind seeks for a steadier light and asks the question: 'Is there a better light, a light which will not flicker and which will be of use in every circumstance?' We want a steadier wisdom which will stand us in all circumstances of life. Philosophy is the pursuit of that wisdom which is itself steady and which helps to steady our feet in the midst of life's slippery path. We want the guidance of a steady wisdom to steer the bark of life through the tempests of circumstance. Vedānta has the capacity to provide us with this wisdom which will help us to keep our feet steady and head firm. Śrī Kṛṣṇa seeks to give us this wisdom; he seeks to impart right knowledge to bring order out of doubt and confusion. As a result of the teaching, we find Arjuna saying that his doubts are gone and that he is prepared to do whatever he is asked to do.

But Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not direct him to do this or that. He says: 'Thus have I taught you wisdom which is subtler than the subtlest; having examined it well, act as you think best.' The best teachers are

those who help the disciples to solve their own problems, never imposing set solutions of their own on them. They never ask their disciples to surrender their independence of judgement. The mention of a great name should not result in the surrendering of our independence of judgement. That is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa would say, and also the great Buddha. In fact, every right type of teacher would say the same. Turn whatever they say upside down and examine it well. Or as Yama said in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*: 'Go round and round and examine it well from all sides and from all points of view.' First examine the teacher and the teaching, and then accept. Sri Ramakrishna used to say to his disciples: 'Test me as the money-changers test their coins.' That is what he said to Swami Vivekananda. How few are the students who can test the teachers, and the teachers who can stand the test! We have to see how many of them have the true ring. A true teacher would say: 'I am here to place the lamp in your hand, and you go your own way.' Philosophy is a lamp which you can take in your hand for a guide through the jungle of ignorance. In the tenth chapter Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: 'I put a little wisdom in the hearts of the seekers by which they find their own way. My function is just to light the lamp.' That is the little help we get from outside, but that is more than enough if we can utilize it properly. The true teacher demands independence for himself as well as for the disciple. After all, we create a disciple out of our own mould. If the teacher is a small mould, the disciple who is cast in it will also be of the same type, even though he may have larger capacities. A teacher who is himself subject to confusion creates more confusion in the disciple. So there must be independent judgement.

In the *Gītā*, in all its eighteen chapters, we are face to face with a philosophy which seeks to impart redeeming wisdom by which men may work out their own salvation. This is its dynamic feature. On our own endeavours depends the taking hold of this wisdom and making something out of it. Philosophy, understood in the Vedāntic sense, should not be mere academic study and discussion, but should be closely related to life and its problems, sustained by life and helping to sustain life in turn. That is the philosophy which is revealed in the succeeding verses of the *Gītā*.

THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE GĪTĀ

AMONG the leaders of thought and action who have appeared on the Indian horizon, none stands so unique for nobility of thought and versatility of character as Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the great teacher of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. With the increasing popularity of the *Gītā* in modern times, a growing appreciation of the personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is becoming evident. In the West, Carlyle, Walt Whitman, and Emerson were the first to respond to the spiritual beauty and philosophic depth of the *Gītā*. Did not Burnouf, the French translator of the *Gītā*, write that 'no greater book has ever come from the hands of man'?

In his preface to the English edition of the *Gītā* by Sir Charles Wilkins, Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, declared:

'The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive, when the British dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.'

Since then, many a thinker and poet in the West has sung the praises of the *Gītā*.

It is significant that it is one of the few religious books in the world which have not lost their appeal to the modern mind. The modern mind, let us note, distrusts all scriptures, and has lost that abiding faith in the values which traditional religion offers. The full fire of modern scientific criticism has been directed to the scriptures of all the religions of the world and the results have been disastrous to a degree to both

of them. It is becoming increasingly difficult to live on mere faith, especially when such faith does not accord with verified truth. There is doubt and questioning prevalent everywhere.

Those minds that have been drawn into the vortex of the conflicts of thought and opinion have lost all faith in doctrines and creeds which could satisfy minds of more placid ages and are searching for the rock of truth where to rest their minds. There is an insistent demand for a *philosophy of life* which requires no submission of the hard-earned critical faculty in man. To such minds, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* brings a message of hope and assurance. In fact, its message is fully significant precisely because it offers such a philosophy of life.

In considering the message of the *Gītā*, our attention is irresistibly drawn to the personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, its teacher and inspirer. Among the galaxy of thinkers and leaders which India has produced in the past, to whose invaluable contributions Indian culture owes its distinctive character and uniqueness, the personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa stands supreme. Hence it is that the Hindus look upon him as a full incarnation of the supreme Being. This is the greatest honour that can be rendered to any individual who stands head and shoulders above common humanity. Indian genius understood this; it exalted the greatest of its spiritual and cultural leaders to the position of incarnations of God. They stand at the vanguard of the nation's progress, creating epochs and moulding the national mind. Such a one was Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the great drama of the epic of the *Mahābhārata*, the figure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears often on the stage. Various are the roles that he plays, but none that so much arrests and holds our attention as that of *Pārthasārathi*—the Charioteer of Arjuna. This is because therein he appears most human and acts as a friend, philosopher, and guide to grief-stricken Arjuna; and this is his individuality as revealed in the *Mahābhārata*.

The teachings of the *Gītā* get an air of reality from the tragic setting in which the imparting of the message occurs. Just before the battle begins, Arjuna the warrior asks Kṛṣṇa to stop his chariot in the midst of the two contending armies; and from that eminent position, Arjuna surveys the field and ascertains with whom all he has to fight. Seeing his own teachers and elders, like revered Droṇa and noble Bhīṣma, arrayed against him, Arjuna's nerve fails him and he becomes despondent. The first chapter of the *Gītā* portrays this scene in all its vividness. An excessive emotionalism, visible in all its colours, overpowers Arjuna's judgement, and he informs Kṛṣṇa about his resolution not to

fight against and kill his own relations and teachers for the sake of mere worldly glory. He would prefer the life of a religious mendicant to the enjoyments resulting from such a victory. Other arguments also he advances which appear so convincing to his abnormal mind and shattered judgement that, with a shivering body and stricken heart, he sinks down in the chariot, giving the ultimatum of withdrawal to Kṛṣṇa. At this moment of crisis comes the vigorous message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoken in a few telling words (*Gītā*, II. 2, 3):

Kutastvā kaśmalamidaṁ viṣame samupasthitam;
Anāryajuṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram arjuna—

'In such a crisis, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Ārya-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of heaven?'

Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayyupapadyate;
Kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa—

'Yield not to unmanliness, O Pārtha; ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies!'

These words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa must have acted like an invigorating tonic on the despondent mind of Arjuna. Contrary to all expectations of Arjuna himself, Kṛṣṇa never sympathizes with Arjuna's explanation, though he is in full sympathy with him for the sorrowful plight in which he is placed. Arjuna seems, at least to himself, to be moved by such high virtues like love, kindness, charity, and mercy to his enemies. Incidentally, he advances the arguments of non-violence and non-resistance also. All these, strange to note, seem to fall flat on Kṛṣṇa's mind. Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa displays an amazing depth of psychological insight and applies what in modern times is called the psychoanalytic method to bring calmness into the troubled waters of Arjuna's mind. An initial weakness which unbalances the mind, and a train of high-sounding rationalizations which props up the first mistake, obscuring it to such an extent as to be beyond one's power of detection—this, in short, is Kṛṣṇa's reading of Arjuna's mind. The latter's arguments of love, pity, kindness, and charity to his enemies betrayed only his sentimental emotionalism, and revealed more the rationalizing process that had set in than these virtues in their virile forms. Virtue, with most people, as it was in the case of Arjuna, is often only a deceptive mask to cover from their vision their own weaknesses. When our lives move on evenly and smoothly, we cannot realize this. But when serious conflicts set in, when storms and stresses of life force us to re-evaluate our facile conceptions, only then do we detect the shaky bases of most of our virtues. It is only when we unmask this virtue that we rise to true ethical life. But this demands the strength and

courage of a *dhīra* or a hero. Hence Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to Arjuna: 'Shake off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O hero.'

After applying the tonic contained in the two verses quoted above, which helped to steady Arjuna's mind to a certain extent, Śrī Kṛṣṇa proceeds to remove his doubts and errors by imparting a knowledge of Truth, which is the greatest saving factor in life. Knowledge is the only permanent cure for all the ills of life, and it is only when we are torn as it were with doubts and conflicts, that we are fit to inquire into and receive knowledge of Truth or philosophy. Since Arjuna is in such a condition, and since he craves Kṛṣṇa to enlighten him (*Gītā*, II. 7), it is only proper on the part of Kṛṣṇa to impart to him a philosophy of life which helps to keep one's mind steady and feet firm in the midst of preoccupations with life's ceaseless activities. 'Tie the knowledge of Truth in the folds of your cloth and do whatever you please', Sri Ramakrishna used to say. Śrī Kṛṣṇa does precisely the same. Life, at every step, raises problems, and it is the business of philosophy to find solutions to them. To this end, philosophy seeks a knowledge of Truth, which alone can give lasting solution to all the problems of life. Philosophical solutions are not in the nature of promises to be realized when life has ebbed away. Truth cannot be of much consequence to us if it cannot be realized in this life. A solution is no solution in the absence of the problem itself. Truth, as the Upaniṣads say, is to be realized *here* and *now* (*Kena Upaniṣad*, II. 5):

Iha ced avedit atha satyam asti,
na ced iha avedīt mahatī vinaṣṭiḥ—

'For one who has realized it *here* (in this world), there is true life. For one who has not, great shall be the loss.'

And truth is simple enough and can enter life silently without elbowing out any of its other contents, and transform it imperceptibly. This, and not a baggage of outworn and meaningless creeds and dogmas and set rules, is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa offers us when we are at our wit's end. If he had done otherwise, it would have become, in effect, a mockery. As Christ well says (Matthew, VII. 9):

'Or, what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?'

To go through life steadily and surmount all its obstacles, what is required is a measure of self-confidence. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'We must have faith in ourselves first before having faith in God'. The knowledge of the Ātman which is our true nature is the

basis of all manly endeavour and achievement. With this end in view, Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows Arjuna the way to the realization of his true self, leaving Arjuna to apply that knowledge and the faith derived therefrom to the solution of his many problems. This is clear from the sixty-third verse of the eighteenth chapter where Śrī Kṛṣṇa says thus:

Iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ guhyād guhyataraṁ mayā;
Vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru—

'Thus has wisdom more profound than all profundities been declared to thee by me; reflecting over it fully, act as thou likest.'

That this teaching had its desired effect on Arjuna's mind is clear from what Arjuna says in the seventy-third verse of the same chapter and from his subsequent conduct. Says Arjuna:

Naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādāt mayācyuta;
Sthito'smi gatasandehaḥ kariṣye vacanaṁ tava—

'Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through thy grace, O Acyuta. I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will act as thou sayest.'

The two important problems which absorb the attention of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the nature of the Self and the problem of conduct. Of these, he proceeds first to a consideration of the former and disposes of the latter afterwards.

The ego in man is the cause of all errors and the origin of all false values. It is that to which we refer all our judgements regarding everything in our experience; and being itself limited and circumscribed, it cannot confer infallibility upon its judgements. Hence the errors. Hence also doubts, which demand further inquiry. Deeper inquiry reveals the totally unreal character of this ego, thus shifting our sense of self-hood to a deeper reality. Here we come upon the great Vedāntic conception of the *Sākṣin* (witness or ultimate observer) which no philosopher in the West has arrived at, but towards which western thought is steadily and unmistakably proceeding through its application of scientific methods to the problems of psychology and epistemology. That the ego is unreal, that man's individuality or self-hood does not consist in the ego is the central truth in Buddhism; this is what modern biology and psychology also hint at. Says that voluminous digest of modern biological knowledge, *The Science of Life*, by H. G. Wells, G. P. Wells, and Julian Huxley (pp. 878-79):

'Alone, in the silence of the night and on a score of thoughtful occasions, we have demanded: can this self, so vividly central to my universe, so greedily possessive of the world, ever cease to be? Without it surely there is no world at all!

And yet this conscious self dies nightly when we sleep, and we cannot trace the stages by which in its stages it crept to an awareness of its own existence.

'Personality may be only one of Nature's methods, a convenient provisional delusion of considerable strategic value....

'The more intelligent and comprehensive man's picture of the universe has become, the more intolerable has become his concentration upon the individual life with its inevitable final rejection....

'He escapes from his ego by this merger (identification with and participation in a greater being), and acquires an impersonal immortality in the association, his identity dissolving into the greater identity. This is the essence of much religious mysticism, and it is remarkable how closely the biological analysis of individuality brings us to the mystics. The Individual, according to this second line of thought, saves himself by losing himself. But in mystical teaching, he loses himself in the Deity, and in the scientific interpretation of life he forgets himself as Tom, Dick, or Harry and discovers himself as Man. The Buddhist treatment of the same necessity is to teach that the individual life is a painful delusion from which men escape by conquest of individual desire. The western mystic and the eastern sage find a strong effect of endorsement in modern science and the every-day teaching of practical morality; both teach that self must be subordinated, that self is a method and not an end.'

Modern biological and psychological analysis must go deeper in the search for man's sense of individuality in order to avert the fallacy of total nihilism. Philosophy in India discovered behind the ego, which is part of the ceaseless flow of Nature, the reality of the ultimate Observer or Witness, whom it called the *sākṣin*. The *sākṣin* is that timeless Being which witnesses all this flow and change in the world of thought and things. The philosophical significance of this discovery has yet to be fully grasped. Yet all true knowledge, all valid judgements in logic or science, imply unmistakably a shifting of the subject from the ego to the *sākṣin*. When science insists on studying things from the point of view of the objects themselves by eliminating the personal equation, it is, in effect, emphasizing only the *sākṣibhāva* or *sākṣī* point of view, for the limited and circumscribed vision of the ego gives place to the unlimited and universal vision of the *sākṣin* by the practice of scientific or intellectual detachment. In ordinary life also, when we insist on what is called impartial judgement, what is sought to be achieved is this same ego-elimination. Says Professor J. B. S. Haldane in his *Possible Worlds:*

'I notice that when I think logically and scientifically or act morally my thoughts and actions cease to be characteristic of myself and are those of any intelligent or moral being in the same position. In fact, I am already identifying my mind with an absolute or unconditioned mind.

'Only in so far as I do this can I see any probability of my survival, and the more I do so the less I am interested in my private affairs and the less desire do I feel for personal immortality.'

The two important characteristics of the *sākṣin* are detachment and universality. It marks the highest point of perfection in the process of de-personalization. Thus it is the fulfilment of the scientific attitude and outlook. That it is the fulfilment and aim of the ethical, and to a large extent of the religious, discipline also will be shown in the sequel.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that the true Self of man is unborn, immortal, and eternal, he is referring to this *sākṣin* (*vide Gītā,* II.16; XIII.22; XV.10; and XVIII.17).

The *Gītā* conceives Reality as that which never changes. The ego, being subject to change, is unreal; so also are all its objects. Hence Śrī Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to transcend the dualities of experience like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, and identify himself with the permanent and unchanging Being, the *sākṣin.*

The *sākṣin* being the ultimate Subject or Observer, the difficulty of comprehending it truly is well expressed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa thus (*Gītā,* II.29):

Āścaryavat paśyati kaścit enam
āścaryavat vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ;
Āścaryavaccainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpyenaṁ veda na caiva kaścit—

'Some look upon the Self as marvellous; others look upon It as wonderful; others again speak of It as a wonder. And still others, though hearing, do not understand It at all.'

Thus does Śrī Kṛṣṇa impart to Arjuna a knowledge of the philosophy of the true Self (*sāṅkhya-yoga*). Next he proceeds to draw the ethical implications of his metaphysics. Śrī Kṛṣṇa recognized long ago that a rational ethics must be based on the highest metaphysics. Mankind has been searching for a sanction for ethical discipline. Prophets and philosophers have offered various theories regarding ethical life. All religions and philosophies unanimously teach that unselfishness is the highest virtue for all. But whereas religions seek its explanation in the words of an inspired prophet or a revealed scripture, philosophers like Kant find it in the Categorical Imperative. Both these are unsatisfactory. Ethics could get no sanction from Kant's Pure Reason and its metaphysics. He fell back upon intuition and Practical Reason and discovered the Categorical Imperative as the basis of all ethical endeavour. But the demand for a rational ethics is still there, and Kant's Categorical Imperative is no better, if not worse, in its actual application than ethics based on revelation. In Vedānta and the *Gītā*

we have a metaphysics which explains the rationale of all ethics and morality.

Ethics has to solve the conflicts between the rival demands of self and society, selfishness and altruism. When ethics teaches the suppression of self or ego as the essence of moral life, it asks us merely to transcend the unreal and find our being in the Real. 'Why should I be unselfish?', asks the rationalist of today, expecting a rational answer. Because 'the self is a fever, the self is a delusion', as Lord Buddha says. And since realization of Truth requires the attainment of the detached viewpoint of the *sākṣin*, ethical discipline must be combined with scientific and intellectual discipline for its fullest realization. To the discipline of the intellect which science insists in its pursuit of truth must be added a discipline of the whole life, covering every moment of one's existence. This is *yoga* as understood in Vedānta and Buddhism. Life is a continuous struggle characterized by ceaseless activity. How to order life and its activities so that it may yield its fruit in the shape of the knowledge of Truth—is the great problem and the nameless quest for all mankind. How to make work conducive to individual and social welfare? To this perennial problem, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives a solution which is at once original and unique in the history of thought—I refer to the *Gītā* teaching of *karma-yoga.*

Before inquiry, untutored man takes his ego or self as real, and all actions and events are judged from that standpoint. At this stage man works with various motives, and one of such motives at the time of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the attainment of heaven, which had attained the status of a creed in the Vedic period. But philosophic inquiry in the Upaniṣads destroyed the basis of this doctrine by showing the impermanence and unreality of the ego. The Upaniṣads and Buddha taught the unreality of all desire-ridden existence, earthly or heavenly. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Buddha showed that sacrifices and rituals are not the essence of an ethical life. Moral evolution is to be measured not by outward transference to higher planes of existence, but by an inward penetration by the reduction of the ego. The *Gītā*, through its teaching of *karma-yoga,* helped to transfer the guidance of life from theology to philosophy (*Gītā,* II. 39, 40):

> *Eṣā te abhihitā sāṅkye buddhiryoge tvimāṁ śṛṇu;*
> *Buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karmabandhaṁ prahāsyasi—*

'The wisdom of Self-realization (*sāṅkhya*) has been declared unto thee. Hearken thou now to the wisdom of *yoga* (practical spirituality), en-

dowed with which, O Arjuna, thou shalt break through the bonds of action.'

Nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate;
Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt—

'In this (*yoga*) there is no waste of unfinished attempts, nor is there production of contrary results. Even a little of this *dharma* saves one from great fear.'

We have already seen in a previous paragraph that the two characteristics of the true Self or *sākṣin* are: (1) its detachment and (2) its freedom from limited or circumscribed vision. We have also seen how scientific inquiry helps in a measure to attain this exalted viewpoint. We shall now proceed to inquire how ethical endeavour also finds its meaning and completion in this consummation. A converging life-endeavour towards the conquest of the false self or ego is the *sine qua non* for the realization of one's true Self.

To this end, the *Gītā* gives a twofold advice. Firstly, all work, whether pleasant or unpleasant, should be performed in the sense of duty. What does this imply? That work by itself is neither high nor low, but the preferences of the ego evaluate all work according to its whims. It is at this stage that man seeks for a comfortable life and a comfortable religion. The sense of duty teaches us to disregard the false values which the ego has attached to life and work. This negation of the ego and its values is also the transcendence of the ego itself. This helps us to realize the second characteristic of the *sākṣin*, namely, freedom from limited vision or, what amounts to the same thing, getting universality of outlook. Secondly, by not caring for the fruits of our actions or by being unattached to them, we are asked to realize the first characteristic of the *sākṣin*, namely, detachment. The only condemnation the *Gītā* makes of those who work with various selfish motives is that they are men of small understanding: *kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ*, and defines *karma-yoga* as dexterity in action: *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*. It extols this attitude in these words (*Gītā*, II. 51):

Karmajaṁ buddhiyuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ;
Janmabandhavinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchantyanāmayam—

'The wise, possessed of this evenness of mind, abandoning the fruits of their actions, freed for ever from the fetters of life, attain that state which is beyond all evil.'

Thus, duty is the first stage in ethical and spiritual discipline. There is a still higher phase of life taught in the *Gītā* which has wit-

nesses among the sages and saints of every religion, but which does not find any serious treatment in any system outside Indian thought. Duty is the hard school where man learns to crucify his ego. This phase is characterized by ceaseless struggle and tension. But when one succeeds in shifting the centre from the ego to the *sākṣin,* duty fulfils itself, and the individual works from the highest standpoint. The urge to break all bondages and fly into the free air of freedom compels one to criticize and evaluate, at a higher stage, the concept of duty itself. Duty is certainly high as compared with the plane of passions and desires. The moral man transcends the vegetative man. But there is an element of compulsion in it. We may call it inner compulsion (Categorical Imperative) or external compulsion (scriptural or state injunctions and prohibitions), but compulsion it is. Hence it must be transcended. The call of freedom is insistent; all bonds must be broken. The man of duty is at best a disciplined slave. Hence the *Gītā* teaches man to rise above even this duty and work as a free being. Loving another because of the mandate of scripture or teacher is good; doing so as a result of a compelling prompting from within is better; but it is best when love becomes a spontaneous expression of one's whole being. In the first and second stages, there is a possibility of error and a dilution of selfishness. But with the transcendence of the ego and elimination of self-love, life and love assume an eternal and pure aspect. Life becomes natural and love becomes spontaneous. Such a one can no more stop loving than a rose can stop sending out its sweet smell. For here we are no more on the plane of commands or law, but on the plane of Nature or Expression. The *Gītā* devotes many passages to describe this stage beyond duty—the plane in which Buddhas and Christs live (*vide Gītā,* II. 71; III. 17; IV. 18; VI. 18; XII. 13, 14, 18, and 19).

When one attains the *sākṣin*-consciousness, he finds life in an entirely new perspective. All the false values which the ego had attached to life and its functions get destroyed, and they reveal themselves in their true forms. Such a life is the acme of ethical perfection. Man leaves far behind him all the struggles and joys, hates and competitions, and sorrows and miseries, which is life to every one of us, and learns to view life as a grand harmony—everything in tune with everything else and with himself. Then words of love alone fall from his lips, all his thoughts make for the good of the world, and all his actions seek the welfare of mankind as a whole. They are, in the words of the *Gītā, sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ* (ever interested in the good of all beings), and their actions and thoughts have always only one ref-

erence, *lokasaṅgrahārtham* (the welfare of mankind). Truly has it been said by Jesus that such men are the salt of the earth.

In this philosophy and in this ethical teaching we have the meaning and explanation of all life's activities. Here I must mention one important feature of the *Gītā* teaching—its synthetic note. Under the hegemony of his comprehensive philosophy of life, Śrī Kṛṣṇa synthesizes all the aspects of spiritual life—aspects broadly known in India as the paths of work, devotion, meditation, and knowledge, and whatever other paths there be—by emphasizing the essential nature and common feaure of all of these. Whether we are asked to surrender ourselves to God or work without any attachment, whether we are asked to calm the mind or analyse our thoughts, what we in essence do and achieve is the elimination of the ego, which is the mask that Truth wears in every one of us. Whatever religious practices we do, whatever phase of life we may live, if once we shift our centre of individuality to the *sākṣin*, we go beyond all the dualities and struggles of life, and attain universality of outlook and breadth of heart. Not only that, all measure of large-heartedness and breadth of outlook we see in the world bespeak only of this attainment in various degrees.

We have here, in broad outline, the *Gītā* teaching and its implications. One thing strikes us, and that is its non-sectarian and non-credal character. In whatever position of life we may be, to whatever creed or religion we may belong, the *Gītā* teaching is unlimited in its scope. It has only one message—the message of strength—a message that raises man to higher and higher levels of self-expression. It never seeks to make a Jew a Gentile, a Christian or a Muslim, a Hindu, a westerner an easterner, or *vice versa*. It appeals to every man and woman to apply its teachings to his or her circumstances and march towards the citadel of Truth, with only one warning, that is, not to rest content on the way. There is no crying quarter in the search for truth.

Today the world as a whole is passing through a supreme crisis in all its history. The old world with its thoughts, opinions, and institutions is in a state of rapid dissolution; none can yet see clearly the shape of things to come. Deeply imbedded in the modern consciousness is a desire for the creation of a stable civilization. Thinkers in the East and the West give expression to this urge when they speak of the future world order. If the future is to witness the emergence of a world civilization, the collective wisdom of mankind has to be utilized for its realization. The greatest contribution shall come not from sects and creeds or parties and leaders, but form the spiritual benefactors

of humanity like Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed. The present world-context, with its gushing passions and high aspirations, somewhat resembles the conditions that obtained in India in the age of the *Mahābhārata* war when the message of the *Gītā* was delivered. In these days of conflict, struggle, and confusion, we can have no better guide to show us the path to freedom and peace than the message of the rational, universal, and comprehensive spirituality which Kṛṣṇa taught in the *Gītā* over 3,000 years ago. It is God's message to man—eternal, ancient, and ageless. Momentous problems are there before us which stagger the wisdom of the earth's bravest and best. Let us hope and pray that the new interest that is evident in many quarters in the 'Song Celestial', as Edwin Arnold called the *Gītā*, may be productive of real and lasting benefit to humanity at large.

THE AVATĀRA AS HISTORY-MAKER

A RATIONAL temper and approach, a spiritual aim and purpose, a passion for the welfare of man as man and not as divided into sects and creeds, and above all a spirit of harmony and fellowship—these are some of the salient features of the religion and philosophy of the Upaniṣads which have marked the Indian spiritual tradition with the stamp of the eternal and the perennial. As the earliest and most comprehensive exposition of this tradition, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* carries a weight and authority in India next only to the Upaniṣads. In the Upaniṣads we move in a world of thought—intense, rarefied, and pure —in the atmosphere of which even the personalities of the thinkers get melted into the impersonal; moving on air, so thin and rare, the *ṛṣis* or sages have left no visible footprints; their personalities have become fused with their thoughts and what we get is an *apauruṣeya* or impersonal body of truths, drawn from experience and tested by experience. This impersonal start has been like a rock-foundation to Indian spiritual tradition, enabling later centuries to erect a wide and lofty cultural edifice in the life of a seventh of the human race. The foundation so laid has imparted to this edifice an element of stability and resilience, ensuring tenacity to meet tension and steadfastness to meet strain, and a continuity, through assimilative power, which is one of the wonders of world's history. During the five thousand years of its history, storms have blown over it, invasions have battered it, subjection has humiliated it, and revolutions have convulsed it; edifices elsewhere have tumbled and crumbled in the past under a fraction of such impact; similar things are happening even in the present. But this one has not only stood them all, but every time has emerged

stronger to greet the world with a new burst of energy. History has demonstrated that India is ever aging but never old.

If, after five thousand years, the people of India feel the freshness and vigour of youth today and an era of struggle and achievement opening out before them tomorrow, the credit goes to the sages of the Upaniṣads for the enduring foundations which they furnished to the Indian national life at the very commencement of its career. We will do well to remember these sages today and learn of them and pay due homage to them for what they mean to us and to the world.

The Upaniṣadic atmosphere, though impersonal in itself, was yet the womb of a galaxy of personalities who have brightened up the sky of India in the succeeding eras. And the first of such was Śrī Rāma, the hero of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the second, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the hero of Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* and the teacher of the *Gītā*. These two heroes dominate the pages of Indian cultural history, being the most outstanding and most effective personalities for later ages. In them the impersonal idea of the Upaniṣads becomes defined as character and personality; the word becomes flesh. It is possible to study the Upaniṣads without reference to the personalities of the *ṛṣis;* but not so in the case of the teachings of the personalities beginning with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. There is a close interrelation here between the teacher and the teaching; the teachers are not mere individuals but world-moving forces, being the condensations of their own ideologies. This is so also in the case of Buddha and Śaṅkara, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. They are archetypal characters, representing a happy synthesis of the personal and the impersonal, in whom are focussed the spiritual and moral urges and loyalties of the age. These are the epoch-makers of Indian history, being the embodiments of its spiritual dynamics. Idea defined is character; character is definition in terms of personality. Ideas in the womb of the Upaniṣads become, as it were, defined as character in these personalities. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme example of this synthesis—a personality—warm, genial, vigorous, and human, and withal so impersonal. Viewed in the context of human history, the term *avatāra,* divine incarnation, as applied to these outstanding heroes, seeks to convey this unique quality in the stature and dimension of their personalities. The *avatāra* is the synthesis of the impersonal and the personal, of the divine and the human; he is at once individual and universal.

One important feature of the *avatāra* concept, the one that is most significant from the point of view of cultural history, is the quality of dynamism associated with the term. The *avatāra,* unlike an ordinary

saint, is not a static guide like a lighthouse; he is, in the words of Śrī Ramakrishna, a large-sized ship, capable of carrying thousands of people across the waters of life (*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Eighth Edition p. 224). He appears on the world scene to establish *dharma*, righteousness, in the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (IV. 7-8); he sets in motion the wheel of *dharma*, says Bhagavān Buddha in his first sermon. And the motive-force of both is the identical one of the happiness and welfare of millions—*sarvabhūta-hita* or *bahujana-hita* and *bahujana-sukha*. Paradoxical as it may seem, the richness and fullness of their personalities is the product of their impersonal attitudes and motives which are the driving forces behind their life and action. 'I have nothing to gain in the three worlds, O Arjuna!' says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (III. 22-25), 'yet, I work incessantly, for the good of the world and as an example to mankind.' Theirs is a standing example which validates the ethical truth that the height of a personality is directly proportional to the depth of its impersonality; to find life, we have to lose it first (Matthew, XVI. 25).

The *avatāra*, as understood in India, is an epoch-maker, a spiritual dynamo from which emanates man-making and nation-making forces. In him philosophy as idea becomes transformed into philosophy as will and purpose and endeavour. If philosophy as idea is primarily concerned with interpreting the world, philosophy as will and purpose is deeply interested in the transformation of it in terms of its idea. The *avatāra* as epoch-maker is the fusion of idea and will and endeavour; and this is also the definition for Īśvara or God in Vedānta—He is the synthesis of *jñāna*, *icchā*, and *kriyā* (knowledge, will, and action). All men of effective character are dynamos of such synthesis in more or less degree; but their powers are limited in scope and circumscribed in motive, being not wholly free from the limitations of personality. Unlike them, however, the *avatāra* functions as a perennial source of power and beneficence in a whole epoch, and continues to be a source of general inspiration ever after.

It will thus be seen that the Marxian distinction between philosophers that merely interpret the world and those that transform it has long been known and acted upon in India. In this we were Marxists long before Marxist philosophy was born in Europe. The *avatāra*, according to Indian thought, is the world transformer; in him idea becomes yoked to will, purpose, and endeavour. He does not merely contemplate the world; he works with a view to changing it. The materialistic philosophy and approach of Marxism, with its faith in naked violence and hatred, and the spiritual view and approach of

Indian thought, with its faith in the innate goodness and educability of man, differ widely in methods and results, in spite of starting with common objectives. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan (*Religion and Society,* p. 25):

'In its concern for the poor and the lowly, in its demand for a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, in its insistence on rational equality, it gives us a social message with which all idealists are in agreement. But our sympathy for the social programme does not necessarily commit us to the Marxist philosophy of life, its atheistic conception of ultimate Reality, its naturalistic view of man, and its disregard of the sacredness of personality.'

Vedānta understands and appreciates the Marxist passion for human betterment. Whether we search into the theoretical statements of its objectives or into the practical conduct of its exemplars, we shall never miss this human element in this philosophy whose quest is for a truth which will most conduce to human happiness and welfare and whose passion is to verify its truth in life and society. And that truth it finds in the unity and solidarity of existence. The social outlook and programme of Vedānta, proceeding as they do from this truth, and periodically set in motion by its greatest exemplars, the *avatāras,* naturally tend to ease the tensions and conflicts obtaining in a society through its insistence on the values of freedom, equality, and the sacredness of personality, and through the spiritual direction it gives to surplus social energies. The *avatāra,* thus, is the dominating spiritual hero of an epoch who functions as the dynamic source of a creative social process and the sustenance and guide of an egalitarian social order.

THE AVATĀRA AS DIVINITY

THE greatness of any historic hero is a product of lived life and interpretation. A people interpret to themselves their hero, generation after generation, by participating intellectually and emotionally in the life and being of their hero. The personality of the hero seems to expand and grow in stature and dimension in this historic process. In the words of Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 313):

'Through thousands of years of chiselling and modelling, the loves of great prophets of yore come down to us.'

This interpretative process is operative only if the hero is of such a rare type that has achieved a more or less synthesis of the impersonal and personal in his being, and if there is a dynamic spiritual kinship between him and his people, a common spiritual conditioning environment for both of them. Though enveloped thus in the same spiritual mantle, each of them bears a different relation to it. The people are relatively static centres except when carried along by the dynamic forces proceeding from a hero who appears as a vortex of thought and movement in the environment, a sort of condenser and radiator in one for the spiritual forces and values around. This is the characteristic that makes a hero in any domain of life.

But among heroes, the *avatāra* or he whom the world recognizes as an incarnation of the Divinity, belongs to a special category. The ordinary type of hero does not respond much to the interpretative process; his personality does not grow in the flow of time whose soil does not seem to hold any nourishment for this type of organism; on the contrary, his stature gets reduced more and more as time passes. This flow of

time, however, does not affect all of them in a uniform manner. It is unsparing with some even in their lifetime, while it spares others for a while. To the temple of greatness, as to the kingdom of Heaven, many are called but few are chosen. There is a rare type of hero whom time chooses, and India designates this hero as the *avatāra;* for him time reserves a role of expanding greatness, while it relegates all other types of heroes to a career of diminishing glory. There is only one factor that conditions this selective process; and that is perfection of character, the fullest flowering of personality; the more perfect the character the longer lasts its glory. We can mock or hoodwink everything except time; it consumes all worldly greatness as systematically as it dissolves the mountains and rocks of the world. But it stops short and even reverses its steps when confronted by a greatness which is unworldly—a greatness which receives its nourishment not from the muscles or mind but from the spirit, from the sap of the timeless reality of the Divine in man. The *avatāra* is that character in its fullest measure, while the saints and prophets and other heroes represent it in varying degrees. In him the seed of divinity latent in man and struggling in a hero for expression becomes fully blown; and man attains in him his fullest stature and glory.

This attainment marks an intense concentration of power and beneficence in the personality of the *avatāra,* all masked by his limited physical and mental configuration. His earthly being and career, with its time co-ordinates of so many years and space co-ordinate of so much height and weight, and other indefinable co-ordinates of personality like love and knowledge, is a highly deceptive mask to cover the spaceless and timeless amplitude of his being. It is wrong to measure the energy generated in the atom-smashing cyclotron of his personality in terms of the size and weight of that personality. Even in the case of an ordinary individual the skin is never the frontier of his personality. His familiar physical personality of the three-dimensional world is enveloped and filled by a mental and emotional personality of a more than three-dimensional continuum. His sentiments and affections, interests and dispositions, in short, his emotional and mental being, reveal the familiar man to be but a cell in a vast organism belonging to a non-physical world.

If even an ordinary human being—unintegrated and unharnessed—is vaster than his physical personality, how much more so will be those integrated characters whom the world calls heroes, and, most of all, the few perfectly integrated ones, whom it calls *avatāras*? Man is a denizen not of one world but of many worlds, which lie about and in him, layer after layer, fold after fold; his true being is in touch with all of them, though his conscious being is expressive of only one or two of them. Be-

ing is not identical with consciousness; consciousness is only one part of being; conscious being is therefore only surface being, limited and circumscribed. The greatness and forcefulness of a personality derive from its capacity to appropriate more and more of its Being to consciousness; thus the expansion of consciousness is also the enrichment of personality; and the highest development of personality is when consciousness becomes coextensive and identical with being. This is the attainment of the fullness of being, the flowering of personality, the perfect integration of character. Theoretically, therefore, the energy generated in a cyclotron of personality such as this must be immense in range and power.

An ordinary individual, functioning at the lowest level of being, can be viewed as a limited quantity of explicit power and a limitless packet of implicit energy. His available energy is mostly the product of chemical combustion in his muscles and partly of an indefinable combustion in his mind. When the same man becomes a hero, there is a vast release of energy in his personality, but the chemical combustion in his muscles may not show any appreciable increase in quantity, nay, it will even show a decrease in value in certain types, with a corresponding increase in the mental field. The quantity of released energy is thus determined by the quality of the energy source. As we deal with finer and finer energy sources, the quantity of energy released is found to be out of all proportion to the quantity of the energy sources. The quantity of food needed to supply fuel to the muscles is always more than what is required for the nerves and the mind; in the case of the latter the energy source is of a higher quality, and energy released is more compared to the quantity of the energy source. Ordinary digestion is a chemical process of combustion; mental digestion is a release of energy on a higher plane; it bears the same relation to the physical digestion as electrical release to the chemical release of energy. There is a third and higher order of digestion, namely spiritual digestion, in which there occurs a total assimilation of ideals and values by which a person becomes value incarnate or ideal incarnate in the full sense of the term. The development of atomic science has made humanity aware of a new source of energy in the physical world—the atomic nucleus—whose fission as well as fusion liberate energies the quantity-value of which is out of all proportion to the infinitesimal quantity-value of its energy source. The process of conversion of quantity into quality is complete here and the Einsteinian formula for nuclear energy, $E=mc^2$, may be considered as a state of a residueless and total conversion of matter into energy in the physical world.

The above considerations help us to place in clear perspective the nature and source of energy in man and its grades and varieties; the Vedāntic statement that each individual is a potential centre of infinite energy will now appear to be a more sober truth containing a hopeful message. The difference between man and man is not in his being but only in his becoming, in his expression. The dullness of the dullard and the brilliance of the bright are only differences in expression proceeding from the differences in the tapped energy sources. And these energy sources in the case of man, as in the case of the physical entities, belong to an ascending order of fineness and subtlety, inwardness and purity, beginning with his body and its environing world, and ending with the very centre or nucleus of his being, the Ātman or the true Self in man, the end value of all subtleness, fineness, and inwardness. In the words of Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (III. 11):

'As there is no higher reality than the Self which is a mass of pure awareness only, therefore It, the Self, is the basis and consummation of all grades of subtleness, immensity, and inwardness.'

Vedānta holds that looking out into the starry heavens of outer space or into the misty past or future of time to locate the centre of being of the universe is a fruitless undertaking. It also appears as a thoroughly meaningless venture in the light of a science which dares to weld space and time into a space-time unity and which views the universe and everything in it as events or configurations of that space-time. To Vedānta, the centre of experience is the centre of the universe —physical as well as non-physical, and this supreme centre is the real Self of man, the Ātman, the unchanging basis of an ever changing universe composed of both nature and personality, above cause and therefore above time, the seer of the space-time events, in the abyss of whose silence the distinction between the space-time and its perceiver, the objects and the subject, the non-selves and the self is transcended in the final truth of perfect non-duality. The *Bhāgavatam* (VIII. 3.3) sings the glory of this shining truth in these memorable words:

Yasmin idaṁ yataścedaṁ yenedaṁ ya idaṁ svayam;
Yo asmāt parasmāt ca paraḥ taṁ prapadye svayambhuvam—

'In whom is this universe, from whom is this universe, and by whom is this universe, who Himself is this universe, who is beyond the familiar world of effect and the unfamiliar world of cause—in that self-existent Reality do I take refuge.'

It is this Reality that the *avatāra* assimilates to his consciousness, a Reality which is the nucleus not merely of a physical universe of three or four dimensions, but the nucleus of the entire range of the universe of experience—a Reality which can best be described as the non-dimensional centre of a multi-dimensional universe, each having the value of infinity. The nature of this non-dual Reality which transcends every range of relation, including causality, and which escapes every attempt of thought and speech to capture it, has been indicated in a famous verse of the Vedas (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* V. 1.1):

Pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate;
Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate—

'That Reality is Infinite (full); this universe is Infinite (full); from the Infinite has come the Infinite. After the Infinite has been taken out of the Infinite, the Infinite alone remains.'

It is this Reality that radiates through the highly sensitive physical and mental personality of the *avatāra,* to whom naturally nothing in the universe is hidden, the high frequency vibrations of whose knowledge have the power to penetrate not only the muscles and minerals of the universe but also its minds and mysteries. The *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* gives expression to the nature of this highest-grade type of knowledge in one of its famous verses (IV. 1):

Jñānenākāśakalpena dharmān yo gaganopamān;
Jñeyābhinnena sambuddhaḥ taṁ vande dvipadāṁ varam—

'I salute that best among men who through his *jñāna* (Knowledge or Reason) which is infinite in nature and non-different from the *jñeya* (object of knowledge), realized (Its non-difference from) the *dharmas* (subjects) which are, again, infinite in nature.'

The atomic energy generated in a cyclotron, immense as it is when measured in terms of the particular available energies in the universe, pales into insignificance in range and power before the mighty energies which an *avatāra* compasses within himself. As a charcoal hearth pales into insignificance before an electric oven and both before an atomic furnace, so also appears an ordinary human being and an ordinary hero by the side of an *avatāra,* whose extraordinary power to love and to save makes him an object of wonder and reverence to all his fellowmen. The nature and scope of this extraordinary power of his is different from the atomic and other energies mastered by science. The latter can run a chain of industries or destroy a city, but is powerless before the subtler realities of mind and heart, which control its

production as much as its use and misuse; it or even something infinitely less than it can doubtless destroy the *physical* configuration of the *avatāra;* but this is the least part of his being. His energy, on the other hand, can penetrate into and control that mind and heart of man which produce and control atomic and other energies in the world. It has the unique power to burn up the ignorance, impurities, and passions in the human heart and bestow on man a fuller and a larger life. Its penetrating and soothing power, compared to that of the atomic and other energies, is evident from this. But his energy, colossal as it is, is yet cool and gentle; it is beneficent. It radiates, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, 'light without heat, as a shining gem'. Wonderful, indeed, is the heart of an *avatāra,* the delicate and intricate mechanism of which can convert scorching heat into soothing light, sorrows and sufferings into joys and delights, passion into purity and hatred into love, the biting winds of despair into the gentle breeze of hope, the poison of death into the nectar of immortality.

This is the conception of *avatāra* in Indian philosophic thought; he is the *dvipadāṁ varam,* the best and highest among *Homo sapiens,* in the words of the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* quoted above. The term *avatāra* indicates the totality of knowledge and power and beneficence gathered in a personality, the visible part of which—his physical life with its earthly setting—is, as in the case of the cyclotron, a highly deceptive mask covering the magnitude of the contents within. This occasional concentration of beneficent energy in a mighty personality has only one historic purpose to serve—to accelerate the spiritual evolution of humanity. He scatters what he gathers, and a tide sets in in the affairs of men. The spiritually sensitive who are alert and waiting take the tide at its flood and move up spiritually; others are left unaffected except indirectly. He represents for humanity the achievement of the high tide of character and spiritual awareness; he is ablaze with divinity, a fact recognized only by a discerning few, but missed by the multitudes due to his physical mask. The *Gītā* refers to this fact in four well-known verses (IX. 11 and 13; IV. 9):

Avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ tanumāśritam;
Paraṁ bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūtamaheśvaram—

'The deluded despise Me, clad in a human body, not knowing My higher nature as the Lord of all existence.'

Mahātmānastu māṁ pārtha daivīṁ prakṛtimāśritāḥ;
Bhajantyananyamanaso jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam—

'The great-souled ones, O Arjuna, who abide in the divine nature, knowing (Me as) the imperishable source of all beings, worship Me with an undistracted mind.'

Janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ;
Tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma naiti māmeti so arjuna—

'He who knows thus, in its true nature, My divine birth and works, is not born again into the body; having transcended it (through such knowledge), he comes to Me, O Arjuna.'

Vītarāgabhayakrodhā manmayā mām upāśritāḥ;
Bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā madbhāvamāgatāḥ—

'Delivered from passion, fear, and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many, purified by the austerity of wisdom, have attained to My state of Being.'

It is this concentrated and intense life energy that enables an *avatāra* to defy time itself which wears out and chokes up all other types of greatness, and to make it flow in the reverse direction in his case. The interpretative process of history finds in his case substantial material for interpretation. He sets in motion a current of beneficent energy which flows on irresistibly to compose the distractions of an age. Humanity finds in him a focus for its transcendent affections and loyalties and a promise of its hopes and aspirations. And the world finds his personality growing generation after generation. This mutually reinforcing synthesis of lived life and historic interpretation explains the transformation, in course of time, of a simple individual, indistinguishable from most of his contemporaries, into a gigantic personality, commanding the head and heart of later generations. It is no wonder then that men and women in India have learnt to find in a personality such as this an embodiment of their deepest spiritual aspirations and a manifestation of the highest Reality, clearer and more adequate than what our intellects can ever conceive of, and have accorded to all such, whether indigenous or foreign, divine honours and devout worship. Such an attitude and worship signifies a confluence of the religion of man and the religion of God, tending to make religion more human and man more divine.

THE PERSONALITY OF ŚRĪ KRSNA

THE Upaniṣadic vibrations of truth and beauty, goodness and love, became caught in a later age in a mighty condenser of personality who shook up India spiritually and politically during his earthly career round about 1400 B.C., and whose voice continues to shake us up even today. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the author of the *Gītā*, has affected Indian thought and life in such a profound way that has no parallel in India or elsewhere; his influence is both intensive and extensive. If we abstract the Kṛṣṇa element from the Indian heritage, it will be reduced to almost elementary proportions. He has entered into our religion and philosophy, mysticism and poetry, painting and sculpture, music and dancing, into all that pertains to the varied life of a people advanced in culture and civilization. His personality has a charm for all varieties and levels of people. He has been and continues to be the perennial 'pied piper' of the Indian heart and intellect, drawing all to him, our girls and our boys, our saints and our sages, our intellectuals and our artists, our statesmen and our diplomats. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, of a later age, gave expression to the wonder of generations when it stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is God Himself, unlike other *avatāras* who were merely aspects and parts of Him (I. 3.28). Where shall we seek for this mesmerism of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for this focussing of affections and loyalties of a whole people, except in the character of that person and the character of his people?

The broad facts of Śrī Kṣṛṇa's career as scanned from the pages of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata* reveal him to have been a leader and a teacher, a citizen and a sage, of a rare calibre. His childhood and early boyhood were spent in the sylvan surroundings of his rural

home in Vraja in the vicinity of Mathurā. In spite of the troubled politics of that city which cast a cloud of sorrow and anxiety over the surrounding countryside, his early life at Vraja, under the loving care of his parents and amidst the simple cowherds of the place, was a saga of sweetness and tenderness, revealing the unity of man with nature and the animal world. The shaded groves on the banks of the sacred Yamunā, enlivened by the deer, the peacock, and other birds, provided the children of Vraja with an idyllic setting, a real kindergarten for the exercise of their freedom and the expression of their personalities. The picture of young Kṛṣṇa, as depicted in the *Bhāgavata*, tending cattle and playing on his flute, and engaging himself in fun and frolic and delights and adventure in the company and at the head of his rustic comrades, has provided the theme for the highest quality of lyrical poetry and spiritual allegory for succeeding ages. Even in childhood he exhibited the qualities of vivacity and precocity, valour and composure. Born with a capacity for sympathy and for understanding, for humour and for laughter, he grew with them into a personality, warm-hearted and thoroughly human, with a serene smile as an inalienable part of his facial expression, a smile indicative of a steady intellect and a tender heart with which he used to confront the doubts and despairs, the passions and hatreds, of the human heart. Even while young he was aware of the mission for which he was born and the work he was to accomplish on earth. That mission very soon compelled him to bid good-bye to the beautiful environments and beloved hearts of his native Vraja when he was in his early teens; he spent the rest of his life in a vortex of struggle, first at nearby Mathurā, and later, at the newly-built city of Dwārakā on the Gujarat coast. While there, the urge of his life-work brought him to Delhi, then known as Indraprastha, the capital of India, and its sister city Hastināpura, and to a close friendship with the Pāṇḍavas and their allies; and he passed the rest of his life between Indraprastha and Dwārakā.

The great epic *Mahābhārata* illumines the India of a heroic and creative age. The galaxy of its heroes belongs to a wide range of the lovable and the hateful, the righteous and the wicked, the gentle and the ferocious, the admirable and the detestable. The one character that dominates this galaxy, alike by its force and charm as by its loftiness and brilliance, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Respected by the sages and loved by the people, feared by the wicked and sought after by the good, full of tender solicitude for the welfare of women and the masses, and honouring those to whom honour is due, the *Mahābhārata* depicts Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a rare hero, at once human and divine, engaged in shaping the mind and face of the India of his time through a long life charac-

terized by ceaseless activity on the one hand and calm detachment on the other. The *Mahābhārata* describes the tumultuous scenes of national welcome which the citizens of Indraprastha and Hastināpura used to accord to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, their leader, during his rare visits to India's capital.

The most active and fruitful part of his long life was spent at Indraprastha and its environs, in the company of the political leaders and spiritual luminaries as well as the humbler men and women of the time. By espousing the righteous cause of the Pāṇḍavas as against the Kauravas, he was drawn into the national politics of the day in which he played effective roles, now as an adviser, then as an ambassador, and always as a friend of the righteous and the virtuous, the lowly and the lost. As the last and crowning act of his political career, we find him playing the humble role of an unarmed charioteer to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, and leaving to posterity an imperishable legacy in the wisdom he then imparted to grief-stricken Arjuna. Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *Pārthasārathi*, the charioteer of Pārtha or Arjuna, has become a fascinating and immortal figure through the music of the Song Celestial—the *Bhagavad-Gītā*—which he then sang to steady the mind and heart of Arjuna. That personality and that music have since then continued to play the 'charioteer' and the stimulus to millions of men and women in the larger battle of life.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* expounds a philosophy of life which breathes the lived convictions of its teacher and exemplar. It is a philosophy which imparts wisdom to man without imperilling his zest in life. It makes one live at his highest and work at his best. In ordinary life, our zest is the product of our selfish attachments; our activity, the expression of our restlessness; and our love, the fruit of our passion and self-love. We begin to lose our zest and our love when life fails to yield selfish advantages; our activity then loses its motive power, and we lapse into a mood of apathy which is compounded of inactivity without and restlessness within. Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows us through precept and example that we can be zestful without being attached and active without being restless. We work at our best when we are free from selfish desire and passions. This is true spirituality, the fruition of the moral process, the achievement of goodness plus effectiveness, the synthesis of the clear intellect, steady heart, and firm hand. It denotes a character which combines strength with gentleness, fearlessness with love, and greatness with humility. The *Gītā* expounds in words what its teacher practised in life and action.

It is this richness and many-sidedness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personality that has made it the centre of not only calm philosophy and sober history, but also of a rich and varied myth and legend. Heroes who profoundly stir a nation's imagination tend to lose the rigid outlines of their historic being and get invested with a national personality; they become alluring themes to the collective subconsciousness of the people as a whole, as much as to their individual consciousness. When the colour of myth and legend responds to the fabric of fact and history in the life of a great hero, we witness the unique phenomenon of a mutual enrichment and edification of the personalities of the hero and his people.

This is the mesmerism of the Kṛṣṇa of legend and history; there is a unity of theme between him and his people. Every spiritual and secular aspiration of the Indian people has found a responsive echo from the many-sided life career and protean teachings of this great personality. The echoes of his powerful voice and the shadows of his giant form can be discerned in the history of the ancient Greek and Middle East peoples. Interesting as this line of inquiry is, it is more instructive and profitable to seek for him in the *living* tradition of India and its people which absorbed him and was absorbed by him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to us, is not a mere historic memory, but a living fact, whose voice and form continue to receive fresh accessions of amplitude and strength in the passing of time. India achieved through him a synthesis of the classical and the romantic in her traditions, and the philosophic and religious in her aspirations. Very few peoples in the ancient or modern world—be it Greek or Roman, French or German—have been able to achieve this height of spiritual synthesis. In all of them the classical and the romantic, the philosophical and the religious, are ever at war with each other, sometimes violently, but always imperceptibly. With Śrī Kṛṣṇa begins the evolution of a truly national Indian mind, at peace with itself through the synthesis he achieved for it and at peace with the world through a larger synthesis which came later through Bhagavān Buddha and his movement. This synthesis is the keynote of the Indian mind, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is its first inspirer.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE OF SRĪ KRSNA

IT IS difficult to say exactly when Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was born; but it is certain that this great event in our history took place over 3,000 years ago. From the accounts available to us of his career, we find that he lived a full life both as to length of span and as to width and depth of interests. He was the product of rural India; his childhood and early boyhood were lived in the villages on the Yamunā river near Mathurā, in the closest intimacy with man and beast and nature. This early experience contributed in no little measure to the formation of the intensely human and universal traits of his arresting personality. To this we owe that ever-present sweetness and humanness in his character which, combined with spiritual depth and intellectual vigour, political power and social wisdom, gave India the services of a leader who awakened our people in his lifetime, and has continued to affect our thought and life in a profound way ever since.

It is the special quality of a great teacher that he evaluates man as man and not in terms of a creed or dogma, or set formula; on the other hand, he evaluates all dogmas and systems in terms of man. Sabbath is for man and not man for sabbath is his watchword. History reveals several instances of leaders and movements trying to fit man into Procrustean beds of narrow religious dogmas and tight political systems and stunting his personality in the process. Sectarianism in religion or politics appeals to man's sectional prejudices and interests, ignores the possibilities of his total personality, and militates against the emergence of the universal in his life and thought. Yet, the universal ever struggles to emerge; and that struggle throws up

rare types of men and women here and there in the world, living and voicing the message of the universal and human. The record of this struggle, when written, will form a most fascinating chapter of human history.

India wrote the first of such glorious chapters in her long history in the life and message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His life reveals the many-sidedness of his character and interests. And his message, as contained in the *Gītā*, well reflects this aspect of his personality. A universal message can proceed only from a universal man. This universality, to be enduring and dynamic, should bear the impress of depth as much as of breadth, intensity as much as of extensity. A cheap cosmopolitanism in manners and outlook does not connote true universality. It is only by realizing the values imbedded in the spiritual depths of his being that man attains to true and abiding universality. Behind the personal, which is finite and limited, lies the impersonal, which is infinite and unlimited. Realization of this impersonal in the depths of man's being alone enriches his personality with unobstructed love and sympathy and confers on him the vision of the universal in man and nature. The height of man's personality is directly proportional to the depth of his impersonality; to find life, we have to lose it first.

The *Gītā* expounds in words what its author expressed in life and action. It seeks to take man gently by the hand, irrespective of credal, social, and political affiliations, and lead him step by step to the realization of the highest and best in life. The highest and best in life is *mukti* or freedom—freedom from all bonds external and internal—according to Indian spiritual thought. The *Gītā* traces four corollaries of this highest excellence:

First, it is this value of freedom that imparts meaning to all other life values; secondly, progress in man's individual and collective existence is to be measured in terms of the gradual realization, internally and externally, of this value of freedom; thirdly, the realization of this value in its fullness constitutes spiritual perfection; and fourthly, this perfection can be attained *here* and *now*, and not in any after-death existence, it being imbedded in the depth of our nature.

Man's struggle for freedom involves the presence of some obstacle or obstacles that thwart his freedom. From the simple primitive individual, nay, from the simplest animal organism, through the technically developed civilized man, to the spiritually advanced saint, one and all are engaged in the *sādhanā* or discipline of freedom, and are wrestling with thwarting obstacles of one type or another. These obstacles are en-

vironmental in the early stages and internal in the later ones, with all sorts of combinations in between. To the question, 'What is life?' put to him by the Maharaja of Khetri in 1891, Swami Vivekananda gave the following Vedāntic answer (*Life of Swami Vivekananda* by His Eastern and Western Disciples, Advaita Ashrama, 1949, p. 220):

'Life is the unfoldment and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down.'

This bold statement embraces in its comprehensive grasp all the aspirations and struggles of man for social security and political freedom, intellectual advancement and artistic refinement, moral stability and spiritual perfection. And the whole of this process forms the scope of *dharma* or religion as defined by the *Gītā*. It includes *abhyudaya*, the struggle for the achievement of social welfare, and *niḥśreyasa*, the struggle for spiritual perfection.

Indian thought classifies all human aspirations and struggles into these two categories of *abhyudaya*, social welfare, and *niḥśreyasa*, spiritual perfection. The *Gītā*, in enunciating its message, does not view humanity as cut up into creeds, races, and sects, religious or political, but as falling into these two types which cut across all such static divisions; and it finds the vast majority of human beings in every society in search of, and fit for, the value of *abhyudaya* or social welfare, and only a minority seeking after, and fit for, the value of *niḥśreyasa* or spiritual perfection. When religions and sects ignore this basic fact and offer their followers the *niḥśreyasa* ideal alone in the shape of some form of other-worldliness, they, unable to digest and assimilate it, bring it down to their own worldly level in the shape of sectarian loyalty and exclusiveness, on the one hand, and extra-sectarian hostility and intolerance, on the other. The *Gītā* recognizes the need of sects for the growing soul; but it finds nothing but evil in sectarianism. Exclusiveness and intolerance engendered by sectarianism are vices born of spiritual snobbery and are terrible bondages of the soul. The *Gītā* places the greatest emphasis on the growth and development of the soul in the direction of the realization of its inborn freedom and perfection. And it judges every form of discipline and education—social, political, or religious—in the light of this aim and purpose. If the discipline of a sect helps the onward march of man, the rigidities of sectarianism arrest that march and stunt and warp his personality.

In his introduction to his *Gītā* commentary, Śaṅkarācārya emphasizes this universal scope of the Vedic *dharma* as expounded in the *Gītā*:

Dvividho hi vedokto dharmaḥ pravṛttilakṣaṇo nivṛttilakṣaṇaśca jagataḥ sthitikāraṇaṁ, prāṇināṁ sākṣād abhyudayaniḥśreyasa-hetuḥ— 'Twofold, verily, is Vedic *dharma,* of the nature of *pravṛtti,* action, and *nivṛtti,* withdrawal, together constituting the world's stabilizing factor, being productive of true social welfare and spiritual perfection of all beings.'

In the light of this approach, the *Gītā* recognizes in the spiritual education of man the legitimate role of the pursuit and acquisition of pleasure and profit in the context of social existence; it does not frown on such pleasures and delights as inventions of the devil. Life in the world is not the same as worldliness; to get stuck up in the field of sense-experience and refuse to grow is worldliness; and this is harmful, simply because it hampers the development of the individual to his or her full stature. By realizing ethical values in an increasing measure, man achieves a largeness and fullness of being and overcomes the taint of worldliness even while living and working in the world. All forms of human associations, from the family to the international community, conduce to this ethical education of the individual. From his self-centred life of sensate profit and pleasure, which is 'short, nasty, and brutish' in the language of Hobbes (*Leviathan,* Part I, Chapter 13), man evolves into the largeness and fullness of ethical life, of joyous interdependence in a free society. This is his spiritual education; in the early stage, the individual needs the compulsion of society to acquire this education; but later, with more developed ethical sense, he learns freely and joyously to acquire it for himself. The freedom that man achieves through the control and manipulation of the external environment is civilization; but civilization does not mean for man the end of the struggle for freedom. It is only when he carries forward this struggle to control and manipulate the internal environment, the forces of his mind and heart which condition the enjoyment of even his external life and liberty, that he begins to appreciate the fuller meaning of freedom and realize the deeper levels of his own personality. This inner struggle is against the promptings of that sensate nature which he had ere long nurtured through civilization, but which he now feels called upon to check and master in the interests of a higher value struggling to emerge within his personality. The *Gītā* calls this value *buddhi,* pure Will or Reason, intelligence freed from the thraldom of the senses and blind impulses. The purpose and direction of man's ethical efforts and struggles is the development of this value of *buddhi* in him. Its presence imparts steadiness to understanding, stability to personality, and strength to character. Life at the level of *buddhi* is

true freedom and delight; and the *Gītā* sings its praise in several of its verses (II. 48-51):

'Giving up attachment, and equal-minded in success and failure, do all actions, O Arjuna, established in the *yoga* (of *buddhi*); this even-mindedness is *yoga*.'

'Action (prompted by sense-attraction and blind impulse) is far inferior, O Arjuna, to action guided by the *yoga* of *buddhi*; seek refuge in *buddhi*; small-minded are they who act for selfish advantage.'

'Endowed with *buddhi*, man goes beyond (the relativity of) both merit and demerit in this very life; strive, therefore, to acquire the *yoga* (of *buddhi*); *yoga* is skill in action.'

'The wise ones endowed with (the *yoga* of) *buddhi*, renouncing the fruits of action, freed for ever from the bondages of existence, attain to that state which is beyond all evil.'

This freedom *in* life through the discipline of life itself is achieved through a masterly manipulation of the energies of life. This constitutes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's original message in the *Gītā*—the achievement of self-realization and steady wisdom in and through life and action; it connotes the fullness of strength and peace. This wisdom of the free spirit is beautifully expounded in two verses of its second chapter (verses 67 and 64):

'The mind that runs out following the pull of the senses gets despoiled of its wisdom and is lost, like a ship on the ocean in a gale.'

'But the self-controlled and self-disciplined man, on the other hand, freed from selfish desire and anger, (though) freely engaging his senses in the sense-objects, attains tranquillity.'

This message has for its aim the development of a spiritual character, pure, steady, strong, and generous, through the manifestation of the perfection innate in every individual. 'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man', says Swami Vivekananda. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you', says Jesus (Luke xviii. 21). Herein lies the universality of the *Gītā* approach to the spiritual education of man; it emphasizes the essential features in the methods and manner of that education as expounded in the world's religions, abstracted of their sectarian and local elements.

The man of true spirituality, says the *Gītā* (III. 25), will ever strive to ensure total human welfare; universal benevolence will be the one theme of his life:

'Just as the unenlightened, O Bhārata, perform all actions prompted by selfish attachments, even so, the spiritually enlightened perform all actions, but without selfish attachments, moved solely by the desire for human welfare.'

Another mark of its universality lies in its recognition of different paths to spiritual perfection. This is an accepted Indian idea, and the *Gītā* and its teacher are its greatest inspirers. Due to its inherent logic and the prestige of its Indian experience, it is receiving increasing appreciation and acceptance in the modern world. Regimentation warps the religious personality as much as the social or political personality. The *Gītā* studies the various expressions of the religious mood and impulse and scientifically classifies them into the four well-known paths: *karma-yoga,* the path of selfless action, *bhakti-yoga,* the path of love, *rāja-yoga,* the path of mental concentration, and *jñāna-yoga,* the path of rational inquiry. All the existing world religions partake of these four paths singly or in varying combinations. The *bhakti* path provides faith in and love and devotion to a personal God or one of His many incarnations as a means of spiritual perfection. Here again, the *Gītā* allows full freedom of choice to the individual, exhorting him at the same time to respect the freedom of other individuals; for God is one, but His names and forms are many; and many also are the paths leading to Him. Declares Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (VII. 21):

'Whatever form of the Divine a devotee desires to worship in faith and devotion, in that very form do I make that faith of his firm and steady.'

Spiritual pride and intolerance are the bane of a sectarian approach to religion; faith is gained at the cost of charity and fellow-feeling. The *Gītā* upholds the ideal of intensity of faith in spiritual life, but imparts to it, at the same time, the mood of acceptance and fellowship as proceeding from that very intensity. This is possible because, to the *Gītā,* realization of God, or achievement of spiritual perfection, is the end and aim of the religious quest and not the realization of a creed or the achievement of a belief. In the onward march of the soul, creeds and sects and churches are left behind after it has gained the education which these are meant to give. 'Be ye therefore perfect even as the Father which is in Heaven is perfect' is the exhortation of Jesus (Matthew v. 48). There are no sects and denominations in the Kingdom

of Heaven. And so the *Gītā* declares the following divine charter of freedom (IV. 11):

'Through whatsoever paths men seek to come unto Me, I accept them through those very paths; all paths which men take, O Arjuna, lead ultimately unto Me only.'

In its comprehensive vision of the drama of human life on earth, the *Gītā* ever seeks to impart to man a sense of purpose and direction which is spiritual freedom and perfection; prevents him from getting stuck up in a static sect or system by exhorting him to move on and grow and develop; and inspires him with a spirit of active tolerance and fellowship by gently pointing out to him that the goal is one, though the paths are many. The modern world, with its prevailing confusion of values and ends, has need to capture this vision of the *Gītā* and turn its course, in the beautiful language of the Vedic hymn (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I. 3.28), from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality:

Asato mā sat gamaya;
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya;
mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya—

'From the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light, from death lead me to immortality.'

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE

I HAVE been asked to speak on 'The Spiritual Life of the Indian People'. That you have chosen this subject is indicative of your keen desire to have a closer insight into the life and thought of the people of a country from which you of Japan have derived a large part of your own spiritual life. And no better subject could have been chosen for this purpose; for religion has formed and still forms the keynote of the music of Indian national life, and no understanding of India will be adequate or proper which does not impart an insight into the spiritual life of her people. I shall endeavour to give here a picture of the spiritual aspirations and activities of the people of my country.

India : Its Immensity and Variety

Two things I would request you to bear in mind constantly: one, the vastness of India in size and population; two, its long history running into over five thousand years. These two facts have imparted an amazing diversity to Indian culture and life. From the snowy peaks of the Himalayas in the north to the land's end, the Cape Comorin or Kanyākumārī, on the Indian Ocean in the far south, a length of about 2,000 miles, from the jungles of Assam on the border of Burma in the east to the deserts of Rajasthan and the beautiful valley of Kashmir on the border of Pakistan in the west, a distance of over 1,800 miles, India contains a wide variety of climate, flora, and fauna, of culture, language, and human types. This vast land and its people have the pressure or the stimulus of over five thousand years of history and tradition behind them, a long history during which the national mind has

had the opportunity to experience life from various angles and various levels—prosperity and adversity, victory and defeat, freedom and subjection, knowledge and ignorance, illumination and darkness. The people had been taught one great lesson by their earliest leaders and thinkers, namely, that the object of life is not pleasure or pain, but knowledge, through a dispassionate study of both.

The Philosophic Temper of the Indian People

The people of India have more or less accepted this outlook on life, the thinking people more and the ordinary people less, for which the land became known abroad as a land of philosophers; for that attitude is the characteristic of a scientific and philosophic mind. Equipped with such a mind and temper, an individual achieves a greater and deeper measure of maturity of knowledge and outlook, the longer his life and the more varied his experience. Without this temper of reflection, long life means only long existence, nothing more; it just means a repetition of the first round of experience, not capable of producing maturity of outlook and chastening of mind and heart.

Wordsworth referred to this chastening process when he sang ('Lines above Tintern Abbey'):

> For I have learned
> To look on Nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue.

This is true not only of individuals, but also of nations and cultures. Cultures with violence imbedded in their hearts represent the failure to capture this maturity of philosophic temper. Fortunately for India, her teachers and leaders, from the great sages of the Upaniṣads and Rāma and Kṛṣṇa of the prehistoric past, through Buddha and Śaṅkara of the historic period, to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda of our own times have helped her people to capture this mood and temper, which accounts for the compassion and humanism in her culture and her spirit of tolerance and peace.

The Upaniṣads and the Science of Religion

It was the great sages of the Upaniṣads who first expounded the science and philosophy of man's spiritual life; this was about 500 to 1,000 years before Buddha. Religious acts of worship and ritual, and religious beliefs of myth and legend obtained even before the Upaniṣads, in the early Vedic and the pre-Vedic or Mohenjodāro periods. In fact,

such expressions of religion are co-extensive with human existence itself; they characterize the life of all men from the primitive to the advanced. *But questioning these religious acts and beliefs, bringing a meaning out of them through comparison and contrast, and grading them into stages according to their spiritual content—in short, the development of a science of religion, of a full psychology and philosophy of religion—these were achieved first in the Upaniṣads or Vedānta, and later in various other limited formulations.*

The practice of meditation, sitting with eyes closed and mind indrawn, was prevalent in India five thousand years ago during the Mohenjodāro period, which has yielded through excavations the statue of a god sitting in *yoga* pose with eyes closed and mind indrawn and surrounded by tame and wild animals, much like the image of Śiva of the later ages. The *Ṛg-Veda* largely depicts a religion of worship and prayer and praise of the various gods of its pantheon in the context of a close kinship of nature, gods, and men. It is a religion of this-worldliness aiming at health, wealth, and welfare of man in society. The worshipper keeps his eyes open and directs them to the gods of wind, rain, and sunshine in the sky. It was marked by simplicity and spontaneity. These two forms of religion became accepted by Vedānta as two valid expressions of the religious impulse. All the higher religions of the world contain these two phases, often living apart and unreconciled, with the claims of this world standing in sharp contrast with those of the world beyond. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism have these two elements in them, the social and the trans-social or mystical, in varying proportions, with a rule-of-thumb method of adjustment between them. According to the preponderance of these two elements, the world religions can be broadly classified as mystical or non-mystical. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity belong to the mystical type, while Judaism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism belong to the non-mystical. In the same country there may be both types of religions present, like Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan and Confucianism and Taoism in China, with mutual adjustment based on social expediency rather than philosophic necessity.

The Innate Divinity of Man

The Upaniṣads carried the development of the mystical religion to its highest point when they discovered the real Self in man behind his apparent self, the former immortal, ever pure, and ever free, while the latter finite, mortal, and bound. And they declared the great truth that *Man is Divine*, which was echoed centuries later in the declaration of Buddha that *nirvāṇa* is *the birthright of every being*, and still later in

that of the New Testament: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.' If Divinity is the inmost core of man, the path to it lies through the withdrawal of the senses and the mind from the world of sensate experience and turning their energies inward in a supreme effort of concentration. By such inward penetration, man achieves realization of his true nature, the non-dual, immortal, changeless, and pure Ātman behind his apparent self of changeful individuality. This is the well-known *yoga* technique and achievement as expounded in Vedānta, of which one of the most glorious examples was Buddha.

The Spiritual Unity of the 'Within' and the 'Without'

But the Upaniṣads did not stop there; they asked the important question as to the true nature of the world outside as well. Their knowledge of the Divine within helped them to penetrate into the nature of the world without, for, as Eddington tells us, at the farthest limits of our knowledge of the external world, we realize that 'consciousness is the first and most direct thing in experience; all else is remote inference'; or, as Jeans tells us, 'in the last resort, those waves which we describe as light-waves, and those other waves which we interpret as the waves of an electron and proton, also consist of knowledge, knowledge about photons, electrons, and protons respectively'. The answer the Upaniṣads received to that question raised the thought of Vedānta to supreme philosophic heights. They discovered Divinity at the core of the world as well, as they had earlier discovered it at the core of the human soul. The universe, to their purified vision, revealed itself as spiritual through and through. Nature was Divine and man was Divine. Thus God became the unity of man and nature; their duality was relegated to partial, limited knowledge, revealed through the prism of the senses and the sense-bound mind. When viewed without these human limitations, the world is Divine. This conclusion the Upaniṣads couched in some of the most pithy and majestic utterances: *Sarvaṁ khalu idaṁ brahma*—'All this is verily Brahman (the spiritual Absolute)'; *Ekam eva advitīyam*—'One only, without a second'; *Neha nānāsti kiñcana*—'There is not the least duality here'; *Ayam ātmā brahma*—'This Self is Brahman'; *Satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*—'Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity'; and *Brahmaivedam amṛtam*—'All this universe is Brahman, the Immortal.'

Yoga as the Science and Art of the Spiritual Life

Thus the Upaniṣads bridged the gulf between man and nature by proclaiming the solidarity and oneness of all existence. This one great idea precluded the maintenance of the whole host of those sharp distinctions between this world and the next, the non-mystical and the

mysucal, reason and faith, life and religion, as also between religion and religion and faith and faith. It was left to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a few centuries later, to gather up these apparently diverse spiritual elements in a sweeping synthesis of a comprehensive spirituality in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The *Gītā* achieves the synthesis of the mystical and non-mystical religious elements, of the 'Shintoistic' and 'Buddhistic' elements of all religions, in a comprehensive spirituality based on the metaphysics of the Upaniṣads. This is the *yoga* of the *Gītā* as different from the Pātañjala and other *yogas*. *Yoga* in the *Gītā* is the science and art of the spiritual life. In the light of this total vision, the *Gītā* discovered two different manifestations of the spiritual life; one, in the form of social ethics, which the *Gītā* broadly designates as *Dharma*; the other, in the form of trans-social spiritual striving, which it designates as *Amṛta*. In the first, man learns to chasten his emotions and thoughts through the discharging of his family and social responsibilities, and experiences the delights thereof. This spiritual education gives him an experience of self-transcendence within the context of his social life itself, a rising from the limited, truncated ego to the largeness and fullness of a social personality. The only austerity he is called upon to undertake at this stage is the austerity of expansion of his interests and affections; it is the austerity involved in love and service; and it is always sought in the context of delight and joy. He is required to cultivate active virtues; for manliness is the end sought to be achieved in this sphere.

When his social personality has become fully developed, when he has achieved manliness, he is called upon to enter the next stage of spiritual education through a direct confrontation with the divinity within. This harder path becomes easy to tread after the achievement of manliness in the earlier stage. There is a change in forms and techniques here, consequent on the change in the field of action. Calm endurance of external circumstances with a view to fitting the mind to penetrate the internal core of his being becomes the virtue to be developed. The emphasis shifts from active to passive virtues, from action to contemplation, from love of society to love of solitude, without, however, involving any hatred of society as such. This training imparts a depth to the human personality, a stability and strength to man's character, and a tranquillity and poise to his bearing; for he is reaching out to the centre of all power and energy within him, his true Self. Every step gained in this direction makes him more peaceful, more joyful, more compassionate, and more efficient. When at last he gains the vision of the Self, he becomes illumined, with all bondages of the heart destroyed and all finiteness transcended. He realizes an infinite individuality, the culmination of the process which had started with education

through social ethics. Herein is the achievement of the full meaning of the Delphic exhortation: 'Man, know thyself.' 'The man of spiritual vision perceives equality everywhere, realizing the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self', says the *Gītā* (VI. 29). 'One who perceives all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings will not, in virtue of that realization, hate anyone or practise dissimulation. When, to that knowing sage who has realized supreme unity, all beings have become the Self, what delusion, what grief, can afflict him?', says the *Īśā Upaniṣad* (6-7).

Unity of Action and Contemplation

Thus has the *Gītā* gathered up the twofold Vedic *dharma,* which is representative of the twofold forms of all religions, the social and the trans-social or mystical, *Dharma* and *Amṛta,* in a comprehensive statement of human spiritual life. Vedānta very aptly designates these two forms of all world religions as *pravṛtti dharma* and *nivṛtti dharma*—religion of social action and religion of inward contemplation. Vedānta holds that every man and woman has to pass through the discipline of these two *dharmas* in order to achieve spiritual fulfilment. Both social ethics and mystical spirituality become the earlier and later phases of one continuous spiritual education of the human soul; there is not and never can be, in the view of Vedānta, any conflict between them. Conflict arises only when one takes a limited view of the scope of human life, or when one refuses to move to higher levels of life expression; in short, conflict arises from stagnation at any particular level.

The Upaniṣads described life as a dynamic movement and used the symbol of the chariot with its horses and driver to illustrate its dynamic nature. They discovered a goal to all this movement, physical, social, and spiritual, and called that goal the achievement of freedom and fullness, Self-realization, or God-realization.

Ācārya Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820), the greatest philosopher of India, refers to this twofold form of religion in the introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* :

'The Vedic *dharma* is verily twofold, characterized by *pravṛtti* (social action) and *nivṛtti* (inward contemplation), designed to promote order in the world; this twofold *dharma* has in view the true social welfare and spiritual emancipation of all beings.'

The Four Yogas

The classification of religion into *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* was based on the felt interests and longings in the heart of man. Vedānta also makes another classification of religion based on temperament and inclination.

This is the well-known classification into the four *yogas* of *jñāna* (philosophy), *bhakti* (devotion), *rāja* (concentration and psychic control), and *karma* (dedicated action). Buddhism in its Theravāda form and certain aspects of Vedānta belong to the *jñāna* type; Christianity, popular Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Mahāyāna Buddhism belong to the *bhakti* type; *rāja-yoga* and *karma-yoga* enter into the above two expressions in a general way, though they are not absent in their specific forms among a certain type of seekers both in ancient and in modern times. The active type of men and women of an extra-religious or extra-philosophical temperament have always resorted to the pure form of *karma-yoga*; similarly, the contemplative type of men and women who are extra-religious and extra-philosophical have always been drawn to the *rāja-yoga* for its experimental attractions.

Vedānta holds that this classification is not exclusive, but it rests on the predominance of a particular temperament and inclination. In a further reduction, Vedānta and the *Gītā* speak only of two *yogas*: the *yoga* of *jñāna* and the *yoga* of *bhakti*, to the latter of which is joined *karma* and *rāja yogas*.

The Pre-eminence of Bhakti

The *Gītā* expounds the latter of the two as the royal spiritual path for the majority of men and women, giving them a scheme of practical spirituality leading to breadth of outlook, strength of character, and efficiency of action. The guidance of *jñāna* or philosophy, however, is always to be there as its background. The devotee here is moved by love of God, God who dwells as the inner Self of all beings and in all nature; to that God of love he dedicates his life and actions; with Him he seeks to commune in prayer, song, and meditation; and Him he seeks to serve in all His creatures.

This is the characteristic religious attitude and temper of the majority of the Indian people, as it is also the characteristic attitude and temper of the majority of the religious people of the world.

Unity in Diversity

It is against this ideological background that we have to view the spiritual life of the Indian people. The first thing that strikes us is the vast diversity of its expressions. India did not believe in uniformity of type either in religion or in culture. It believed in a variety of expressions held together by a central thread of unity.

This idea derives from its philosophy, which holds that unity in variety is the plan of the universe and not a dull, dead uniformity.

India speaks of the search for God as the search for the One in the many, the One that gives meaning and significance to the many, like the figure 1 behind a zero or zeros. And so, in religion, she consistently upheld the idea that the goal was one, but the paths were many.

The Spirit of Active Toleration

To the people of India, therefore, toleration of different forms of faith and culture, of belief and practice, becomes a natural corollary of their outlook and philosophy. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's proclamation in the *Gītā*: 'Through whatever paths men approach Me, I receive them through those very paths; all paths, O Arjuna, ultimately lead unto Me only' has gone into the bone and marrow of the Indian people, and made the spirit of positive toleration or universal acceptance pervasive of the entire range of their long history.

India defines religion as realization (*anubhava,* in Sanskrit), and not as a matter of forms, ceremonies, and dogmas. The latter are valid as means, but not as ends. Secondly, India does not equate religious scholarship with spirituality. Knowledge of religious tenets is not the same as religion. Such knowledge is also valuable, but only as means and not as end; it must reach out to experience. As *The Imitation of Christ* expresses it: 'I would rather feel compunction than know the definition thereof.' Thirdly, atheism is not such a bugbear to India as to Semitic religions; for these are merely academic affirmations and negations; in the absence of an earnest endeavour to *realize* God, India does not find much difference between the affirmation of the theist and the negation of the atheist.

Moreover, *India holds that consistent atheism is an impossibility, because the God it preaches is not an extra-cosmic God, but the Divine Self in the heart of all—in the theist and the atheist, in the wise and the ignorant.* No one can deny such a God without first denying oneself; no one, on the other hand, can affirm such a God without first affirming oneself.

As a fruit of this view, there has been very little heresy-hunting in Indian history; India's toleration extended not only to different groups of the faithful, but also to different groups of the faithless who could not arrive at any faith in God.

Sanātana Dharma

The majority of the people of India belong to one or other of the various branches of the ancient religion of the country, Vedānta. It has another significant name—*Sanātana Dharma* or Eternal Religion.

This was the name that the people of India gave to their religion. It is based on the eternal impersonal principles discovered by different sages at different times and collected together in the Upaniṣads. As such, *Sanātana Dharma* is not derived from the authority of any single personal founder.

The sages of the Upaniṣads discovered the truths of religion, and these sages are honoured as such; but the truths themselves are eternal, and can be discovered by any person in any age. In fact, *Sanātana Dharma* holds that it is precisely this effort to discover the truth by oneself and its final realization that constitute religion, and not the effort to believe in a creed or dogma about God or soul.

This impersonal foundation of the Indian religions stands in sharp contrast to the personal authority of a founder of all the other world religions. Early Buddhism was an impersonal religion; Buddha discovered the Truth and showed the way to Truth to others. He described himself as the Tathāgata, the path-finder, and declared that Buddhahood was a state, not a person, and that it was attainable by all.

In this he was a teacher of *Sanātana Dharma,* and his teaching was close to the spirit of the Upaniṣads. Later, when he was transformed into a personal founder of a particular religion, a spirit of exclusiveness developed; and from being, like Vedānta, an Eternal Religion, *Sanātana Dharma,* it was changed into a religion with history, so much so that, without the authority of the personal founder, the religion so interpreted cannot stand.

This limitation of its scope was one of the important reasons for its later disappearance, in name and form, though certainly not in substance, from India, a phenomenon in Indian history not confined to this one instance only.

Vedānta or *Sanātana Dharma* is not the same thing as Hinduism. The words 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' were not coined by the people of India to refer to themselves or to their religion. As was said earlier, they themselves designated their religion as *Sanātana Dharma,* Eternal Religion. 'Hindu' was a term coined by foreigners, especially the ancient Persians, to designate the people of India in a territorial sense; it only meant the people living on the east of the river Sindhu (modern Indus), and they pronounced 'S' as 'H'. Thus the 'Sindhu' of Sanskrit became 'Hindu', and their land, Hindusthan. The Greeks avoided both 'H' and 'S' and pronounced it 'Indos' from which was derived 'India'. Thus the word 'Hinduism' originally meant the religion of the people

of Hindusthan. In actual fact, however, it is not one religion that exists in India, but many religions. Apart from the religions that came to India from outside in the course of her long history, namely, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam, all of which are based on a personal founder or founders, there are several indigenous religions, each complete in itself, and all loosely called by the single name of Hinduism.

The Impact of Vedānta on India's Popular Religions

Among these indigenous religions, three are particularly important, both as to philosophy, tenets, and long history and as to the number of the adherents involved. These are Vaiṣṇavism, adoring Viṣṇu or his incarnations, Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, as the Deity; Śaivism, adoring Śiva as the Deity; and Śāktism, adoring Śakti, the Divine Mother as the primal divine Energy, as the Deity.

Among these, Śaivism and Śāktism are practically one, as both the deities are objects of worship in each of them. These deities and incarnations have been the objects of worship for millions and millions of the people of India during these two to five thousand years. These religions have not remained the same during all these millennia of history. They have undergone changes—even profound changes—in their every aspect, in theological structure as much as in their mythology and ritual.

Their contact with the rational philosophy of the Upaniṣads gave rise to the changes in their theology, while this orientation, in turn, produced relevant changes in their mythology and ritual. This story of the peaceful evolution of the Indian religions under the stimulus of a lofty philosophic thought, and in response to changing cultural situations, is one of the most impressive chapters in the history of religion. Through this process, primitive forms of religion were allowed to grow and develop into highly spiritual religions without getting smothered by more advanced ones.

The Evolution of the Śākta Religion

The history of the Śākta religion is significant in this connexion. Originating as the worship of the Mother-Goddess patronized by the primitive groups in all parts of India, in the hills and in the plains, this religion slowly evolved under the stimulus of Vedānta and became, centuries ago, a complete religion of deep philosophy, profound mysticism, and appealing ritual.

Some of the greatest personalities of Indian history, including the great philosopher Śaṅkara, were followers of this religion. Conceived as the Divine Mother of the universe, and called by different names,

such as Devī, Durgā, Bhagavatī, Kālī, Bhavānī, Annapūrṇā, or Mīnākṣī, this Deity centralized within Herself the entire range of the Mother-Goddess cults of the vast continent of India. Some of the sublime poetry and mysticism of India is centred in Her worship; while its philosophy has become almost identical with that of Vedānta itself.

In modern times, this religion became associated with the name of Sri Ramakrishna, who worshipped this Deity as Kālī in the Dakshineswar temple, near Calcutta. The Brahman and *Māyā* of Vedānta are conceived as a unity, the quiescent and dynamic aspects of Reality. Śakti or Kālī represents this dynamic aspect which brings about the birth and evolution of the universe out of itself and finally withdraws it into itself. And Brahman represents that quiescent state.

Worship of Divine Incarnations

Though *Sanātana Dharma* is based on impersonal principles, it provides plenty of scope for the play of personality as well—personalities come into the religion as illustrations of the principles. So, immediately after the age of the Upaniṣads, India saw the emergence of two towering personalities, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, whose influence on the totality of Indian culture, religion, poetry, art, and life has been the deepest and the most pervasive. Their influence has been not only on India, but also on the countries of South-East Asia, where Indian culture had penetrated during the first ten centuries of the Christian era, to result in the beautiful flowering of native cultures. *Sanātana Dharma* looks upon them as incarnations of God, who came to establish righteousness on earth. Buddha's status in *Sanātana Dharma* is also the same.

The worship of these *avatāras* or incarnations of God has been long recognized in India as effective spiritual help, and it forms an essential part of India's religion of *bhakti* or love. In fact, the worship of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa forms the major part of the religious life of India. The largest number of temples in the country are dedicated to their worship. This worship consists of a series of rituals and services rendered to the image in the temple, exactly in the spirit of service to a living personality. Devotees join this worship, especially the evening services, when lights are waved and songs sung before the image, often in chorus. This chorus singing is a prominent part of India's spiritual life; the chorus song composition in Sanskrit in praise of Rāma, known as *Rāmanāma* or 'Name of Rāma', is especially very popular throughout India. Mahatma Gandhi was very fond of this chorus, and used to have it sung in his prayer meetings. It is very pleasing to the ear and elevating to the heart.

Songs relating to Kṛṣṇa will fill several volumes. He is worshipped as the personification of the god of Love; but there is also the worship of him as the Child Kṛṣṇa, a worship enriched by relevant poetry, song, and mysticism, which is unsurpassed in its lyric of tenderness and pure spirituality. The birthdays of these two incarnations of God—of Rāma, in March-April, and of Kṛṣṇa, in August-September—are big events in the religious calendar of India.

Śiva and Buddha

The worship of Śiva seems to have been the most ancient of the worships in India, with the exception of Śakti or the Mother-Goddess. Śiva is conceived as the god of the *yogins,* men of contemplation. He is the ascetic god with the snowy Himalayas for his natural abode. He represents the state of *bodhi,* the state of illumination attained by Buddha, the soul enjoying the beatitude of its own divine nature. But Śiva is also compassionate; the word 'Śiva' in Sanskrit means auspiciousness, goodness; and he comes down from his state of divine absorption to bless a seeking aspirant or redeem a soul in distress. Śiva is thus a state as well as a deity, the latter as the symbol of the former; he is also the special god of Indian monasticism.

The close kinship of this concept of Śiva to Buddha and his religion made for the blending of the two in several respects in the later evolution of Buddhism.

Śiva and Śakti

The worship of Śiva is marked by a spirit of seriousness and austerity. This worship is closely allied to the worship of Śakti or the Divine Mother, known also as Kālī, Durgā, etc. In the symbolic language of popular Hinduism, Śakti is the wife of Śiva, and both are looked upon as the parents of the whole universe. This idea of Śiva and Śakti as the father and mother of the universe has inspired poets and philosophers, artists and mystics, saints and devotees, in India for hundreds of years. The great national poet Kālidāsa sang in praise of them in the opening verse of his epic poem *Raghuvaṁśam:*

'Inseparable as "Word" and its "Meaning" are Śiva, the supreme Lord, and Pārvatī, the Divine Mother, whose grace I seek for culturing the soul of language.'

Pārvatī literally means the daughter of the mountain, the Himalayas; her other two names, Durgā and Gaurī, also derive from her association with the mountain.

The marriage of Śiva with Pārvatī or Śakti is the symbol of the union of the immobile Absolute and the mobile Creative Energy—the potential and kinetic states of the total energy, physical and spiritual, of the universe. The two are ever inseparable.

This marriage is the theme of another long epic poem of Kālidāsa, known as *Kumārasambhavam* (The Birth of the Heroic Child). Śakti stands for the unity of the energies of Mother Nature in all her aspects—physical, biological, mental, and spiritual, and represents a generalization of the energies of Nature far beyond what physical science gives today. Śakti is the unity of the physical and non-physical energies of Nature. It is termed *cit-śakti*, the Energy of Consciousness, out of which the whole world of conscious and unconscious entities proceeds. It is viewed in the feminine, and conceived not as 'creating' the world from outside, but as 'giving birth' to the world from within itself. So it is the Divine Mother of all, as Śiva is the Divine Father of all; both form an inseparable unity, two aspects of the same Reality, the unity of Becoming and Being. Buddha experiencing the immobile state of *bodhi* or *nirvāṇa* represents the Śiva aspect, and Buddha engaged in active public ministration represents the Śakti aspect.

Indian Śakti versus Japanese Kāmi

This concept of Śakti and its association with mountains, you will mark, brings it into close kinship with the *Kāmis* or gods of Japanese religion, especially with the chief *'Kāmi'*, Amaterasu Omikāmi. But the Japanese *Kāmi* concept has not received that treatment from philosophy as the Indian Śakti concept received from the philosophy of Vedānta. This philosophic nourishment of the Śakti concept has raised the *Kāmi* cults of India to the highest level of philosophic mysticism of the most active type. Śakti is the favourite deity not only of contemplatives and pious devotees, but also of warriors and men of action. This concept and worship, as it has evolved during these several centuries, and especially through the dynamic orientation which it received at the hands of Sri Ramakrishna (A.D. 1836-86) in our own time, is winning its way to the hearts of millions of the Indian people today, in view of its capacity to bridge the gulf between the demands of active social ethics and passive contemplation, between reason and faith, and between knowledge of the world and knowledge of God.

Spiritual Life : Three Stages

India discerns three stages in the expression of man's spiritual life. In the first stage, man's religious impulse seeks to find expression in outward acts of worship and adoration; his God is outside. He resorts to

temples and churches, images and symbols, hymns and songs, fasting and pilgrimages. This is the first stage of every religion, the effort to capture an intimation of the Eternal through the concrete and the gross. The discipline of this stage must lead the devotee on to the second stage—that of inward contemplation. He has now learnt to feel the presence of God within, close. In this there is very little of the external expression, there is very little of the noise and show associated with the first phase. In fact, true religion begins only at this stage; the first one is treated as just the kindergarten of religion. When the heart becomes purer and purer, it is able to *experience* the pull of the Divine within; and religion then becomes a joyous communion of the soul with God. The practice of meditation becomes a delight. Continued practice of this stage draws down the grace of the Divine and the soul enters the third stage in which it achieves the fullness of realization. The seeker sees God within, in contemplation, and also without, in the field of action. India considers this as the aim of all spiritual striving; every devotee in India places this as his or her final spiritual objective; but he or she knows that it is difficult to achieve in a single life, but it will surely be achieved some day. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* (VII. 3):

'Out of thousands of people, only a few strive for perfection; and out of thousands that so strive, only a few realize the truth of My true being.'

Again (*ibid.*, VII. 19):

'Striving through several births, the wise one realizes Me as existing in every being; such a *mahātman* (great soul) is rare to come across.'

Japa and Dhyāna

With the knowledge of the above stages in view, the worshipper in India not only engages in external ritual worship, but also practises *dhyāna,* inward meditation, aided by *japa* or repetition of the divine name. This repetition of the divine name is a universal practice in the *bhakti* religions of India; it is also prevalent in some form in all the religions of the world.

This *japa* and *dhyāna* are the central core of the spiritual practices of the Indian people. A devotee chooses a particular form of God or Incarnation as his 'favourite object of adoration'—his *iṣṭa-devatā.* India allows perfect freedom of choice in this matter, as the people are taught by Vedānta that the supreme Truth is One, though called by various names and conceived under various forms, for the facility of comprehension and approach. In modern times, through the benign

influence of Sri Ramakrishna, who had realized God through both Hindu and non-Hindu forms of adoration, this choice of 'object of adoration', which was till now confined to the various deities and incarnations of the specifically Hindu religions, is being extended to Christ and Buddha as well, who also are viewed as incarnations of God, just like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages occupy an important place in the spiritual life of India. India's important holy places are scattered over its length and breadth; some of the holiest are in the interior of the Himalayas, including the holy mountain Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva, in Tibet, holy to Hindus and Tibetan Buddhists alike. At the southern extremity of India are the temples of Rāmeśvaram and Kanyākumārī. Two other important centres are Dvārakā and Pūrī on the western and eastern seaboards of India.

The Sacredness of Gaṅgā

A special object of reverence in India is the river Gaṅgā, whose water is treated as the symbol of God Himself. No river in the world is treated with such reverence as the Gaṅgā in India, and this from pre-Buddhistic times. Millions of Hindus bathe in it every year and carry its water in brass pots and jars to their homes, even to foreign countries, to sip a few drops every day or on special occasions. A few drops of the sacred water of the Gaṅgā are put into the mouth of dying persons by their relatives. On its banks, thousands of people practise meditation and austerity, getting the stimulation of its holy atmosphere. The Gaṅgā, with its sacredness, has been carried to Ceylon and South-East Asia in the wake of Indian culture. In some of these countries, every river is known as Gaṅgā.

It is conceived as the river of heaven brought down to earth by a great emperor of ancient India, Bhagīratha. This historic-mythical episode has formed the theme of much literature and art. The river fell from heaven on the matted hair on the head of Śiva who was then absorbed in contemplation on the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, and then flowed down in winding streams through the tortuous mountain valleys, eventually to enter the plains at Hardwar (an ancient holy pilgrim centre about 120 miles north of Delhi) to become the great river of material and spiritual prosperity for India. Bhagīratha had to undergo infinite troubles and austerities before he had the satisfaction to see the river flow into the plains. And the name of Bhagīratha in Indian culture now stands for all energetic and holy endeavour for the good of man, just like Prometheus in Greek culture.

Indian Monasticism

Before I close, I would like to say a few words about Indian monastic life, which is such a significant expression of the Indian spiritual life. An institution with hoary antiquity and prestige, it was ancient and well established even at the time of Buddha, who became one of its greatest representatives. The *sannyāsin* or monk, in virtue of his total renunciation and emancipation from personal and social bonds, is given divine veneration in India. And the best representatives of this Holy Order fully deserve this national reverence. Buddha, Śaṅkara, Caitanya, Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda belong to an unbroken line of monastic tradition, which goes back to Śuka, Yājñavalkya, and Sanatkumāra in prehistoric ages. In several monastic Orders, the monastic initiation is preceded by a *homa* (*goma* in Japanese), fire ceremony, in which the candidate, who is a celibate from birth or has become celibate after a spell of the married state, pours into the lighted fire, which is the symbol of the Absolute, in the form of material oblations, his desires, senses, mind, and the ego, and realizes himself as pure Spirit without the touch of worldliness. He is then given a new name and a new apparel (coloured with a special kind of earth) to signify his death in the flesh and birth in the Spirit. Homeless and without possessions, he starts a new life of practical direct religion, the 'march of the alone to the Alone' and love and service of all beings without distinction.

Conclusion

India does not believe in a rigidly controlled central church to regulate religion or monasticism. When the new social order evolves a welfare state in India, the monastic Order will become a constructive force for human happiness and welfare in India and abroad; for the same clarion call of *bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya* (for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many), which Buddha had sounded to inspire his Order, has been sounded in this age by Swami Vivekananda to inspire the monastic life of modern India, before which he has placed the great ideals of 'Renunciation and Service'. The teachings of Swami Vivekananda and of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, are the most dynamic spiritual forces in modern India, helping her people, both lay and monastic, to evolve a new form of spiritual life adequate to the aspirations and purposes of the modern world.

ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM ON THE CENTRAL THEME OF BHAKTI UPĀSANĀ

THE *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* opens with the important question put by Śaunaka and other sages to the Sūta (I. 1.9):

Tatra tatrāñjasāyuṣman bhavatā yadviniścitam;
Puṁsāmekāntataḥ śreyaḥ tannaḥ śaṁsitumarhasi—

'O thou endowed with long life! it behoves thee to impart to us thy true conviction, arising from thy knowledge and experience, as to what constitutes the supreme welfare of man.'

What is man? At the lowest end of the scale, we see him as weak, sense-bound, and helpless, and at the highest end, we see him as the divine incarnation radiating infinite knowledge and love, compassion and fearlessness. God, who dwells in the heart of all beings as their very Self, incarnates Himself as man to redeem man from finitude and fear. God and His name, *nāmī* and *nāma*, are non-different, says Sri Ramakrishna. By taking shelter in His name, man takes shelter in God Himself. When man, absorbed in his worldly pursuits, pleasures, and cares, becomes aware of the existence of God as an ocean of love, and His manifestation in an incarnation, he ceases to be a worldly man, a *saṁsārī*, and becomes a devotee and begins his life of spirituality. This is *upāsanā*, worship, by which he commences a new chapter in his life as an *upāsaka*, worshipper. Says the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (*ibid.*, I. 1. 14):

Apannaḥ saṁsṛtiṁ ghorāṁ yannāma vivaśo gṛṇan;
Tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta yadbibheti svayaṁ bhayam—

'Fallen in the terrible (ocean of) worldliness and feeling helpless, if man but takes recourse to His name which is the fear of fear itself, he shall immediately be redeemed.'

Loving devotion to a personal God who is the ocean of love and the Self of our selves, enjoying the accounts of His *līlā* as an incarnation, constant remembrance of Him and taking His holy name, doing all actions as His worship, and serving all beings in a spirit of worship of Him—all these constitute the protean forms that *upāsanā* takes after the first step has been taken from a life of worldliness to a life of spirituality. To such a spiritual seeker who has tasted love of God even a little, God acts as a powerful magnet, the attraction of which is in proportion to the overcoming of the impurities of his or her heart. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* stresses the importance of the remembrance of God and repetition of His name for effecting this purification of the seeker's initial love of God, which is mixed with worldliness in varying degrees. Through the answer of the Sūta to Śaunaka's question, it proclaims the glory of that *bhakti* which has become completely pure (I. 2. 6):

Sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktiradhokṣaje;
Ahaitukī apratihatā yayā ātmā samprasīdati—

'That, verily, is the supreme *dharma* (or duty) of man by which he achieves love of God (in this case, of His incarnation as Kṛṣṇa)—a love which is motiveless and unobstructed (expressing in its purest form as love for love's sake), by which the heart of man achieves his highest welfare.'

The cultivation of this pure love is the purpose of *upāsanā*. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* suggests the following powerful means to this end (*ibid.*, I. 2. 16):

Śuśrūṣoḥ śraddhadhānasya vāsudevakathā ruciḥ;
Syāt mahatsevayā viprāḥ puṇyatīrthaniṣevaṇāt—

'Seekers who are endowed with *śraddhā* (spiritual conviction or faith), and who desire to listen to things spiritual, O holy sages, develop an appetite for words relating to God through frequenting holy places and service of the great ones (saints).'

Through the exercise of this appetite, continues the *Bhāgavatam* in the next verse, the heart of the devotee becomes pure in a mysterious way:

Śṛṇvatāṁ svakathāṁ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇyaśravaṇakīrtanaḥ;
Hṛdyantastho hyabhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām—

'Of those who listen to words relating to Kṛṣṇa—Him whose name is holy to hear and to utter, He, abiding in their hearts, wipes away all the evils (in their hearts); for friend is He of all good people.'

And in the next four remarkable verses (18-22) *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* speaks of three stages in man's spiritual growth and development culminating in spiritual freedom and beatitude:

Naṣṭaprāyeṣvabhadreṣu nityaṁ bhāgavatasevayā;
Bhagavatyuttamaśloke bhaktirbhavati naiṣṭhikī—

'When the evils of the heart are mostly eradicated through the *constant* cultivation of the holy life, man achieves a *naiṣṭhikī* (steady) love of God, the most glorious One.'

In the early stages of spiritual life, our love of God is weak and tepid; and under the interference of our worldly loves, it finds expression only in fits and starts. But, as the heart becomes purer and purer, love of God becomes steadier and steadier. Absolute steadiness and absolute purity are possible only after the *realization* of God, which is the theme of the third verse. In the meantime, the second verse refers to the inner transformation resulting from the onset of *naiṣṭhikī bhakti:*

Tadā rajastamobhāvāḥ kāmalobhādayaśca ye;
Ceta etairanāviddhaṁ sthitaṁ sattve prasīdati—

'Then does the mind attain the state of being unsmitten by lust and greed, which are the concomitants of *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (inertia), and, becoming steady, attain the tranquillity of *sattva* (lucid calmness).'

The heart is now ready for the visitation of the blessed Lord:

Evaṁ prasannamanaso bhagavad-bhaktiyogataḥ;
Bhagavat-tattvavijñānaṁ muktasaṅgasya jāyate—

'Thus becoming tranquil in mind through the practice of the *yoga* of *bhakti*, there arises in him, who is now free from all attachments, the *realization* of the truth of the blessed Lord.'

The next verse, which is an adaptation of a well-known verse of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 2. 9), conveys what happens to man as a result of this realization:

Bhidyate hṛdayagranthiḥ chidyante sarvasaṁśayāḥ;
Kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi dṛṣṭa evātmanīśvare—

'When the Lord (who is one's own Self) is *realized* in the heart, the complex knots of the heart are broken, all doubts are shattered, (the effects of all previous) actions are dissolved.'

Herein is expounded, in clear and precise terms, the science and art of the spiritual life according to the path of *bhakti* or loving devotion to the personal aspect of the impersonal-personal God as preached by Vedānta. God is one, but the paths to Him are many. These paths are broadly classified by Vedānta into the two paths of negation and affirmation. *Jñāna yoga* and *rāja yoga* form the former, and *bhakti yoga* and *karma yoga* form the latter. But the *bhakti* of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* partakes of both *bhakti* and *jñāna* as well as the essential elements of *rāja and karma yogas. Sri Ramakrishna describes the delicious nature of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam when he, comparing it to the* sweetmeat *pantua* made of cottage cheese, says that it is 'fried in the butter of *jñāna* and soaked in the syrup of *bhakti*'. *Jñānavairāgyayuktayā bhaktyā*—'love of God combined with knowledge and renunciation'—is a phrase that recurs often in this great book of spirituality. Its message of the unity of the impersonal-personal God, the unity of the God of the *jñānī* and the God of the *bhakta*, shines in one of its famous verses (I. 1. 11):

Vadanti tat tattvavidaḥ tattvaṁ yat jñānamadvayam;
Brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate—

'Knowers of Truth declare that it is one and the same Truth of non-dual Knowledge (or Awareness) that is *spoken of* as Brahman (the Absolute, by the philosophers), as Paramātman (the supreme Self, by the mystics), and as Bhagavān (the Blessed Lord, by the devotees).'

Differences are only in the name, *śabdyate*; they arise from the different methods of approach; the paths are many, but the goal is one, says Sri Ramakrishna.

I cannot better conclude this short article on the central theme of *bhakti upāsanā* than by referring to another sweet and greatly musical verse of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* which proclaims the passage of man from wretchedness to blessedness (II. 2. 37):

Pibanti ye bhagavata ātmanaḥ satāṁ
kathāmṛtaṁ śravaṇaputeṣu sambhṛtam;
Punanti te viṣayavidūṣitāśayaṁ
vrajanti tat caraṇasaroruhāntikam—

'Those who fill their ears with, and drink the nectar of, words relating to the blessed Lord, who is realized by saints as their own Self, purify their hearts which have been made impure by sense attractions, and reach the presence of His lotus feet.'

Part Two

GAUTAMA BUDDHA, THE LIGHT OF ASIA

A GREAT thinker has said that the history of the world is the history of its greatest men. This is especially true of India whose long history is filled with the life and work of some of the greatest men the world has ever seen. But the men whom India considers great are not kings and military conquerors like Alexander, Charlemagne, or Napoleon, but philosophers and thinkers like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān Buddha, and Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. These latter have also been conquerors, but of a different type. In the memorable words of Aśoka, India's conquest is through *dharma* or righteousness (Rock Edict 13):

'What has been obtained by this conquest (of *dharma*) creates affection. This affection is firmly established as it is won by conquest by *dharma*.... This rescript on *dharma* has been written for the purpose that my sons and great grandsons who will hear about my new conquests should not consider that further conquest is to be undertaken. If there has to be conquest, through weapons of war, let them take pleasure (after their victory) in peace and light corrective measures. They should consider that the only true conquest is conquest by *dharma*.'

They conquered through non-violence and love, and that love is enshrined in the grateful hearts of millions today.

The Upaniṣads are the fountain-head of not merely the religion of India, but of her culture and philosophy as well. The great sages of the Upaniṣads stand at the very dawn of history as the progenitors and inspirers of a culture and a civilization which, starting like a little stream up in the mountains in the dim antiquity of the Vedas, has come down to us as the mighty river of Indian national life, enriched and ennobled by the valuable contributions of a brilliant galaxy of

philosophers and thinkers of the first magnitude. The Indian of today, to whatever section he may belong, whether he knows it or not, is the inheritor of this rich heritage. And he is proud of the fact that this veritable Gaṅgā of Indian culture has fertilized and nourished not only India, but lands far and near as well.

The first great personality who enriched Indian thought and life, after the sages of the Upaniṣads, was Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He stands as the great national leader, impressing every department of Indian life with his genius and personality. He is the unfailing source of inspiration for much of Indian mysticism, art, literature, and philosophy. And his great teaching to Arjuna contained in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the Song Celestial, was the first attempt made in India to preach religion and philosophy to the people at large; and with Śrī Kṛṣṇa begins the evolution of a truly national culture and philosophy. In this he represents the liberal tradition of the Upaniṣads as opposed to the sacerdotalism of the earlier part of the Vedas. In the *Gītā* he opens the door of salvation to one and all, besides showing that all religions lead to the same goal (IX. 32, IV. 11):

'Those that come to Me, O Arjuna, even if they be the most sinful, or be they women, Vaiśyas, or Śūdras—all attain to the highest Goal.'

'Through whatever paths men come to Me, I receive them through those very paths. All paths, O Arjuna, which men follow, lead ultimately to Me alone.'

The second great teacher who enriched Indian culture and who made Indian thought overflow its narrow geographical bounds is Gautama Buddha, the subject of the present sketch. With Buddha begins the story of that Greater India which fills the whole of the Asian continent with the sweetness and aroma of her spiritual contribution.

Buddha exemplifies in his person the ideal man of the Upaniṣads and the man of steady wisdom of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. His life and character gave strength and vigour to many an earlier teaching and idea, and vitalized Indian society for more than a thousand years.

It is a mistake to suppose that Buddha taught something absolutely new or anything hostile to the spirit of the existing philosophy and religion. It is more correct to hold that he taught a purer doctrine and expounded and exemplified a more positive philosophy of life than the prevailing ones of the day. True it is that he preached against the exclusiveness of caste and the excessive ritualism of the Vedic

priesthood and taught a religion of moral and spiritual discipline. But, in this, the spiritual and philosophical tradition of India as enshrined in the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* was behind him. In the words of Sir E. Denison Ross, C.I.E., (Introduction to the *Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold, 1926, p. XIII):

'There was nothing absolutely new to the Indians in the teachings of Gautama, and his message could only be intelligible in its original form to the Hindus. The changes he made were in either the cosmogony or the ritual of the Hindus, and could only appeal to those familiar with both.'

Rhys Davids, another western scholar and student of Buddhism, also says (quoted by Sir E. Denison Ross, op. cit., p. XVII):

'It is inaccurate to draw any hard and fast line between the Indian Buddhists and their countrymen of other faiths.'

Sir Edwin Arnold, in the preface to his *Light of Asia*, points to the same truth when he says:

'The mark of Gautama's sublime teaching is stamped ineffaceably upon modern Brahmanism, and the most characteristic habits and convictions of the Hindus are clearly due to the benign influence of Buddha's precepts.'

It is not possible in the course of this short article to enter into any detail regarding the life of the blessed Teacher. But I would like to touch upon a few of the outstanding events of his long career and ministration. Born of King Śuddhodana and Queen Māyā of the Śākya clan in the city of Kapilavastu, we find young Siddhārtha spending the early years of his life in his father's palace in the customary fashion of the princes of those days. But there was something in him even then which made him the beloved of the people; for with the valour of the Kṣatriya he combined true gentleness and humility of spirit. The father had great hopes of his son; for had not the astrologers told him that prince Siddhārtha would become an emperor of the wide world? An emperor he became, but not like Alexander or Napoleon; but a *svarāṭ*—a master of his passions and of himself first, and then a ruler of the heart of men. And in this transformation is contained all the romance of the life of the Buddha.

Siddhārtha was married to princess Yaśodharā, and to them was born the young prince, Rāhula. King Śuddhodana took every means to make the life of his son gay and happy; but the great future whispered to the young prince his mission in life, and the stark reality of life presented before him the painful scenes of suffering, sickness, and death, and the joyous visions of renunciation and enlightenment. With a resolution possible only for a true Kṣatriya, Prince Siddhārtha left

the securities and luxuries of his home and palace, and his pre-monastic name of Siddhārtha as well, and wandered forth into the wide world in quest of the highest truth and the peace that passeth understanding. For many years he struggled and searched; now following this sect, now that, wandering from place to place, until at last he came to Gaya, in modern Bihar; and, finding the place beautiful and serene, he sat down under a Bodhi tree, resolved not to move till the highest truth was found (*Lalitavistara,* XIX. 57):

Ihāsane śuṣyatu me śarīraṁ
tvagasti māṁsaṁ pralayaṁ ca yātu;
Aprāpya bodhiṁ bahukalpadurlabhāṁ
naivāsanāt kāyam ataḥ caliṣyate—

'Let my body wither away in this seat, let it be reduced to mere skin, flesh, and bones, but I shall not move an inch from hence till the highest enlightenment is gained.'

Sitting cross-legged in meditation under the sacred tree, Gautama's mind rose to the height of contemplation and of ecstasy, and with the passing of every successive watch of the night, fold after fold of the garment of Truth was unveiled till the dawn found the naked Truth revealed (*Light of Asia,* p. 130):

...The spirit of our Lord
Lay potent upon man and bird and beast,
Even while he mused under the Bodhi-Tree,
Glorified with the conquest gained for all,
And lightened by a light greater than day's.

Gautama became Buddha, the Enlightened One. And he rose from his seat with a shout of joy, for he had attained insight into the meaning of life and existence (*ibid.,* p. 131):

Many a house of life
Hath held me seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught,
Sore was my ceaseless strife.
But now,
Thou builder of this tabernacle—thou!
I know thee! Never shalt thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it!
Safe pass I thence Deliverance to obtain.

Gautama had attained Deliverance and Enlightenment; but now the question arose in his mind whether he was to keep this wisdom to himself or broadcast it so as to redeem the suffering world. After an intense mental struggle, he decided to share the new-found treasure with one and all—*bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya*—for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many—and thus achieved a greater renunciation than the one he had attained by leaving the princely life. With this assurance and resolve, he proceeded to the holy city of Vāraṇāsi, where he first 'turned' the *Wheel of the Dharma*. And for the next forty years, he wandered from place to place, meeting all classes of people, from prince to peasant, wiping the widow's tears and assuaging the orphan's wails, imparting wisdom to all and gathering a large number of disciples and followers. He charged his disciples (*Dhammapada*, quoted by Sister Nivedita in *The Master as I Saw Him*, p. 257):

> Go forward without a path!
> Fearing nothing, caring for nothing,
> Wander alone, like the rhinoceros!
> Even as the lion, not trembling at noises,
> Even as the lotus-leaf unstained by the water,
> Do thou wander alone, like the rhinoceros!

The words of the Master carried a freshness and a vigour which appealed to the better minds of the day, and his adoption of the language of the people as a vehicle of expression helped in the spread of his thoughts and ideas. His wide heart embraced one and all, the afflicted and the despised. After a long career of benevolent ministration, the Blessed One passed away at Kuśīnagara, in the northern part of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, in the year 543 B.C.

The *Dharma* of the Lord continued to spread, thanks to the activities of the *Saṅgha* or monastic Order. It rescued the national mind from the intellectual confusion of the age by elevating the people morally and spiritually, and it ushered in the age of Aśoka, which may be called the brightest period in India's history. The spread of Buddha-*dharma* under Aśoka is one of the most instructive chapters of world's history. Aśoka's relinquishment of war and all forms of violence as an instrument of state policy is the only example of its kind in all history; and this great example has a deep significance for us today in the context of the second world war which humanity is waging against each other. Through his numerous edicts inscribed on rocks and pillars, Aśoka helped the spread of the message of love, tolerance, and service. He sent out bands of monks to spread the noble *Dharma* far and near, and for the next thousand years this activity continued

to be the main aspect of India's foreign policy. In a special sense, Emperor Aśoka was instrumental in making Gautama the Buddha, the Light of Asia. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru quotes the following well-known tribute of H. G. Wells to the memory of Aśoka (*Glimpses of World History,* Letter 24):

'Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Aśoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine and Charlemagne.'

In concluding his great work on *Karma-Yoga,* Swami Vivekananda gives the following tribute to the character and personality of Bhagavān Buddha (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, pp. 116-18):

'Let me tell you in conclusion a few words about one man who actually carried this teaching into practice. That man is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect practice. All the prophets of the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action. The prophets of the world, with this single exception, may be divided into two sets, one set holding that they are incarnations of God come down on earth, and the other holding that they are only messengers from God; and both draw their impetus for work from outside, expect reward from outside, however highly spiritual may be the language they use. But Buddha is the only prophet who said, "I do not care to know your various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrines about the soul Do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is." He was, in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what man worked more than he? Show me in history one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character, such high philosophy, such wide sympathy. This great philosopher, preaching the highest philosophy, yet had the deepest sympathy for the lowest of animals, and never put forth any claims for himself. He is the ideal *karma-yogī,* acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born; beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul-power that has ever been manifested. He is the first great reformer the world has seen. He was the first who dared to say, "Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it from childhood; but reason it all out, and after you have analysed it, then if you find that it will do good to one and all, believe it, live up to it, and help others to live up to it." He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. This man represents the very highest ideal *karma-yoga.*'

All through the teachings of the Blessed One there is a constant insistence on right conduct based on true understanding. The aim of

life is to develop a perfect character. Buddha referred to himself as an example of this attainment which is open to all, and never laid any special claims to divinity or godhood for himself. Religion, according to Buddha, does not consist in mere performance of ritual or propitiation of deities, but it consists in the struggle to achieve self-possession and peace. In his last discourse addressed to Ānanda, just before his passing away, Buddha summed up his teachings in the following beautiful words:

'Therefore, O Ānanda! be ye lamps unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth.... Herein, O mendicants, a brother continues as to the body, so to look upon the body that he remains strenuous, self-possessed, and mindful, having overcome both the hankering and the dejection common in the world. And in the same way as to feelings, ... moods, ... ideas, he continues so to look upon each that he remains strenuous, self-possessed, mindful, having overcome both the hankering and the dejection common in the world. And whosoever, Ānanda, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, and a refuge unto themselves, shall betake themselves to no external refuge, but holding fast as their refuge to the Truth, shall look not for refuge to anyone besides themselves—it is they, Ānanda, among my *Bhikkus*, who shall reach the very topmost height—but they must be anxious to learn.'

Let me conclude this short sketch with the following exhortation of Buddha as given in the *Dhammapada* (II. 1, 4, and 5):

'Wakefulness is the way to immortality; heedlessness is the way to death; those who are wakeful die not, the heedless are already dead. Continuously increasing is the glory of him who is wakeful, who has aroused himself, and is vigilant, who performs blameless deeds, and acts with becoming consideration, who restrains himself and leads a righteous life. Let such a one, rousing himself to wakefulness by the restraint and subjugation of himself, make for himself an island which no flood can engulf.'

THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF BUDDHA

I *HAVE been asked to speak to you on 'The Eternal Message of* Buddha', a theme dear to our hearts. *The lamp that was lit in India* in the sixth century B.C. lit the hearts of millions and millions of people in Ceylon, Central Asia, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, and Indonesia in the succeeding centuries. Through Buddha, India established silken bonds of fellowship and love with the peoples of Asia. This process forms one of the arresting episodes of human history.

To understand Buddha and the great movement initiated by him, it is necessary to understand the developments of Indian thought and life previous to him and leading up to him. When Buddha appeared on the Indian scene, India had already lived a life of over two thousand years comprising the Mohenjodāro or pre-Vedic, the early Vedic, the later Vedic, and the Upaniṣadic periods of her history. The first two of these periods were characterized by remarkable civic and social developments and religious and philosophic questionings. A high level of material and civic culture is evident in the Mohenjodāro period. A spirit of dynamic faith and enthusiasm is evident in the Ṛg-Vedic period. Life was joyous and free, and in a context of communion of men and women with nature and its gods arose the inspiring poetry of the *Ṛg-Veda,* the earliest book of the human race. And in the midst of the enjoyments and delights of social existence, the finer spirits of the age were asking searching questions about life and death, about nature, man, and the gods, thus laying the foundations of a dynamic

and comprehensive philosophy which *was to find its full development* in the Upaniṣads or Vedānta a few centuries later. The *Ṛg-Veda* had unequivocally formulated the unity of the Godhead *in the famous declaration: Ekaṁ sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti—'Truth is one, sages call* It by various names', and sensed the wider unity of God and man and nature.

While these developments of thought were taking place, the Vedic Indian culture, confined till then to the north-west, was expanding steadily to the east of India and slowly getting fused with the culture, religions, and social forms of the people of the new territories. The need for organizing the vast and complex social whole was being increasingly felt and was met through a non-violent social policy and method, which found gradual formulation in the *varṇa* (translated, not aptly, as caste) theory of social classification with the Brāhmaṇa, the man of God, at the top; the Kṣatriya, the man of valour, next; the Vaiśya, the agricultural and commercial group, as the third; and the Śūdra, the unskilled labour force, as the fourth. Originally a natural division of labour, neither rigid nor watertight, this *varṇa* system slowly developed rigid features in the later Vedic period, with the Brāhmaṇa at the top forgetting his divine vocation and developing into a privileged social class, intent on retaining his power over the rest. He began to use the complicated system of rituals and sacrifices, with complex theologies in their support, to maintain his privileged position, and claimed increasing social power through his supposed power over the gods. This is the period of the later Vedic literature, the Brāhmaṇas, a period marked by an increasing complication of religious life and distortion of social values.

But very soon protests arose against these distortions, both in the field of philosophy and in the field of society; a new spiritual earnestness and philosophic temper began to inspire large groups of the finest minds, both men and women, and Indian thought entered into the fourth or the Upaniṣadic period of her history. In voicing their protest against barren ritualism, in advocating morality as the foundation of spiritual life, in defining spiritual life as the realization in this very life of the divinity inherent in man and the transcendence of the finite ego, and in proclaiming the unity and solidarity of all existence in the non-dual spiritual Absolute or Brahman, the great sages of the Upaniṣads reversed the cramping tendencies of the earlier Brāhmaṇa literature and paved the way for the emergence of two creative personalities—Bhagavān Śri Kṛṣṇa, the teacher of the *Gītā*, in the pre-

historic period, and Bhagavān Buddha, the Light of Asia, in the historic period, of Indian history.

The Upaniṣads or Vedānta represent the highest development of Indian spiritual thought. The sages of the Upaniṣads, among whom were great women like Maitreyī and Gārgī, towering intellectuals like Yājñavalkya, Sanatkumāra, and Varuṇa, philosopher-kings like Janaka, and pure and truth-seeking boys like Naciketā, Satyakāma, and Śvetaketu, were moved only by one passion—the passion for Truth and, its corollary, the happiness and welfare of all humanity. *Satyameva jayate*—'Truth alone triumphs', proclaims one of the Upaniṣads (*Muṇḍaka*, III. 1.6); and this famous Upaniṣadic passage now adorns the crest of the Republic of India. The Upaniṣads were not interested to frame a creed or propound a dogma. They sought, and sought with a persistence rare in the history of philosophic thought, for that changeless Reality in the changing facets of man and nature, and discovered the One in the many, the Brahman or the Ātman, the unity of the Self in man with the Self in the universe, the 'One without a second', *Ekameva advitīyam*. This Mount Everest of experience, they further proclaimed, is the goal of human existence, the birthright of every being, and the path to it lies through the steady pursuit of 'Truth, right effort, right knowledge, and *brahmacarya* or self-control'—*Satyena labhyaḥ tapasā hi eṣa ātmā samyag-jñānena brahmacaryeṇa nityam* (*ibid.*, III. 1. 5).

The enduring edifice of thought which the Upaniṣads or Vedānta raised in those far-off days through a dispassionate study of life and experience provided the basis for all later developments of Indian thought, life, and religion. Rightly, therefore, is Vedānta called *Sanātana Dharma*, Eternal Religion, or the 'Perennial Philosophy'. To begin with, it was naturally the possession of a few—those who had the requisite moral and intellectual strength to grasp and live its lofty truths. Then appeared a creative genius in the person of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who synthesized the varied religious thoughts of the age in the light of Vedānta, and gave, through his immortal *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the Song Celestial, a message of practical spirituality, breaking the barriers of caste and class and sex. Śrī Kṛṣṇa made Vedānta the property of the Indian people as a whole and silenced for a time the conflict of sects and castes through his message of unity and toleration. Proclaiming the Magna Carta of religious freedom, he infused the spirit of positive toleration and acceptance into the Indian religious spirit, which has remained indelible to this day. 'Through whatever paths men come unto Me, I receive them through those very paths; all paths, O Arjuna,

ultimately lead unto Me only', says Kṛṣṇa to his warrior disciple, Arjuna, in the *Gītā (IV. 11)*. Proclaiming the spiritual equality of all men, he further declares (*ibid.*, VI. 29): 'One endowed with true spirituality will see oneself in all beings, and all beings in oneself; he will be equal-minded everywhere.' And (*ibid.*, XIII. 28): 'Thus seeing the same God everywhere equally present in all, the sage does not injure the self by the self, and by that he attains to the highest goal.' Through the comprehensiveness of his message and the many-sidedness of his personality, Kṛṣṇa became the perennial inspirer of much of the mysticism, poetry, religion, and philosophy of later ages of Indian history.

For some centuries after Kṛṣṇa, everything seems to have gone on well; but, later, the creative impulse of the original movement seems to have been lost, as happens to everything in the flow of time; materialism with the higher classes and superstition with the common people gained ascendency, while the intellectuals indulged in barren speculation and the religious aspirants indulged in meaningless asceticism. Earnest men and women, who were moved by the spiritual impulse, renounced the world to practise meditation in the forests, singly or in groups, often under the guidance of a teacher or teachers. The spirit of renunciation and free inquiry, which had appeared on the Indian horizon towards the end of the later Vedic period, found a more pervasive expression now in the eastern fringes of the orthodox Vedic society—in the province of Magadha and its neighbouring regions, corresponding to modern Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. And it was here that, in response to the demands of the age and the promise of Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* that God will incarnate Himself whenever the world needs Him, the next great renaissance of the Indian spirit was achieved with Bhagavān Buddha as its centre; and this renaissance not only energized India vertically and horizontally, but also energized practically the whole of the vast continent of Asia.

It is against this background that we have to view the life and teachings of Buddha and the dynamic movement initiated by him in the India of the sixth century B.C. Without that perspective and the thought-background provided by Vedānta, it becomes difficult to grasp his teachings in their original intentions and emphasis. As Dr. Radhakrishnan points out (*Gautama the Buddha*, p. 33):

> 'Gautama the Buddha has suffered as much as any one from critics without a sense of history.'

There are a few western scholars who appreciate this fact. In his Introduction to Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, Sir E. Denison

Ross, C.I.E., says (London, John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd., 1926, p. XIII):

'There was nothing absolutely new to the Indians in the teaching of Gautama, and his message could only be intelligible in its original form to the Hindus; the changes he made were in either the cosmogony or the ritual of the Hindus, and could only appeal to those familiar with both.'

In his Preface to the above book, Sir Edwin Arnold says (*ibid.*, p. XIX):

'Though the profession of Buddhism has for the most part passed away from the land of its birth, the mark of Gautama's sublime teaching is stamped ineffaceably upon modern Brāhmanism, and the most characteristic habits and convictions of the Hindus are clearly due to the benign influence of Buddha's precepts.'

On the inter-relationship between Buddhism and Brāhmanism, Rhys Davids says (*Buddhism*, London, 1907 Edition, pp. 83-85):

'But the foregoing account will be sufficient, I hope, to remove at least one misconception—the prevalent notion that Gautama was an enemy to Hinduism, and that his chief claim on the gratitude of his countrymen lies in his having destroyed a system of iniquity and oppression and fraud. This is not the case. Gautama was born, and brought up, and lived, and died a typical Indian. Hinduism had not yet, in his time, arisen. And he had but little quarrel with the religion that did prevail. His purpose was to build it up, to strengthen it, not to destroy it. ... Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adopted, enlarged, ennobled, and systematized that which had already been well said by others; in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent earlier thinkers. The difference between him and other teachers lay chiefly in his deep earnestness and in his broad public spirit of philanthropy. Even these differences are probably much more apparent now than they were then, and by no means deprived him of the support and sympathy of the best among the brāhmins. Many of his chief disciples, many of the distinguished members of his Order, were brāhmins; he always classed them with the Buddhist mendicants as deserving of respect, and he used the name brāhmin as a term of honour for the Buddhist *arahats* or saints. ... So, far from showing how depraved and oppressive Hinduism was, it shows precisely the contrary; for none will deny that there is much that is beautiful and noble in Buddhism; and Buddhism was the child, the product, of those phases of Indian belief out of which Hinduism afterwards arose. ...He probably deemed himself to be the most correct exponent of the spirit, as distinct from the letter, of the ancient faith. And it can only be claimed for him that he was the greatest, and wisest, and best of that long line of illustrious reformers who have endeavoured, through the centuries, to infuse new strength and new truth into the religious life of India.'

No writer has realized more clearly this Vedāntic perspective of Buddha and Buddhism than Edmund Holmes. He writes in his *The Creed of Buddha* (p. 98):

'Those who have followed me thus far will, I think, admit that Buddha's scheme of life coincides at all vital points with the scheme that I worked out by

drawing practical deductions from the master ideas of that deeply spiritual philosophy which found its highest expression in the Upaniṣads.'

There are three eventful periods in the life of Buddha: first, his early life up to the age of 29; second, his renunciation, search for Truth for seven years, and final illumination under the *bodhi* tree in Bodha-Gaya; and third, his forty-five years of unremitting public teaching moved by compassion.

The personal name of Buddha was Siddhārtha, and the family name Gautama. He was the only son of King Śuddhodana and Queen Māyā. Śuddhodana ruled over the principality of Kapilavastu in the foot-hills of the Himalayas in modern Nepal. Soon after the birth of the child, Queen Māyā died, and her sister Prajāpatī became the foster-mother of Gautama. Wise men came to the palace and, beholding the new-born child, foretold a great future for him saying that he was destined to become either a great emperor of the world or an emperor of the Spirit. Very soon the second destiny knocked at his door. Educated into the capacities and talents of a warrior prince, Gautama grew up to be a vivacious youth skilled in archery and other manly sports. Soon he entered the next stage of life, when he took for wife the princess Yaśodharā. King Śuddhodana was pleased to find that his son was developing into a worthy heir apparent. But the prince began to look beyond the pleasures and delights of worldly life and ask searching questions about life as a whole in the recesses of his heart. The facts of suffering and death could not be concealed for long beneath trivial pleasures. He must confront them and wrest the truth out of them. Is there a Truth beyond sorrow and death, and if there is, can man realize it, and if so, how? This question began to take increasing possession of his heart, until the time came when he could no longer evade it.

In India renunciation of the world, adoption of the free monastic life, and calm meditation were well-established norms in the Upaniṣads as a path leading to the realization of the true Self. Bold and free spirits resorted to this difficult path, which, as described in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (III. 14), is 'difficult to pass and hard to tread like walking on the edge of a razor, so say the sages'—*Kṣurasya dhārā niśitā duratyayā durgaṁ pathaḥ tat kavayo vadanti.* This path became defined as the path of *jñāna,* knowledge, enlightenment—leading to spiritual emancipation or *mukti*—in later spiritual thought, which also defined two other paths of spiritual life, namely, *bhakti-yoga,* the path of devotion to a personal God, and *karma-yoga,* the path of dedicated action. The *Gītā* had earlier blended these three paths in its teaching of *yoga*

as practical spirituality, based on equability of reason and leading to equality of vision and efficiency in life and action.

Gautama resolved to follow this hard path of *jñāna,* which had been trodden by the great sages of earlier periods. In his discourses after enlightenment, he has referred to this fact. He resolved to renounce home and wife and attachments and wander alone in quest of saving wisdom. When he was making preparations for the great departure, word was brought to him that his wife had given birth to a male child; the name Rāhula was given to the child, in view of the slight obstacle that his birth presented to Gautama. But he stood by his resolution to leave that very night. His charioteer, Canda, had got his faithful horse Kaṇṭhaka ready; it was midnight; the town of Kapilavastu and the palace of Śuddhodana were hushed in slumber. Gautama rose; and as he was about to mount his horse, a desire arose in his heart to have a parting look at his sleeping wife and new-born son. With gentle footsteps, he entered the room and bent low over the sleeping wife and child and desired to kiss the child, but desisted, for fear of waking the mother, and gently withdrew from the room, mounted the horse, and rode out into the wide world of forests and towns and villages, into the mysteries of the truth of existence, and, finally, into the minds and hearts of men and women.

This renunciation of Gautama later became an arresting theme for much poetry and art. It was certainly a great event in human history, and it has left ineffaceable marks on Indian religion and life.

The change from the ease and comfort of the palace to the hardships and uncertainties of a monastic life was hard to bear at first. In his discourses Buddha has given vivid descriptions of the state of his mind during this transition. But his iron determination and his passion for Truth made these changes in his external circumstances of no consequence. He soon entered on a course of study, discipline, and meditation, first under two well-known teachers in succession, and later, moving into the jungles of Uruvela in the vicinity of Gaya, all by himself. Five other aspirants attached themselves to him as disciples, inspired by the rigour of his austerity and earnestness. After years of fruitless mortification of flesh, he discovered that, though his body was facing death from emaciation, Truth still remained an interrogation; he discovered that austerity was only a means, not the end, and that the end was the knowledge of Truth. So he gave up the path of senseless austerity and began to strengthen his body and mind through food and drink. At this, the five disciples forsook him, and went towards the holy city of Vāraṇāsi (Banaras).

The day came when he decided to make a supreme effort to win enlightenment. Feeding on the alms made of sweetened milk and rice given by a village girl, Sujātā, Gautama sat down under a sacred *aśvattha* tree towards the evening with the resolve never to move until the Truth was achieved. As the night advanced, his meditation grew deeper and deeper; layer after layer of the coverings over Truth was lifted; and towards the dawn, he found the naked Truth revealed. It was the great moment of his life, the great moment in the history of man's spiritual quest. Gautama became Buddha, the Enlightened; he had achieved true freedom, emancipation of heart, *cetovimukti*, as he himself termed it. This state had been earlier described by the Upaniṣads in a famous verse (*Muṇḍaka*, II. 2. 9):

Bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ chidyante sarvasaṁśayāḥ;
Kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare—

'The knots of the heart are cut asunder, all doubts become destroyed, and all his actions (bondage-producing seeds of actions) become eliminated, when the supreme Truth is realized.'

After attaining this great realization, Buddha experienced an access of compassion in his heart, which moved him to take steps to impart it to humanity as a gospel of redemption from spiritual blindness, finitude, and self-centredness, and the sorrows and miseries flowing from them. He felt assured that, though the vast majority of the world was sense-bound and hence incapable, there were some who had the moral and spiritual capacity to grasp his message and profit from it. After enjoying for seven weeks the inexpressible bliss of his lofty realization in the vicinity of the sacred tree, henceforth to be known as the *bodhi* tree, Buddha wended his way to Vāraṇāsi where, at Sārnāth, the Deer Park in its vicinity, he met the five disciples who had earlier deserted him. After some initial hesitation, they finally recognized the spiritual eminence of Buddha and acknowledged him as their guide and master. He then preached to them two discourses, in the first of which he expounded his famous doctrine of the 'Middle Path' between the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to insight, enlightenment, and peace.

Craving, he declared, is the root of all tension and sorrow—craving for both worldly and heavenly pleasures. This arises from spiritual blindness. Through spiritual education in the noble eightfold path of *śīla*, morality, *samādhi*, meditation, and *prajñā*, insight, man becomes liberated from ignorance, craving, and sorrow. He achieves supreme

enlightenment, *sammā-sambodhi,* and transcends his separate limited individuality and overcomes the round of birth and death, which is *saṁsāra,* in the realization of the Truth of *advaita,* the non-dual Self.

This discourse is famous as the *dharmacakra-pravartana* discourse, the 'turning of the wheel of *dharma*'. *Dharma* had become static and lifeless; Buddha, through this discourse, set it in motion; and it continued to move for centuries together, flooding India and Asia with ethical and spiritual inspiration. Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke of '*dharma saṁsthāpana*'—firm establishment of *dharma*—as the motive of divine incarnation; Buddha spoke of *dharmacakra-pravartana.* Both refer to an identical dynamic divine process of world redemption through the setting in motion of a current of moral and spiritual energy.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had spoken in the *Gītā* of the wheel of interdependence of man and the divine order, and nature and society, which had been set in motion at the very beginning of the world. The continuous rolling on of this wheel is the basis of human happiness and welfare. The wheel is symbolic of dynamic movement. Buddha set in motion anew this wheel of *dharma,* which had got stuck up in the mud of materialism, worldliness, and self-centredness. This wheel later entered Buddhist art and became the symbol of the dynamic expansion of Indian culture under the inspiration of Buddha *Dharma.* And this symbol of the wheel adorns today the banner of the Republic of India.

In the second discourse at Vāraṇāsi, Buddha exhorted his five disciples to give up the natural but mistaken identification of the Self with the five *skandhas* or constituents of the changing personality, namely, the body, sensation, perception, predisposition, and consciousness, with regard to each of which, or all together, true knowledge will affirm: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my Self.' Through such knowledge, man gives up identification with the finite, limited, separate self, which is mortal and realizes himself as the non-dual, non-separate, absolute Self.

At Vāraṇāsi, Buddha gathered to himself, in a short time, sixty disciples; he then sent them far and wide with the charge that they preach to one and all his message of deliverance from ignorance, craving, and sorrow—'*bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya*' (for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many), in his own weighty words. He thus set in motion the first great missionary movement in history

which, in the succeeding centuries, altered the destinies of nations in the most peaceful way. This peaceful way has not been the characteristic of the missionary movements of religions which had their birth outside India. Peace is the product of a sense of non-separateness, universality. This universality is the keynote of the Indian religious spirit nurtured in the philosophy of Vedānta. That spirit found a mighty expression in Buddha and his missionary movement in the sixth century B.C., and got a further impetus from the great Emperor Aśoka three centuries later. And that spirit has continued to characterize the movements of India's soul ever since.

After sending his band of missionaries far and wide, Buddha proceeded towards Uruvela, the scene of his enlightenment, where he met first one of his famous disciples, Kassapa. To him, who was a fire-worshipper, Buddha preached the famous 'Fire Discourse' at Gaya: Man is burning in the fire of the senses, in the fire of craving; the putting out of this fire through dispassion and insight is *nirvāṇa*, liberation. At Rājagṛha, the capital of Magadha, Buddha got two of his greatest disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, 'the most excellent pair', as he put it. And during a visit to his native Kapilavastu, Ānanda, who became his devoted attendant, and to whom many of his discourses are addressed, joined him as a disciple.

Buddha was a great traveller; except for the rainy seasons, he was constantly on the move through villages and towns, for full forty-five years, preaching to the people, guiding his monastic disciples, and organizing the monastic *Saṅgha* or Order. The spiritually sensitive minds of the day felt the impact of his benign influence and rallied under his banner. Laymen or monks, simple folk or intellectuals, men or women, all those who came under his influence were led forward in the flood of his ethical and spiritual message. 'Be good and do good' was his universal exhortation. Religion is striving for goodness and not external ritual or ceremony. Through goodness of heart alone can *nirvāṇa*, the highest excellence in life, be attained.

Three months before he passed away, he gave his last famous discourse of the *mahāparinirvāṇa*, the 'final passing away'. In this he re-emphasized the central principles of his message, *śīla* or morality, *samādhi* or meditation, and *prajñā* or insight; and after an address to laymen, he exhorted his monastic disciples thus:

'It is through lack of understanding and of comprehension of the four noble truths, O monks, that you and I have passed for so long in this road of rebirth. When the noble truths of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of the cessation of

suffering, and of the way to the cessation of suffering are completely understood, the craving for the process of life will be destroyed, and there will be no more recurring of the present state.'

The discourse concluded with the following exhortation:

'These, O monks, are the truths which, when I had understood them well, I expounded to you. Having learnt them well, you should practise and develop them increasingly, devoting yourselves to them, so that the religious life, lasting a long time, is perpetuated, for the welfare and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, and for the individual welfare and happiness of gods and men. And now, O monks, I have this to say to you: *All conditioned things are subject to decay. Strive diligently to work out your own perfection.* In three months from now, the Tathāgata will attain to his *parinirvāṇa* (death).'

Then he passed through many towns and cities and reached Pāvā, where, in the house of Cuṇḍa, the smith, he partook of a meal which proved fatal. He took ill; still he continued to teach, taking an occasional rest. Accompanied by his faithful attendant Ānanda, and a large number of monks, Buddha crossed the Hiraṇyavatı river, entered the *sāl* (Himalayan teak) grove of the Malla country, and lay down on a couch spread by Ānanda between two trees, to die. At this time, Subhadda, a wandering monk, appeared and asked to see Buddha. Knowing Buddha to be very sick, Ānanda was about to turn away Subhadda, when Buddha, overhearing from within, asked Ānanda to let Subhadda in. Buddha instructed and gladdened Subhadda, who then and there joined the Order and became the last of his disciples. After consoling his beloved attendant Ānanda, who was weeping at the thought of the imminent departure of his beloved master, Buddha quietly passed away, after giving his disciples a reiteration of his central message: '*All conditioned things are subject to decay; work out your liberation with diligence.*'

Thus ended the earthly, physical career of Gautama Buddha, one of the greatest teachers of Indian history, and one of the most dynamic characters of world's religious history. But the *Dharma* continued to spread first in India and then gradually to Ceylon in the south and to the countries to west and north-west of India under the patronage and zeal of Emperor Aśoka, who sent missions to all these countries and enunciated India's foreign policy as the gift of spiritual wisdom through peace and fellowship. His rock and pillar edicts, scattered over his empire, which included modern Pakistan, Afghanistan, and portions of Central Asia, proclaimed the principles of toleration and kindliness, goodness and compassion. From the northwest, the *Dharma* spread to China six centuries after Buddha's death, and later to Tibet. From China it spread to Korea. And from Korea it entered Japan in the

seventh century A.D., and from China in the succeeding four centuries. There was initiated a pilgrimage of faith between India and China. The Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hien, Hiuen Tsang, I-tsing, have left records of their travels in India, which throw a flood of light on Indian history and life. Hiuen Tsang, especially, studied in the Indian Buddhist international university of Nālandā, and was honoured by the Indian ruler of the time, Emperor Harṣa. He was in India in the middle of the seventh century A.D., when Prince Shotoku was taking steps to introduce Buddhism into Japan. From the towns of the eastern coast of India, the *Dharma* was carried by energetic missionaries to the countries of Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, and Indonesia, as also to China, between the fourth and tenth centuries A.D. In each of these countries, the message of Buddha imparted a depth to man's spiritual striving and a powerful stimulus to the nation's cultural life. The content of that message found varying expressions in the different countries which received it in accordance with the genius of the people and their felt spiritual needs.

Thus, within fourteen centuries, the Light that was lit in India had become the Light of Asia. But by that time it had undergone a transformation in the land of its origin, consequent on the loss of its original impetus; Hiuen Tsang had recorded signs of decay of Buddhism in the India of the seventh century which he had visited. Two centuries earlier, it had the patronage of the great Gupta Empire and had created the world famous art of Ajanta and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. But the decay that had set in could not be arrested. And its later developments could be hardly distinguished from other popular Indian faiths; soon there was an assimilation, and Buddhism as a separate religion ceased to exist by the tenth century A.D. Its spirit and most of its distinctive features had become reincarnate as post-Buddhistic Hinduism. Even in other countries the message had been transformed in some instances out of all recognition. The stern *jñāna-mārga* of early Buddhism had become transformed into a doctrine of total soullessness in the Theravāda, into the warmth of *bhakti* or devotion and divine Grace in some aspects of Mahāyāna, into the Vedāntic doctrine of Tathatā, or Buddha-nature inherent in all beings, in the 'Pure Land' doctrines and in the Zen, and into pure magic and ritual in some layers of almost all of them. And post-Buddhistic Hinduism in India was but a federation of all these diverse developments, but under different names and forms, and loosely held together by the philosophy of Vedānta.

Today, the world needs the healing touch of the message of Buddha, a message of renunciation, compassion, and service. There is need

to liberate the essence of that spirit and message, which is eternal, from the non-essentials, which, being but local and temporary, are obsolete and time-worn. India believes in the eternity of the Spirit and the impermanence of its temporal expressions. This search for the spirit of a religion, and the efforts at giving it a new expression in tune with the demands of the changed social situations, alone can help to renew the eternal springs of that religion.

BHAGAVĀN BUDDHA AND OUR HERITAGE

IT is remarkable that our country which, unlike Ceylon or Burma, does not profess to be a Buddhistic country, has yet become very enthusiastic about the celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the birth of Bhagavān Buddha. A phenomenon like this can take place only in India, not in other countries—the celebration of the birthday of a great teacher whom we are not supposed to be following as professed adherents. But it is this very fact that invests this celebration with a significance which we would do well to understand—how India and the vast body of Hindus could enthusiastically enter into this great celebration and make it a nation-wide affair. The answer to this question will be found in the nature and scope of the faith of the Hindus and the place which Buddha holds in that faith.

For centuries together, we had entirely forgotten Buddha, and his doctrines and creed had become almost alien to us, while they had been taken up by peoples outside India and made the religion of their own countries and societies. It is only for the last hundred years, ever since the recovery of Buddhism and its literature by the western scholars and of archaeological finds in India, that our people have begun to love and appreciate the great personality of Buddha and his teachings. But once the discovery was made that there was such a great period in Indian history which was dominated by the personality of Buddha, our national mind reacted to this fact with enthusiasm and devotion; we felt elated at the uncovering of a period of our ancient history which had been dark to us, but glorious at the time at which it was lived, and

dominated by this great teacher and his sublime message of unity, holiness, renunciation, and love for one and all; and that period of our history is today accepted by us as one of the greatest periods of Indian history. When the great message of Buddha throbbed in the hearts of millions of our country, the whole nation rose morally, spiritually, as also politically; and with that accession of strength, our nation became the centre for a wide and rich cultural diffusion in the world outside.

Greater India of the historic period is the gift of Buddha to us and the world. Till then India was self-contained, though there are evidences of her thought and people influencing her neighbouring countries in an unorganized way; organized work of this type was largely confined to India itself. Whatever cultural values we had evolved, whatever religions we had developed, we had tried to diffuse them only within the Indian continent. But with Buddha started that organized expansion of Indian culture and Indian thought outside India for which half the world is grateful to this country today. It is in this context that we are viewing the great work of Buddha and what it can do to enrich and ennoble our spiritual and cultural life in this age.

Swami Vivekananda is one of the most prominent leaders of our country in recent times who has called our attention to the great work of Buddha in the past and the greater work that the Buddha spirit can do to us today. In his lectures and discourses he has beautifully expressed his conviction that modern India requires to assimilate the great intellect of Śaṅkara and the great heart of Buddha, the great heart for which, somehow or other, in the later development of philosophy in this country, we had practically found no place. That the human mind can not only think high, but also feel deeply and work energetically from that high point of view was something which was continually forgotten for centuries together, and it was Swamiji who pointed out to us that the origin of almost all the social maladies in our time, all those things which made us immobile as a people, leading to the accumulation of all sorts of evils in our body politic, all these experiences of recent centuries can be traced back to the banishment of the Buddha spirit, of the Buddha heart, from the thought and practice of our country. In the same breath, he exhorted us to turn back once again to that great heritage, to call back Buddha to our nation and to our hearts; and he also added that until we did that, our country could never hope to develop that internal strength which we all wish and pray for. This was the approach of all enlightened minds of India in recent decades. This positive approach to Buddha and his place in our history has gripped the minds of our people, so that today, after

nearly sixty years of education by Swami Vivekananda and other leaders, the nation feels a sense of pride in owning Buddha as one of its glorious teachers and in being the children of a country which produced a Buddha. That is the context in which we are living and functioning today.

In what sense can we say that Buddha is intimate to us, that his contribution is of vital importance to us today? What is his place in our national tradition? Unless we answer that question, we shall not be able to accept him with that whole-heartedness with which we have accepted the other great teachers who preceded and succeeded him. We have responded with all love and enthusiasm and reverence to the celebration of his 2500th birthday, and yet we are not Buddhists. When we ask ourselves as to what are those traces of the teachings of Buddha in ourselves through which we are slowly and imperceptibly discovering our kinship with this great teacher, we are led to the realization, through a study of his life and message, that he is closest to us in all the essential teachings that he gave, in all the greatness and depth of the holy dedicated life that he lived. We may have forsaken the creed which developed out of his teachings in later centuries as Buddhism; yet, even in the matter of that creed, many aspects of it are akin to our own; but our interest in Buddha today does not proceed from that source; it does not mean that we are going to become Buddhists in the political or sectarian or credal sense. Whether to become such a Buddhist or not is not a vital question with us; after all, if a man or a group changes the label of his or its creed, it will only result in removing his or its name from one column to another in the census register. It does not result in the increase of the moral or spiritual strength of the nation. But if the nation as a whole or at least large numbers in it can inspire themselves with the spirit of Buddha, can imbibe his spirit of love and compassion and tolerance, can imbibe that spirit by which knowledge can flow into love and service of the people, if that can be developed in us, resulting in a purer and a nobler mode of life, certainly the whole nation stands to gain and to benefit from that assimilation.

That is the line in which the country has tried to understand Buddha, and that is the line in which Swami Vivekananda taught it to accept this great teacher, who, according to him, is the fulfilment of the spiritual thought of the Upaniṣads which had preceded him.

Coming close upon the age of the Upaniṣads, wherein the foundations of the subsequent developments of culture and religion in India

had been laid, Buddha stands closest to the spirit of the Upaniṣads. In fact, it is not possible to appreciate the life and teachings of Buddha adequately without understanding the spirit of the Upaniṣads. There are at least a few western scholars who appreciate this fact. A large number of western scholars who have written books on Buddha have been unduly harsh on the prevailing Vedic religion, often confusing their estimates of it with post-Buddhistic developments. It looks as if they sought the growth of the plant of the Buddha movement at the cost of the soil in which it was raised and reared, to trace its life development outside that soil and climate. But there have been, as I said, a few western scholars who have realized that Buddha could not be understood except in the context of the spiritual soil and philosophical climate provided by the sages of the Upaniṣads.

One such author whom I would like to quote, one who has made a sympathetic study of Buddha, is Edmund Holmes. In his book, *The Creed of Buddha,* he warns us that to understand Buddha without understanding the Upaniṣads is to miss the significance of Buddha and his teachings. The understanding of the Upaniṣads is absolutely essential, for it is against that Himalayan thought background that we can realize the significance of the new advances that Buddha made in the thought and practice of that great philosophy. Writes Edmund Holmes at the commencement of his fifth chapter entitled 'A Misreading of Buddha' (*The Creed of Buddha,* p. 98):

'Those who have followed me thus far will, I think, admit that Buddha's scheme of life coincides, at all its vital points, with the scheme that I worked out by drawing practical deductions from the master ideas of that deeply spiritual philosophy which found its expression in the Upaniṣads.'

Again (*ibid.,* pp. 102-103):

'The cumulative evidence afforded by these facts, added to the internal evidence which has already been set forth in detail, seems to point with irresistible force to one conclusion, namely, that Buddha accepted the idealistic teachings of the Upaniṣads—accepted it at its highest level and in its purest form—and took upon himself as his life's mission to fill the obvious gap in it—in other words, to make the spiritual ideas, which had hitherto been the exclusive possession of a few select souls, available for the daily needs of mankind. If this conclusion is correct, we shall see in Buddhism, not a revolt against the "Brāhminic" philosophy as such, but an ethical interpretation of the leading ideas of that philosophy—a following out of those ideas, not into the word-built systems of (so-called) thought which the metaphysicians of the day were constructing with fatal facility, but into their practical consequences in the inner life of man.'

There are a few points in the teachings of Buddha which have always been points of controversy, wherein great interpreters have

differed from one another. The most important of these are two: first, the well-known *Anatta* doctrine, the teaching that there is no permanent soul; this teaching is so pervasive of Buddhism that we can take it as part and parcel of the original Buddhism. In the second discourse delivered by Buddha at the very beginning of his public ministration at Sārnāth, entitled the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta,* we have an exposition of this *Anatta* doctrine; so that it is necessary for us to understand what Buddha meant by this *Anatta* or *Anātmā* doctrine, which *apparently* represents a fundamental point of departure from the great teachings of the Upaniṣads on the subject of the true nature of individuality. The second is with regard to the nature of the ultimate reality. When man attains *nirvāṇa*, what does he realize and what happens to him? Does he attain something positive or something negative? On this subject the language of the Upaniṣads is clear, in spite of all the prefaces with which they have expounded it, stating that the ultimate Truth is that from which speech and thought recoil, that it transcends all specifications. In spite of this kind of reservation, the Upaniṣads leave us in no doubt that the ultimate Truth is a 'Yes' and not a 'No'. It is a positive something and not a negative nothing; the Upaniṣads speak of it as Brahman, the One without a second, the Self of all, beyond sense and thought, the Impersonal, the Transcendent as well as the Immanent. Even though it transcends specifications by speech and thought, yet it is a positive reality. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. 3. 12-13) says:

Naiva vācā na manasā prāptuṁ śakyo na cakṣuṣā;
Astīti bruvato'nyatra kathaṁ tad upalabhyate—

'This Self cannot be reached through the organs of speech or thought or sight. How can It be realized except through one who says "*It is*"?'

Asti ityeva upalabdhavyaḥ...—

'It must be comprehended as "*is*" (and not as "*is not*").'

The last category of thought can only be a position, and not a negation, according to the Upaniṣadic thought. On this basis when we proceed, we do not see in the teachings of Buddha any clear reference to the reality of a changeless Being behind the fluctuations of Becoming.

As in the case of the soul, it is something composite, impermanent, and ultimately insubstantial, so in the case of the world, it is also impermanent and insubstantial; but with regard to the ultimate Reality realized in *nirvāṇa,* Buddha did not say that it also is impermanent and insubstantial. He did not say anything about it at all. He was

silent about it, as he was also silent about the nature of the individual in the state of *nirvāṇa,* and evaded giving direct answers to questions relating to them. That is a point which we shall have to discuss, the meaning of this silence of his on the subject of the ultimate Reality in man and in the universe, and to determine his position in the great philosophical tradition of the Upaniṣads.

In the life of Buddha we can trace three eventful periods. The first is the period of his youth and early manhood when, as Siddhārtha Gautama, he lived a life in the world, all the while yearning to gain the truth of all life and existence. Gifted as he was with a keen mind, a pure mind, a mind that questions and struggles to find the truth, the spirit of utter dispassion for the life of empty pleasures came upon him at the age of twenty-nine, and he entered the second stage of his career, renunciation and whole-souled search after Truth. Gautama getting the spirit of dispassion and leaving the world of evanescent pleasures in search of Truth is not a new or strange phenomenon in Indian history. Hundreds and thousands of ordinary and gifted men and women had passed through the same experience. They had followed the path of renunciation to search for the meaning of life, so that at the time of Gautama there were so many wandering teachers who were also inspired by the great desire to penetrate the world of appearance and come in touch with Reality. They had renounced all sense pleasures and become wandering ascetics, *parivrājakas*; and these *parivrājakas* were large in number at the time of Buddha. Thus, Gautama did not initiate something unique or new in turning a *parivrājaka.* He himself was one of the *parivrājakas*; and when he left the world, he attached himself now to one teacher and then to another, each of whom was a *parivrājaka,* surrounded by a number of young students, who were also *parivrājakas.* This tendency to go forth into the homeless state in search of Truth was well established in the age of the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads; they give us arresting pictures of gifted men and women imbued with the spirit of renunciation and earnestness, with hearts pure and tranquil, leading lives of meditation and truth-seeking, alone or in groups, in forests and quiet retreats. This is a tradition which goes back to a very early period of Indian history. Says Rhys Davids (*Buddhist India,* pp. 161-62):

'The career of such a wandering teacher seems to have been open to anyone, and even to women. And the most perfect freedom, both of thought and of expression, was permitted to them—a freedom probably unequalled in the history of the world.

'This curious state of things would only have been possible among people of a very fair degree both of average general intelligence and of gentle manners.'

So far as the renunciation of Gautama, the future Buddha, is concerned, so far as the steps that he took in this direction are concerned, he fully falls in line with the national tradition well established in the Upaniṣads.

Following this established pattern, we find Gautama, in the wake of his renunciation, attaching himself now to one teacher, then to another, in his search for Truth. First he goes to Ālāra Kālāma. He was a famous teacher of the time, and to the last day of his life, Buddha held him in great respect. Learning what he could from Ālāra, we find Gautama attaching himself next to another famous teacher, Uddaka, the son of Rāma. These were his two teachers, themselves spiritually advanced souls, living in the forest near Rājagṛha with their groups of seeker-followers. Writes J. G. Jennings (*The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha*, p. lxvi):

'Though Gautama ultimately rejected the teachings of both these ascetic thinkers, the Brāhman doctrine of the *Parama-ātman* evidently remained as the basis of his own doctrine of the impermanence of the individual.'

Thus the first step that Gautama took on entering the homeless life was to search for a *guru*, one from whom he could get guidance in his spiritual quest, and in this, again, he was on the trail blazed by the Upaniṣads. For we know from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. 2. 7, 11) that the seeker after Truth, the seeker after spiritual excellence forsakes all interests in rituals and ceremonials which had been elaborated by the ritualistic portion of the Vedas, knowing them to be useless in the search for the highest Truth:

Plavā hi ete adṛḍhā yajñarūpā
aṣṭādaśoktam avaraṁ yeṣu karma;
Etat śreyo ye abhinandanti mūḍhā
jarāmṛtyuṁ te punarevāpi yanti—

'The path of sacrifices and rituals are very frail boats; the fools who rate them high and indulge in them enter into the cycle of birth and death again and again.'

Tapaḥ-śraddhe ye hi upavasanti araṇye
śāntā vidvāṁso bhaikṣyacaryāṁ carantaḥ—

'But the wise with tranquil minds live in the forest as mendicants practising austerity and faith.'

The Upaniṣad (*ibid.*, I.2.12) then proceeds to state that a person who wants to realize the ultimate Truth must examine all that can be

gained by ritualistic acts in this world as well as in the next, whether in the earthly world or in a heavenly world; whatever pleasures and delights can be had in these, he must examine thoroughly with the eye of reason, of understanding, and, having examined, reject them as of no consequence at all, because Truth cannot be had by a life of pleasure here or elsewhere. Having rejected all these things, he must search for the Truth within himself, for which he approaches a great teacher and sits at his feet and learns the lessons of pure spirituality:

Parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo
nirvedam āyāt nāsti akṛtaḥ kṛtena;
Tadvijñānārtham sa gurum eva abhigacchet
samitpāṇiḥ śrotriyam brahmaniṣṭham—

'Having examined all the worlds which are caused and conditioned by actions, a Brāhmaṇa shall conceive utter dispassion for all of them; for the Unconditioned cannot be had through the conditioned. In order to realize the Unconditioned, let him approach, in all humility, a teacher who knows the spirit of the scriptures and is established in Brahman.'

'The uncaused cannot be had through the caused', says the Upaniṣad. That is a great idea. What kind of dispassion does that person get? That this world as well as the world of heaven is the product of actions and that both are within the causal chain. Buddha also taught at a later period that what falls within the sphere of causality cannot be unconditioned and absolute.

The most reiterated formula in Buddhism refers to Buddha's knowledge of the entire range of conditioned things and their cessation:

Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā teṣāṁ hetuṁ tathāgato hyavadat;
Teṣāṁ ca yo nirodho evaṁ vādi hi mahāśramaṇaḥ—

'Whatever entities (*dhammas*) are produced from a cause, of these the *Tathāgata* tells the cause (*hetu*);

'and also that which is the cessation (*yo nirodho*) of these; thus declares the great recluse.'

Therefore, says the Upaniṣad, to realize the unconditioned reality, taking the mind away from all conditioned things here or elsewhere, one should, in a spirit of questing humility, resort to a great teacher, a teacher who is a *brahma-niṣṭha,* one established in that Reality and

thus embodying the spirit of the *śāstras* or scriptures (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* I. 2.13):

Tasmai sa vidvān upasannāya samyak
praśāntacittāya śamānvitāya;
Yenākṣaraṁ puruṣaṁ veda satyam
provāca tāṁ tattvato brahmavidyām—

'To one who has so approached, and who has fulfilled all moral virtues, and become tranquil, the teacher shall impart that highest wisdom by which the Imperishable, the True, the Self, is realized.'

Thus, so far as the approach to the two great teachers is concerned, Gautama followed the tradition laid down by the Upaniṣads; having approached those great teachers, he learnt whatever they had to give. If the particular teachers could not give the highest teaching, that does not mean the highest teaching was not there. For, after all, teachers who have assimilated the highest teachings are not to be had in every generation; and this particular seeker was of a type that could not be satisfied by an ordinary teacher. He assimilated whatever his teachers could give and asked for more; but they could not satisfy the aspirations of his heart for the highest realization. With all politeness, Gautama then left these two teachers and resolved to seek the highest Truth for himself. It was in that mood, with that spirit, that he walked from Rājagṛha to the place which is today known as Buddha Gaya in the jungles of Uruvela. Having gone there, he established himself in a course of severe austerity, penance, and inward contemplation. Five other devotees were also engaged in the same pursuit in the place. They recognized the advanced spirituality of Gautama and accepted him as their spiritual guide and leader and followed him in his path of austerities. It was a path that was well defined and followed by various *sādhakas* of the time, a path consisting of severe austerity of body and mind. It was a form of extreme, rigorous asceticism. Gautama was a thoroughgoing person. If he accepted a procedure, he would not rest content till he thoroughly saw to the end of it. So he was foremost among the six seekers in the practice of austerity and mortification, until he became extremely weak from his fastings and privations. Seeing their leader's rigour and determination, the five disciples became extremely happy and hoped that he would soon attain enlightenment. But one day, when Gautama was getting up from his seat, he fell down unconscious from weakness; regaining consciousness, the following thought arose in his mind: 'What foolishness! I am in search of the highest Truth. It is a search that calls for the utmost courage and stamina, and yet I am weakening my body, weakening my senses, the only instruments I possess by which I can

undertake this voyage of discovery; I shall not proceed on this path of foolish mortification any more.' So he immediately forsook the path of senseless austerity, and proceeded to a nearby village to beg for a little food to strengthen himself. Seeing Gautama abandoning the path of asceticism, the five disciples felt that their leader had strayed into the path of luxury and ease and decided that he was not worthy of them; they deserted him and went away.

Gautama did not mind their desertion. He went to the village and received a bowl of *pāyasa* or sweetened milk-rice from a village girl by name Sujātā; he bathed in the nearby river, ate the *pāyasa* and rested during the afternoon; and towards the evening he proceeded to a nearby spot where there was a large banyan tree, and sat under it with the determination not to rise till he had realized the highest Truth.

All these were in the line of what the Upaniṣads had prescribed. Sitting under the tree, with senses and mind under control, Gautama entered into the depths of meditation. His naturally pure mind, which had become purer as a result of the discipline he had undergone for six years, was now so fine that with a little effort he soared to the heights of meditation. In the first three watches of the night, Gautama plunged deeper and deeper into the depths of his being, and the descriptions of his meditation given in the Buddhist scriptures tally with what the Vedānta describes as the process of entering into the *nirvikalpa* state of *samādhi,* the *samādhi* where the mind transcends the sphere of form, the sphere of consciousness, and the sphere of duality, and ultimately goes to the highest realm where no personality exists, where existence is unconditioned and pure. Towards the fourth watch of the night, Gautama realized the highest Truth and attained *bodhi,* Enlightenment. He became Buddha, the Illumined.

What exactly is the nature of this illumination? As I said before, this question has been left unanswered by Buddha. It has not been answered by his immediate disciples either; but they have given some description of it in negative terms, as the cessation of craving, of the grasping ego, of ignorance and delusion, and this silence regarding the nature of the unconditioned, impersonal state and its description in negative terms or even through silence is perfectly Vedāntic. But it was sought to be answered in more positive language by later followers who had split up the movement on various grounds into eighteen sects within a century of the Master's death. *Thus it was from the later followers' formulation of answers to a question on which Buddha himself and his immediate disciples had kept silent that all the confusion and misunderstanding regarding Buddhism has arisen.*

Let us try to understand the content of that realization in the words of the Master himself. In his very first discourse at Sārnāth, Buddha expressed the content of that realization in these few simple words (*Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta* 26, adapted from J. G. Jennings's translation):

'There (at Uruvela) I settled, Bhikkhus, there being everything needed for effort. And being myself subjected to earthly existence, I perceived the wretchedness of what is subjected to earthly existence, and seeking the supreme peace of *nibbānam* not affected by earthly existence. Being myself subjected to decay, to disease, to death, to grief, (and) defilement, I attained the supreme peace of *nibbānam* not affected by decay, disease, death, grief, (and) defilement.

'And the knowledge (*jñānam*) now as a thing seen arose in me: "My liberation (*vimutti*) is established, separate existence (*jāti*) is terminated here; there is not now rebirth (*punna-bbhavo*)." '

Continuing further, Buddha said (*ibid., Sutta* 36):

'Then I turned my mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*āsavās*). I knew verily (*yathābhūtam*) the four truths: "This is sorrow."... "This is the origination of sorrow."... "This is the cessation of sorrow."... I knew verily: "These are the taints (*āsvās*)" ... "This is the origination of the taints."..."This is the path leading to the cessation of the taints."

'When thus I perceived and understood, my mind (*cittam*) was liberated from the taint of lust (*kāma-āsava*); and ... the taint of individuality (*bhava-āsava*); and ... the taint of ignorance (*avijja-āsava*); and when I was liberated there arose in me the knowledge of my liberation. I knew: "separate existence (*jāti*) is ended (*khīnā*); the holy life (*brahma-cariyam*) is lived, what must be done is done; there is nothing beyond this (*nāparam itthattāya*)." '

This is how Buddha described the content of his realization; and it can easily be mistaken for a passage in any one of the Upaniṣads. Destruction of the separate ego sense, cessation of rebirth, attainment of perfect purity and insight—this is spiritual emancipation according to both the Upaniṣads and Bhagavān Buddha. Both term it *mukti* or *nirvāṇa*, a state which ensues when *avidyā*, spiritual blindness along with all its effects, is completely destroyed. Says the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 2. 8):

Bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ chidyante sarvasaṁśayāḥ;
Kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare—

'The knots of the heart are cut asunder, all doubts are dispelled, (the seeds of) all actions get exhausted, when the supreme truth of Oneness is realized.'

The Buddha had attained the *'bodhi'*, enlightenment, which is *'bahukalpadurlabha'*, difficult to get even by aeons of struggle. He enjoyed the supreme bliss of this attainment for seven weeks all alone in Bodh-Gaya or Buddha Gaya. Then a question arose in his mind: Should he or should he not share this treasure with the world? Initial-

ly he was inclined to keep it to himself, and for good reasons; for the worldly-minded cannot comprehend it, and it would be mere vexation of spirit to teach it to them. But the god Brahmā intervened on behalf of the world, and Buddha agreed to communicate his realizations out of 'compassion for the world' and the knowledge that there would be some at least who would be pure enough to comprehend so high a teaching. With this resolve, he entered the third and most significant phase of his eventful life. To put the matter in his own words (*Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta* 26, Jenning's translation):

'Thus, O Bhikkhus, as I pondered, my mind inclined me to inaction and to refrain from explaining the Dharma. Then, because of compassion for living beings, I gazed over the world and I saw (beings with natures) scarcely tainted,...much tainted, with keen faculties, with dull faculties, well-disposed, ill-disposed, docile, indocile, and a few who lived perceiving a world beyond sin and danger—just as in a pond of blue lotuses or pink lotuses or of white lotuses, some lotuses born and springing up in the water do not emerge from but are nourished under the water; others ... reach the surface of the water; and others... rise above and are untouched by the water.'

Though he felt that the world, so much given to sensuality and ordinary pleasures, might not understand him, still there might be a few whose minds were not so full of the dust of ignorance and attachment and who, with a little effort, could be made to see the truth; he decided to search them out and share his experience with them. That was the difficult choice before Buddha, and his compassion decided for him. Every teacher who has reached very high levels of spirituality is in the same quandary. The higher the attainment, the more difficult it is to find people capable of sharing that attainment. We know in the case of Sri Ramakrishna how he could not share with one and all some of his innermost experiences. That was why he yearned for the arrival of those pure-minded disciples headed by Narendra, later Vivekananda, to whom he could communicate whatever he had experienced.

Thus we find Buddha looking out for those to whom he could communicate his realization. The thought of his two venerable teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka, came to his mind and, out of gratitude for them, he resolved to seek them out and impart his realization to them. He said to himself (*ibid.*):

'There is Ālāra Kālāma, wise, intelligent, and learned, his nature has so long been scarcely tainted. What if I should first declare the Dharma to him? He will quickly comprehend it. ... and the knowledge clearly came to me: "Ālāra Kālāma died seven days ago." Then, Bhikkhus, this thought came to me: "Nobly born was Ālāra Kālāma. If he had heard the Dharma, he would quickly have comprehended it. Then the thought came to me: "There is Uddaka, the son of Rāma, wise, intelligent, and learned; his nature has long been scarcely tainted."...And the knowl-

edge clearly came to me: "Uddaka, the son of Rāma, died yesterday evening." Then, Bhikkhus, this thought came to me: "Nobly born was Uddaka, the son of Rāma. If he had heard the Dharma he would quickly have comprehended it." '

Then the thought came to him of the five disciples who had been with him, had later deserted him, but who were also advanced spiritually. He decided to seek them out; and learning that they had gone to Isipaṭṭana or Sārnāth near Banaras, he decided to go there, a distance of 114 miles from Buddha Gaya. Reaching Isipaṭṭana, he saw from a distance the five disciples sitting in a park there. And enfolding them in the love of his pure mind, he approached them. But at first they were not inclined to greet him and show due courtesies, because they had decided that he had fallen from the path. They addressed him by name calling him 'friend'; yet there was something compelling in the demeanour, in the dignity, in the poise of Buddha that made them receive him with love and reverence. He then said to them (*ibid.*):

'Hear me, Bhikkhus, the Immortal has been gained by me. I teach, I show the Dharma. If you walk as I teach, you will ere long and in the present life learn fully for yourselves, realize, and having attained, abide in the supreme fulfilment of the holy life, for the sake of which the clansmen rightly go from home to the homeless life.'

When they did not seem to have been convinced of his spiritual *bona fides*, he said again, in a gentle tone of authority: 'Are you conscious, O Bhikkhus, that I have not spoken to you in this manner before?' They understood that he spoke from the depth of personal realization, and became receptive and attentive. The Master then imparted his realizations to them and, through them, to humanity in two well-known discourses, the first of which is the *Dharmacakra-pravartana-Sūtra* and the second, the *Anātmalakṣaṇa-Sūtra*, delivered five days later.

Addressing the five on the first occasion, the Buddha said (*Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga, Khandhaka* I. 6, J. G. Jenning's translation):

'These two extremes, O Bhikkhus, are not to be approached by him who has withdrawn (from the world). Which two? On the one hand, that which is linked and connected with lust through sensuous pleasures, and is low, ignorant, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless, and on the other hand, that which is connected with self-mortification, and is painful, ignoble, and profitless. Avoiding both these extremes, the middle road (*madhyama pratipada*) bringing insight, bringing knowledge, leads to tranquillity, to highest knowledge, to full enlightenment, to peace. And what middle road leads to peace? It is indeed this Noble Eightfold Path, namely, right outlook, right will, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right absorption. This middle road leads to peace.

'Now again, this is the Noble Truth as to sorrow (*dukkham ariya saccam*): birth (*jāti*) is sorrowful, decay is sorrowful, disease is sorrowful, death is sorrowful, union with the unpleasing is sorrowful, separation from the pleasing is sorrowful,

the wish which one does not fulfil is sorrowful—in brief, desire-ridden transient individuality (*pañca-upādāna khandha*) is sorrowful.

'Again, this is the Noble Truth as to the origin of sorrow (*dukkha-samudayam ariya saccam*): It is this recurring craving (*tanha*) associated with pleasure and attachment, seeking enjoyment everywhere, namely, the craving for sense-pleasure (*kāma tanha*), the craving for separate earthly existence (*bhava tanha*), the craving for heavenly existence (*vibhava tanha*).

'Again, this is the Noble Truth as to the cessation of sorrow (*dukkha nirodham ariya saccam*): It is the cessation of this very craving, so that no remnant or trace of it remains, its abandonment, its renouncement, liberation (*mukti*) from it, detachment (*an-alayo*) from it.

'And this once more is the Noble Truth as to the road leading to the cessation of sorrow (*dukkha-nirodha-gāmini patipada ariya saccam*): It is indeed that Noble Eightfold Path (*maggo*) ....

'As soon as my knowledge and insight (*nana dassanam*) concerning these Four Noble Truths were pure, I knew that I had attained supreme and full enlightenment (*sammā-sambodhim*) .... The knowledge now as a thing seen arose in me. The liberation of my mind (*me ceto vimuti*) is established, separate existence is here ended, there is not now re-birth.'

In the second discourse, the Buddha stripped the notion of individuality of all its unreal elements (*ibid.*):

'"*Rūpam* (material form) is *an-atta* (not the self); *vedanā* (sensation) is *an-atta* ...; *sanna* (perception) is *an-atta* ...; *samkara* (predisposition) is *an-atta* ...; *vinnanam* (consciousness) is *an-atta* (not the self).

'"Again what think you, Bhikkhus? Is the material form permanent (*niccam*) or impermanent (*a-niccam*)?" "Impermanent, revered sir." "But that which is impermanent, is that suffering (*dukkham*) or happy (*sukkham*)?" "Suffering, revered sir." "That then which is impermanent, is suffering, and by nature changeable (*vi-pariṇāma dhammam*), is it proper to regard it thus: This is mine, I am this, this is my self (*etam mama, eso'ham asmi, eso me atta*)." "No indeed, revered sir." "Is sensation permanent? ... Is perception permanent? Is pre-disposition permanent? ... Is consciousness permanent? ... That then which is impermanent, suffering, and by nature changeable, is it proper to regard it thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" "No indeed, revered sir."

'"And so, Bhikkhus, all material form whether past, future or present, whether within us or external, whether gross or subtle, low or high, far or near, is to be regarded with right insight as it really is (*yathā bhūtam*) thus: This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self...All sensation... gross or subtle, all perception ...gross or subtle,...all predisposition...low or high,...all consciousness...far or near is to be regarded with right insight as it really is thus: This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.

'"Regarding them thus, O Bhikkhus, an instructed *ariyan* disciple becomes indifferent to (*nibbindati*) material form, becomes indifferent to sensation, becomes indifferent to perception, becomes indifferent to consciousness. Becoming indifferent, he becomes free from desire (*vi-rajjati*); through non-desire (*vi-rāgo*) he is liberated.

' "When he is liberated, there arises in him the knowledge, 'I am liberated'. He knows *'jāti* (birth or separate existence) is ended (*Khīna*); *brahmacariya* (the holy life) has been lived; *karanīyam* (what ought to be done) has been done; there is nothing beyond (*nāparam*) this state (*itthattāya*).' " '

The above two discourses and several others in the Buddhistic scriptures can be easily mistaken for passages in any one of the several Upaniṣads.

Buddha is the teacher of the *madhyama pratipada,* the middle path in spiritual life, neither austerity nor indulgence, but a steady pursuit of truth with all the strength of body and mind. It is the exposition in the first discourse, repeated in his later expositions of the spiritual life, that has come down to us as the famous teaching of the Middle Path associated with Buddha. It was original only in the sense that he taught it with a force, he expounded it with such authority, that the country which had strayed into the extremes of sense indulgence and senseless asceticism accepted it and benefited from it. But it was there in the Upaniṣads, as it is there in any moral and spiritual system; for, if our pursuit is morality and spirituality, we gain nothing from senseless asceticism and much less from sensual indulgence. Such austerities have a place only in a religious discipline dominated by the idea of the magical. But moral and spiritual discipline has for its aim the reshaping of our character, the creation of a new pattern of human personality, through increase in inner purity and the overcoming of spiritual blindness. Training for such a character has nothing to do with any kind of magic or trick generally associated with such kind of austerity. *In giving the authority of his powerful personality to the Middle Path, Buddha helped to release the spiritual life from the grip of magic and mummery, and to direct human energies to fruitful channels, towards the cultivation of a moral and spiritual character.*

We are familiar with this emphasis on the middle path in the *Gītā.* In its sixth chapter (verses 16, 17) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

Nātyaśnatastu yogo asti na caikāntam anaśnataḥ;
Na cātisvapnaśīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna—

'*Yoga* is not for him who eats too much or does not eat at all, nor sleeps too much or does not sleep at all.'

Yuktāhāravihārasya yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu;
Yuktasvapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkhahā—

'But *yoga* becomes the discipline for the destruction of sorrow for him who is moderate in eating and recreation, moderate in work and sleep and waking.'

Thus Vedānta and Buddha emphasize this Middle Path. In the case of Buddha there is this additional charm that his teaching on this subject issued out of his personal experience of austerity and its meaninglessness; it was not hearsay with him, which explains the tone of authority in his utterances on the subject.

The Middle Path is meant to lead the seeker to a firm grip on experience and to the discipline leading to the realization of the truth imbedded in experience. With this end in view, Buddha expounded the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path to his five disciples. The first of the four truths is the truth of suffering, the universal experience of satisfactions falling short of desires. The Upaniṣads spoke of life ridden with sorrow till life detaches itself from the changing waves of surface-becoming and gets rooted in the changeless depth of being. The second relates to the origin of suffering; this is *tanha* (*tṛṣṇā*) or desire, the tendency of the ego to go out of itself to seek satisfactions, impelled by spiritual blindness. The Upaniṣads spoke of *avidyā* and *kāma* as the roots of relative existence; through them we forge links in the causal chain of existence, forget our own spiritual nature, and become cogs in the wheel of *saṁsāra*; that *tṛṣṇā* or desire, with its root, ignorance, must be eradicated. Therefore, the third truth is the recognition of the possibility that we can overcome suffering. And the fourth truth is the path that leads to the cessation of suffering through the eradication of ignorance and desire; and this is the path that leads to the state of *nirvāṇa*, the state of enduring peace and emancipation.

This fourth truth which flowers into the Noble Eightfold Path, with its stress on moral and spiritual endeavour, constitutes the essential teaching of Buddha. So far as the discovery that the world is suffering, that life is suffering, and that it proceeds from *tṛṣṇā* is concerned, there is not much difference between the Upaniṣads and Buddha. When we compare the teachings of the Upaniṣads with those of Buddha, we find very little difference so far as the content is concerned, but a good deal of difference in the way certain points were stressed or developed or ignored in the two teachings. For example, Buddha stressed on the subject of suffering. He also developed the subject of the path to *nirvāṇa* in all its details; but he ignored defining the goal, the state of *nirvāṇa*. Buddha takes various examples to show that life is suffering. Thus the fact of suffering in life gets a good deal of emphasis in his teaching. This special stress on suffering is absent in the Upaniṣads. Though recognizing the fact of suffering, the Upaniṣads

stress on the state of bliss that transcends suffering and proclaim that as the true nature of man.

It is a question of stress, as I said. You can say that life is sorrow, if you look at it from the human end. You can say that life is joy, if you look at it from the ideal end. Both conclusions are true. The Upaniṣads also say that to live as a separate individual, as a finite individual, cut off from the vast ocean of Being around us and in us, is sorrow. The finite, separate individual is the focus of tension and strain; the world and the soul are in their essential nature the *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* Brahman, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; cut off from that ocean of being, the finite separate individual becomes a zero, and yet fears to become a zero, and fears still more to shed its finitude. As Śaṅkara said: 'Cut off from that ocean of pure Being, the world gets reduced to a zero.' If life or the world is separated from the supreme Ātman, which is the source of all joy, of all existence, and of all knowledge, it will become sorrow-ridden, fugitive, and dark. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, zeros have value only when the figure '1' is behind them. Take the '1' away, they become mere nothingness. So also is human life; cut off from the Reality of the One, it becomes ridden with sorrow, reduced to darkness and nothingness. Buddha took this finite individual for his theme—the human soul subject to ignorance, desire, delusion, grief, and death. And his compassion went out to steady his feet, illumine his mind, and fill his heart with wisdom, peace, and joy; hence his stress on psychology and ethics, but not on metaphysics.

The finite, separate individual ever passes into something other than itself in the ceaseless flow of becoming. Spiritual teaching must proceed from this fact. This is the *doctrine of actuality* preached by Buddha. In revealing this, he was compelled to ignore studiously all metaphysical questions as to the existence or otherwise of a permanent self behind the fleeting ego, of an abiding reality behind the world of becoming, and of the nature of *nirvāṇa*. His silence on these questions is matched by his expressiveness on how man can wisely tackle the actual situation in which he finds himself. Man has forgotten his real self; he has grasped things other than himself. In so grasping, he has fallen into the endless chain of cause and effect, of *avidyā*, *tṛṣṇā*, and *karma*, or ignorance, desire, and action, into the chain of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the whirlpool of *saṁsāra*. It is nothing but sorrow to be thus caught in the wheel of birth and death and change, to be merely a helpless thing worked upon by forces outside of oneself.

This is the meaning of the first and second Noble Truths, the actuality of sorrow. But, according to the Upaniṣads, it is only half the truth. Buddha also meant it to be taken only as half the truth. To both, there is also the state beyond sorrow and the path that leads us from the world of sorrow to the world of joy. But the Upaniṣads proclaimed in no uncertain terms that that ultimate state of bliss and peace is also the essential nature of each and every individual even now. This was not stressed by Buddha. The Upaniṣadic Brahman or Ātman is peace, so is the *nirvāṇa* of Buddha. But the Upaniṣads stress the fact of bliss imbedded in our nature, while Buddha stressed the fact of sorrow which we actually see in and around us. In the case of Buddha, the stress on actuality was meant to focus that attention on ethical preparation and spiritual struggle which had been largely dissipated in defining metaphysical subtleties of the goal. This alone can explain his consistent silence on the subject of the nature of the goal. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan (*Gautama Buddha*, p. 56):

'The Buddha warns us against the danger of assuming that, because we are divine in essence, we are not divided in actuality. To become actually divine is our goal.'

This severely practical approach of Buddha to the problem of the spiritual life is expressed in the Noble Eightfold Path, and finds repeated emphasis through parables and illustrations in all his teachings. To both the Upaniṣads and Buddha, Truth is not merely a thing to be intellectually known, but also a value to be inwardly realized; *mokṣa* and *nirvāṇa* are *puruṣārthas*. Both refer to spiritual realization as *kṛtakṛtyatā*, doing what ought to be done. Neither intellectualism nor sentimentalism can help us. And both these aberrations have often vitiated Indian spiritual life, not only before Buddha, but also after him; his own movement became infected by this intellectualism five centuries after his time, and never recovered from the resulting stagnation. There is constant need to hearken to Buddha's stress on the path to be traversed, his insistence on the remaking of character through severe practical self-discipline in thought and conduct.

It has been a recurring experience in India that we talk high philosophy and live very ordinary lives. In Buddha's time, probably, it must have been much more serious. We know that in our own time it is a very serious problem with our nation as a whole; we have the mood and the energy to discuss the highest philosophy or pressing national problems in our drawing-rooms, at our tea-tables and at public meetings; but in day-to-day life, we lapse into a spiritual lassitude and function largely at the bottom levels of existence. Swami Vivekananda

was the first to diagnose this trait of ours in this age. And in great agony he said:

'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.'

The highly sensitive mind of Swami Vivekananda felt this great disparity between the highest philosophical conceptions and the unspiritual, unsocial, and unethical practices of our people. And he strove to bring about harmony between our professions and our practices. If it is a desideratum in our own time, we may as well infer from Buddha's silence on the goal and stress on the Eightfold Path that it may have been more so in his own time.

The silence of Buddha on ultimate metaphysical questions and his constant stress on conduct and character is clearly brought out in his replies to the questions put by the monk Māluṅkyaputta. Māluṅkya asked Buddha with a bluntness almost bordering on discourtesy to state whether or not the world is eternal, whether or not the perfect Buddha continues to exist after death, and demanded that if he did not know the answers, he should be straightforward and say that he did not know.

Buddha answered (*Majjhima Nikāya*, Discourse 63, Woodward's translation):

'Suppose, Māluṅkyaputta, a man were pierced with an arrow well steeped in poison, and his close friends and relatives were to summon a physician, a surgeon. Then suppose the man says, "I will not have this arrow pulled out until I know of the man by whom I was pierced, both his name and his clan, and whether he be tall or short or of middle stature; till I know him whether he be a black man or dark or shallow-skinned; whether he be of such and such a village or suburb or town, I will not have the arrow pulled out until I know of the bow by which I was pierced, whether it was a long bow or a cross bow; till I know of the arrow by which I have been pierced, whether it be a reed-shaft, or of a sapling...."

'Well, Māluṅkyaputta, that man would die, but still that matter would not be found out by him.

'...But I am one who declares thus: Whether the world is eternal or not, nevertheless there is birth, there is decay, there is death, there are sorrow and grief, woe, lamentation, and despair; and it is the destruction of these things that I do declare.

'...Wherefore, Māluṅkyaputta, do you bear in mind that what I have declared is declared, and what I have not declared is not declared. Bear that in mind.

'And what, Māluṅkyaputta, have I not declared? That the world is eternal or otherwise ...that the *Tathāgata* is beyond death or otherwise, and so forth.

'And why, Māluṅkyaputta, have I not so declared?

'Because this thing is not concerned with profit; because it is not a principle of the holy life; because it does not lead to repulsion, to aversion, to cessation, to calming, to the super-knowledge, to the supreme wisdom, to *nibbāṇa*. That is why I have not declared it.

'And what, Māluṅkyaputta, have I declared?

'I have declared, "This is suffering; This is the arising of suffering; This is the ceasing of suffering; This is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering."

'And why, Maluṅkyaputta, have I so declared'?

'Because it is concerned with profit; because it is a principle of the holy life; because it leads to repulsion, to aversion, to cessation, to calming, to the super-knowledge, to the supreme wisdom, to *nibbāṇa*. That, Māluṅkyaputta, is why I have declared it.'

Buddha's silence regarding the reality or otherwise of a permanent self is well brought out in his encounter with Vacchagotta the Wanderer (*Sutta Nipāta*, VI. 400, Woodward's translation):

' "Master Gotama," said Vacchagotta, "what have you to say about the existence of the self?"

'At these words the Exalted One was silent.

' "How now, Master Gotama? Is there no such thing as the self?"

'At these words the Exalted One was silent.

'Then Vacchagotta the Wanderer (in disgust) rose up from his seat and went away. Not long after he was gone, the venerable Ānanda said to the Exalted One:

' "How is it, Lord, that the Exalted One made no reply to the question asked by Vacchagotta the Wanderer?"

' "If, Ānanda, when asked, 'Does the self exist?', I had replied to him, 'The self exists', then, Ānanda, that would be to side with all those *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who are eternalists.

' "But if, Ānanda, when asked the question, 'Does the self not exist, then?', I had replied, 'No, the self does not exist', that would be to side with those *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who are annihilationists.

' "And, Ānanda, if when asked by Vacchagotta the Wanderer, 'Does the self exist?', I had replied, 'The self does exist', would that reply be consistent with my knowledge that all things are impermanent?"

' "No, Lord, it would not."

' "Again, Ānanda, when asked, 'Then, does not the self exist?', if I had replied, 'No, it does not exist', it would have added to the bewilderment of Vacchagotta the Wanderer, already bewildered. For he would have said, 'Formerly I had a self, but now I have one no more." '

The sage of the *Kena Upaniṣad* (I. 3, 4, 6) had faced this problem earlier; Buddha shares his hesitancy to define the indefinable which is the true self in man:

'The eye does not go there, nor speech, nor the mind; we do not know or understand how this (knowledge of the Self) could be imparted. It is entirely different from the known; yet it is beyond the unknown. Thus have we heard from the teachers of old who explained It to us.

'That which cannot be apprehended by the mind (and the senses) but by which, they say, the mind itself is apprehended—know thou That alone as Brahman, and not that which people worship here.'

The goal of the Eightfold Path is *nibbāṇa*; Buddha defined *nibbāṇa* only in negative terms, as the destruction of craving, of ignorance, of separate individuality, of delusion and sorrow.

Addressing the monk Rādha, the Buddha said that the five *skandhas* (constituent factors of personality) should be regarded as the seat of Māra; then the following conversation ensued between the two (*Sutta Nipāta*, III. 187, Woodward's translation):

' "What was the purpose of so regarding ", asked Rādha.

' "For the sake of disgust", replied Buddha.

' "But disgust, Lord, for what purpose is it?"

' "Disgust, Rādha, is to bring about dispassion."

' "But dispassion, Lord, for what purpose is it?"

' "Dispassion, Rādha, is to get release."

' "But release, Lord, what is it for?"

' "Release, Rādha, means nibbāṇa."

' "But *nibbāṇa*, Lord, what is the aim of that?"

' "This, Rādha, is a question that goes too far. You can grasp no limit to this question. Rooted in *nibbāṇa*, Rādha, the holy life is lived. *Nibbāṇa* is its goal. *Nibbāṇa* is its end." '

The Upaniṣadic way of expressing this truth is contained in an arresting dialogue of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II. 4. 12-14).

Addressing his wife Maitreyī, the sage Yājñavalkya said:

'As a lump of salt dropped into water dissolves with (its component) water, and no one is able to pick it up, but whencesoever one takes it, it tastes salt, even so, my dear, this great, endless, infinite Reality is but pure Intelligence. (The self) comes out (as a separate entity) from these elements, and (this separateness) is destroyed with them. After attaining (this oneness), it has no more consciousness. This is what I say, my dear.'

Maitreyī said:

'Just here you have thrown me in confusion, sir, by saying that after attaining (oneness) the self has no more consciousness.'

Yājñavalkya said:

'Certainly I am not saying anything confusing, my dear; this is quite sufficient for knowledge, O Maitreyī.

'Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one speaks something, one thinks something, one knows something. But when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell, and through, what? what should one see, and through what? what should one hear, and through what? what should one speak, and through what? what should one think, and through what? what should one know, and through what? Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known—through what, O Maitreyī, should one know the knower?'

The teachings of Buddha on the subject of self involve the distinction between the true Self and the false self. When we are asked to deny self-hood to all the constituent elements of personality, the *pañca upādāna skandhas*, we are not left to believe that we are empty nothings.

That Buddha and his immediate disciples kept in view this distinction between the false Self and the true Self is brought out in the episode of Yamaka's heresy (adapted from H. C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translation*):

Not understanding the true import of Buddha's teaching on the subject of *nibbāṇa*, Yamaka the monk came to the belief that 'on the dissolution of the body the monk who has lost all depravity is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death'. His fellow monks, after trying in vain to make him give up what they considered a wicked heresy, requested Sāriputta to tackle him.

Sāriputta asked Yamaka whether the report about his views was true.

Yamaka replied:

'Even so, brother, do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed One, that on the dissolution of the body the monk who has lost all depravity is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death.'

Sāriputta then asked him whether the five *skandhas* of form, sensation, perception, predispositions, and consciousness were permanent or transitory.

Yamaka admitted they were transitory.

'And that which is transitory, is it evil or is it good?' asked Sāriputta.

'It is evil, brother', replied Yamaka.

'And that which is transitory, evil, and liable to change—is it possible to say of it: This is mine; this am I; this is my self?' asked Sāriputta.

'No, brother', said Yamaka.

'Accordingly, brother Yamaka, as respects all form whatsoever, as respects all sensation whatsoever, as respects all perception whatsoever, as respects all predispositions whatsoever, past, future, or present, be it subjective or existing outside, gross or subtle, mean or exalted, far or near, the correct view in the light of the highest knowledge is as follows: This is not mine; this am I not; this is not my self.'

Perceiving this, brother Yamaka, the learned and noble disciple, conceives an aversion for form, conceives an aversion for sensation, conceives an aversion for perception, conceives an aversion for predispositions, conceives an aversion for consciousness. And in conceiving this aversion he becomes divested of passion,

and by the absence of passion he becomes free, and when he is free he becomes aware that he is free; and he knows that rebirth is exhausted, that he has lived the holy life, that he has done what it behoved him to do, and that he is no more for the world.

Sāriputta then asked him whether the arhat who has achieved nibbāṇa can be comprised in form, sensation, perception, predispositions, and consciousness, or distinct from them. Yamaka replied in the negative.

'Considering now, brother Yamaka, that you fail to make out and establish the existence of the *arhat* in the present life, is it reasonable for you to say: Thus do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed One, that on the dissolution of the body the monk who has lost all depravity is annihilated, perishes, and does not exist after death?'

'Brother Sāriputta, it was because of my ignorance that I held this wicked heresy; but now that I have listened to the doctrinal instruction of the venerable Sāriputta, I have abandoned that wicked heresy and acquired the true doctrine.'

The conversation between King Pasenadi and the nun Khema further elucidates the point (Oldenberg quoted by Edmund Holmes in his *The Creed of Buddha*):

'To the question of King Pasenadi of Kosala regarding the existence or otherwise of Buddha after death, the nun Khema replied that Buddha had not revealed this subject.

'The king was astonished and asked:

' "What is the reason, venerable lady, what is the ground on which the Exalted One has not revealed this?"

'She asked the king in reply whether he had an accountant who could count the sands of the Gaṅgā or measure the water in the great ocean.

'The king replied in the negative.

' "And why not?" the nun replied, and continued: "The great ocean is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable. So also, O great King, if the existence of the Perfect One be measured by the predicates of corporeal form: these predicates of the corporeal form are abolished in the Perfect One, their root is severed, they are hewn away like a palm tree and laid aside, so that they cannot germinate again in the future. Released, O great King, is the Perfect One from this, that his being should be gauged by the measure of the corporeal world: he is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable, as the great ocean." '

Jñāna and *bodhi* are indefinable; so are the ways of the *jñānī* and that of the Buddha. The following verse quoted by Śaṅkara in his *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā-bhāṣya* (IV. 95) reinforces and clarifies nun Khema's view:

Sarvabhūtātmabhūtasya sarvabhūtahitasya ca
Devā api mārge muhyanti apadasya padaiṣiṇaḥ;
Śakunīnām iva ākāśe gatirnaivopapadyate—

'Even the gods feel puzzled while trying to follow the footsteps of those who leave no track behind, of those who realize themselves in all

beings and who are always devoted to the welfare of all. They leave no track behind like the birds flying through the sky.'

The attainment of *nirvāṇa* in Buddha's teachings tallies in all essential respects with the attainment of the impersonal, formless Brahman in the Upaniṣads. By the negation of self-hood to the five *skandhas,* the second discourse at Sārnāth did not explain *away* the self, but pointed to this Impersonal Brahman, the Universal Self as the true Self of all; for, in the words of the Upaniṣads, *Brahmavit brahmaiva bhavati* —'the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman' (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* III. 2.9); again *Ayam ātmā brahma*—'this Self is Brahman' (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad,* I. 2); and *Brahmavid āpnoti param; tadeṣābhyuktā; satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*—'the knower of Brahman attains the Highest; on this, there is the following declaration: Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity' (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad,* II. 1).

In the course of one of his addresses to the monks on the subject of *nibbāṇa* in the Jeta grove at Sāvatthi, the Buddha uttered these solemn words (*Udāna,* Woodward's translation):

'There is, brethren, an unborn, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. If there were not, brethren, this that is unborn, not become, not made, not compounded, there could not be made any escape from what is born, become, made, compounded.

'But since, brethren, there is this unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded, therefore is there made known an escape from what is born, become, made, and compounded.'

It will be clear from the above extracts from the teachings of Buddha and the Upaniṣads that the goal of spiritual life in both is the destruction not of self as such, but of all limited and false notions of the self which treat it as separate from other selves; the realization of the true Self ensues when ignorance and delusion, leading to attachment and identification with the body and other constituents of personality, are overcome. This realization is deep and immeasurable as the ocean, because the individual loses himself in the universal, the *jīva* in Brahman, which is the One without a second. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*'s analysis of individuality through the negation of the five *kośas* or sheaths leads to the same conclusion; the self that manifests through each of the five *kośas* or through all of them is unreal and shadowy, finite and fugitive. When the *kośas* are negated, the one true Self which is the Self of all shines in all its glory in the *nirvikalpa samādhi.* This is *prajñā* or *bodhi* in both the teachings. When the Upaniṣads tell us that the Ātman should be realized through hearing, reflection, and meditation, it is not the finite, separate, changeful, per-

sonal self of man that is meant, but the impersonal, universal, changeless Self which is the Self of all. And nowhere does Buddha negate the reality of this Self which is the theme of the Upaniṣads; nor does he ever negate the reality of the impersonal Brahman of the Upaniṣads, though Buddha's discourses often refer to Brahmā, the personal Creator, as paying homage to Buddha and as a being falling within the world of change. His Sārnāth discourse, entitled '*Anattalakkhaṇa-Sutta*', is acceptable to the Upaniṣads in its entirety, and can be correctly understood only in the light of the Upaniṣadic exposition on the subject. Sri Ramakrishna held the view that Buddha's teachings were on the lines of the *jñāna-yoga* of the Upaniṣads. The Vedas and the Vedic path, often criticized in the Buddhist scriptures, mean in every instance only the Vedic *karma-kāṇḍa*, the ritualistic portion; but never the *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, the philosophic portion comprised in the Upaniṣads. These Upaniṣads themselves contain criticisms and evaluations of the Vedic *karma-kāṇḍa* almost exactly on the lines of the Buddhist criticisms and evaluations. And even the *Gītā* (II. 42, 43) speaks disparagingly of the *vedavādaratas*, those who indulge in Vedic ritualism impelled by desire and attachment. Śaṅkara's Advaita is a severe critique of the *karma-kāṇḍa* as well as the philosophy behind it. The Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* prescribe for the spiritual seeker dispassion and other moral virtues on the lines of Buddha's Eightfold Path. Buddha's final exhortation to Ānanda to work out his salvation with diligence, depending on himself and not on any personal god or other external aids, is equally applicable to the *jñāna-yoga* of the Upaniṣads, which also advocates the three stages of *śīla, samādhi*, and *prajñā* prescribed by Buddha for the spiritual life. Also common to both is the notion of the 'ten fetters' and their destruction, characteristic of spiritual progress and realization.

Buddha's silence on the subjects of a permanent Self and of the nature of *nirvāṇa*, and his studious disapproval of metaphysical discussion, did not have the results he anticipated. Silence on questions of deep import acts as a spur to speculation.

This was what happened to Buddhist thought in subsequent centuries. A flood of metaphysical speculation on these forbidden themes ensued. And such speculation, without any guidance from the Master or his first disciples, and without any guidance from the Upaniṣads, which were not to become widely known till Śaṅkara, a thousand years later, split up the Buddhist movement into sects upholding views many of which were clearly considered as heresies in the Master's own time. Yamaka had a Sāriputta to correct him of his nihilistic views. But Yamaka's views did not die with his correction. What Buddha wanted

to avoid in the case of Vacchagotta—bewildering his mind by saying there is no permanent Self—became the source of bewilderment and confusion to his later followers. These wrong views steadily penetrated the later Buddhist movement at the intellectual levels and, in the eyes of many Buddhists and all non-Buddhists, became the main characteristic of that thought. This later intellectual movement found no point of contact with the vast mass of the Buddhistic population, which sought solace not in *nirvāṇa* or its metaphysical formulations, but in the worship of the Buddha through the idols, temples, processions, and pilgrimages of popular Buddhism; cut off from its intellectual sustenance, popular Buddhism slowly decayed and withered and got absorbed in the reviving Vedic religious movements of later Hinduism. And intellectual Buddhism found its challenge in Śaṅkara in the eighth century, who succeeded in reuniting Indian philosophic thought with the thought of the Upaniṣads. Unlike the other post-Buddhistic movements which were merely revivalist and sectarian, Śaṅkara's was synthetic and constructive and inclusive. The Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara has absorbed all the essential elements of Buddhist thought; it is becoming increasingly clear that if Buddha's teachings are to be provided with a metaphysical support, we have to search for it in Śaṅkara's Advaita. In the Buddhist philosophy (as presented to us in the Buddhist scriptures), we have, in the words of Dr. Oldenberg, only 'a fragment of a circle, to complete which and to find the centre of which is forbidden, for it would involve an inquiry after things which do not contribute to deliverance and happiness' (quoted by Edmund Holmes, *The Creed of Buddha,* p. 64). If Buddhism had continued in the spirit in which Buddha had meant it to proceed, if it had not indulged in metaphysical speculations, but propagated only the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, Śaṅkara need not have appeared. But when, against the exhortations of the Master and without his guidance, metaphysical attempts to 'complete the circle' miscarried, resulting in intellectual confusion and spiritual anarchy, Śaṅkara appeared and gave to humanity the priceless thought of Advaita Vedānta, which, in the words of Thibaut (Introduction to *The Vedānta-Sūtras,* p. XIV),

'is, from a purely philosophical point of view, and apart from all theological considerations, the most important and interesting one which has arisen on Indian soil; neither those forms of the Vedānta which diverge from the view represented by Śaṅkara nor any of the non-Vedāntic systems can be compared with the so-called orthodox Vedānta in boldness, depth, and subtlety of speculation.'

Writes Dr. Radhakrishnan (*Indian Philosophy,* Vol. II, p. 446):

'It is impossible to read Śaṅkara's writings, packed as they are with serious and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind of a very fine penetration and profound spirituality. With his acute feeling of the

immeasurable world, his stirring gaze into the abysmal mysteries of spirit, his unswerving resolve to say neither more nor less than what could be proved, Śaṅkara stands out as a heroic figure of the first rank in the somewhat motley crowd of religious thinkers of the medieval India. His philosophy stands forth complete, needing neither a before nor an after.'

Commenting on the decay of Buddhism in India, Swami Vivekananda said sixty years ago ('Sages of India', *Complete Works,* Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 263-65):

'The earlier Buddhists, in their rage against the killing of animals, had denounced the sacrifices of the Vedas; and these sacrifices used to be held in every house. There was a fire burning and that was all the paraphernalia of worship. These sacrifices were obliterated and in their place came gorgeous temples, gorgeous ceremonies, and gorgeous priests, and all that you see in India in modern times. I smile when I read books written by some modern people, who ought to have known better, that the Buddha was the destroyer of Brāhmanical idolatry. Little do they know that Buddhism created Brāhmanism and idolatry in India....

'Thus, in spite of the preaching of mercy to animals, in spite of the sublime ethical religion, in spite of the hair-splitting discussions about the existence or non-existence of a permanent soul, the whole building of Buddhism tumbled down piecemeal; and the ruin was simply hideous....The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the most obscene books that human hands ever wrote or the human brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever passed under the name of religion, have all been the creation of degraded Buddhism.'

And referring to the legacy which Buddhism in its state of degradation left for Śaṅkara, and his great work of synthesis, Swami Vivekananda continued:

'But India had to live, and the spirit of the Lord descended again. ... the marvellous boy Śaṅkarācārya arose. The writings of this boy of sixteen are the wonders of the modern world, and so was the boy. He wanted to bring back the Indian world to its pristine purity, but think of the amount of the task before him. I have told you a few points about the state of things that existed in India. All these horrors that you are trying to reform are the outcome of that reign of degradation. The Tartars and the Baluchis and all the hideous races of mankind came to India and became Buddhists, and assimilated with us, and brought their national customs, and the whole of our national life became a huge page of the most horrible and the most bestial customs. That was the inheritance which the boy got from the Buddhists, and from that time to this, the whole work in India is a re-conquest of this Buddhistic degradation by the Vedānta. It is still going on, it is not yet finished. Śaṅkara came, a great philosopher, and showed that the real essence of Buddhism and that of the Vedānta are not very different, but that the disciples did not understand the Master and have degraded themselves, denied the existence of the soul and of God and have become atheists. That was what Śaṅkara showed, and all the Buddhists began to come back to the old religion.'

It is this combined legacy of the two great architects of Indian thought and culture—Buddha and Śaṅkara—that modern India is learn-

ing to appreciate and to cherish, discovering after centuries the deep kinship between them. Behind them both stand, like the Himalayan background, the eternal visions of the sages of the Upaniṣads which found their undying expression in a later period through Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā.*

The self-transcending ethics of unselfish love and compassion of Buddha and his movement, united to the philosophy of the transcendent Self of Śaṅkara's Vedānta, is the new thought—the New Vedānta—which is energizing and stimulating India's mind and heart today. It is no wonder, then, that India as a whole has responded with enthusiasm and devotion to the message of the 2500th birthday of Bhagavān Buddha.

THE CHRIST WE ADORE

WE, in India, have learnt through our religion to look upon great teachers with a heart open to the inspiration which they hold for all humanity. The approach of our people to the lives of all teachers has something refreshingly beautiful about it; it is hard for non-Hindus to understand how we, professing a different religion, can open our hearts, with equal fervour, to receive the inspiration of this great Son of Man, Jesus. India's approach to religion is experiential and not dogmatic. It is spirituality that India seeks in its religious quest and not a creed or dogma. This is also the approach of Jesus Christ to religion, as we shall presently see. It is this approach that explains the spiritual hospitality of the Indian mind. This broad, all-inclusive approach will be increasingly appreciated and accepted by the thinking people of the world in the coming years. *What is now the cherished possession of a national culture will eventually become an integral part of human culture and civilization.* Such a consummation will help to release the Christ-spirit from the shackles of a narrow sectarian creed in which it has been stifled for centuries. This will be the service that the spirit of India will render in this age to the religion of this great Master.

Birth and Boyhood of Jesus

We are familiar in our country with the idea that at the birth of divine personalities there is joyous co-operation of man and nature to welcome them; for it is an event heralding universal joy. In the words of one of our sacred books: 'The ancestors rejoice, the gods dance in joy, and this world gets a saviour'—*Modante pitaro, nṛtyanti devatāḥ, sanāthā ceyaṁ bhūrbhavati* (*Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra*, V. 5).

Very similar is the account of the birth of Jesus Christ, as given in the various Gospels of the New Testament. Deeply touching is the description of the episode in Luke. The parents, Joseph and Mary, had come to Bethlehem in Judea from Nazareth in Galilee, to be taxed according to the newly promulgated Roman law. Mary was expecting her first child. The couple took shelter in an inn, where Mary gave birth to an infant who was destined to become a great spiritual teacher. For want of accommodation in the inn, the mother wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. At this time, a group of shepherds, keeping watch over their sheep nearby, received, in the stillness of the night, in an extraordinary way, the intimation of the birth of this wonderful infant:

'And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapt in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger' (Luke, II. 9-12).

The shepherds were amazed. Hardly had they time to recover from this amazement, when they heard a multitude of angels singing, praising God: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men' (*ibid.*, II. 14).

The shepherds proceeded to Bethlehem in search of the babe as indicated, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger, and they offered him loving worship and homage.

Next, we get a glimpse, a tender and pleasing glimpse, of him as a boy of twelve. He was accompanying his parents to the Holy temple in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. After the ceremonies, the parents started homeward; they expected Jesus to be in the party, but after a day's journey when they found him missing, they searched for him here and there and, finally, retracing their steps, found him, after three days, in the courtyard of the holy temple discussing with the learned doctors points of law and faith. When his mother, piqued, told him how much she and his father had been worried over his disappearance, he gave a characteristic answer: 'How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' (*ibid.*, II. 49). His parents could not make anything of this enigmatic reply, but they were satisfied when they found him willing to return home with them.

We get hardly any account of Jesus during his youth and early manhood. 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour

with God and man', says the Gospel in a compressed narrative (*ibid.*, II. 52).

But we have enough reference to show that Jesus, very early in life, had become aware of the great purpose of his advent and set about it with a thoroughness that nothing could thwart. He must have also spent long hours in silence and loneliness in the nearby mountains and communed with himself. Later, when we meet him next, he is already a young man of about thirty. Moving from place to place, Jesus heard of another teacher who was creating a stir by his way of life and preaching. This was John the Baptist, who went about in the wilderness of Judea, and later in the Jordan area, proclaiming; 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matthew, III. 2).

Semitic Religious Tradition

The lives and works of John the Baptist and Jesus introduce us to a new chapter in Semitic religious history. There is something extraordinary, something refreshingly striking, in their contribution which has made religion in the West flow into a new channel of God's intimacy with man, with love as the bond between both. In the old Semitic tradition, this was not the central idea. The idea there was that God was far away; His distance from man was the measure of His majesty; man was called upon to conduct his life here below with faith and fear, and the fruit of such faith was to be reaped after death. Such a religion tends to be largely this-worldly, increasingly bound to time and the historical process. As a socio-political faith, with a slight flavour of the otherworldly, it constantly tends to be bound in a rigid creed which leads to dogmatism, bigotry, and intolerance, on the one hand, and formalism and stress on correct ritualistic behaviour, on the other.

The New Testament contains vivid descriptions of such a situation in the field of religion at the advent of John the Baptist and Jesus. Its pages reveal the birth-pangs of a new spiritual *Weltanschauung* at once universal and human, the recurring conflicts of this new ideology with the entrenched monotheistic exaggerations, the deep aspirations of the people for release from the rigidities of a lifeless tradition as represented by the priesthood, and the shining figures of John and Jesus proclaiming through life and teaching a compelling message of hope and assurance.

Man, as spiritual seeker, transcends the sphere of law and commandments of a religion. Whereas law and commandments relate him to parochial and temporal interests, spirituality relates him to the eter-

nal and the infinite. Jesus came to offer this to man, to give the bread of life to the spiritually hungry. Insistence on correct ritualistic behaviour does not bring satisfaction to man at this stage. They are as stones to a hungry man, as the New Testament puts it. Jesus proclaimed a religion of wide and deep horizons; he brought God near to man and bound both with the cord of love; he eliminated fear as the medium of their relationship. With love implanted in his heart in place of fear, man emerged as the lover of his fellow-men; he learnt to find fulfilment in a life of love for God and service to man, to God in man. This love for God, this intimate communion with Him, is the fulfilment of the righteous life; it is the only means of satisfying the soul's spiritual hunger. This is the *essential* of religion. It holds that man has a higher dimension which transcends his physical and social personality; he is essentially spiritual; in that inmost being of his lies his intimacy with and closeness to the divine, and his kinship to all creation. Religion is the realization of this spiritual fact and its expression in life and behaviour.

This is the approach of Jesus to religion. And this is the approach which India has learnt from the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* the *Bhāgavata,* and other scriptures, and has made it part and parcel of our national awareness. These scriptures have taught us that *religion is realization*; it is not creed or dogma or mere believing; it is not merely the good life, the moral life, the righteous life, though all these are necessary for the flowering of religion in spiritual realization.

Thanks to the Upaniṣads, religion in India, unlike religion in Palestine, learnt to understand and appreciate this mood of spiritual earnestness, this passion for the spiritual as distinct from the merely socio-religious and moral, and to welcome it. This is the meaning of our national idea that Śruti is more binding than Smṛti, that life according to the Smṛti is only a prelude to life according to the Śruti.

Jesus Came to Fulfil, Not to Destroy

For the first time, a glimpse of this great idea came to the Semitic world through John and Jesus; it was not that this idea was entirely absent from the older tradition; a few gifted individuals had borne witness to it. But theirs were forlorn voices incapable of making any impression on the tradition. This was the case even with John the Baptist, who was compelled to refer to himself as 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness'. But with Jesus the idea became a force, which inevitably came into conflict with the traditional religion. In the New Testament, we can see these two currents flowing side by side.

The conflict was all a one-way affair; it was the old in conflict with the new, and not the new in conflict with the old. A spiritual message is large enough to accommodate all forms of faith. Its approach is synthetic and inclusive. Love and grace do not negate law and commandment, but fulfil them. Jesus himself never desired to exclude the old religion. He claimed to have come to fulfil and not to destroy. In this broad and generous spirit, which is the mark of a deeply spiritual religion, we find him endeavouring to effect a synthesis of the old and the new.

The New Testament gives us glimpses of this attempt at synthesis between the message of Moses and the message of Jesus. 'For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (John, I. 17).

To the rich man who wanted to know the way to inherit eternal life, Jesus gave the advice to fulfil the commandments before proceeding higher in the spiritual quest. It was in this sphere of the higher spiritual life that Jesus had something new to give. It was not merely new, it was also startling to the people who heard him. 'They were astonished at his doctrine', records the New Testament in several places.

Baptism of Jesus

The appearance of John the Baptist on the horizon was the first surprise to the people. John was an ascetic and lived a celibate life. Asceticism and celibacy were foreign to the Semitic tradition. John burst upon the people's attention with the startling proclamation, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'. The people were familiar with the notion of a kingdom of heaven. So there was nothing startling in that; it was a far-away thing in time and space, and they could afford to wait till death and take things leisurely till then. But John proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*; not far away, but *here, now*. To a people suffering from Roman oppression, this was a happy announcement; and they naturally interpreted it in political terms. He asked the people to prepare themselves to enter into it by inner purification through sincere repentance; and he instituted a symbolic purification through baptism in the Jordan river.

Hundreds of people flocked to John to be baptized; a few among them who were wicked at heart, he sent away hurling after them words of rebuke and threat. He exhorted the baptized to practise charity, justice, mercy, and honesty. The crowds took John to be the

promised Messiah; but he divined their thoughts and proclaimed in clear language:

'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire' (Matthew, III.11).

Presently, Jesus, who was still an unknown figure, went to him to be baptized by him. John eyed Jesus for a minute and then remonstrated, saying that he was not fit to baptize him, but that he had need to be baptized by Jesus. But Jesus replied: 'Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness' (*ibid.*, III. 15). John baptized him, and, coming out of the water, Jesus had his first recorded spiritual experience; and a voice from heaven proclaimed: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (*ibid.*, III. 17).

Jesus now began his mission. John was arrested and beheaded shortly after for the fault of being far ahead of his time. Immediately after baptism, Jesus retired to the silence of the mountains nearby and passed through a tense inner struggle and, coming out victorious over the 'temptation', moved to the coast of the lake of Galilee to enter into the period of his public ministry.

His Spiritual Mission

The first act of this ministry was the gathering of his disciples; there is something very fascinating in this process, in the call he sends forth and the response he receives; its simplicity and directness are charming. Finding Peter and his brother Andrew, both fishermen, casting their nets into the sea, Jesus went up to them and summoned: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him' (*ibid.*, IV. 19-20). Two other fishermen, James and John, he similarly gathered, and later Matthew, the customs clerk, and the rest of the twelve.

This is something we understand well in India: the tremendous magnetism of a spiritual teacher who finds and gathers round him those who are to be his spiritual intimates and the bearers of his message, the pure ones who have the capacity to share his inmost thoughts and relieve his loneliness. Buddha, after his illumination, went to Vāraṇāsī to gather his five disciples. We are reminded, in this connexion, of the words which Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86) spoke at the close of the period of his *sādhanā*, describing the longing of his heart for his disciples:

'A mother never longed so intensely for the sight of her child, nor a friend for his companion, nor a lover for his sweetheart, as I longed for them. Oh! it was

indescribable. Shortly after this period of yearning, the devotees began to arrive' (Swami Nikhilananda, *Ramakrishna, Prophet of New India*, p. 38).

Jesus now began to move about with his disciples, preaching the kingdom of heaven in the synagogues and performing various miracles of healing. But the congregations of the synagogues could not understand or appreciate him. They were certainly looking for the advent of a heavenly kingdom; but it was one largely political in complexion, tribal in scope, and intended to free the Jews from the hated Romans. One who claimed to be the promised Messiah had to fulfil this national demand. Jesus did claim to be the Messiah in direct and indirect references, but made only vague mystical references to the kingdom. He merely incurred the displeasure of the orthodox. But the masses followed him, fascinated by his personality and the miracles he wrought. Although he delivered his message in the famous 'Sermon on the Mount' to his disciples alone, it has provided spiritual nourishment to vast masses of mankind these nineteen hundred years.

The Sermon on the Mount

The 'Sermon on the Mount' expounds moral and spiritual ideas which are universal; they do not breathe the air of Jewish exclusiveness. They are the G.C.M. of the inner life of spirit, and will not sound strange to any spiritual seeker nourished on the ideas of the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. But it sounded strange to the ears of those who listened. There was newness in them, and there was a ring of authority in their utterance. It was not an authority deriving from any sacerdotal office; it took its force from inner realization. The New Testament has put it pithily: 'And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes' (Matthew, VII. 28-29).

The Sermon was a tremendous departure from the accepted ideas of the time; it was a mighty attempt to release the life of the spirit from the shackles of tribal morality and dogmatic religion. Old familiar words were used, but they were given new meanings; old moral codes were invoked, but they received an inward content and direction; old familiar hopes were mentioned, only to be filled with new spiritual meanings. And all these innovations had been prefaced with a 'but *I* say unto you', conveying a sense of authority. It was no wonder that the people were astonished at his doctrine.

There is a continuity from John to Jesus. John preached baptism unto repentance with a view to preparing man for the kingdom of

heaven; and Jesus took up this idea, in spite of its background of Jewish dogma, for, as he expressed it, he came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets. Repentance is based on the Jewish dogma of original sin; but whatever be the dogma behind it, it has its significance for spiritual life, in so far as it initiates the inner cleansing process; it leads to humility and receptivity of heart. As a moral act, it steels the mind against further evil doings. Without this resolve, no spiritual life is possible. But repentance is not everything; there are further steps to be taken before we can achieve the kingdom of heaven which, though near at hand, is yet far. It was these further steps that Jesus elucidated in his impressive Sermon.

Jesus opened the Sermon with a reference to repentance and its fruit: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (*ibid.*, V. 3).

But he struck a new note thereafter: not only was the kingdom of heaven at hand, but it was also *within* us—not outside; and we *can* realize it. This was a revolutionary conception that spiritual realization was to be had then and there, *in this very life*, here and now, not after death. And so he added: 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall *see* God' (*ibid.*, V. 8).

Thus purity of heart is the one condition for spiritual realization. It follows that everything else—acts of piety, morality, and social service—is but the means to attain this purity. This was entirely new language for his listeners—that we can *realize* God, become intimate with Him, and be blessed in this very life. *And here we have his unique message, the message of a spiritual religion of inward realization.* We are reminded of the ringing proclamation of the Upaniṣads:

Ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ—'The Self, O dear, must be realized' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II. 4.5);

Tam akratuḥ paśyati vīta-śoko dhātuprasādāt mahimānam ātmanaḥ —'He who is humble and pure realizes the glory of the Ātman and becomes free from grief' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. 20).

The farthest that Judaism had gone till then was to make man hear the voice of God; the idea of *seeing* God was thus an innovation which, with all its corollaries, was the main point of departure from the prevailing tribal god and faith. These corollaries are set forth in the succeeding passages dealing with the inwardness of morals, rituals, and pietistic acts, indicating the clear departure from the old in the emphatic words in refrain: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old

time.... *But I say unto you.*' The moral and ethical demands of a spiritual religion are far more exacting than those of a socio-political faith; hence he said: 'That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew, V. 20).

The departure became complete when he exhorted his listeners to strive for perfection: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (*ibid.*, V. 48).

This exhortation sounds strangely Vedāntic in significance. He then wound up the Sermon with a ringing statement on the need for the *practice* of the teaching, and not merely the hearing of it or believing in its truth, and illustrated the nature of wisdom and folly through a beautiful parable:

'Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it' (*ibid.*, VII. 24-27).

How akin this sounds to the exhortation of an earlier teacher, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in our own country !

'Those devotees who practise, in a converging life endeavour, this teaching of mine which fulfils all righteousness and leads to immortality, endowed with faith and a godward passion, are extremely dear to me' (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, XII. 20).

Here is a refreshing statement of the scope and goal of religion. The emphasis is on *sādhanā*, the *practice* of religion, with a view to attaining *anubhava*, realization. 'Religion is realization; it is being and becoming', in the words of Swami Vivekananda; it is character. It is not a cosy belief, but an adventure, something that sets the soul on fire, the carrying, as Jesus would say, of one's cross by oneself and not by proxy. It reminds us of Buddha's last words addressed to his dear disciple, Ānanda:

'Be a lamp upto yourself, O Ānanda; depend not on any external refuge: work out your emancipation with diligence.'

Perfection is a complete transformation of character through the realization of the kingdom of heaven which is within. *It is the fruit of lived religion.* This conception frees religion from all elements that

are magical and misty, materialistic and primitive. The strength that comes to a life through the realization of the ever-present Ātman within is something palpable. It is the rock-bottom of experience, which ensures steadiness of wisdom and character; it is the *sthitaprajña*, the life of steady wisdom, of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

The Healing Touch of Jesus

With the 'Sermon on the Mount' closed, once for all, the chapter of obscurity in the life of Jesus. Multitudes thronged round him, many of them victims of serious bodily and mental ailments, some of whom were endowed with deep faith in his spiritual power. They sought his blessing which was given, and they were cured. Some he touched; some just touched the hem of his garment; and some he just blessed saying, 'Be thou whole'. In all cases the effect was immediate. Jesus had the power within him, and he had compassion in his heart. But he did not like to exhibit this power or make it known wide. Accordingly, he exhorted the cured not to make a fuss about it. He asked them to mollify orthodoxy by making customary gifts to the synagogue in thankfulness for the healing. He gave the credit for all healing to the faith in the heart of the healed: 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.'

From now on, the events in his life move ever faster; and the shadow of tragedy, arising from the conflict with established religious authority, becomes darker and darker, until it reaches its final act in the crucifixion. But within this brief period of about two and a half years, we are introduced to events and episodes and personalities which have the touch of the immortal about them. They form the bright and cheerful scenes of an otherwise gloomy drama. We find Jesus moving from place to place, a picture of alertness and vigour, compassion and humanity, humour and laughter. We watch him in his dealings with the rich and the poor, the good and the sinful, the lowly and the lost; we are amazed at the poise, self-assurance, and versatility which he manifests in these varying situations.

Mary and Martha

The touching episode of Mary and Martha of Bethany has entered into world literature. The two sisters were deeply devoted to Jesus. The death of their brother Lazarus made them grief-stricken. They heard that Jesus was in the neighbourhood. Martha went out to call Jesus. She expressed her faith in his divinity, and then rushed home to call her sister, Mary, saying. 'The Master is come and called for thee' (John, XI. 28).

Both then rushed out to welcome the Master. Mary fell at his feet weeping. Jesus was moved:

'When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled....Jesus wept' (*ibid.*, XI. 33, 35).

He then went up to the grave of Lazarus and, after deeply communing with God for a moment, commanded Lazarus to come forth. And forthwith he rose alive.

In another touching scene, we find the same Mary doing a loving service to Jesus at Bethany, just before his last supper.

She brought an alabaster box of precious ointment and poured it on the head of Jesus, as he sat at his meal. When a disciple protested at the waste and said that it could better have been utilized to help the poor, Jesus made the significant and ominous remark:

'Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her' (Matthew, XXVI. 10-13).

There was also a third occasion when the two sisters met Jesus; it is a story full of mystical import. They received Jesus into their house. Mary was sitting at his feet and hearing his inspiring words; whereas Martha was busy in the kitchen. She complained to Jesus about her sister Mary:

'Lord dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke, X. 40-42).

Divine Life Demands Total Renunciation

During his wanderings in Judea, Jesus was approached by a certain man who knelt before him and, addressing him 'Good Master', asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus reprimanded him for calling him good, saying that none except God deserved the epithet, and asked him to keep the ten moral commandments. The man replied that these he had been keeping from his youth; he would like to know what else he should do.

'Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

'And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for the great possessions' (Mark, X. 21-22).

Seeing him thus go away, Jesus made the famous remark that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

This episode illustrates the distance that separates mere social ethics from divine life, and proclaims total renunciation as the watchword of the latter. The young man of the story went away grieving; but the story itself has inspired many a young man and woman of later generations, of the type of St. Antony and others, to fulfil to the letter the demands of Jesus and scale the heights of holiness and blessedness.

The Compassionate Jesus

The compassion of a divine incarnation and his power to redeem shine remarkably through two anecdotes, which also reveal the way purity views sin.

A Pharisee, Simon by name, invited Jesus for a meal one day; Jesus accepted and sat down to eat. A woman in the city, who was a sinner, hearing that Jesus was in the house of the Pharisee, brought an alabaster box of ointment and washing his feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair, kissed them and anointed them with the ointment.

Seeing this, the Pharisee was angry that Jesus should have allowed a sinner to do all this. Jesus, addressing Simon, said:

'There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace' (Luke, VII. 41-50).

Jesus was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem. The scribes and Pharisees brought before Jesus a woman taken in adultery and, announcing that, according to Mosaic law, she had to be stoned, asked him for his opinion, just to entangle him unawares. The Gospels give a fine picture of Jesus stooping down and writing on the ground with his finger, as if he did not hear them. But when they pestered him, he lifted up his head and, turning to them, declared:

'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even upto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, 'Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?' She said, 'No man, Lord'. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more' (John, VIII. 7-11).

The power behind the words 'Thy sins are forgiven' is the power of God working through an incarnation only; it is beyond the reach even of saints. This divine power working through Jesus is specially revealed in his famous declaration:

'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matthew, XI. 28-30).

We are reminded of an identical promise given by an earlier incarnation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

'Renounce all your duties and take refuge in me alone; I shall redeem you from all sins; grieve not' (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, XVIII. 66).

Jesus' Teachings

Trials and tribulations began to confront Jesus. Various attempts were made by the priests to entangle him in some remark of treason or blasphemy. But his intelligence and ready wit baffled their attempts. A group of priests brought a Roman coin and asked him whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not; on his asking whose image and superscription the coin bore, the priests answered that it was of Caesar. Then he answered, to the amazement of the clever priests:

'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's' (Matthew, XXII. 21).

Then a lawyer came forward to entangle him with a clever question, as to what constituted the great commandment in the law; *and*

the world got in the answer of Jesus a compressed statement of spirituality and social ethics:

'Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (*ibid*, XXII. 37-40).

This great enunciation gave rise to a very practical question: Who is my neighbour? In answering it, through the famous parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus contrasted the universality of the spirit and temper of spiritual ethics with the narrow and parochial temper of creedal and sectarian morals.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves; they stripped him of his raiment, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. A priest and a Levite chanced to pass that way; seeing the helpless man, they, instead of going to his help, went away by the opposite side of the road. Narrating the above, Jesus continued:

'But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee' (Luke, X. 33-35).

After narrating this, Jesus asked his questioner as to who really behaved as neighbour to the one that fell among the thieves. 'And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise' (*ibid.*, X. 37).

In between the harassments of the priests, Jesus did a lot of teaching: first to the simple masses and then to his close disciples. To the former he spoke in parables, making thereby difficult subjects easy to comprehend. Each one of these parables, like the parable of the good Samaritan, elucidates one or other aspect of his central theme, the life of godliness. Some of them, like the parable of the Ten Virgins, are full of mystical significance. He spoke to the disciples about the service of man, the poor, the sick, the homeless, the naked, and the forlorn, in the spirit of the worship of God:

'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me' (Matthew, XXV. 40).

He charged the disciples to go forth and preach his gospel among the people, and he prescribed a way of life and behaviour for the prea-

chers, which breathes the spirit of renunciation, dependence on God, non-possession, peacefulness, and humility, echoing the exhortation of Buddha to his disciples. *It is a tragedy of history that subsequent Christian preachers, unlike the Buddhists, have largely strayed from the strait and narrow path shown by their great Master.*

To his chosen disciples, Jesus gave his spiritual teachings directly and without the aid of parables. He revealed to them, a few days before his death, his true personality as the Christ, the anointed One, and charged them not to tell it to anyone else till the day of resurrection:

'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father....Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works' (John, XIV. 6-10).

He asked all those who would choose to follow him to be prepared to deny themselves and take up their crosses; it was not a cosy and comfortable religion that he offered, but a heroic path of adventure, a life of total renunciation in the love of God:

'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Matthew, XVI. 25-26).

The Betrayal and the Trial

The preachings, movements, and miracles of Jesus had stirred up by now a good deal of hostility from the priests, who now began to take steps to apprehend him and bring him before the law. They picked up stray bits of remarks made by Jesus and built up a case for blasphemy against the faith. The tragedy deepened with the last supper in the company of all his disciples, when Jesus made the ominous remark that one of his disciples would betray him and hinted at Judas. When Peter protested against it, he made the still more ominous remark that even Peter would deny him thrice before the next morning. Feeling the end near, and with a heavy heart, Jesus moved to Gethsemane and sat down to pray, asking Peter and two of his other disciples to watch and pray in the meantime. But Peter fell asleep, and Jesus, annoyed, rebuked him:

'What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (*ibid.*, XXVI. 40-41).

This happened three times; but the third time he allowed them to sleep and, after prayer, waited for the betrayal by Judas, who had been bribed by the priests to do so with thirty pieces of silver. Judas came up soon after with the priests and soldiers, and betrayed Jesus to them through a kiss of the Master's hand for identification, and the soldiers took Jesus into custody. Peter, in defence, cut off the ear of a soldier with his sword. Jesus reproved him saying:

'Put up again thy sword, into its place: for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword' (*ibid.*, XXVI. 52).

Henceforth, it was mounting pathos to the end. Jesus was taken to the high priest, Caiaphas; all the disciples deserted him. Peter, however, attended the trial from a distance, and during the trial he denied thrice, before passers-by who asked, that he had anything to do with Jesus. The operations of an inexorable fate left Peter sad and weeping. The priests decided, though without much evidence, that Jesus was guilty, and they hauled him up before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

Pilate asked Jesus whether he took himself to be the king of the Jews. Jesus remained silent, which amazed Pilate. Pilate found Jesus was not guilty, but the priests demanded his crucifixion amid tumultuous scenes. Pilate, finding no other way, yielded to their demand and, washing his hands with some water symbolically, said that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, whom he referred to as a just man. The people assembled there cried out that they were willing to take his blood on themselves and on their descendants. What a tragic statement, and what tragic consequences have followed therefrom ever since !

The Crucifixion and the Resurrection

The doleful procession, with Jesus adorned with a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns and carrying his heavy cross, proceeded to Golgotha. He was attended by soldiers who jeeringly hailed him king of the Jews and spat upon and smote him; then they removed the scarlet robe and put his own raiment upon him and nailed him on the cross on the mount of Calvary between two thieves similarly crucified. They placed over his head a taunting signboard: This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

After hours of intense agony, Jesus cried with a loud voice:

'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matthew, XXVII. 46), and then in an appealing voice:

'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'(Luke, XXIII. 34).

It was a Friday. The mother of Jesus was a witness of this pathetic scene from a distance; with her was her sister and Mary Magdalene and John. Before he finally expired, Jesus pointed to his mother and asked John to treat her as his own mother, and asked her to treat him as her own son. After this expression of tenderness, Jesus bent his head and expired, after nine hours of intense torture.

The tragedy was complete. Forsaken by the world, for whose redemption he had come, Jesus ended his earthly career when he was hardly thirty-three. But his spirit triumphed in the resurrection. Joseph of Arimathea, a silent but influential devotee, took his body for burial with the permission of the Roman governor. He laid the body in a new tomb and, placing a heavy stone over it, departed. The two Marys, however, remained near the sepulchre. After three days, on Monday, they had a shaking spiritual experience; and they learnt about the resurrection of Jesus through the angels. They rushed to convey the news to the disciples at Galilee in fear and joy. On the way, the radiant form of Jesus appeared before them, and they fell at his feet and worshipped him. Directed by him, they informed the disciples of the glad tidings, and Jesus appeared to all of them on a hill in Galilee, blessed them, spoke to them, commanding them to teach the gospel to all the world and, before disappearing, assured them that he would be with them always unto the end of the world.

In this moving story of the resurrection, there is one touching episode relating to one of the disciples, Thomas, who was absent at that time. When they related the vision to him, he refused to believe them until he had a direct experience. Exactly eight days after, Jesus again revealed himself to all of them, including Thomas, and invoked his peace on them. Calling to Thomas, Jesus asked him to feel his wounds with his fingers, which he did in amazement and sorrow and joy. Jesus admonished him to believe and not be faithless, and added a significant remark:

'Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed' (John, XX. 29).

As a sequel to the above episode, the expression 'doubting Thomas' passed into the world's vocabulary of banter.

It is interesting for us to recall the tradition that our country first heard the message of Jesus from this direct disciple of his, and a group of Christians of our Kerala State trace their spiritual descent from him.

These are, then, some of the salient features of the life and teachings of this arresting personality, whom the Hindus spontaneously recognize as a divine incarnation. As we have seen, his life is full of sweetness and tenderness, tragedy and pathos; it is spiritually inspiring. *To us in India, however, the end is just a tragedy, bereft of any special spiritual beauty.* It is the life that is, in our view, spiritually beautiful and elevating. The deaths of our own spiritual heroes, Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, were near tragic; but we did not build our religion on them. India treats the manner of their deaths most casually, while she seeks to build her religion on their lives and teachings.

It is no wonder that ordinary people do not understand the depths of a divine incarnation's personality; they can at best appreciate his miracles, while missing his character. Too much insistence on these miracles converts religion into a sort of magic, and degrades the content of the life-giving message to cheapness. All great teachers, including Jesus, therefore, discountenanced them. The difficulty of recognizing an incarnation has been well expressed by Srī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*; only a few can understand him; the rest will deride him or just ignore him:

Avajānanti māṁ mūḍhā mānuṣīṁ tanumāśritaṁ;
paraṁ bhāvamajānanto mama bhūtamaheśvaram—

'Fools deride me when invested with a human body, not being able to grasp my transcendent nature as the supreme Lord of all beings' (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, IX. 11).

The trial and crucifixion of Jesus is the measure of the intolerance and folly of the contemporary society. There is pathos in the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem:

'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!'(Matthew, XXIII. 37).

Persecution is the outcome of intolerance, which is a social malady arising out of the limitations of its *Weltanschauung*. India was, and is, fortunately free from this malady, thanks to its generous spiritual outlook which finds beautiful elucidation in several of our sacred books:

'Knowers of Truth declare that it is the same non-dual Reality that is spoken of as Brahman (Absolute) by the philosophers, as Parama-Ātman (Supreme Self) by the mystics, and as Bhagavān (God) by the devotees'—

Vadanti tat tattvavidaḥ tattvaṃ yat jñānam advayam;
Brahmeti Paramātmeti Bhagavān iti śabdyate (Bhāgatvata, I. 2.11).

The New Movement

To teach the world faster than it can learn is to court disaster, as Bertrand Russell has put it. The teachings of Jesus relating to the kingdom of God and the resurrection were just incomprehensible to most of his hearers. There is the typical instance of the Pharisees demanding Jesus to state when the kingdom of God should come. Jesus answered:

'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you' (Luke, XVII. 20-21).

This statement that the kingdom of God is within us can hardly be squared with the dogma of the innate vileness of human nature. How beautifully have the Upaniṣads expressed the above sentiment of Jesus:

Na sandṛśe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya,
na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam;
Hṛdā manīṣā manasābhiklipto
ya etadviduramṛtāste bhavanti—

'The form of the Self is not an object of vision;
None can behold Him with the fleshy eye;
One can know Him when, by constant meditation
And free from doubt,
He is revealed by the heart.
Those who know thus become immortal.'

(*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, VI. 9)

The crucifixion was a tragedy of the first magnitude; *but a greater tragedy was the way it was handled.* Woven into the prevailing dogmas, it slowly became central to the new movement. The man of joy, which Jesus undoubtedly was in real life, became transformed into the man of sorrows, in dogma. We may find a forbidding austerity in John the Baptist; but the Son of Man, as he himself has said, came eating and drinking, trailing clouds of humour and laughter. By transforming him into a man of sorrow, dogma has helped to turn his religion into grim and cheerless aspects, with serious consequences for the emotional life of its followers. Only a few great saints have been able to penetrate through this spiritual heaviness. 'A sad nun is a bad nun', wrote St. Theresa; and she exclaimed: 'O Lord, save us from sullen saints!'

The dogma of one man's sin affecting all humanity gave rise to its logical corollary of the dogma of one man's blood washing away the

sins of all; such an approach led inevitably to a chain reaction of such tragedies involving the lives of Stephen and Joseph, Peter and Paul, immediately after, and of countless other good and noble and innocent souls, thereafter. The theory that the blood of the martyr is the seed of the Church developed out of this dogma; and, in place of calm reason and generous love, frenzy, fanaticism, intolerance, and bigotry gripped the propagation of the life-giving message of Jesus down the centuries, destroying as many lives as it undoubtedly helped to build, with groups interchanging places as persecutor and victim.

It is interesting to speculate how the message would have spread, like a little leaven leavening the whole bread, from one good soul to another in comparative peace and goodwill, if the divine life and sublime teachings of Jesus had found the central place, instead of the popular and striking dogmas of 'the scapegoat' and 'the atonement', physical resurrection and the second advent, earthly kingdom, and the imminence of the Day of Judgement. These dogmas were purely tribal in their scope, including the prevalent concept of the monotheistic god. They were the nurseries of contemporary Jewish patriotism and national cohesion, sectarian intolerance and political frenzy.

This fettering, in cast-iron dogmas, of the universal message of Jesus—the ideas of the indwelling divinity, of divine grace, universal ethics, and spiritual realization—caused the distortion of its universality through bigotry and intolerance, and the dilution of its peace and love content with hatred, violence, and war.

Judaism represents an impressive human movement of ethical fervour and faith in the divine; but its scope was severely limited to the Jewish community which, in response to the challenge of a hostile world, had tightened its moods and ways, life and laws. The radiant faith in a living God and the laws and commandments which nursed that faith in the hearts of its people, made it the only steady spiritual island in the sea of the moral and religious confusions of the Roman world. As such, it had justification for its faith in its world mission; it was also fitted to be the nursery of the new message of John and Jesus, which had brought with it the vision, the energy, and the character to translate that faith into reality. The only impression that the Gospels warrant us to carry is that Jesus meant his movement to be at first a deepening and, eventually, a broadening of his people's heritage. He took in much before he gave out in ample measure; he came to fulfil and not to destroy 'the law and the prophets'. Here was an attempt at a lofty spiritual synthesis by an equally lofty spiri-

tual character. But history records the tragedy of its failure; the word 'fulfil' was slowly interpreted, not in its spiritual sense as meant by Jesus, but in its prevailing socio-political significance; and this not merely by the Jews, but also by the new movement, which led to the dissatisfaction of Jews against the movement with its tragic consequences, on the one hand, and the strait-jacketing of the soaring spirit of the new movement itself in the 'letter' of the dogmas of the old faith, on the other.

The new movement thus began as an uneasy combination of the universal and the tribal, the spiritual and the dogmatic, the peaceful and the passionate. The latter elements in their original context, which was consciously parochial and limited, were constructive and creative; but in their new context of the universal, they became largely negative and destructive. The former elements, however, became the source of the high spiritual, mystical, and humanitarian temper of the new movement. The history of Christianity, in its twin records of persecution, violence, and war, on the one side, and lofty mysticism, moral passion, and humanitarianism on the other, bears the impress of this inner division, which also explains its recurrent conflicts with science. A successful synthesis needs the guidance of an adequate *Weltanschauung,* which was not available at the time. *The successful synthesis of thought elements, each one of which is vital and powerful, flowering as they do from human experience at various levels—the ethical passion of Judaism, the mystical and humanitarian fervour of Christianity, and the rational temper of science—calls for the guidance of a philosophy or world-view such as that of Vedānta, which is not afraid of any aspect of experience, but seeks truth in all of them with zestful detachment and devotion.*

It is against this background that we view with hope the future of Indian Christianity. Under the guidance of the philosophy of Vedānta, the Christian message in India can achieve that synthesis by which it will flow as an entirely constructive force with its universal elements functioning free in the spirit of the universal, and its dogmatic elements digested and retained to accord with the spirit of the universal and human.

Our people have the genius, inherent and active, to appreciate a truly spiritual message; our minds are hospitable to spiritual ideas, however new or startling they may be. *The message of Jesus and his life divine have found their lodgement in the Indian soul, through the irresistible appeal of their beauty and charm.* It is our earnest hope

that the Christian message, passing through Indian experience, will bear in its look a new charm and force of tolerance and gentleness, peace and fellowship, capturing thus the Master's spirit *in full.*

Conclusion

The gospel of Jesus is a gospel of spiritual redemption. That gospel has a meaning only when we feel the bondage of worldliness irksome and heavy, and seek for freedom in the freedom of God. There is the assurance given by the Master that we shall then get what we seek. To ask and seek and knock is our share, and to give and reveal and open is the Lord's. That is the mood and attitude in which we adore Christ. That is the Hindu way of acceptance and assimilation.

ŚAṄKARA AND THE CHARACTER OF HIS GREATNESS

WE HAVE gathered here this evening to celebrate the birthday of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. I do not propose to dwell at length on the life of Śaṅkara except in so far as it helps to illustrate the main theme of my speech—the character of his greatness. As for that, the life of Śaṅkara, in its merely outward bodily incidents, may be told in a paragraph. But the quantity and quality of thought and achievement that he packed into the short span of his life of thirty-two years have earned for him a place among the world's immortals. Today our minds are straggered at the thought that so much could be achieved by one single individual in so short a time. It speaks volumes for the burning motives within him moving him to work incessantly for human betterment and welfare.

Conscious of a great message that he was to deliver and the mission that he was to fulfil in this country, we find Śaṅkara, while yet a boy, leaving his home with a firm resolve to bend all his energies and resources towards that end. If we are to appreciate his work, we have to capture an understanding of the climate of thought in which he lived and functioned. He is a remarkable specimen of Indian humanity of those times. If we can get a close view of these two things—the environment and the personality—we shall be able to assess the type of work done by him and see whether we have any lesson to learn from his life and work. Possessed of extraordinary powers, this young boy, highly intelligent and deeply conscious of his mission, has worked wonders in the cultural, philosophical, and religious fields of Indian life.

We can know and appreciate better the great work that Śaṅkara has done by a consideration of the background of contemporary historical conditions. At that time, there were various conflicting systems of thought in India, and the condition that prevailed can be best characterized as nebulous. Politically as well as socially, philosophically as well as religiously, there was no central rallying point from which men could view the entire panorama of Indian thought and say, 'Here is the unity of India'. The several systems of thought were narrow and self-sufficient and had nothing to do with each other. That is why I said that our thought and religious life then were nebulous. The country was divided into various sects and creeds and they only paid lip allegiance to the Vedas; even this was thoughtless and uncritical.

Politically, as it has happened so often in the history of India, and let us hope it will not happen in future, the country was divided into a congeries of little states. On the death of the last Buddhist sovereign, Harṣa, who had brought about some sort of political unity of India by bringing these states under his empire, the political equilibrium was disturbed, and Hindusthan again became divided into small states fighting with each other without any common loyalty to unite them. Thus politically, philosophically, culturally, and religiously there was no central rallying point. It was at such a time that the master mind of Śaṅkara set to work to produce unity in the field of religion, culture, and philosophy, leaving the political aspect of it to be worked out by future generations. But even what he had undertaken was a gigantic task for a single individual.

We find clearly from a study of Śaṅkara's career that his purpose was to reduce to unity and harmony, under the hegemony of Vedānta, the multiplicity of conflicting thought systems, without destroying the integrity of the prevalent faiths. He could have brought everything to a dead dull level of uniformity, but he did not do that; for it militated against his idea of the richness of diversity in the world of faiths. Unity was his aim and not uniformity—unity in diversity. Diversity connotes richness. But diversity, when it destroys the central unifying cord, becomes chaotic and an enemy of all progress and well-being of a community. Therefore, the purpose of all the great thinkers in this country has been, and is, to preserve the variety and to subordinate it to an overriding unity. The operation of this idea has created harmony out of all the diverse thoughts and faiths in this land instead of reducing everything to a single uniform faith at the point of the sword, as has happened in some other countries.

It is a federation of faiths that Śaṅkara established through a struggle based on reason and free discussion designed to appeal to the heart and mind of the people. As such, he fully deserved the title of '*Ṣaṇmata-sthāpana-ācārya*' (the teacher who established six religions) conferred on him by a grateful people. This is what we get out of the work of Śaṅkara. There were myriads of faiths justifying themselves through appeals to varying shades of logic and revelation, but there was no loyalty to a fundamental principle which could be considered to be a mediating element between sect and sect and party and party. Śaṅkara tried to introduce this mediating element between these, and he found it in the great philosophy of Vedānta which proclaimed as ultimate Reality a principle that is personal as well as impersonal, immanent as well as transcendent.

In Śaṅkara we find that intense sympathy, a desire to understand other points of view, and a patient effort at critical appreciation of thoughts and things. With an iron resolve attuned to a deep affection and loyalty for the people and the culture of the country, and with a strong conviction that he was born to strengthen the one and enhance the other, we find him taking up this problem with a firm determination to produce cosmos out of chaos in the world of culture and in the mind of man in India. And a sustained struggle of a lifetime brings to India a measure of unity, harmony, and order in religion, thought, and culture which is a record unparalleled in the history of man.

There have been great men who have fought for great causes. All over the world there have been great heroes. In Mohammed Bin Kasim we have the example of a courageous youth possessing the heroic touch. There is something to be admired in a young lad of sixteen marching forth from his home-town in Arabia in quest of adventure and conquering a province like Sind with the help of a few companions. We have again Napoleon who marched his army across the Alps and fought and defeated the Austrians in Italy. We have many such examples in our own history. But as contrasted with all these stands the brilliant example of Śaṅkara. A single individual, whose only companion was his glowing spirituality, vast intellect, and deep sympathy, going the length and breadth of India and conquering its mind and heart is something unique in history—even in Indian history. He captured both the intellects and the hearts of men. He established an empire of the spirit, of love and of lofty spiritual idealism. From the example of Śaṅkara we can picture the greatness of a person who sways the world in this manner. It is such type of leaders that India, nay, the world, needs badly today.

The environment that obtained at the time of Śaṅkara is of interest to us today. Those were times when men paid homage to intellect and character. Those were days when men of culture and intellect and the rare ones with new ideas were respected all over the country. In a sense this has been so throughout our history. All fights were on the intellectual level, on the ideological level. When we think of those days, we feel that we need today to recapture that idealism and learn again to settle our quarrels not by breaking heads but by breaking wits. It speaks of the high culture of a society where problems are solved not by the sword but by discussion. It was this democratic attitude that prevailed at the time of Śaṅkara. People were invited to hear the exposition of a new idea and the subsequent discussion saw the opposition of idea to idea and the meeting of argument by argument. We have, out of these clashes of ideas, the emergence of a rational philosophy. We find, at the time of Śaṅkara, people's minds ever ready to receive new ideas; there was an intellectual receptivity to truth.

This attitude and mood is the high watermark of culture. We sadly miss that today. We try to impose an idea by the force of the sword and not by an appeal to the intellect and understanding. It is difficult to spread an idea in the latter way. But the former way—that of the sword—is unworthy of a cultured and civilized people—a way which, fortunately, has been rarely tried in India. Therefore, most teachers and leaders in India have resorted to a third and easier way—an appeal to the emotions of the people. Their appeal was to the feeling and not to the understanding. This method we find very much popular among the political leaders today. At its best it no doubt produces fine loyalty and deep enthusiasm for a cause; but at its worst it expresses itself in fanaticism and mutual destruction. But the most enduring appeal is that which affects the intellect, the mind of a people, and which, through its inherent truth and beauty, gradually penetrates to the heart, producing deep convictions and rational faiths. This method has been tried by very few in the world, and amongst those who have tried, and tried successfully, one is Buddha and the other is Śaṅkara. Usually, the masses can be appealed to through their emotions only. But Śaṅkara is an exception to this general rule; though an intellectual of a rare order, he has appealed to both the heart and the intellect of men. We have in Śaṅkara a great intellectual and at the same time one who commanded the emotional allegiance of the masses. Today in Hindustan, if there is one teacher of the historic period who commands the allegiance of both the intellectuals and the masses, it is Śaṅkara. Yet, most of his writings are very abstruse and cannot be easily understood. But his other writings, consisting of soul-stirring

devotional songs and hymns, are there. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, referring in deep appreciation to this striking aspect of Śaṅkara's work, remarks (*Glimpses of World History*, Letter 44):

'Śaṅkaracārya's record is a remarkable one. ... The whole country is stirred up intellectually by Śaṅkara's books and commentaries and arguments. Not only does he become the great leader of the Brāhmin class, but he seems to catch the imagination of the masses. It is an unusual thing for a man to become a great leader chiefly because of his powerful intellect, and for such a person to impress himself on millions of people and on history. Great soldiers and conquerors seem to stand out in history. They become popular or are hated, and sometimes they mould history. Great religious leaders have moved millions and fired them with enthusiasm, but always this has been on the basis of faith. The emotions have been appealed to and have been touched.

'It is difficult for an appeal to the mind and to the intellect to go far. Most people unfortunately do not think; they feel and act according to their feelings. Śaṅkara's appeal was to the mind and intellect and to reason. It was not just the repetition of a dogma contained in an old book. Whether his argument was right or wrong is immaterial for the moment. What is interesting is his intellectual approach to religious problems, and even more so the success he gained in spite of this method of approach. ...

'And the great success which met his campaign all over the country in a very short time also shows how intellectual and cultural currents travelled rapidly from one end of the country to another.'

We are moved to admire the people of his time. About one hundred and fifty years before Śaṅkara, the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang came to India and he was struck by the intellectual curiosity of the people of this country, their eagerness for knowledge, readiness to accept new ideas and interest in education. Himself a great scholar, he came here to learn, to slake his thirst for intellectual and spiritual knowledge. That is the kind of atmosphere in which Śaṅkara lived and worked, with nothing but his keen intellect and deep conviction to help him. Whenever such a personality appears in such a context we can expect to find the birth of a mighty ideology capable of changing the thought and life patterns of a people.

Thus, within the course of a few years, we find this man travelling the length and breadth of India to fulfil his mission. He was a traveller in the true sense of the term, ever in contact with nature and man. He was ever on the move, preaching and teaching and uplifting the people wherever he went. Having no desires of his own to satisfy and having nothing to gain for himself—in the words of the great teacher Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose able commentator he becomes, and who said that having nothing to gain for himself he yet worked so that good may come to society—we see Śaṅkara, going from place to place in order to uplift the people, to enlighten them. His teacher had asked him to

go to Vāraṇāsi first to bring harmony in its world of thought. He defeated his opponents in argument at Vāraṇāsi and established the greatness of the Vedānta philosophy on firm rational foundations. From there he went all over the country on foot. What must be the loftiness and intensity of the impulse in the heart of this noble person which could impel him to go from place to place in a vast subcontinent like India, removing the doubts of people, discussing patiently with them on all aspects of philosophy and faith, and bringing order out of the chaotic and nebulous condition of the thought and faith of the country.

This is the greatness of this teacher. He gathered up the scattered cultural and spiritual energies of the people and raised their voltage tenfold. Being a man of intense practicality and possessed of rare organizing abilities, Śaṅkara took steps to ensure the continuity of his great work by setting up ten Orders of monks—the *paramahaṁsa parivrājakas,* a band of roving and teaching monks—and establishing four monastic centres at four corners of India and entrusting them to the care of monks noted for their intellect, character, and vision. The location of these centres—at Sringeri in the south, at Puri in the east, at Dwaraka in the west, and at Badarinath in the north—reveals his far-seeing genius as also his vision of the geographical and cultural unity of India. *Paramahaṁsas* are a class of sannyāsins who are never attached to the world and have nothing to gain for themselves; when they go about as peripatetic teachers they are called *parivrājaka ācāryas.* This is the beautiful expression to describe a person who goes about uplifting society. His detachment makes him a universal man—above the limitations of caste, creed, and sect. With his sympathy unobstructed by physical or mental barriers, he functions as the lover and benefactor of man. The *paramahaṁsas* are free to move about everywhere. They are neither men nor women; neither Hindu nor Muslim; neither Christian nor Vaiṣṇava; neither Śaiva nor Śākta. They are all and above all. They remain uncontaminated, ever purifying others. They are the equal and the free. For, in the memorable words of the *Gītā* (V. 19):

'They, with their minds resting on equality, have conquered relative existence in this very life, since Brahman is perfect and equal; therefore they indeed rest in Brahman.'

But mark the deep humility of this great man who, though outshining his *guru,* Govindapāda, in learning as well as achievement, yet always proclaimed himself in all his works as his disciple: *Śrīmat-paramahaṁsa-parivrājakācārya-Govindabhagavad-pūjyapāda-śiṣya.* In this he typifies the natural humility of the wise man of his philosophy.

Śaṅkara never remained at a place for long; he went about as a peripatetic teacher. And as a result of his ceaseless striving we have the unity of Hinduism and Hindu culture of which we are so proud today. But after 1000 years, today, we are face to face with a more complex situation. To bring unity not only in Hinduism but in India as a whole, in which all religions and cultures can find a harmonious blending, is a task that remains for us to accomplish today. This is the challenge of the present age to the genius of India. The work of synthesis which we have successfully carried on in every epoch of history is there to inspire us, and Śaṅkara's method and manner are there as a guide for us. He was a teacher of unity. His spirit was universal. His mind was inclusive and not exclusive. He taught not merely toleration, but also dynamic acceptance. Herein lies the value of his work to us. Wherever there is emphasis on unity, there is knowledge; its fruit is concord and happiness and beneficence; and wherever there is emphasis on diversity, it is ignorance; and it results in conflict and misery, says Śaṅkara. We need badly today the message of that unity based on understanding and leading to all-round concord.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON GURU GOBIND SINGH

OUR NATION will soon be celebrating the fourth centenary of one of the greatest heroes of our history—Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). He was a mighty personality thrown up by the tumultous socio-political *milieu* of the India of the later Moghuls who had reversed the policy of broad and constructive nationalism of the early Moghuls in favour of a narrow, bigoted, and violent communalism of an intolerant brand of Islam. The cry of distress of millions of Hindus and Sikhs reached the throne of Mercy which sent down in response two great heroes who were also lovers of God and man, Guru Gobind Singh in the Punjab and Shivaji in Maharashtra. The resistance movements organized by the two against the prevailing tyranny were entirely inspired by the spiritual and human motives imparted by two great spiritual teachers—Guru Nānak and Rāmdas.

Guru Nānak and his movement sought to weld Hindus and Muslims into a powerful nation dedicated to the realization of the universal spiritual and human values transcending the prevailing communalisms of sects and creeds and castes. This movement soon gathered strength, and, equally soon, faced fierce opposition from the contemporary Muslim communalism and the Moghul political state. The tragedy which began with Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, continued and reached its highest intensity during the period of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, whose struggles and sacrifices, successes and defeats make him shine as the greatest tragic hero of later Indian history. His character, dedication, intellect, courage, and, above all, compassion, mark him out

as a born leader and saviour; in his life as well as in his defeat and death, he has been a beacon of light and hope to millions of his countrymen.

Swami Vivekananda was a great admirer of Guru Nānak and Guru Gobind Singh. Himself a hero of a rare type whose intellect and character and vision have powerfully influenced the shaping of modern India, Swami Vivekananda saw in Guru Gobind Singh a powerful nation-builder, and greeted him as 'one of the last and one of the greatest heroes of our race'.

Apart from creedal differences, the people of India are one. The word 'Hindu' originally represented this common national stock; and foreigners always referred to the people of India by that name, irrespective of caste and creed. Sir Mohommad Iqbal was proud to proclaim: 'Our Hindustan is the best of all countries. Religion does not teach man to hate each other; we are all Hindis and Hindustan is our (common) country'.

It is instructive for us today to know what Vivekananda said about Guru Gobind Singh sixty years ago. Speaking in Lahore in 1897 on 'The Common Bases of Hinduism', the first of his three lectures there, the Swami, greeting the brave people of the Punjab and eulogising the greatness of Guru Nānak and Guru Gobind Singh, said (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 366):

'This is the land which is held to be the holiest even in holy Āryāvarta; this is the Brahmāvarta of which our great Manu speaks. This is the land from whence arose that mighty aspiration after the Spirit, ay, which in times to come, as history shows, was to deluge the world. This is the land where, like its mighty rivers, spiritual aspirations have arisen and joined their strength, till they travelled over the length and breadth of the world, and declared themselves with a voice of thunder. This is the land which had first to bear the brunt of all inroads and invasions into India; this heroic land had first to bare its bosom to every onslaught of the outer barbarians into Āryāvarta. This is the land which, after all its sufferings, has not yet entirely lost its glory and its strength. Here it was that in later times the gentle Nānak preached his marvellous love for the world. Here it was that his broad heart was opened, and his arms outstretched, to embrace the whole world, not only of Hindus, but of Mohammedans too. Here it was that one of the last and one of the most glorious heroes of our race, Guru Gobind Singh, after shedding his blood, and that of his dearest and nearest, for the cause of religion, even when deserted by those for whom this blood was shed, retired into the South to die like a wounded lion struck to the heart, without a word against his country, without a single word of murmur.'

Towards the end of the same lecture, the Swami, referring to the Indian conception of religion as realization, whose fruit is universal

love and compassion, and paying a special tribute to the greatness of the tenth Guru for his character and vision, said (*ibid.*, pp. 378-80):

'Therefore, take more thought before you go and find fault with others. Let them follow their own path to realisation so long as they struggle to see truth in their own hearts; and when the broad, naked truth will be seen, then they will find that wonderful blissfulness which marvellously enough has been testified to by every seer in India, by every one who has realised the truth. Then words of love alone will come out of that heart, for it has already been touched by Him who is the essence of Love Himself. Then and then alone, all sectarian quarrels will cease, and we shall be in a position to understand, to bring to our hearts, to embrace, to intensely love the very word Hindu, and every one who bears that name. Mark me, then and then alone you are a Hindu when the very name sends through you a galvanic shock of strength. Then and then alone you are a Hindu when every man who bears the name, from any country, speaking our language or any other language, becomes at once the nearest and the dearest to you. Then and then alone you are a Hindu when the distress of anyone bearing that name comes to your heart and makes you feel as if your own son were in distress. Then and then alone you are a Hindu when you will be ready to bear everything for them, like the great example I have quoted at the beginning of this lecture, of your great Guru Gobind Singh. Driven out from this country, fighting against its oppressors, after having shed his own blood for the defence of the Hindu religion, after having seen his children killed on the battlefield—ay, this example of the great Guru, left even by those for whose sake he was shedding his blood and the blood of his own nearest and dearest—he, the wounded lion, retired from the field calmly to die in the South, but not a word of curse escaped his lips against those who had ungratefully forsaken him! *Mark me, every one of you will have to be a Gobind Singh, if you want to do good to your country.* You may see thousands of defects in your countrymen, but mark their Hindu blood. They are the first gods you will have to worship, even if they do everything to hurt you; even if everyone of them sends out a curse to you, you send out to them words of love. If they drive you out, retire to die in silence like that mighty lion, Gobind Singh. Such a man is worthy of the name of Hindu; such an ideal ought to be before us always. All our hatchets let us bury;; send out this grand current of love all round.'

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND UNIVERSAL RELIGION

IT is an undeniable fact of history that one of the most potent factors in the evolution of humanity has been the force which manifests itself as religion and the religious motive. From earliest times it has supplied the motive for social cohesion and social progress. Besides satisfying the individual's spiritual needs, it has also been the power to unite individuals into groups and communities.

Religion : A Curse as well as a Blessing in The Past

But it is a strange paradox that this same impulse which has contributed to human unity and welfare has also been the cause of much strife and disunion among mankind. It seems as though religions are closed systems and the only relation they can have towards one another is that of antagonism. The powers for blessing which they exhibit in their narrow spheres of sect and community turn into curses when applied to the larger world outside. Every system has appealed to the religious susceptibilities of its votaries to goad them either to war, persecution, or murder. Thus some of the most atrocious crimes and inhuman practices in all history have been perpetrated in its name. These are some of the blackest pages of all religious history. Whatever blessing it has conferred in private has thus been nullified in public.

Indian Religious Thought: Its Unique Feature

The only country where religious wars and persecutions have been comparatively negligible is India. This, let us note, is not because there

is no deep religious feeling in India, as some critics would think, to whom love for one's religion is achieved only by hating other religions; neither is it due to any absence of variety in the religious outlook. History shows, and even today it is a fact, that both in point of spiritual fervour and the variety of its expression, India stands foremost in the world. The science of comparative religion tells us that the evolution of religious ideas has been, to a great extent, identical throughout the world. But whereas outside India this evolution stopped at the tribal stage and the monotheistic conception, Indian spiritual genius soared higher and yet higher and discovered the Unity behind all the gods. This is a great landmark in the history of religions in general, for it marks the stage at which religion turns out to be the messenger of *all* peace and *all* blessing to the *whole* of humanity instead of being partially good and partially evil, as it has been in its earlier stages. For India herself, this discovery was momentous; for through this she has been spared from endless travails of religious persecution. This idea carries with it a certain universal outlook, being based on a highly rational philosophy, which later Vedic thought, especially the Upaniṣads, developed into its logical conclusion by discovering the Unity behind all existence.

Sectarianism: Its Evils and Their Remedy

The relationship between religion and religion has been anything but happy. Religions which seemed to have worked well in the places of their birth are found to be failures in their careers outside. Sentiments like love, brotherhood, and peace give place to those of hatred, scorn, and strife. In the name of religion, countries have been devastated, great cultures have been destroyed, and masses of men have been massacred—all with the 'pious' idea of extending the empire of the 'One God'. Little does the fanatical religionist realize that that is not the way to establish the 'Kingdom of Heaven' on earth. There is no doubt that the destruction of old cultures like those of Peru, Mexico, etc. really leaves such a 'Kingdom of Heaven' poorer in spiritual content. The sectarian spirit of religion is manifestly antagonistic to the very spirit of modern times which is scientific through and through, and which appeals not to sects and sections but to humanity at large. Consequently, the prestige of religion itself has suffered much in modern times. If religion is to be a living force in the modern world and contribute its share for the ushering in of a future civilization of humanity, it requires to be restated and cast into rational and scientific moulds. The solidarity of mankind is the ideal for which science stands. The immense possibilities which the scientific advancement of the last three centuries holds in its bosom for the realization of the

great hopes of poets and philosophers of the past ages, require for their consummation a new spirit, a new outlook, and a new message, universal in its appeal, which will mediate between religion and religion on the one hand, and science and religion on the other. Where is this message, this quickening impulse, to come from ? To this insistent question, the eager minds of thinking men, both in East and West, turn towards India and the invaluable treasure of her spiritual and philosophic thought, the Vedānta.

Vedānta : Its Contribution to Indian Thought and Life

This is no audacious claim. We have seen already how Indian thought took a great step towards religious harmony when it discovered the one God of whom all other gods are but manifestations. This is the great idea embodied in the famous verse of the *Ṛig-Veda* (I. 164.46): *Ekaṁ sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is One; sages call It by various names', such as Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, etc. Not only this; no new thought has ever suffered suppression in India—be it in science, religion, or philosophy. Where all knowledge is held as sacred, how is it possible to suppress any aspect of it? The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. 2.4) speaks of the *parā* and *aparā* kinds of knowledge: *Dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yad brahmavido vadanti parā caiva aparā ca.* All sciences including even the holy Vedas are only *aparā* knowledge. Let us note, in this connexion, that *aparā* does not and cannot mean here anything inferior in kind. That knowledge which is derived from human experience in parts and aspects is *aparā*, while that which is the fruit of a study of experience as a whole, of life in its totality, is *parā*. And all knowledge of the *aparā* kind is only an expression of the *parā vidyā*, Philosophy. This is the same as *Brahmavidyā*, Brahman standing for the totality of existence and experience. This is the famous Vedānta philosophy, which is the very kernel and core of Indian culture, the fairest flower of its thought—the one which has given Indian culture its distinctive character and uniqueness. It is the spirit of Vedānta which has moulded all forms of Indian life and which has mediated between sect and sect, imparting to the rich variety of Indian thought its synthetic unity. This is the mesmerism of Indian thought which is slowly gripping the minds of many a serious thinker of the West. Those who speak of Hinduism as a bewildering mass of confused religious and social ideas and practices have not yet grasped Vedānta. To understand India and Hinduism requires, first of all, an intimate acquaintance with the spirit of Vedānta. It is in virtue of this Vedānta that we are enabled to speak of the fundamental unity of India. It will be in virtue of this same Vedānta that we will be enabled not merely to speak about, but achieve, the fundamental unity of humanity itself. And if

religious harmony, social progress, and national solidarity are lacking in present-day India, the quickening impulse must come from this Vedānta alone, for it is the storehouse of all wisdom.

Indian Thought and Sri Ramakrishna

The oneness of all existence is the message which Vedānta teaches. The immediate implication of this message in life and thought is another great idea which seems to run counter to the very spirit of religious sectarianism, but which breathes truly the scientific spirit. As Swami Vivekananda expresses it (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 15):

'Man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth.'

If truth is like a pyramid, the philosophical understanding of Unity is its apex. Viewed from this supreme height, no aspect of life or effort can appear as false or erroneous; for truth itself is the goal of all paths. It is chiefly in the application of this great idea to the pressing problems of modern life that the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are supremely significant. Through them we find Indian thought, especially Vedānta, speaking to the modern world for composing its distractions and ushering in on earth an era of what the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (I. 6) calls *Satyātma prāṇārāmaṁ mana ānandaṁ śānti samṛddham amṛtam*—'Truth, the solace of life and bliss of the mind, exuberant with the wealth of peace and immortality'.

Universalism: Old and New

The idea of universal religion is not something new in the world. There have been two senses in which it has been understood. When a religion steps out of its local boundaries and starts on a career of conquest and annexation, adding new recruits, much in the same way as an empire extends by the accession of new territories, it styles itself a universal religion. Such a religion keeps before itself the alluring ideal of becoming a world-religion sooner or later and believes itself to be the only fit candidate to that estate. The outstanding examples of this type are Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. The last one differs from the other two both in its methods and motives of such extension. Unlike Christianity and Islam, the spread of Buddhism has been singularly characterized by a spirit of peace and non-violence. This is undoubtedly due to the influence of Indian thought wherein Buddhism has its roots and from which it has sprung. Christianity and Islam, on the other hand, have followed a relentless course of

destruction and persecution with the ostensible purpose of 'saving' the 'damned souls'. Now this idea of universal religion is self-destructive. Not through conquest and the use of might is the way to universal religion. It breathes the spirit of the Old Testament, where, when a tribe conquers another tribe, it also destroys the latter's god and imposes its own god over it. It is this same spirit which is working now when in the place of tribes we have alien cultures and religions. And when there are two claimants, both equally strong, zealous and fanatical, this idea of universalism is seen to defeat itself. The fact is, there is a world of difference between the two assertions—'My god is the only true god and you must accept Him' and 'My god and your god are one and the same, differing at best only in name'. When a single religious belief, sincerely held, is disturbed and destroyed, the purpose of universal religion defeats itself.

The second idea of universal religion is seen expressed in the eclecticism of Akbar and some modern sects and movements. Eclecticism is like a bouquet of choice flowers, and like a bouquet it has no enlivening principle in it and is bound to wither away. A still greater criticism is that it has a tendency to become a closed system in itself, which defeats its very purpose. It says, 'There is so much sectarianism in the world; it must be destroyed; so let us start a new sect'. This sounds like the famous wartime sentiment—a war to end all wars. But just as not one among the older sects is entitled legitimately to claim universality, by the same inexorable logic, no new sect also can lay claim to that position.

Sri Ramakrishna's Ideal of Universal Religion

From the previous analysis we have come to this—that no religion can aspire individually to become universal. Unity in variety is the test of universality and not a dull and dead uniformity. In sharp contrast to the previous two conceptions stands Sri Ramakrishna's ideal of universal religion. The very first principle of this ideal is: 'If one religion is true, then by the very same logic all other religions are also true', the verification of which is found in the fact 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'. (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 22). Hence this great teacher left every religion undisturbed; neither did he start a new religion. Yet his life was the greatest vindication of true religion. Nay, it was a veritable Parliament of Religions. He traversed the various paths of the Hindu Faith and attained perfection in each. Not content with this, he lived the life of a pious Christian and a devout Muslim reaching the goal of

the respective paths. As a result of all his experiments, he realized that all religions are at bottom one, they all teach the same truth and lead to the same goal. In his own words (*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna,* 1954, p. 152):

'Many are the names of God, and infinite the forms that help us to know Him. By whatsoever name or form you desire to know Him, in that very form and under that very name will you see Him. Different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God; various and different are the ways that lead to the temple of Mother Kāli at Kalighat (in Calcutta). Similarly various are the paths that take men to the house of the Lord. Every religion is nothing but one of these paths.'

Again (*ibid.*, p. 155):

'As a mother in nursing her sick children gives rice and curry to one, sago and arrowroot to another, and bread and butter to a third, so the Lord has laid out different paths for different men suitable to their natures'.

What follows? To quote Sri Ramakrishna again (*ibid.*, p. 156):

'Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity, a Mohammedan should follow Mohammedanism. For the Hindu--the ancient path, the path of the Āryan *ṛṣis*, is the best. A truly religious man should think that other religions are also so many paths leading to the Truth. We should always maintain an attitude of respect towards other religions.'

Thus, in Sri Ramakrishna's view, the existence of many sects and religions not merely does not stand as obstacles in the way, but actually helps the realization, of universal religion. Let sects multiply until each individual will have a religion for himself. As no two individuals can be exactly similar in respect of taste, outlook, and capacity, so no one religion can perfectly satisfy the needs of all. Thus sects ought to multiply until they coincide with humanity itself. But *sectarianism* will disappear. And with its disappearance will be realized the ideal of a universal religion. In fact, it is already existing, no one has to create it, only each one has to discover it for himself. But its symphony is marred and distorted by the sharp and dissonant note of sectarianism. And sectarianism will disappear only when the world understands this new ideal of religious harmony taught by Sri Ramakrishna, when men will learn to see truth in every sect, when men are taught to sympathize with and appreciate every sincere longing of the human heart, knowing it to be an urge towards light and truth.

Conclusion

This ideal of universal religion accords most with the modern spirit and temper. It enables religions to work for human welfare as co-operating parts instead of remaining as colliding units. And religious fellowship will bring in the sense of human kinship and brotherhood and enable the collective wisdom and effort of man to work towards the evolution of a complete civilization of humanity and a world culture.

SARADA DEVI, THE HOLY MOTHER

IN recent years the name of Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, is becoming increasingly known among the people, and her Birth Centenary Celebrations have hastened the process of lifting the veil of obscurity behind which she had remained hidden so far. This knowledge has roused an amazing degree of spiritual enthusiasm in men and women, and an eagerness to know more about this great woman of our age who, as the disciple and helpmate of *Bhagavān* Sri Ramakrishna, played the roles of wife and nun and mother and *guru* in one.

What is the source of the mesmerism of this name and personality? Even a slight acquaintance with her life will make us realize that this mesmerism does not proceed from any aspects of her personality which the modern world recognizes as significant in women. To all outward appearances the Holy Mother was just ordinary, or even less than ordinary. Rustic in simplicity, almost unlettered, and shy and modest, she was far removed from the educated, self-conscious, active type of modern women. And yet her life finds powerful responsive echoes from the hearts of all men and women, rustic and modern alike. It is evident that she has captured in her life and being the fundamental value which lies at the back of the womanliness of woman and which transcends all distinctions based on mere sex and the attractions thereof. This fact alone explains her universal appeal, representing, as she does, not a mere national or racial type, but the fulfilment of woman as woman, the realization in flesh and blood of the Eternal Feminine.

No greatness has sprung up and got reared and even flowered in greater obscurity and silence than that of Sarada Devi. She was born

in the obscure village of Jayrambati in West Bengal, India, on 22 December 1853. Her advent coincided with the brightening of the family fortunes of her poor but pious parents, who enfolded her in tender love and care. Even as a child she was active and hard-working, and helped her mother in her household chores. She was hardly six when she was betrothed to Sri Ramakrishna who was then twenty-three and who was passing through the stormy period of his spiritual *sādhanās* and realizations. Through this betrothal, little Sarada entered into the current of the life of one who, in his God-intoxication, passed most of his life in divine ecstasies and visions, and the rest in soul-stirring conversations with earnest souls, conveying a message of radiant spirituality to the modern world.

It was a strange marriage; for it remained unconsummated in the physical plane, but found its spiritual consummation in a union of souls on the occasion of the *Ṣoḍaśī-pūjā* in 1872. This was the culminating act of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual *sādhanās* when he worshipped the Divine Mother of the universe in the person of his wife, at the end of which the worshipped and the worshipper entered into deep *samādhi* and realized their spiritual identity. Thenceforth they became as one soul functioning in two bodies, and Sarada Devi assumed her equal role in the fulfilment of the mission of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna himself recognized the spiritual eminence of Sri Sarada Devi. Unlike the general run of spiritual aspirants who forsake all worldly connexions on entering the religious life, for which there is the sanction of religious law and custom behind them, Sri Ramakrishna welcomed Sarada Devi to his side when she, coming of age, came to claim her rights over him. It is a deeply moving episode in their lives, which helps to reveal the stuff of both. Sri Ramakrishna was in Dakshineswar, passing through storms of spiritual moods and experiences; except on the two occasions of his brief visits to his native village, he had not met his wedded wife these twelve long years and seemed apparently to have forgotten her.

Sarada Devi, now about eighteen, entered his room late at night after an arduous journey from her native village in the company of her father. She had her fears in her heart proceeding from the gossip she had heard in her village about the deranged condition of her husband's mind, and her own knowledge of his utter indifference to worldly concerns. But Sri Ramakrishna, though a bit surprised at her sudden arrival, welcomed her very cordially, and accommodated her in his own room for facility of medical attention, and arranged for the medical care of her body which had been ravaged by illness and fatigue during

the long trek. She found in him the same loving divine husband whom she had known during his previous visits to the village. When she had settled down, Sri Ramakrishna one day addressed her thus:

'As for me, the Mother has shown me that She resides in every woman, and so I have learned to look upon every woman as Mother. That is the one idea I can have about you; but if you wish to drag me into the world, as I have been married to you, I am at your service.'

To this challenging question of her divine husband, Sarada Devi gave a straight-forward answer:

'Why should I desire to drag your mind down to the worldly plane? I have come only to help you in your chosen path. I desire only to live with you and serve you and to learn of you.'

This reply of his pure and spotless wife pleased Sri Ramakrishna immensely and he experienced a great accession of spiritual strength. His mission in the world of calling humanity back to an awareness of its inborn divine nature is not to be a lonely struggle; he recognized in Sarada Devi a companion in this noble mission; and within a year of her arrival, he verified the truth of this exalted view of his wife through the *Ṣoḍaśī-pūjā* experience referred to above.

From now on till the end of his life, for full fourteen years, Sarada Devi served the person of Sri Ramakrishna and the large number of disciples and devotees visiting him, with a rare devotion and self-effacement unrivalled in human history. It was also the period of her intense spiritual education under her divine husband. She has referred to this period as a continuous experience of intense bliss. Months together they lived in the same room and slept in the same bed with no trace of carnal thought in the mind of either. Their minds constantly soared in the region of divine awareness and bliss; each stood transfigured to the other; and both became instruments for the working out of the divine will. The immense store of spiritual energy—divine *śakti*—which was generated by the *sādhanās* of Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi contains the promise of the spiritual evolution of humanity which keenly feels its own tragic spiritual poverty in the midst of abundant material wealth.

Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886. Sarada Devi was thirty-three at the time. Having lived in a non-physical plane of relationship with her husband, she did not experience the feeling of widowhood at his death. To her he continued to be a living reality to the end of her days. And for the next thirty-four years she lived a life, complex in its roles and varied in its riches, and withal silent and sweet, that

gained for her the endearing title of 'Śrī Mā', 'the Holy Mother', by which she is known ever since.

The Holy Mother was called upon to be the spiritual guide of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order constituted initially of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda, and to be the *guru* of an ever-increasing circle of spiritually hungry men and women. Her spiritual eminence and the divine power of her personality enabled her to fulfil this mighty role with ease and naturalness. But it was in the role of a household woman, in the midst of her own family circle consisting of her worldly-minded brothers, sisters-in-law, and their children, that the Holy Mother manifested a unique facet of her character and personality. It is this aspect of her personality that provides a shining example of practical spirituality capable of inspiring all men and women. The nun shone through the householder, and both through the heart of an all-loving mother. Far from shunning a distracting world, she embraced it and enfolded it in her love. And in the midst of a thousand distractions, she preserved the naturalness of her personality.

Verification is the proof of a theory or a claim. The test of life alone proves the genuineness of a moral virtue or a spiritual value; virtues are tested more in ill-fortune than in good fortune. To maintain poise and grace in good weather is easy enough; but it is only bad weather that tests their genuineness. The calmness, poise, and grace, and the spirit of unobstructed love and self-effacing service, which Sarada Devi expressed in her day-to-day life in the context of a highly distracting environment of sheer worldliness, proclaims the supremely uplifting power of godliness and spirituality. The possession of this power by a man or woman makes him or her pure and holy. The expression of this power in life is love. Sarada Devi was the very personification of this purity, holiness, and love which is the meaning of the ideal of motherhood at its highest and best. This power lies imbedded in the heart of every woman. An ordinary woman captures in her life only a fraction of this ideal by which she shines in her loving kindness and holiness. A merely biological function becomes elevated through the infilling of a spiritual value. But this spiritual value shone in its fullness, even outside the biological context, in the personality of the Holy Mother, demonstrating thereby the ideal in its pure form. Out of the abundance of her heart Sarada Devi gave of her love to one and all without any distinction and, by so doing, justified the endearing epithet of 'the Holy Mother'.

Herself out of the ordinary in all basic values of character and personality, but hiding these under the mantle of the simple and the ordinary in social and physical make-up, the Holy Mother eludes the grasp of ordinary minds, but reveals her true form to all seekers of basic values. Did not Sri Ramakrishna say of her: 'She is Sarasvatī, the goddess of Wisdom, come to give spiritual knowledge to humanity.' And had she not also said of herself: 'Sri Ramakrishna has left me to manifest the ideal of divine Motherhood.'

In her life and in her teachings she has left a balm for suffering humanity in search of light and peace. Her love knew no distinctions of sex, creed, or race. It enfolded and uplifted the Muslim labourer Amjad as much as the *sannyāsin* Saradananda, the gifted Sister Nivedita as much as the simple 'mother of Annapurna'. The Holy Mother's deathbed advice to the latter is typical of her universal personality and depth of insight. To the 'mother of Annapurna' sorrowing at the thought of Holy Mother's imminent passing away, she said these words of uplifting consolation and strength:

> 'If you want peace of mind, do not look for faults in others. Rather look out to discover your own weaknesses. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one here is an alien or a stranger, my child. The whole world is your own.'

Let me conclude this tribute with the beautiful Sanskrit verse composed by Swami Abhedananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in praise of the Holy Mother's pure nobility:

> *Pavitraṁ caritaṁ yasyāḥ pavitraṁ jīvanaṁ tathā;*
> *Pavitratāsvarūpiṇyai tasyai devyai namo namaḥ—*

'Whose character is all pure and whose life is similarly pure; who is the embodiment of purity divine, that shining goddess I salute again and again.'

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA
AN APPRECIATION

AMONG the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Ramakrishnananda holds a unique position; he bears the Master's name; and he, among all the disciples, may be considered as a specially commissioned apostle chosen to work in one part of the world—the South of India. While other disciples were sent to various places as a matter of course, the special act of commission to this teacher by Swami Vivekananda is something distinctive, and there is significance in this event. I shall have occasion to point out towards the end of my discourse in what relation Swami Ramakrishnananda stands to that great change in the mind and face of South India which is to come in the not distant future.

The Early Promise

Let us make his acquaintance as the young boy Sasi who entered this world at Calcutta in the same year in which Swami Vivekananda entered it—in 1863. We find him cheerful, vivacious, and active as a child, and intelligent, inquisitive, and energetic as a boy. At school he studied the various subjects that were taught to him, but the fire in him could not be quenched with the studies that the school provided. There was in him even in early boyhood a passion for purity, a spirit of dispassion, and a mood of searching and inquisitiveness, a burning desire to probe deeper and not rest content with what was given on the surface plane of experience. A mood of spiritual quest was marked in him even in his boyhood. And so along with Sarat (Swami Saradananda), a younger cousin of his, we find him wending his way to the Brahmo Samaj, which was then the movement to which

most of the spiritually hungry among the English-educated went at that time. There he came in touch with the great Keshab Chandra Sen and others. He participated in the spiritual ministry of the Brahmo Samaj and sought to satisfy his soul's hunger. From there an inexorable destiny guided his steps gently and steadily to the temple of Dakshineswar, where he met with the great Sri Ramakrishna, whom he accepted as his *guru*, guide, and all in all, and under whose training he developed into that great spiritual personality in whose blessings we all have the privilege to share.

Meeting with the Master

Sasi's meeting with Sri Ramakrishna is significant because of the future which lay hidden within it. He goes to the teacher and there was an interview between the teacher and the disciple. It was characteristic of Sri Ramakrishna and characteristic also of the disciples who went to him, that in these interviews there were interesting questions and answers. Sri Ramakrishna asked Sasi—hardly eighteen years then—as to what aspect of God he would like to meditate on, whether God with form or God without form. This was a usual question which Sri Ramakrishna put to various aspirants coming to him. But straight came the answer from this young, inquisitive, and frank boy to this query of the Master: 'I do not know whether God exists at all or not—so how can I decide whether I should worship God with or without form?' The mood behind this frank answer is very significant for religion. There is an earnestness behind its apparent agnosticism. Religion with most people is a matter of belief or conformity. It ensures for them a life, cosy, comfortable, and secure. But it lacks adventure and, consequently, leaves the heroic souls cold. The heroic souls come to religion in a spirit of quest, in a mood of adventure, and find no joy in cosy and comfortable beliefs which they dare to question with a frankness which cannot be appreciated by ordinary teachers but only by the greatest of teachers. Sri Ramakrishna represented in himself that spirit of a great world teacher who could tame and train these fearless and frank souls. Of such stuff was Sasi made. Of such stuff, even in a more intense form, was Swami Vivekananda—then young Narendra—made. All these souls were fearless and frank, yet possessed of that dynamic inquisitiveness which makes for greatness in any sphere of life. Sri Ramakrishna gathered around himself such inquisitive and aspiring souls and slowly shaped them in their particular lines of personality development, and gave to humanity the services of a galaxy of apostles.

The Mother of the Infant Order

Swami Ramakrishnananda's devotion to his Master was characterized by a supreme spirit of dedication and self-effacing service characteristic of the mother-heart. During Sri Ramakrishna's illness in the last year of his mortal existence, Swami Ramakrishnananda dedicated himself to the unremitting care of his Master's body, excelling in this all his other brother-disciples. The spirit and intensity of that service to the person of the Master earned for him, after the passing of the Master, the name Ramakrishnananda. Swami Vivekananda, who had desired to take that name for himself, chose, however, to bestow it on his brother-disciple, Sasi, in appreciation of his self-effacing love and service of the Master.

We next meet with him as Swami Ramakrishnananda in the first monastery of the Ramakrishna Order at Baranagore, Calcutta, in the company of Swami Vivekananda and other young *sannyāsin* disciples of the Master. The great mother-heart of Sasi found another remarkable expression in the life of that monastery. This famous monastery is the origin of the now world-wide Ramakrishna Math and Mission. That origin is characterized by an intense spirit of renunciation, spiritual devotion, austerity, self-sacrifice, and brotherly love, which is characteristic of the traditional monastic life of our country. In the Baranagore monastery the life of the members was marked by an utter forgetfulness of the body and its needs in an intense pursuit of spiritual awareness and divine presence. But in this code of life there was one exception—and that was Swami Ramakrishnananda. Second to none in his spirit of renunciation, austerity, and devotion, he chose to give expression to these through the loving service of the Master's relics in the chapel and of the Master's children in the monastery. His mother-heart found the fullest expression in these two channels.

His labours to keep intact the infant monastery and his care and watchfulness over the bodies of his brother-disciples whose souls had sped to God in self-forgetful devotion have become inspiring legends in the Ramakrishna Order. Actuated by the monk's love of wandering and of the open and free life, we find Swami Vivekananda and all his brother-disciples filing out of the Baranagore monastery one by one. They went, they came, went again, and came again. Every time they found Swami Ramakrishnananda steadily tending the monastery fires—spiritual and physical. For ten long years he tended the infant Order with a rare love and devotion. The monastery's life centred in him and his life centred in the Master whose service constituted his austerity and

spirituality, pilgrimage, and devotion. In the meantime, great things were happening outside which were to affect profoundly the course of the world and the life of Swami Ramakrishnananda.

In the Vineyard of God

For, Swami Vivekananda, after his wandering through the length and breadth of India, had gone to the West and preached successfully for four long years the message of Vedānta through the Chicago Parliament of Religions and a thousand other platforms. On his return to India in 1897, he had burst upon our horizon with a mighty spiritual force, had shaken our nation out of its lethargy and complacency, and had imparted to it a message of strength and practical spirituality, of patriotism and national service, the message, in short, of a dynamic national character. This dynamic impact was to affect Swami Ramakrishnananda's life also in a radical way. For, as part of his plan of spiritual campaign in India, and in response to the desire of his Madras devotees and admirers, Swami Vivekananda decided to open one of the three centres of his movement in Madras—the other two being in Calcutta and in Mayavati. And he deliberately chose Swami Ramakrishnananda for Madras, as his apostle to South India. The call was sudden as well as revolutionary. From the even tenor of a cloistered life, he was to plunge into the responsibilities and cares of an abbot in a big city. Swami Ramakrishnananda cheerfully responded to the call of his beloved leader and thus expressed another facet of his great spirit of renunciation and self-effacement. He reached Madras in the middle of 1897 to commence a new form of spiritual *sādhanā* where service of God flowed into service of man, and which continued to the end of his life in 1911.

This self-effacement of Swami Ramakrishnananda, as also of other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna like Swami Premananda and Swami Turiyananda, each one of whom was a spiritual giant, contains a lesson to the spiritually-minded in our country today. Spiritual pride is the bane of some aspects of our spiritual life. And spiritual pride is worse than worldly pride. The examples of the children of Sri Ramakrishna will help us to avoid this vice and implant self-effacing humility in its place. *Little saints breathing high spiritual airs is a social malady which can be cured only by the examples of a few spiritual giants following the humble way.* A mantle of simplicity and humility covered the gigantic spiritual stature of Swami Ramakrishnananda, Swami Premananda, and other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He went about his work in his new field in Madras denying himself in the affirmation

of the Divine. Only to a few discerning souls was it given to see the man behind the mantle.

Apart from this, there was another aspect of his work in Madras, especially in the early years. Swami Ramakrishnananda came to Madras which had only just a while ago experienced the mighty impact of Swami Vivekananda's personality. The difference between the two personalities was wide. Swami Vivekananda was an orator and organizer, and a dynamo of spiritual energy and power which neither the East nor the West could resist or ignore. Swami Ramakrishnananda was the opposite of this. But he possessed just those gifts which could canalize a spiritual flood for the lasting benefit of the people concerned. His purity and renunciation, non-sectarian spirituality and broad tolerance, his utter selflessness and intense love for man, and, above all, his complete dedication to the cause of his Master—these he placed in the devoted service of the people of this part of our country. He was endowed with a strong physique and keen intellect; the first enabled him to bear the hardships of a pioneer's job, while the second enabled him to satisfy the spiritual demands of an intellectual people such as the people of Madras are known to be.

South India may well claim the honour of having been the spiritual teacher of India for centuries together. To this South India came Swami Ramakrishnananda. We can see the unseen hand of Providence in this choice; his attainments and outlook and approach bore a relation to the spiritual background and present requirements of South India. The wholesome effects of this choice are already beginning to manifest, but its full effects, its mature fruits, would come in course of time.

Static Piety versus Dynamic Spirituality

We may well ask what is the type of spirituality that is now wanted in this part of our country? There is one fact that emerges from South Indian history; it is that the people here are intensely religious. For two thousand years at least the people of South India have paid passionate allegiance to the spiritual ideal through Buddhism or Jainism, Śaivism or Vaiṣṇavism. Yet, in recent centuries, there has been a developing tendency to entomb the spritual idea in social conformities and forms and to confuse spirituality with frozen patterns of mere *smārta* or rigidly orthodox behaviour. This tying up of spirituality made for the stagnation of spirituality along with the stagnation of society. This was the situation all over Hindu society by the end of the eighteenth century, but it was much more pronounced in South India due to its comparatively sheltered political existence. With the

impact of the West on our society, however, its centuries-long stagnation got disturbed and society began to move, slowly at first, but faster and faster afterwards.

This gave rise to a critical social situation; a stagnant religiosity which found expression largely in formal acts of piety and correct *smārta* behaviour could not catch up with, much less sustain, the movements of a dynamic society. Life and religion, therefore, began to function in separate compartments. This division in the mind of man had disastrous consequences for his character and personality. The impulses of a static piety and the forces of dynamic social urges tended to cancel each other so as to reduce man's strength of character and effectiveness of personality. Religious orthodoxy needed to be rescued from a rigid social orthodoxy, especially when that society was in a phase of dynamic movement. It is only then that religion comes to itself and becomes strong to sustain and guide the new social urges. In the absence of this orientation, religion functions as a dead-weight on life and society, continuing to swear by a world which is no more. This explains the evil aspects of communalism in modern India in its Hindu, Muslim, or Christian forms. For communalism is religion entombed in rigid and narrow socio-political frames. It dries up the human heart along with drying up the springs of religion itself. The country needed a restatement of religion as a spiritual adventure and quest which has the capacity to invigorate a society from within and make for progress all-round. This was the service that Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda did to religion in general and India in particular. And it was the pure message of that dynamic and comprehensive spirituality that Swami Ramakrishnananda bore to the extremely religious people of the South.

God-ward Passion and Man-ward Love

The impulse of this spirituality flowed in the two channels of a God-ward passion and a man-ward love. And the currents of that flow broke down in its flood the limitations of creed and dogma on the one side, and sect and *sampradāya* on the other. Swami Vivekananda did not engage himself in any programme of social reform; he considered social evils as diseases on the social body; social reform, he held, dealt only with the symptoms, and was therefore temporary in its effect. Lasting benefit to society comes from spirituality which, energizing from within, makes for health and vigour without. This is the dynamism of a spiritual orthodoxy as contrasted with the staticity of a rigid social orthodoxy. Emphasis on this spiritual orthodoxy makes for a

deepening of man's spiritual awareness and a broadening of his human sympathies, resulting in basic social health and development in a natural way.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement in Madras, as expressed through Swami Ramakrishnananda, was a combination of this central spiritual orthodoxy with a peripheral social orthodoxy. The latter helped to smoothen the passage of men from a mere adherence to the letter and forms of religion to its inner life-giving content and spirit, while the former helped to demonstrate the beauty and charm of this inner content and spirit, and to draw up to it with irresistible force the native religious instincts of the people.

Swami Ramakrishnananda's life in Madras was an eloquent expression of this inner spirit of religion. It manifested itself through his every act and speech and mood. He lived and functioned in a constant awareness of the presence of his Master, whom he worshipped through ritual and labour, through study and teaching. Often would he be filled with spiritual ecstasy and emotion which would find chance escapes in talks with the Divine which, to an onlooker, were audible, yet incomprehensible. Though meticulous as to ritual, his worship in the temple was no act of prosaic ritual; it was the outpouring of a devout heart to the ultimate spiritual Principle who as a Person was a reality intimate and close to the worshipper. In his worship of his Master in the chapel of the monastery, the people of Madras got a glimpse into Sri Ramakrishna's own worship of the Divine Mother at the temple of Dakshineshwar. To a people so devoted to temple and worship and ritual as South Indians are, Swami Ramakrishnananda's methods and manner and moods of adoration were an inspiration and an education.

Swami Ramakrishnananda's spirituality did not get confined to the precincts of the temple. What he took in by contemplation, he poured out in love and action in a variety of fields of human service—spiritual and intellectual, cultural and philanthropic. In fact, his life of fourteen years in Madras was a saga of self-effacing austerity of a new type through which abundant good flowed to humanity. Through lectures and classes, conversations and instructions, he scattered what he had gathered. He did these in addition to his constant efforts to run the Ashrama household on precarious means. So much work he did, and so many burdens he bore, without feeling the strain of work or weight of burden, because of the fullness of his love for God and concern for man.

The Catholicity of Creative Spirituality

His catholicity was another fruit of his comprehensive spirituality. He was a reverential student of the Bible and the Koran side by side with the Hindu scriptures. As for the Bible, he knew it from cover to cover, and he adored Jesus Christ with a passion met with only among the early Christian saints. He would go to the old Christian church at San Thome in Madras and enjoy the delights of Christian piety there. He was equally at home with the Vaiṣṇava as with the Śaiva adorations. *The example and ministrations of such a dynamic catholicity introduced into the South Indian religious mind a new impulse of spiritual creativity and unity.* This impulse had within it the force of Sri Ramakrishna's personality and the message of Indian spiritual tradition.

That message, originating in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, found effective voice in the *Gītā* (IV. 11) and the *Bhāgavatam* (I. 2.11) in a later day:

Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁstathaiva bhajāmyaham;
Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ—

'In whatsoever way men approach Me, in the same way do I respond to them. All paths, O Partha, lead eventually to Me only.'

Vadanti tat tattvavidaḥ tattvaṁ yat jñānam advayam;
Brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate—

'It is one and the same non-dual knowledge that knowers of Truth declare variously as the Absolute, the Self and God.'

Says Swami Vivekananda in his speech at the Chicago Parliament of Religions (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 18):

'The whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them.'

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement in the South, as elsewhere in India and abroad, embodies this message of fundamental religion. This explains its universal appeal; it attracts to itself the spiritually hungry of every creed and sect. Those who gathered round Swami Ramakrishnananda belonged to a variety of sects and creeds which had lived exclusive and even mutually hostile lives for the past few centuries. At his touch, the high walls that separated them fell, revealing the beauties in each other's garden and leading to union in heartbeat and pulse. Here is the initiation of a process which contains momentous consequences for India and the world. Though it found

only a limited expression in Swami Ramakrishnanada's time, it proved its worth and validity and significance through him and the movement of which he formed a part. And since his time it has been steadily advancing, uniting heart with heart and hand with hand, to create a pattern of enduring national unity in the South as elsewhere.

Swami Vivekananda had proclaimed (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 371):

'National union in India must be a gathering up of her scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.'

The intensification of this process in the coming years, with the resultant sucking into its stream of the currents of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, Christianity and Islam, is bound to evolve a pattern of *fundamental* national unity in India based on the principles of unity in diversity, toleration, and fellowship, with sects preserved but sectarianism destroyed, and liberating values, spiritual and human.

The Silence of Creative Work

The way Swami Ramakrishnananda lived and worked in Madras gives us an insight into the impact of true religion on society. The only asset of a spiritual movement is the character and spirituality of its members and their radiant faith in the Divine in man. The influence of such a movement spreads from person to person and group to group, until its spiritual leaven, pure and potent, eventually leavens the whole bread of society. This is the history of the Christian faith during its early centuries. Śaṅkara refers to this leavening process in his introduction to his *Gītā* commentary:

Guṇādhikaiḥ gṛhītaḥ anuṣṭhīyamānaśca dharmaḥ pracayaṁ gamiṣyati—

'A spiritual idea spreads in society when it is grasped and lived by men and women of more than ordinary virtue.'

Swami Ramakrishnananda spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in this part of India primarily through his exemplary life and character. Its silence was the measure of its potency. He carried Swami Vivekananda's exhortation into practice (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 11):

'Calm, silent, and steady work, no newspaper humbug, no name-making, you must remember.'

Though a spiritual giant, he hid his sainthood behind an exterior of simplicity and common human ways. *What a lesson this, alike to the pious and the saintly in India, several of whom tend to proclaim their piety and their sainthood through even their bodies*! Those who proclaim religion thus are castigated by the *Bhāgavata* as *dharmadhvajas;* they carry cathedrals on their heads, and not in their hearts. The truly religious, on the other hand, express their inner fulfilment through a character which is fearless and gentle and which exudes the aroma of purity, renunciation, and love.

This is how a great teacher like Swami Ramakrishnananda lived and worked in Madras to lay the solid foundations of a spiritual movement which has spread far and wide and which, since his passing away forty-two years ago, has been uplifting the hearts of thousands in this city and province. The faith in his heart flowed into works for the good of his fellowmen. The vast and varied educational activities of the Mission in Madras today, serving the needs of about 6,000 boys and 4,000 girls, have for their original inspiration the compassion of his heart on a poor youth orphaned by plague at Coimbatore whom he took up and made the first inmate of the hostel which is today the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home. His visits to Travancore-Cochin, Mysore, and Burma helped to lay the foundations of the far-flung Mission institutions which we see in those areas today.

Our Secularism : Its Scope and Limitations

There is much discord and division in the Indian mind today as it expresses itself in the religious and cultural, social and political fields. The last few centuries had witnessed a contraction of our loyalties in the form of sectarian narrowness in religion and caste narrowness in society. To the prevailing divisions of Hindu society have been added Christian and Islamic divisions. In the absence of a broader understanding of religion, the people have tended to express the intensity of their religious feelings and loyalties through narrow communal movements based on sectarianism and intolerance. Yet, the desire for national unity is a powerful urge; it is the most outstanding fact revealed by the national renaissance; and it forms the stimulus behind all progressive socio-political movements in modern India. When the world of religion lay divided and broken, this urge for unity sought effective expression through non-religious channels, mainly political. The political movement in India, therefore, gradually developed into a national movement, breaking down the barriers of sect and creed, caste and sex, and liberating the Indian spirit from the shackles of foreign subjection and indigenous division. In the wake of political freedom, the nation pro-

claimed its formal unity through its newly adopted Constitution for a sovereign democratic and secular state. The wisdom of declaring India a secular state may be questioned and has been questioned. But that was a step dictated by actual conditions, social and political, cultural and religious, and meant to forge a common national loyalty. Political wisdom consists in reckoning with *actual* social forces and formulating policies based on that assessment, for enhancing the unity and strength and progress of the nation. The secular as applied to the state means only non-communal and not non-religious; it is of course, not anti-religious.

Citizenship of an all-Indian state involves common national loyalties and common national aspirations on the part of all the people, irrespective of caste and creed and sex. At present, these loyalties and aspirations proceed from forces outside the creedal and caste loyalties, which latter function largely at the communal and the parochial but not at the national level. This is the logic of forces behind the secular state. But, in the Indian context, this cannot be the final answer to our social problem. *A common political loyalty, on the one side, and divisive religious loyalties, on the other, ill go together, except in the short run.* The division in the national mind thus engendered will lead to a weakening of the national character and loosening of our national ties in the long run. But a nation is wise in resorting to this social expediency and resigning itself to its long-range effects if it has in its possession no higher wisdom capable of bridging the gulf between the sacred and the sacred, and the sacred and the secular.

The nation has accepted this expediency with a deep-seated feeling that it misses the truly Indian touch. But, feeling apart, the question is: Do we have that higher wisdom in our country? The answer from those who know India intimately is an emphatic YES. This question when seriously put will lead the nation to an appreciation of our authenitc national spiritual tradition, Vedānta, and to its dynamic expression in our age in the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The lives and experiences of these two master minds furnished a positive and adequate answer to this question long before the nation formulated the question to itself under the pressure of social forces. *They represent the spirit of unity and synthesis at the highest level—the triple unity of faith and reason, faith and faith, and faith and life.* That spirit forms the very core of Indian culture and spiritual tradition. The impact of this spirit on the various creeds and sects in India will lead to an increasing emphasis on their common spiritual elements resulting in the liberation of values, universal and human, imbedded in them. Religion then will function as a force for

human unity, fellowship, and service, and contribute its vital quota to national life to convert the formal political unity proclaimed in the Constitution into a real and lasting national unity.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Synthesis

This is the meaning of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement for our nation today. It has a message to every Indian citizen—a message of renunciation and service—the intensification of which in life will make for character and spirituality, which are the results of the impact of religion on the individual, on the one hand, and national unity, strength, and progress, which are the results of the same impact on society, on the other. This was the message that Swami Ramakrishnananda lived and taught for fourteen years in Madras. This message has one supreme quality—it is everything positive and nothing negative. The message that was then spread in this part of India through one centre and one voice is now being radiated, as a fruit of his labours, through a score of centres and scores of voices. Already it has achieved a measure of unification of the national mind and purpose and thinned the barriers between sect and sect and community and community. Though what is accomplished is small compared to what remains to be achieved, the methods and results have vindicated their cogency and adequacy for the solution of our many religious and social problems. *Our task today is to struggle to lay hold of the wisdom of that authentic national tradition and remould our nation in its light and inspiration.* In this supreme creative adventure, the examples of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples will provide us with an unfailing source of stimulation and guidance.

MAHĀPURUSAJI AS I KNEW HIM

SWAMI APURVANANDAJI has exerted more than the usual pressure of loving persuasion to make me agree to contribute to this volume of reminiscences. Having been the devoted personal attendant of Mahāpuruṣaji for long years, and receiving his love in abundance, Apurvanandaji is in a unique position to share with the readers a plethora of reminiscences. But my reluctance arose from the fact that I had not the privilege to live long years in Mahāpuruṣaji's company and had consequently very few memories of him which could be shared. It is, however, true that I have received from him all that sustains one in the life spiritual. From him I received *mantradīkṣā*, 'spiritual initiation'; from him also I received the most spiritually impressive *brahmacarya* and *sannyāsa* initiations of the Ramakrishna Order, including the monastic name I bear.

Though most dreams are just dreams, useless except for the psychoanalyst, some dreams may reveal the trend of the future development of one's life and destiny. From this point of view, Mahāpuruṣaji, whose monastic name of Śivananda is more than a mere name—his brother disciples saw in him a manifestation of the Śiva nature—came into my inner life years before I saw him with my physical eyes.

Devoted from childhood to the worship of God in His aspect as Śiva in the impressive cave temple situated on a rocky hill in my native riverside village of Trikkur in central Kerala, I had a vivid dream when I was hardly nine or ten: I felt myself being carried high up in the sky, above the din of the world, and ushered into the presence of an old sage sitting cross-legged in a large room which vibrated with his

holiness and peace. The sage, whom my heart spontaneously recognized as Śiva, lovingly beckoned me to take my seat to his left; I obeyed. He then imparted to me some spiritual instruction. I felt a great sense of joy and blissfulness, in which mood I woke up from the dream.

Four or five years later, at the age of fourteen and a half, I came across, first, the remarkable book, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, and, later, the biographies of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, and the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. The impact of the study of these books on my young mind is indescribable. It helped to generate a spiritual tide which gave form and force to the inchoate spiritual ideas and aspirations struggling for expression in my boyish mind and imagination. And, during the next three years, the tide developed into a flood of love and dedication to the holy cause for which this blessed trinity appeared in the world, founded the holy Ramakrishna Order of monks, and attracted spiritually sensitive youths to join the same. At the age of seventeen and a half, I left home and parents on 25 June 1926 with the intention of joining the Order in its Mysore branch, which was then presided over by the late Swami Siddheswarananda, who had fortunately come to the town of Trichur then to see his parents. I accompanied him by a night train from Trichur, which is six miles from my village of Trikkur, to the city of Ooty situated at an altitude of over six thousand feet. We reached Ooty the next morning. Here he wanted to meet Swami Śivananda, familiarly known as Mahāpuruṣaji, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who was then spending a few months in that beautiful hill station. Swami Siddheswarananda took me to his presence; I prostrated before him and felt blessed to be in the presence of a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. And we stayed there for a week as his guest.

On the fifth day of my stay, Swami Siddheswarananda arranged for my spiritual initiation from Mahāpuruṣaji. I entered a large room where Mahāpuruṣaji was seated cross-legged on a carpet. He motioned me to sit on a seat spread to his left. As I took my seat and received spiritual instructions from him, I found the entire scene strangely reminiscent. I found it to be a re-enacting, in the world of fact, of the dream I had in my boyhood: going up and up the hill, being ushered into the presence of Śiva in the form of a serene old person, getting seated to his left, and the blissful feeling generated in my heart. After the initiation, he asked me whether I had anything with me to offer him as *gurudakṣiṇa*, 'offering to the guru'. When I replied in the negative, he placed two or three mangoes in my hand asking me to offer

those back to him. I did as directed and left the room after prostrating before him.

Siddheswarananda was familiarly known as Gopal and much loved by Mahāpuruṣaji. When he and I went to take leave of Mahāpuruṣaji and receive his blessings on the eve of our starting for Mysore on July 2nd, Mahāpuruṣaji gave me this brief parting message along with his blessings: 'Serve Gopal'. And for the next twelve years, I was privileged to serve Siddheswarananda, both in a personal sense and in the sense of the holy cause of which he was the local leader, for nine years in the Mysore branch of the Order as cook, dish-washer, and housekeeper for six years and, later, as warden of its Home for students for three years, followed by three years in the Bangalore branch of the Order. During the first seven years of this period, I had my *brahmacarya* and *sannyāsa* initiations from Mahāpuruṣaji, the first, on Bhagavan Buddha's birthday in May 1929 and the second, on Swami Vivekananda's birthday in January 1933. On the first occasion, Mahāpuruṣaji was present throughout the ceremony which was held, in those days, in the room behind the old chapel of Sri Ramakrishna dedicated by Swami Vivekananda in 1899. His physical presence, with a smiling serene face, intensified the spiritual atmosphere of the ceremony, at the end of which he conferred on me, as is the custom, a new name, Yati Chaitanya. Due to infirmities of age, he could not be physically present on the occasion of my *sannyāsa*. But after the ceremony, I, along with the other eight fellow-candidates, went to his room to receive, from the *guru*, the monastic vows and blessings, and monastic robes and names.

On each of these two occasions, I had the privilege to spend over three months at the Belur Math in his elevating company and render him little personal services, which included bringing tube-well water from near-by Lilooah for his daily bath, and a cup of curd for the diet of his faithful dog.

The most memorable experiences on these occasions were the daily morning sessions in his room after breakfast, lasting sometimes for over an hour. Monks and probationers come in batches and prostrate before him and stand aside. He is sitting on his bed or in his chair, indrawn, often with the *hookah* (hubble-bubble) in front, from which he draws a puff now and then, mostly absent-mindedly, and occasionally exchanges courtesies with the monks and novices present. When the indrawn mood relaxes, he converses on various topics with those present, interspersing it with humour and laughter, an endearing trait especially characteristic of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. Sometimes

the talk turns on to deep spiritual themes, and those present wait on every word that then falls from his lips. In between all these, one hears him utter, in a tone suffused with deep devotion, such spiritual phrases as: *Saccidānanda Śivam, Jai Guru Maharaj, Jai Mā,* etc.

Within ten months of my joining the Order, Mahāpuruṣaji had permitted me, as a special case, at the request of Swami Siddheswarananda, to wear ochre clothes, which are usually worn by brothers of the Order only after their *sannyāsa,* in place of the probationer's white clothes. Viewed in retrospect, this blessing has contributed not a little to my spiritual stability and spiritual growth.

Though living far away in Mysore, I had the good fortune to receive from him extremely valuable spiritual guidance through letters. To my earnest request to be allowed to stay with him and serve him for long periods, he pointed out the futility and impracticability of seeking to be physically near one's *guru,* and exhorted me to serve the *guru* through devoted service to the Order in the various fields of its activities. He encouraged the monks of the Order to develop a many-sided character and exhorted them to cultivate knowledge, secular and sacred, and develop practical efficiency. He always emphasized the need to combine meditation with work, and pointed out the importance, for all monks generally, and for me specially, of the company of one's monastic brothers for gaining spiritual strength. He warned me against the weakening effects of religious sentimentalism and explained that true love of God can be gauged not by our sentimental effusions but by purity of our character and spirit of dedication and service. He always exhorted the monks and laymen to strive to acquire spirituality, and warned them against all forms of showy piety and cheap religiosity.

The following passages from some of his letters will convey some idea as to the type of spiritual guidance he gave and spiritual strength he imparted to spiritual aspirants. The letters carry his own signature with the spelling 'Shivananda':

In his very first letter, Mahāpuruṣaji wrote:

Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama,
Laxa, Banares City.
9/12/27.

My dear Sankaran,

I am very pleased with your letter. You are proceeding on the right way. It is the nature of the mind, unless it be purged of its bad habits by constant prayer and meditation, to drag man down to lower pleasures. It has acquired those habits through our past acts. So there is nothing to be disheartened in it.

You and everybody shall have to infuse in it good ideas and good habits by present acts. Then it will trouble you. That is the reason, when a man wants to be spiritual, he has to remain always on the guard so that the mind goes not back again to its unnatural habits. During this period constant struggle takes place. You are passing through that. If you have faith in yourself and in the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, you are sure to come out victorious. He helps him who struggles—that is His nature. Know it always that His helping hand is always guiding you. Otherwise you would have been vanquished long ago and would have become an ordinary man. So you need not fear; with full faith in Him, go on with your struggles—pray to Him for strength and help; meditate on Him. Through His blessings the character of the mind will change and it will be a helping maid by your side. But you shall have to keep a constant watch on the mind till He comes and resides permanently within it. You shall feel it yourself.

Sentimentalism is not good. Why shall you try to weep? Loving and weeping are not the same things. You shall love Him, that's all. Tears are not the indication of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* can be gauged by one's manners and behaviours—how he is attached to the Lord, whether he loves Him or the world.

The main part of *pūja* (ritual worship) is when we try to think of His presence in the room and within us, seeing the union between the Lord within and the Lord on the throne. Feeling this, you may worship Him in the manner you like. You cannot expect the same attitude to develop daily in the mind during worship. The sweetest feeling will fill you gradually. That is the reason why we worship, pray, and meditate, and try to think of the presence of the Lord in everything in the world, and we think that by each of our acts we are serving Him. So go on with the best of attitude you can command to worship Him, and do the Lord's work.

I am doing well through His grace. Hope this will also find you to be the same. May you have *bhakti, vairāgyam,* and *jñānam* through His blessings. With my love, blessings, and good wishes.

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Math
P.O. Belurmath
15/4/28.

My dear Sankar,

Glad to get your letter and to know that through His grace you are all well now.

Dull periods often come at first, and that is not bad. Because it brings in the heart of a true devotee the zeal for greater endeavours. Praying to Sri Guru Maharaj, in your case also, may it bring in you the spirit for greater efforts. You are proceeding in the right lines—through His grace, it will be over and your heart will be full of constant love and devotion for Sri Guru Maharaj.

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Belur Math P.O.
Dt. Howrah (Bengal)
10/7/28.

My dear Sankaran,

Received your letter duly and am glad to know that you are doing well. Praying to Sri Guru Maharaj to increase your hankering to know Him and to lead a pure and holy life.... We are all human; temptations and bad thoughts come. Shall we have to weep for them? Let them come; what's of that? the more they come, we shall have to pray with double the energy to the Lord. They come, as it is the will of the Lord; and when it will be His will again, they won't come. Know you to be His children—so you cannot be impure and unholy. Knowing this, pray to Him. Never indulge in these bad thoughts and evil deeds. Throw them away as soon as they come.

If you cannot perform *dhyānam* (meditation) it does not matter; *Japam* (repetition of God's name) will do. One can meditate well, another can make *Japam* well. Through either *Japam* or meditation, one can attain liberation.

When Sri Guru Maharaj will give you opportunity, you will come to me to have bodily *darśan*—otherwise, I am ever present within you in spirit.

Through His grace I am doing well. With my affectionate love and blessings.

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Math
P.O. Belurmath.
17/11/28.

My dear Sankar,

Your affectionate letter of the 12th last is to hand. Surely your prayers are being granted. You are advancing towards the goal unmistakably. One day you shall realize that through His grace....

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Math
P.O. Belurmath.
14/5/30.

My dear Yati Chaitanya,

Glad to get your letter and to know all about you.... My health is not good. I am glad to know that your health has much improved. I am blessing you: May you have *Viveka* and *Vairāgyam* like Buddha....

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Math
P.O. Belurmath.
7/7/30.

My dear Sankaran,

Received your letter and the *kuṁkum* of Sri Chāmuṇḍā Devī. I am blessing you: May Śrī Chāmuṇḍā Devī grant you *bhakti, vivek,* and *vairāgyam.* My fever has left; I am better now. You need not come here again so soon. What

is the necessity of spending so much over railway fare? What shall you gain by coming over here? Pray to Sri Guru Maharaj wherever you be; only through His grace you can gain peace; need not travel here and there. Do not give up work; try to combine it with prayer and meditation. Idleness in the name of meditation and *japam*, I do not like. For your salvation, cannot you depend on Him? How can you become Him unless you surrender yourself entirely to Him. What work you do is equally efficacious as the *japam* and meditation. You can visit your parents if you like. Seek the advice of Siddheswarananda and depend entirely on him....

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Belur Math P.O.
Dt. Howrah (Bengal).
24/9/30.

My dear Yati Chaitanya,

Received your letter duly.... My dear boy, to be spiritual is not an easy thing. Unless one gets purified through the fire of struggle, he is not fit for spiritual progress. So such struggles will come—we need not be at all afraid for that. You are a child of Sri Ramakrishna. Be always conscious of it and brave the struggle. Through His grace I am sure you shall succeed. You are thinking of Sri Ramakrishna—the personification of purity. All impurities will have no hold on you. I am also praying: May you have peace and happiness, purity, *vivek*, and *vairāgyam*....

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Belur Math P.O.
Dt. Howrah (Bengal).
24/3/31.

My dear Yati Chaitanya,

Received yours duly and have gone through its contents. Such depression in mental attitude often comes to *sādhakas* (spiritual seekers) at the initial stage. But those who do not understand their condition, they get deluded and get lost. But as, in your case, you are fully cognizant of them and of their evil effects, and trying to overcome them, through His grace they will pass away. Pray to Him for strength; and struggle; never give way. If you can cross this hurdle, next time it will not be of such strength. You must have the will to overcome them. You know their nature; throw them overboard. I am praying for you and blessing you.

With such mental condition, it will be suicidal for you to go outside and live alone. Do not do it. During this time, do not trust your intellect, but do as the other *sādhus* (monks) tell you to do. This is the advantage of living with others.

My health is not good. I am getting repeated attacks of asthma. You need not be anxious for me. May He grant you strength, purity, *vivek*, *vairāgyam*, and obedience. My blessings and best wishes to you.

Affectionately ever yours,
Shivananda.

Mahāpuruṣaji appeared to every monk and devotee as a mass of love and blessings. Hundreds of monks and thousands of laymen were the fortunate recipients of his love and blessings. He gave me to understand that in initiating me or any other seeker he had only offered me or the seeker concerned at the feet of the Lord. To any one asking for his blessings, his characteristic reply was: 'What else have we with us to give others except blessings?' Very rational in his attitude and outlook, and singularly informal and deeply human, sainthood and holiness and the presidentship of an international spiritual and humanitarian movement sat lightly on his mind and heart.

A few weeks after my *sannyāsa,* I sought his blessings on the eve of my visit to the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sargachi, West Bengal, in order to fulfil my heart's long-cherished craving to meet, and receive the blessings of, Swami Akhandananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He was then the Vice-president of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. As the founder and head of that Ashram, he was the first and foremost among the fellow-disciples of Swami Vivekananda to implement his message of the service of God in the poor and the suffering. Mahāpuruṣaji was happy to learn that I was going to meet Akhandanandaji to receive his blesssings. I spent three happy days in the latter's holy company at Sargachi and received his love and blessings in ample measure. But sad news awaited me on my return to Calcutta; for Mahāpuruṣaji had suffered a stroke of apoplexy that very day, 25 April, 1933 and lay in his room in the Belur Math with the right side of his body paralysed. After a few weeks' treatment and care, the crisis passed, though the paralysis of the right side, with resulting incapacity of speech, continued, till his passing away about ten months later.

The last time I saw him was on the eve of my departure for Mysore after he had passed the crisis. I entered his room; he was lying on his back with his head resting on high pillows, and face serene, calm, and majestic. As I prostrated, Swami Apurvananda, who was attending on him, informed him that I was leaving for Mysore to resume my duties in the Ashrama there. Unable to utter speech as he was, his eyes had an eloquence of their own and conveyed the feelings of his heart. Mahāpuruṣaji's face beamed with a smile of benediction, which found expression in the lifting of his left hand in an act of blessing. He communicated to Apurvananda by signs to give me some money with which I was to offer special worship to the Divine Mother at the temple on the Chāmuṇḍi hill in Mysore, which was a favourite shrine of his, and to Sri Ramakrishna in the shrine of the local ashrama. I received the

money as a sacred charge and did as he had desired on reaching Mysore, sending him the sacred *prasād* of the worship in due course.

I consider myself thrice blessed for getting shelter under a teacher of his spiritual eminence, for being offered by him at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, and for receiving his ample blessings in as much measure as I could spiritually digest and assimilate.

SRI NARAYANA GURU: AN APPRECIATION

ROMAIN ROLLAND, in his work *The Life of Ramakrishna* speaking about the great Shepherds of modern India, refers (p. 160 fn.), also to numerous less known spiritual leaders, and introduces Sri Narayana Guru as:

> 'the great *Guru* ... whose beneficent spiritual activity was exercised for more than forty years in the State of Travancore over some million faithful souls (he has just died in 1928).... He preached, if one may say so, a *Jñāna* of action, a great intellectual religion, having a very lively sense of the people and their social needs. It has greatly contributed to the uplifting of the oppressed classes in Southern India and its activities have in a measure been allied to those of Gandhi.'

Sri Narayana Guru came of a section of India's population which possessed no rights and privileges and which consequently received the name of depressed classes in modern times. Totally neglected and often oppressed and suppressed for a thousand years by the higher classes, the seventy million depressed classes of India, as of other parts of the world, constituted the basis of economic prosperity and social well-being of the country, as they formed the entire labour front. Continued slavery for generations had produced in these classes, as it is bound to produce in any class of men, an oppressive sense of its own littleness and helplessness—a sense of despair. Slavery is bad enough; but a situation in which the slave begins to accept his position as part of a natural social order—a position in which there is dictated duty without any inherent right and privilege—is something which reduces man to the level of cattle and robs him of his human prerogatives. This was precisely the condition of the Indian masses at the beginning of the

nineteenth century when India was thrown open to the play of world forces. The mingling of the age-old idealism of India with the thought-forms and forces of the modern world has ushered in a new epoch in Indian history whose foundations were laid in the last century by the life and work of a few great leaders and the movements associated with them. These teachers and movements mainly appealed to the higher classes generating in them a sense of past guilt and of its present 'duty to the masses'. The movements have borne fruit so that the modern Renaissance in India does not exhaust itself in a mere political upheaval but assumes more enduring forms of a religious awakening and social transformation. The world outside sees mostly India's political awakening. Far more important to India herself is the great struggle for social justice and social welfare that is going on within her bosom. It is, in the words of Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 11):

> 'a struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor, and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large, and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts, by the tyranny of your forefathers'.

Thanks to the work of Ram Mohan Roy and Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, Hindu society has seriously taken in hand the work of self-purification. The charter of freedom has been proclaimed in no uncertain voice and the dead-weight of custom and tradition is being slowly lifted. We have also to thank western thought and political practice which have helped to break what Vivekananda characterized as, our 'crystallized civilization'. Social progress in India has always been on the lines of sharing the benefits of culture and of higher Hindu thought by larger and larger sections of the population. Democratization of knowledge and opportunity meant also elevation of the people. The best genius of Hinduism lay in this direction in a special sense. If there had been stagnation due to the dead-weight of meaningless custom and oppressive tradition, it meant only that society had forgotten the larger plan and purpose of the ancient leaders. Society is then in need of a new dynamism. In India, this urge to progress has always come from great saints and sages and not from mere political thinkers. A new passion for *dharma* has supplied the necessary revolutionary urge. Hinduism seeks to demonstrate that progress and well-being of the masses do not lie against religion. Swami Vivekananda sums up this outlook and programme in the formula 'Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion' (*ibid.,* p. 29).

But the awakening of the conscience of the privileged is only one act in the drama of enfranchisement. The other equally, if not more, important part is the process of self-discovery on the part of the oppressed themselves. This period of awakening of the masses to a sense of their worth and importance is a critical period in the history of a people. It may be either explosive and destructive or gentle and constructive; but the effect is revolutionary in both cases. The most serious criticism against a violent revolution is that it rarely achieves its original purpose. The second type is more permanent and far-reaching in its effects.

That these recent changes in Hindu society are of a peaceful and constructive character is as much due to the good sense of the Indian masses as to the soundness of Hindu social philosophy and ideals. The movement of reform associated with Sri Narayana Guru is unique in one important respect: it is entirely constructive and devoid of any bitterness against the higher classes. All over the world, the unprivileged classes, in their awakening, have manifested what may be called legitimate hostility and bitterness against the privileged. All the blame has been attached to one side. From the purely human point of view, there may be some justification for this attitude and the class-hatred that it fosters. But it is harmful to the abiding interests of social health and well-being. The theory that all social progress is the result of class-antagonism and class-struggle is yet to be proved. Clash of interests in a society is inevitable. What is not so evident is that social progress is the beneficent result of such clashes. It is more reasonable to hold that true progress is possible only where class-antagonism is least in virtue of the emphasis on ideas and ideals which are the common wealth of all the classes.

This is the meaning and significance of the Indian conception of *dharma*—a conception which seeks the unity of social endeavour through harmony and co-operation. It is to the eternal glory of Sri Narayana Guru to have inaugurated a movement which embodies in itself this unique genius of Hinduism and to have released the forces of the Spirit for the solution of the many pressing problems of even the mundane life of his people. In this he takes rank with the saints and reformers of earlier centuries and more especially with Guru Nānak, the founder of the Sikh fraternity. Except in one respect, there is striking similarity between the life and work of these two masters who are separated by about five centuries. Nānak belonged to the higher classes but fraternized with and reformed the lowly and the lost in Hindu society. Narayana Guru was born with the social stigma of an untouchable among whom he worked and whose life he transformed.

The so-called lowness of his birth could in no way hide or smother the richness of his native endowment. It is this wealth of native genius that enabled him to raise himself and his people above the depressing circumstances of an unjust social order. He imparted life to the almost dead bones and muscles of his people and made them conscious of their human worth and dignity. Rightly is he called the *Guru* whose breath is hope and whose touch is life.

Sri Narayana shows himself at his best in wisdom and discernment in the role of a religious and social reformer. There has been no dearth of reformers and reform proposals in modern India. But most of the social reforms advocated by them were more ornamental than real. In his famous lecture on 'My Plan of Campaign' delivered at Madras in February 1897, Swami Vivekananda referred to this problem in these words (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 213-215):

'To the reformers I will point out, that I am a greater reformer than any of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want root-and-branch reform. Where we differ is in the method. Theirs is the method of destruction; mine is that of construction. I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth.... We admit there are evils. Everybody can show what evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who finds a way out of the difficulty. Like the drowning boy and the philosopher, when the philosopher was lecturing him the boy cried, "Take me out of the water first"; so our people cry, "We have had lectures enough, papers enough, societies enough; where is the man who will lend us a hand to drag us out? Where is the man who has sympathy for us?" Ay, that man is wanted.'

About the time these words were spoken at Madras by the great prophet of modern Indian Renaissance, the sunken masses of the neighbouring province of Kerala were finding their hopes and their voice in the personality of Sri Narayana Guru who had by then started his silent work of transformation. World events are compelling us to the view that the best legislative authority in the world is character. The *ṛṣi* or sage has always been recognized as the law-giver in India. His knowledge and his detachment constitute valid sanctions for the equity of his legislation. In Sri Narayana Guru the people found such a law-giver. Himself a monk and a man of God, in virtue of which he rose above all social conventions and obligations, he yet descended to the level of his fellow-men in an attitude of compassion, and lent his loving hand to drag them out of their misery. And he had the supreme satisfaction to witness even in his own lifetime the ample reward of his labours in the improved tone of the moral and material well-being of his people.

Sri Narayana Guru is reputed to have been a great *Ayurvedic* physician. But he was a greater physician of social maladies. He pres-

cribed education as the one remedy for all the ills of the depressed classes. He was the unwearied champion of modern education for his people. This was to pave the way for their economic and social advancement. Equally important is the acquirement of culture for which he prescribed Sanskrit education. A third vital need was spiritual sustenance, which comes first in importance in his scheme. To meet this need, he consecrated temples and shrines. Temples, modern education, and Sanskrit culture formed integral parts of the Guru's method of root-and-branch reform. In asking his people to depend upon their own resources, he inspired them with self-respect and self-help which helped to draw out their latent capacities. The power thus released was canalized into constructive channels resulting in the creation of a network of institutions to serve the religious, educational, social, and economic needs of the community throughout the province of Kerala.

The curse of untouchability is practised in its most extreme form in Kerala for which that province had earned the name of lunatic asylum from Swami Vivekananda. The thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi mingled with the silent and steady work of Sri Narayana Guru led to the great act of expiation in the famous Travancore Temple-entry Proclamation, which at one stroke bridged the wide gulf that separated the privileged classes from the masses in religion and wiped away one of the deep-seated stains on the society and the province. In this great achievement, Sri Narayana Guru's contribution has been immense. Under the inspiration of his name and ideals, the depressed classes of Kerala are making rapid strides in educational advancement and economic improvement. To several sections of them, the name 'depressed class' is a thorough misnomer today. It is only a question of time when this label of stigma on them and on Hindu society will be a thing of the past not merely in the province of Sri Narayana Guru's birth, but also in the whole of India. This was the dream of Swami Vivekananda, as it is the passion of Mahatma Gandhi today. Only then will be accomplished the purification and strengthening of Hindu society and Hindu religion when the paralysed limb of society constituted of the seventy million people of the unprivileged classes will be galvanized into self-conscious activity, and contribute their share to the building up of a healthy national life.

In this great work of reform and consolidation in the wider fields of India, the ideals and methods of Sri Narayana Guru are bound to be an unfailing source of inspiration and guidance. In all that he was and all that he did, Sri Narayana Guru stands as the supreme symbol of hope and redemption to the depressed classes of India.

SISTER NIVEDITA AND THE CHARACTER OF HER GREATNESS

IT is by sheer chance that I am in Coimbatore and before you today; and I am very happy to spend a few minutes with you to discuss the life and message of Sister Nivedita and the character of her greatness. Our country has been celebrating her birth centenary during the last over a year. Her's was a great life on which it is good for us all to contemplate. How did she become great and what was the character of that greatness? Her life and work have drawn homage from many a thinker and leader of our nation. The beautiful tribute paid to her by poet Rabindranath Tagore within a month of her passing away on 13 October 1911, and published in the Bengali Monthly, *Prabāsi,* is indicative of the impact of her personality on her contemporaries (English translation by Kshitis Roy and Krishna Kripalani):

'I have not seen in any one else such amazing capacity for a total dedication of self.... To know her was to see the spirit of humanity at its best—a privilege, indeed, to be able to see the human spirit's undimmed radiance through the coarse crust of the work-a-day world. We who had this opportunity to see face to face the spirit's unvanquished splendour revealed through Sister Nivedita, were thus blest.

'The gift that Sister Nivedita gave us was the gift of a great life. ...We have to understand and realize the power that was behind it, the intellect, the heart, the sacrifice, and the bright insight of genius which could make such self-dedication possible.

'What impresses one most in her life is that she was at once a profound thinker and capable of dynamic action. ... Where action springs

from thought, even a small deed assumes bigness, and imperfections take a strange kind of beauty like the many-coloured rays of the sun filtered through an intervening layer of clouds. Such a beauty is revealed in the life and work of Sister Nivedita....

'Sister Nivedita loved India and gave herself with unreserved devotion, not withholding anything of herself. ...

'She was indeed a *Lokamātā*, a mother to the people. We are familiar with the mother's role in the family; but the image of a mother whose love enfolded a whole people was something we had never seen before. We have had male devotion to public duty, but never before had we witnessed such magnificent sweep of womanly devotion. When she referred to 'our people', the feeling in her voice rang more true than in the voice of any one of us.'

Born in Ireland in 1867 as Miss Margaret Noble, she died in Darjeeling in India in 1911 as world-famous Sister Nivedita, drawing tributes from world-famous men like the one from Tagore which I quoted just now. She had to strive hard to achieve this greatness, compressed as her life was in a brief forty four years. That holds a fascination to all students of human greatness.

The early years of her life were spent in Ireland and in England. She possessed a brilliant intellect, a powerful will, rare artistic sensibility, and a deep human concern. Her most striking quality was her passion for truth and a persistent search to discover the same. She was dedicated to the service of God by her pious Christian parents in her early childhood; but as she grew up, dogmatic religion failed to satisfy her searching mind and heart; and like many others of the modern age, she soon became an agnostic, but only with respect to the prevailing formulations, continuing, however, unlike the usual run of agnostics, her quest for truth more ardently.

She was running a successful educational institution for children in London. Inwardly, however, she was restless, intellectually and spiritually. Little did she then know that destiny was about to knock at her door, that the kingdom of Heaven was *at hand*. The year was 1895; after his great work of spiritual awakening in the United States in the wake of his historic speech at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893, Swami Vivekananda was giving a series of lectures on Indian philosophy and spirituality in London. Miss Margaret Noble met him and heard him at an intimate gathering of fifteen or sixteen men and women at a parlour talk in Wimbledon, London, in November of that

year. In her famous book on Vivekananda entitled *The Master as I Saw Him,* she describes her first impressions of him, the manner of his speaking, the truth he expounded, and the powerful impact of the speaker and his message on her mind and heart. She felt then and there that this was the teacher and this was the teaching that she was waiting for all these years. Very soon she gained an insight into the spirit of India and her great philosophy, Vedānta; its rationality and universality, and its stress on personal verification of its truths, with no demand to believe in advance, impressed her immensely.

Summing up her impressions of this first contact with Vivekananda, Nivedita writes in the above book (*Complete Works of Sister Nivedita,* published by Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta 3, Vol. I, p. 24):

'These then, were the things I remembered and pondered over, concerning the Swami, when he had left England that winter for America—first, the breadth of his religious culture; second, the great intellectual newness and interest of the thought he had brought to us; and thirdly, the fact that his call was sounded in the name of that which was strongest and finest, and was not in any way dependent on the meaner elements in man.'

Thereafter, it did not take her long to accept Vivekananda as her Master or *Guru.* Reflecting on these events years later she wondered how fruitless and small her life would have been if she had not met him, and she expressed these feelings in a letter to a friend written after the publication of her book *The Web of Indian Life* (quoted in *Sister Nivedita* by Atmaprana, p. 18):

'Suppose Swami had not come to London that time! Life would have been like a headless torso. For I always knew that I was waiting for something, I always said that a call would come, and it did. But if I had known more of life, I should, perhaps, have doubted whether when the time came I should certainly recognize. Fortunately, I knew little and was spared the torture. Now I look at the book and say, ' 'If he had not come!" For always I had this burning voice within, but nothing to utter. How often and often I have sat down, pen in hand, to speak, and there was no speech, and now there is no end to it. As surely as I am fitted for my world, so surely is my world in need of me, waiting, ready.'

He gave a direction to her spiritual quest and a meaning to her life. But her discipleship was not a smooth and easy experience. She was an intellectual rebel and she vehemently questioned the truths he

presented and the teachings he imparted. Later, in India, she had a hard time in her training under her Master to see India through Indian eyes, about which I shall speak in due course. She was unique in this in her whole group. And she was amazed and gratified to find that her Master never expressed dissatisfaction at this, but on the contrary, encouraged her in her critical questioning approach, saying that he himself had rebelled against his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, in the same way, and that his Master had encouraged him in the same. It is only what one accepts after thorough inquiry and questioning that becomes truly one's own. He told her that his Master had always encouraged him saying:

'Don't simply accept what I say; but test me as the money changers test their coins.'

Giving the Swami's reaction to this scepticism of hers, Nivedita refers to his assuring words (*Complete Works of Sister Nivedita,* Vol. I, p. 22):

'Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way!'

When Nivedita finally accepted Vivekananda as her Master and his message of Vedānta as her spiritual nourishment, she asked herself how she was going to live it. She offered herself to the cause of her Master's work for Indian women. He was at first hesitant to accept her offer, firstly because of considerations of the difficult living conditions and climate in India, and secondly because of the prevailing attitude of superiority and patronage of the western workers in India. Vivekananda, however, soon accepted her offer, impressed as he was with her dynamism, sincerity, and dedication. Accordingly he wrote to her on 29 July 1897 (quoted in *Sister Nivedita*, pp. 28-29):

'Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man but a woman; a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women specially.

'India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.'

He later sent her the following sweet benedictory poem:

The mother's heart, the hero's will
the sweetness of the southern breeze
the sacred charm and strength that dwell

on Aryan altars, flaming, free;
all this be yours, and many more;
no ancient soul would dream before—
Be thou to India's future son
The mistress, servant, friend, in one.

Margaret landed at Calcutta on 28 January 1898 and was received, among others, by Vivekananda himself. The Swami wondered how to make her acceptable to the Indian people in the context of the then prevailing social exclusiveness and distrust of the western people. He decided to introduce her to Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, believing that if, in spite of her conservative Hindu social background, she accepted her, India also would accept her. To the great satisfaction of the Swami and to the immense joy of Margaret herself, the Holy Mother accepted her with open arms and treated her as her own daughter; and to the end of her days, Margaret called herself the Holy Mother's *khooki* or little daughter.

This was followed, eight days later, by what Nivedita valued as the second great event in her life in India, namely, her initiation into spiritual life by her Master at the Ramakrishna monastery, then located in the Nilambar Mukherji's garden-house at Belur, on 25 March 1898. It was during this initiation that Margaret received her new name of 'Nivedita', 'the dedicated'. And none more truly lived a life true to one's name—and, in this case, a great meaningful name, than this worthy disciple of so outstanding a teacher.

Alluding to these two important events in her life, she wrote in a letter to Miss MacLeod, an intimate American friend and admirer of Vivekananda, on 17 March 1904 (*Sister Nivedita*, p. 37):

'Six years ago this very day, and on a Thursday too, I saw the Holy Mother for the first time, and went home with you again to the cottage. In the cycle of years we have come round to the same days again. Friday next, March 25th, will be the anniversary of the first day I was called 'Nivedita'. We are, then, entering on the seventh year; I wish it might be unflawed, perfect, but this seems too much to ask.'

Nivedita soon plunged into the work for which she had come to India. And the remaining thirteen years of her earthly life were marked by a rare type of intensity and dedication comparable only to her own Master's. She absorbed herself in lecturing, writing, educational work, political activities, and social service, including plague relief; she encouraged and helped budding artists, scientists, journa-

lists, political revolutionaries, and simple housewives. In our Tamilnad itself, poet and patriot Subrahmanya Bharati looked upon her as his *Guru.* Several aspects of the modern renaissance in India felt the wholesome impact of her powerful pen and tongue and personality. Her intense love of India flowed into an unceasing service of her people struggling to recover their ancient soul and find their firm feet in the modern transition. She exemplified the dictum of queen Vidula of *Udyogaparva* of the *Mahābhārata* (*120, 15*):

Muhūrtaṁ Jvalitaṁ śreyo na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—
'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for an age.'

Till her Master's passing away in 1902, Nivedita spent many months with him either in Calcutta or on visits to various parts of India and the West. This period marked her own intense education in the Indian view of life and in the message of her own Master. As a fruit of that education, she has left a permanent literary legacy in several books, in two of which, namely, *The Master as I Saw Him* and *Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda,* we have a master-mind interpreting another master-mind. We have the teachings of Vivekananda available in his lectures, writings, letters, and interviews collected in the eight volumes of his *Complete Works.* But Nivedita provides us with an intimate and near-view of the colossal greatness of a highly creative mind which was Vivekananda. She gives us fascinating glimpses of the personality of her great Master, the immense range of his intellectual and human interests, his fearless and refreshing views on historical and contemporary personalities, movements, and events, and valuable snatches of his strengthening and purifying message.

Referring to her own role in these books as a mere instrument of communication between a great teacher and the waiting world at large, Nivedita says (*Complete Works of Sister Nivedita,* Vol. I, p. 74):

'Mine is the broken and faltering witness of one who is fain to tell —not of geography nor of politics, nor yet of the ways and customs of interesting people and unknown races, but rather of the glimpse vouchsafed to her of a great religious life of the ancient order, living itself out, amidst the full and torturing consciousness of all the anomalies and perplexities of the Modern Transition.'

And speaking more explicitly about this role of hers, she says (*ibid.,* p. 76):

'My own part, throughout the years of my discipleship, appears to me to have been something like that of a thought-reader. The only

claim that I can make is that I was able to enter sufficiently into the circuit of my Master's energy to be able to give evidence regarding it from direct perception.'

And speaking of her Master's role in that Modern Transition, she says (*ibid.*, pp. 74-75):

'His was the modern mind in its completeness. In his consciousness the ancient light of the mood, in which man comes face to face with God, might shine, but it shone on all those questions and all those puzzles which are present to the thinkers and workers of the modern world. ...

'And thinking thus, I believe that each trace of those higher and uncommon modes of thought and consciousness to which he held the key, has its significance for the modern age, I believe that much which has passed myself by, uncomprehending, will fall on its proper soil in other lives. And I pray only to give always true witness, without added interpolation or falsifying colour.'

I have been always fascinated by two passages in her *The Master as I Saw Him* wherein she conveys, in arresting language, Vivekananda's love of India (*ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 45):

'There was one thing, however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was his love of his country and his resentment of her suffering. Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He never used the word 'nationality', nor preached an era of 'nation-making'. 'Man-making', he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his Motherland. Like some delicately-poised bell, trilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. There was no cry of fear, no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification, that he had not known and understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness'.

Again (*ibid.*, pp. 47-48):

'Like some great spiral of emotion, its lowest circles held fast in love of soil and love of nature; its next embracing every possible asso-

ciation of race, experience, history, and thought; and the whole converging and centering upon a single definite point, was thus the Swami's worship of his land. And the point in which it was focussed was the conviction that India was not old and effete, as her critics had supposed, but young, ripe with potentiality, and standing, at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the threshold of even greater developments than she has known in the past.'

After referring to the need to make Hinduism dynamic, she conveys, in another luminous passage, her Master's vision of modern Hinduism and the ideals of the Ramakrishna Order (*ibid.*, pp. 113-14):

'The same purpose spoke again in his definition of the aims of the Order of Ramakrishna—"to effect an exchange of the highest ideals of the East and the West, and to realize these in practice"—a definition whose perfection and special appropriateness to the present circumstances of India, grows on one with time. To his mind, Hinduism was not to remain a stationary system, but to prove herself capable of embracing and welcoming the whole modern development. She was no congeries of divided sects, but a single living Mother-Church, recognizing all that had been born of her, fearless of the new, eager for the love of her children, wherever they might be found, wise, merciful, self-directing, pardoning, and reconciling. Above all, she was the holder of a definite vision, the preacher of a distinct message amongst the nations. To prove her this, however, he relied on no force but that of character. The building of the temple of his faith was all-important, it was true; but for it there was infinite time, and with it worked the tendency and drift of things. For himself, the responsibility was to choose sound bricks. And he chose, not with an eye to the intellect, or power of attraction, or volume of force, of those who were chosen, but always for a certain quality of simple sincerity, and, as it seemed, for that alone. Once accepted, the ideal put before them was the same: not *mukti* but renunciation, not self-realization but self-abandonment. And this rather, again, on behalf of man than as an offering to God. It was the *human motive* that he asserted to his disciples.'

She presents vivid glimpses of the Swami's great love and concern for the welfare of women and the common people (*ibid.*, p. 193):

'Our Master, at any rate, regarded the Order to which he belonged as one whose lot was cast for all time with the cause of woman and the people. This was the cry that rose to his lips instinctively, when he dictated to the phonograph in America the message that he would send to the Raja of Khetri. It was the one thought, too, with which he

would turn to the disciple at his side, whenever he felt himself nearer than usual to death, in a foreign country, alone, "Never forget" he would then say, "the word is, 'woman and the people'!"

Conveying his vision of the woman of the future, she says (*ibid.*, p. 195):

'He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future, entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science, woman must learn; but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality. He saw clearly enough that the ideal education would be one that should exercise the smallest possible influence for direct change on the social body as a whole. It would be that which should best enable every woman, in time to come, to resume into herself the greatness of all the woman of the Indian past.'

Again, highlighting his stress on the need for both men and women to outgrow their physical limitations by their closer and closer approach to Self-realization, the realization of the Ātman, the sexless Self of all, she remarks (*ibid.*, pp. 196-97):

'He saw plainly enough that what was wanted was a race of women-educators, and this was how he contemplated making them. Strength, strength, strength was the one quality he called for in woman as in man. But how stern was his discrimination of what constituted strength! Neither self-advertisement nor over-emotion roused his admiration. His mind was full of the grand old types of silence and sweetness and steadiness to be attracted by any form of mere display. At the same time, woman had as large an inheritance as man in all the thought and knowledge that formed the peculiar gift of the age to India. There could be no sex in truth. *He would never tolerate any scheme of life and polity that tended to bind tighter on mind and soul the fetters of the body. The greater the individual, the more would she transcend the limitations of femininity in mind and character; and the more was such transcendence to be expected and admired.*' (italics not author's).

In the opening para of her book, *Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda*, Nivedita writes (*Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (*ibid.*, pp. 277-78):

'Beautiful have been the days of this year (1898). In them the Ideal has become the Real. First in our river-side cottage at Belur (Bengal) ; then in the Himalayas, at Naini Tal and Almora; afterwards wandering here and there through Kashmir—everywhere have come

hours never to be forgotten, words that will echo through our lives for ever, and, once at least, a glimpse of the Beatific Vision. ...

'We have seen a love that would be one with the humblest and most ignorant, seeing the world for the moment through his eyes, as if criticism were not; we have laughed over the colossal caprice of genius; we have warmed ourselves at heroic fires; and we have been present, as it were at the awakening of the Holy Child. ...

'We have learnt something of the mood in which new faiths are born, and of the Persons who inspire such faiths. For we have been with one who drew all men to him,—listening to all, feeling with all, and refusing none.'

Āścaryo vaktā kuśalo'sya labdhā—'wonderful the teacher and talented his disciple', says the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. It was such a communion of two creative minds that found expression in the education of Nivedita under Vivekananda. Referring, with refreshing candour, to the severity of her training at Almora by her Master to fit her for her role in India, Nivedita writes (*ibid.*, pp. 289-90):

'Into these morning talks at Almora, a strange new element, painful but salutary to remember, had crept. There appeared to be, on one side, a curious bitterness and distrust, and, on the other, irritation and defiance. The youngest of the Swami's disciples at this time, it must be remembered, was an English woman, and of how much this fact meant intellectually—what a strong bias it implied, and always does imply, in the reading of India, ... the Swami himself had had no conception till the day after her initiation at the monastery. Then he had asked her some exultant question, as to which nation she now belonged, and had been startled to find with what a passion of loyalty and worship she regarded the English flag, giving to it much of the feeling that an Indian woman would give to her *Thākoor* (God). His surprise and disappointment at the moment were scarcely perceptible. A startled look, no more. Nor did his discovery of the superficial way in which this disciple had joined herself with his people in any degree affect his confidence and courtesy during the remaining weeks spent in the plains.

But with Almora, it seemed as if a going-to-school had commenced, and just as schooling is often disagreeable to the taught, so here, though it cost infinite pain, the blindness of a half-view must be done away. A mind must be brought to change its centre of gravity. It was never more than this; never the dictating of opinion or

creed; never more than emancipation from partiality. Even at the end of the terrible experience, when this method, as regarded race and country, was renounced, never to be taken up systematically again, the Swami did not call for any confession of faith, any declaration of new opinion. He dropped the whole question. His listener went free. But he had revealed a different standpoint in thought and feeling, so completely and so strongly as to make it impossible for her to rest, until later, by her own labours, she had arrived at a view in which both these partial presentments stood rationalised and accounted for.'

The end of this stress and strain of training was the descent of peace through the blessing of her Master. In her description of this event in *The Master as I Saw Him* we get revealed the calibre of both the disciple and the Master. It holds a vital lesson for all those who desire to become fit instruments for the high and worthy causes which they may have chosen. *(The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita,* Vol. I, pp. 80-81):

'My relation to our Master at this time can only be described as one of clash and conflict. I can see now how much there was to learn and how short was the time for learning to be, and the first of lessons doubtless is the destroying of self-sufficiency in the mind of the taught. But I had been little prepared for that constant rebuke and attack upon all my most cherished prepossessions which was now my lot. Suffering is often illogical, and I cannot attempt to justify by reason the degree of unhappiness I experienced at this time, as I saw the dream of a friendly and beloved teacher falling away from me, and the picture of one who would be at least indifferent, and possibly, silently hostile, substitutng itself instead.

'Fortunately it never occurred to me to retract my own proffered service, but I was made to realise, as the days went by, that in this there would be no personal sweetness. And then a time came when one of the elder ladies of our party, thinking perhaps that such intensity of pain inflicted might easily go too far, interceded kindly and gravely with the Swami. He listened silently and went away. At evening, however he returned, and finding us togther in the varandah, he turned to her and said, with the simplicity of a child, "you were right, there must be a change. I am going away into the forests to be alone, and when I come back, I shall bring peace." Then he turned and saw that above us the moon was new, and a sudden exaltation came into his voice as he said, "See! The Mohammedans think much of the new moon. Let us also with the new moon begin a new life!" As the words ended, he lifted his hands and blessed, with silent depths of blessing, his most re-

bellious disciple, by this time kneeling before him. . . . It was assuredly a moment of wonderful sweetness of reconciliation.

'But such a moment may heal a wound. It cannot restore an illusion that has been broken into fragments. And I have told its story, only that I touch upon its sequel. Long, long ago, Sri Ramakrishna had told his disciples that the day would come when his beloved "Naren" would manifest his own great gift of bestowing knowledge with a touch. That evening at Almora, I proved the truth of his prophecy. For alone, in meditation, I found myself gazing deep into an infinite good, to the recognition of which no egoistic reasoning had led me. I learnt, too, on the physical plane, the simple everyday reality of the experience related in the Hindu books on religious psychology. And I understood, for the first time, that the greatest teachers may destroy in us a personal relation only in order to bestow the Impersonal Vision in its place.'

Nivedita's glowing life and example hold a great lesson for our people, and more especially for our women. Her love for the people and her service of them were imbued with the deepest Vedāntic spiritual vision, the vision which Sri Ramakrishna imparted in his message: *Jīva* is Śiva; and service of *Jīva* is the worship of Śiva, and which Vivekananda proclaimed in his message of *Daridra-Nārāyaṇa seva*. In that article in the *Prabāsi* referred to earlier, Tagore speaks of Nivedita as the modern Sati. Ancient Indian religious literature, including Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṁbhavam,* refers to the severe penance of young and beautiful Sati to secure Siva as her husband. Says Tagore (*op. cit.*):

'Sati, for love of Siva, subjected her delicate body and mind to a fiery ordeal of hunger and heat. Nivedita too, a modern Sati, underwent a similar ordeal, with almost no food for days on end, cooped up in a small house in a narrow street where for want of air many a burning night was spent without a wink of sleep. . . . It was her total surrender to the Śiva seated in the heart of man. What *sādhana* can be harder than to strive to win as one's lord and master this Śiva on his Mount Kailas hidden in the hearts of all men?

'One day Śiva himself appeared in disguise before Sati in penance and said: "Lady, is he for whose sake you are undergoing this ordeal deserving of one so beautiful as you? He is destitute, old, and ugly, and his ways are strange." Flaring up, Sati rejoined, "He may be all that you say, nevertheless my mind is wholly centred on him."

'Can a Sati so absorbed in her Śiva ever care for the outer glamour, wealth, and beauty of the material world?'

Explaining the nature of Nivedita's penance, Tagore continues (*ibid.*):

'Sister Nivedita's heart overflowed with this deep and rare spiritual love. That is why she saw her God in the poor, and entranced by what she beheld, she put the garland of the pure, white blossoms of her deathless devotion round the neck of the people whose lack of outward elegance repels the elite.

'Witnessing with our eyes the penance of this Sati for her Śiva, our own paralysed faith was quickened into life, and we could believe that there indeed is Śiva in every man, that his radiance illumines the tumble-down huts of the poor and the slums of the pariah and the outcaste.'

The Indian people in general and her women in particular have a hoary tradition of austerity and penance and capacity for love and service. For long it had remained confined to the person and his or her family. Vivekananda has cut a new channel, the channel of service of God in man, for this current of national tradition to flow with a view to fertilizing the national life in a pervasive way. He calls upon our men and women to grow spiritually by transcending their physical and biological selves. This is true renunciation; this is creative austerity. The *gṛhastha* or the householder must grow into the citizen through ethical awareness and social concern, with service as the principle of inter-human relationships. If our women had achieved this growth in themselves in the earlier centuries, there would have been no untouchability and other social evils in our society. 'Renunciation and service', says Vivekananda, 'are the twin ideals of India; intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

It was this message that found a glowing example and communication medium in Sister Nivedita. May her example be a beacon of hope and courage to you all.

Part Three

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA

THE 15th of August 1947, so far as India is concerned, may be said to mark the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. Foreign domination which began with Plassey in 1757 ends today —exactly 190 years later. This epoch of political slavery is but a short interregnum viewed against the background of India's long history. The real significance of this interlude in our history can be assessed only when we are at a little distance in time from it, when alone an objective consideration of events becomes possible. It is difficult for any but the greatest thinkers to view events dispassionately even while living them. Any such event, therefore, will appear to have a different value to such a thinker from what it will bear to an average person.

Political slavery, to an average person, may mean nothing unusual, if it does not affect the routine within the little horizon of his daily life. But it becomes galling when the same person becomes politically conscious—when its restrictions impinge upon his newly acquired sense of values of freedom and self-respect. With the dawning of the consciousness of these values, he becomes a political entity—a being who values freedom above mere material and physical security. This marks the emergence of a spiritual and moral value in the life of man and the evolution of a rudimentary moral and spiritual personality. It is this rudimentary personality that, later on, through political education in life, and through the intense pursuit of the value of freedom, grows into that finished social product, the citizen. The evolution of this citizen is the end of politics, as it is also the highest *social* end.

Political subjection in the nineteenth century, with its promise of an era of peace, was more or less accepted by the vast mass of Hindus and Muslims of this country, urged by considerations of physical and material security and as an escape from the uncertainties of the earlier centuries. But this was but a phase, and a short phase at that. Political slavery becomes a challenge as much when it tends to uproot the cultural inheritance, as when it tends to restrict the scope of functioning, of a people. A people who possess inner reserves of vitality rise to meet this challenge, while those who are bereft of it take it easy and court extinction as a people, though continuing to live as individuals with new souls and new bodies. The history of the world is not without examples of the latter type. The challenge to India came from both the fronts—cultural as well as socio-political. India rose to meet the challenge first on the cultural front, then on the political—broadly speaking the second half of the nineteenth century evidenced the first, while this century up-to-date evidenced the second—thus demonstrating the abiding vitality of the people and their legacy. In the arresting story of this double process and the phenomenal successes it has attained even in so short a peroid lies the romance of recent Indian history and its significance to the world at large.

One noteworthy feature of India's rise to meet the new cultural challenge from the West needs to be well emphasized; for it contains a quality of dynamic synthesis, which has also imparted its tone to her response to the second challenge, namely, to her fight for political independence, and which contains promise of fruitful application in the spheres of her domestic and foreign relations as well. *This striking feature is the note of affirmation and synthesis, inclusion and not exclusion, characteristic of new India's awareness and activity.* What was but re-actionary (used in the literal sense only) in the early phases, and often apologetic and negative, becomes transformed into a creative movement of thought, seeking to affirm and to synthesize any tested human value whether evolved in the East or in the West, whether scientific or religious, political or social.

Swami Vivekananda stands as the most effective spokesman and representative of this phase of our cultural movement. He was one of those who found in the British connection a potent means for breaking our moribund society and civilization with a view to making it expansive. In his personality was fused the past and the present, ancient wisdom and modern knowledge; he knew the glory of our past; he felt intimately the degradations of our present day; he was a Hindu to the backbone; he loved and revered other religions as well. He

was a lover of the social and spiritual gospel of Islam and Christianity and of their value to Indian life and thought. Above all, he was deeply imbued with the spirit of modern thought with its theoretical and practical contributions in the field of science, and political and economic countributions in the field of life and society. Last but not the least, he was fully aware of the international character of human relationships in the modern context. His was not the rôle of a reactionary patriot who would take his country away from the contamination of other peoples, or who would ride his chariot of nationalism roughly over the freedom of other nations. He loved India, but he loved humanity, too, with equal passion. Says he in one of his letters affirming his faith in the glory of man as such, undivided by narrow domestic walls. (*Complete Works,* Vol. VIII, Third Edition, p. 349):

'What is India or England or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called *Man.*'

And we may as well add, whom the more ignorant call Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Indian, Russian, American, etc.

Jawaharlal Nehru pays a tribute to this aspect of Swami Vivekananda's personality (*The Discovery of India,* p. 400):

'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

Himself an internationalist, he quotes with deep appreciation the following statement of the unity of mankind from Swami Vivekananda's lectures delivered in 1897 (quoted in *The Discovery of India,* pp. 401-2):

'Even in politics and sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago can no longer be solved on national grounds only. They are assuming huge proportions, gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international grounds. International organizations, international combinations, international laws are the cry of the day. That shows solidarity. ... There cannot be any progress without the whole world following in the wake, and it is becoming everyday clearer that the solution of any problem can never be attained on racial, or national, or narrow grounds. Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole of this world, every aspiration must go on increasing till it has engulfed the whole of humanity, nay, the whole of life within its scope.'

Appyling this criterion to the recent past of India and pointing a lesson and a warning to his countrymen, both Hindu and Muslim, Swami Vivekananda affirms (quoted in *The Discovery of India,* p. 402):

'I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy, or holiness, the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one. The fact of our isolation from all the

other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration, and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the world. Motion is the sign of life.'

The words quoted above were uttered fifty years ago; they carry a freshness and a vigour even today. In Swami Vivekananda's day, India was not an active factor in world affairs. Her past glory was a subject of sympathetic comment and study with several Western scholars. But the world in general pitied her in her plight. Her own children also felt a sort of self-pity for their aged and battered mother.

But all this quickly changed. The shock of conquest and the shame of subjection were a challenge which, far from extinguishing her inner fires, as happened in the case of many other nations and as was anticipated by many even in hers, on the contrary, led to her blazing forth in an outburst of thought and activity, initiating a real process of national rejuvenation. This awakening was a process, first, of self-discovery and, second, of self-expression.

The process of self-discovery on the part of India may be said to attain its culmination today—15th of August 1947—with the attainment by her of full political freedom; the energies so released will from now onward issue forth in a more intensified process of creative self-expression.

Vivekananda as *person* led India into the current of world cultural forces. Vivekananda as *idea* seeks to guide India into the world community of nations after making her a well-knit people. In Vivekananda's conception, India had in her the requisite historically acquired capacity to function as the moral leader of nations. The new world situation also demands a strong moral guidance to the energies of nations. But India, he held, could not assume that rôle and discharge it effectively without first effecting certain vital changes within herself. Herein lies the scope of what he characteristically termed his 'domestic policy', leading to the assumption and discharge by her of that world responsibility which he called his 'foreign policy'.

Political freedom, economic advancement, and social solidarity are the three pre-conditions of effective Indian participation in world affairs. With the accomplishment of the first item today, the second and third remain to be tackled. Vivekananda was the first to point out the harm that has been done to the spiritual and moral personality of our people by economic backwardness and social division. Involuntary poverty, to him, is unspiritual and immoral. Religion, he held, is not for empty bellies. Social inequalities and unwholesome hierarchies are a disease

in the body-politic. In his wanderings through the length and breadth of India, he came into intimate personal contact with the emaciated and dismembered body and mind of India, as he had earlier come into contact with her undying and eternal unity of spirit through his contact with his master, Sri Ramakrishna, and through his own studies of her literature and history. He found the ideal and the real far apart; and he set his heart and hands to make the real approximate to the ideal. He wrestled through sorrow and anguish to lay bare the problem of modern India and to find its solution, and he worked himself to an early death in imparting to his countrymen his passion and his resolve. The mind and face of India today bear unmistakably the impress of Vivekananda's heart and resolve. To quote Sister Nivedita, Vivekananda's gifted Western disciple (*The Master as I Saw Him*, pp. 49-50):

'There was one thing, however, deep in the master's nature, that he never knew how to adjust. This was his love of his country and his resentment of her suffering. Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word "nationality", nor proclaimed an era of "nation-making". "Man-making", he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his motherland. Like some delicately-poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. There was no cry of fear, no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification, that he had not known and understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness.'

Today, when the country is celebrating its day of deliverance from foreign subjection, it is well for us to remember Swami Vivekananda and his conception of the future of our country. He believed in the unity of the Indian people. He believed that our culture is a rich mosaic containing Hindu, Muslim, and other elements. He also believed that the Hindus and the Muslims have certain things to learn from each other, which would make them not merely better Hindus and better Muslims, but, what is more important, better men. *Since man-making was his religion, he exhorted his countrymen to discard narrow lives and narrow hates and grow into that wholeness which is perfection of character.* In the same vein, he exhorted the Hindus to discard the sectional loyalties of caste and sect and grow into that fullness and wholeness expressive of the Divine in man. It is as an effective help to this religion of man-making that he upheld the modern theory and practice of democracy with its faith in freedom and equality and the sacredness of personality.

The strength of democracy lies in the citizen. Democracy in India seeks to turn Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, and others into citizens owing allegiance to certain fundamental values which are universal and human. This great process will derive ample sustenance from the inspiration of the great world religions. In fact, political, and even economic, democracy cannot go long, can also go wrong, without the guidance and inspiration that religion alone can impart. But that inspiration has to be sought not from the dogmas and creeds of religions, but from their inner core of essential truths. *This work of elevating democracy to a moral and spiritual value is the task that awaits the energies of a Free India.*

The above remarks may sound a bit strange, a bit too bold, in the context of present-day India. Our freedom has come to us with a good bit of sorrow in it; the voice that will proclaim freedom today will also be the voice that will proclaim our division into two political entities. But tragic as division is, we shall not make it more tragic by considering it as something more than political and administrative. Superficially, it appears to be a division based on cultural and religious grounds. But, on a close view, it reveals itself as a mere political division, based on political considerations only, but using cultural and religious badges. It has certainly roused religious and communal passion; it has left behind colossal material and human destruction.

But all this does not prove that Islamic culture and religion require to be protected from the contamination of Hindu religion and culture in a separate sovereign state; all that it proves is that the Muslim intelligentzia had begun to think that it required a separate state to express its political and economic personality. If and when partition will fulfil this desire, it is bound to annul itself for want of a basic urge. The people are one whether under one sovereign state or two. And, as such, there will always be a large India looming behind the states of India and Pakistan. That India is bound to impinge itself on the social constitutions and on the political states of the two parts of divided India.

The social composition of the Indian population is bound to assert itself on her social constitution and on the political state. Whatever basic urge there is, therefore, is towards unity; the social forces can move only in this direction; the minority problem in both the states, in spite of division, is a powerful factor, in spite of appearances to the contrary, that will tend to eventual unity. And this unity will be on a higher and more enduring plane than on those of political expediency and manoeuvring through pacts and deals of the past few decades.

The pressure of politics has divided us; but the pressure of sociology will unite us; and culture reinforced by social and economic forces and the realities of the world situation will speed up the process. This process, which always goes on in a society, producing an ever-widening unity of types, had to reckon, in the case of India, with an incalculable third factor, the presence of a foreign power pursuing a policy of continual thwarting of healthy national forces in the interest of its own self-perpetuation. The elimination now of this incalculable third factor leaves the field free for the effective operation of social forces. This is the faith that sustains those who, though feeling the pang of partition, are yet not dismayed by it or confused by it. This section even now is large, comprising influential political parties and non-political groups and individuals both among the Muslims and among the Hindus. When the abnormalities of the present situation with its gushing passions and blinding hates will pass away, leaving the Indian sky clear, the country will recognize the correctness and cogency of the above faith and vision; *the faith of a steady few will then become the enthusiasm of the many, leading to a reconciliation and reunion of the sundered parts, and the unsettling of a settled fact through popular will.*

To work towards this glorious consummation silently and steadily is the task that faces the country today. We have to realize that politics is the plaything of social forces. Sociology is more fundamental than politics. In this healthy manipulation of social forces to make them tend towards social solidarity, the country will find inspiration and guidance from the personality and message of Swami Vivekananda.

Economic and cultural advancement of the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes will tend to establish a balance of social forces in the country. The impact of democracy on Hindu society will tend to the elimination of its inequalities, helping to put it on an even keel. Cultural and economic advancement will make the average Muslim less and less susceptible to communal and fanatical propaganda, and make him receptive to those aspects of his religion which are universal and human. The practice and preaching of a tolerant Islam is the task that awaits the Indian Muslim of tomorrow; its recently invoked divisive powers and negative and exclusive attitudes will have to be replaced by its sublime unifying attitudes and programmes. In short, Islamic democracy will have to grow into human democracy. The impact of this democracy on Hindu society will be wholesome for that society and the world. Vivekananda held the view that the beauty of Hindu religion has been marred by its social inequalities. In agony he cried

in one of his letters written from America to a devoted worker in India (Complete Works, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 15):

'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The Lord has shown me that religion is not at fault, but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika* (absolute and relative truth).

'Religion is not at fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied. But it was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy—the want of heart.'

The history of India and the character of Indian Islam and Hindu society would have been different if Islam had come to India as a friend and in peace. It would then have contributed its equalitarian social gospel to the purification of the social edifice of Hinduism—Hinduism would have gladly learnt these lessons from it, while imparting its own tolerant outlook to the sister faith. But the fact that Islam in its most effective forms came to India through the military conquerors who professed Islam but practised their own national savagery, and who ravaged India and battered Hinduism, made Islam an eye-sore to the Hindu mind. It is one of those sad chapters in inter-religious and inter-cultural contacts which yielded bitter fruits, but which, in a different form, would have been fruitful of great results for the religion and culture of mankind.

Yet, social forces override human frenzies and passions; for, once Islam got established in the land, the work of fusion and synthesis commenced, and the life and work of the great medieval saints of North India, both Hindu and Muslim, have added a brilliant chapter to our history. Their work, broadly speaking, bore the impress of Hinduism in the field of thought and religion, and of Islam in the field of social life. In the general framework of history, the work of Kabīr, Nānak, Dādū, Caitanya, Sūrdās and others may appear fugitive and forlorn, but they contain a moral and an inspiration for us of this age. If isolated individuals in unpropitious times could produce such glorious results, how much greater results in the direction of spiritual stability and social solidarity and the great end of, what Vivekananda called, 'man-making' could be achieved, if the forces of both the faiths could be canalized into constructive and creative channels through deliberate and self-conscious endeavour? This endeavour, aided by the theory and practice of modern democracy, and assisted by the impact of world forces, has for its glorious consummation the evolution of an Indian

polity based on spiritual foundations, and endued with the moral passion of human welfare.

Is this not the end and aim of all religions? Is this not what would please the hearts of the prophets and founders of the world's great religions? Is this not the natural issue of modern world forces when directed to human ends? Will not this consummation make India prosperous and powerful and the moral leader of nations? Cannot Indian Islam and Indian Christianity, like Hinduism, issue forth as distinct world forces with characteristic individualities of their own and a message to the other peoples of the world? Religion thrives best in the Indian soil; the Indian—whether Hindu, Christian, or Muslim— is deeply religious. Allied with narrow political passions, this religious feeling has exhibited the most brutal aspects. Allied with the passion for spirituality and human service, it has exhibited the most sublime aspects as well. It is up to the Hindus and Muslims and Christians to see that their religions exhibit this latter aspect. The average Muslim must learn to consider military conquerors and fanatics as human aberrations and abnormal types, who use the name of Islam to cover their own blood-thirstiness and egoism. They can at best be military heroes and not religious heroes. He must learn to venerate more the saints and sages of his religion who have imparted cheer and hope to man. This will, in turn, help the Indian Muslim to cultivate an attitude of reverence to other faiths, and their teachers and saints. The Prophet of Islam came as a warner to man; he came to unite; he came, as he has himself affirmed, as a blessing to mankind and not as a curse. Gentle as a lamb, but strong and courageous as a lion, he bent his energies to the moral and spiritual upliftment of his people. In his attitudes and activities, he has created a pattern of excellence which remains as a fund of inspiration to those who seek to follow him.

Mutual respect will lead to mutual emulation. *We have suppressed this great sociological factor of emulation for long;* it has led to a distortion of our religions and our personalities. It is time that we give free play to this compulsive factor of social evolution. That is the line of our future advance. It is a happy augury that Indian Christianity, overcoming its erstwhile temptations to the contrary—temptations engendered by political exigencies over which it had no control—has recognized this great truth and is consciously working towards this end. A glorious future for Indian Christianity is assured thereby. When will Indian Islam come to itself? When will Indian Muslims learn to impart their own genius to this great religion and produce a crop of saints and sages who will command the veneration of all men?

The test of a living religion is this production of saints who bear witness to God and the highest in man. A too close and long association with 'real politics' can even destroy the soul of a religion.

Society expects this guidance from its leaders today. The nerves cannot stand the strain and tension of hatred and bickering for long. Free India, divided now into two sovereign states, calls for the burying of our hatchets; it demands the sending of a current of love all round.

Swami Vivekananda believed in this glorious destiny for India and worked unceasingly to that end. He has left it as a legacy to us. He knew what blessings would flow from a junction of religions on the soil of India. Such significant attempts at what was then called *samudrasaṅgam*, 'the confluence of the oceans', have been made by some of our far-seeing forbears in the far less propitious period of the seventeenth century. Conditions are ripe today for its successful implementation in contemporary India. Referring to the interaction of Hinduism and Islam, Vivekananda has written, what Jawaharlal Nehru calls, 'a remarkable letter' to a Muslim friend, Mohammad Sarfaraz Hussain (*The Discovery of India*, p. 403—footnote). It is dated 10th June 1898. I cannot do better than quote this letter *in extenso*:

'My Dear Friend—I appreciate your letter very much, and am extremely happy to learn that the Lord is silently preparing wonderful things for our motherland.

Whether we call it Vedāntism or any *ism*, the truth is that Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. We believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet, practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, is yet to be developed among the Hindus universally.

On the other hand, our experience is that, if ever the followers of any religion approach to this equality in an appreciable degree in the plane of practical work-a-day life—it may be quite unconscious generally of the deeper meaning and the underlying principle of such conduct, which the Hindus as a rule so clearly perceive—it is those of Islam and Islam alone.

Therefore we are firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedāntism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible, and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

For our own motherland, a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedānta brain and Islam body—is the only hope.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA

I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedānta brain and Islam body.

Ever praying that the Lord may make of you a great instrument for the help of mankind, and especially of our poor, poor motherland, Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA

An India spiritually united, economically strong, and socially stable, and imbued with ethical passion, will be a unique force in world affairs. This was Swami Vivekananda's dream of the future of our country. The world expects much from India. The stability of civilization depends upon the giving of a moral and spiritual direction to powerful world forces. The world calls. Will India listen and respond? Vivekananda believed that she can and will respond. Let Free India lay hold of that Faith and Vision and march forward. Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached!

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: HIS CENTRAL THEME

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA can be looked upon as a great organizer or a great orator, as one whose heart bled for the poor in this country and abroad or as one who successfully carried the message of Vedānta to foreign lands; he can also be looked upon as an intellectual giant who built a bridge between the East and the West, as also between reason and faith. But behind all these, there was that fundamental basic inspiration, his spiritual realization.

Swami Vivekananda derived all the inspiration for his work from that touch with the spiritual depths of his own being. It is this aspect of his personality that gives nourishment to all that he said and all that he did. When he came to Sri Ramakrishna as a young boy, Sri Ramakrishna marked in him the eyes of a *yogi* and told the other disciples that Vivekananda, or Naren as he was then called, was a spiritual personality of a high order. He added (Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1952, p. 720):

> 'I found that his eyes were indrawn; half his mind was looking to something within and only the other half was aware of the outside world.'

This, said Sri Ramakrishna, was the characteristic feature of the eyes of great *yogis*. Naren had this characteristic of inwardness which constantly drew him close to the Spirit within. Sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, he developed this trait and became a man of the highest spiritual realization.

When he had realized this spiritual amplitude and fullness, the question arose in his mind as to what he should do thereafter. As it often happens in the life of spiritual aspirants, when they get the vision of the spiritual ideal, they get immersed in that realization. They have little sympathy for or interest in the world of struggling souls around them. Swami Vivekananda would have become one such among the great spiritual luminaries that have come to this country. But his path was to be otherwise, and the fate of India was to be otherwise; for Swami Vivekananda appeared on the scene at a crucial period of our history as a man with a message, and with the necessary spiritual authority and power to impart that message. In that transformation of Swami Vivekananda from a self-absorbed saint to a compassionate teacher is contained the story of modern India's spiritual and cultural regeneration.

When Vivekananda wanted to enjoy spiritual bliss, it was Sri Ramakrishna who told him that he was meant for a different purpose and that he was not to be like an ordinary saint enjoying spiritual beatitude for himself. He was a person who was meant to be a source of inspiration to millions of people in India and abroad; and it was Sri Ramakrishna who gave that turn to Swami Vivekananda's spiritual energies and purposes. With this touch of his Master, Swami Vivekananda burst upon the world not as a passive saint, but as a dynamic world-mover. If Swami Vivekananda exerted so much influence on the contemporary world, and continues to exert that influence in ever increasing measure in the East and the West, it is because he realized the eternal imperishable truth in his own being, and sought inspiration from that in his work to compose the distractions of our age. The edifice of his character was built on the rock foundation of spirituality which found expression in a vigorous personality of scintillating intellect and measureless heart. I wish to emphasize this point because Swami Vivekananda was a many-sided personality and can appear to us in various hues, but his greatness had something eternal about it unlike the passing greatness familiar in the world of achievements. The flow of time affects such greatness in a strange way; it augments it instead of diminishing and destroying it. Rooted in the Ātman and drawing nourishment therefrom, the personality and work of such men and women carry something compelling in it and possess an enduring character.

Great teachers of the world like Jesus Christ, *Bhagavān* Buddha, Sri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda derive their strength and inspiration not from the muscles or mind or intellect, but from the

deepest reality in man and nature. That is why they speak a language which goes straight into the hearts of the people, not only of their own generation but for centuries thereafter. That is how they stand before us, these spiritual giants, in spite of passing time, as the timeless witnessess of what is permanent and eternal in man. It is this that flavours the message which Swami Vivekananda gave to India, on the one side, and the West, on the other.

It is significant that though he had dived deep into the ocean of spiritual realization, he did not give the same message, or rather the message in the same form, to India as he gave to the West. He varied his message to suit the needs of the people; but all these variations were expressions of one central theme—spirituality. In the Indian context he saw that the path to spirituality lay through material and social amelioration. To this end he drew out of Vedānta a social philosophy and outlook, at once dynamic and practical. To India which sorely needed it, he gave the message of a man-making religion and a nation-making faith and resolve.

While Swami Vivekananda felt proud at the glory of old India, he was deeply afflicted to see her in the depths of degradation and misfortune. The sufferings of his countrymen, their age-old starvation, ignorance, and social disabilities, moved him deeply. Confronted with this situation, his abundant spirituality and dynamic philosophy flowed into a stream of compassion and love, into a national message of renunciation and service; Vedānta once again became dynamic and practical. It is this that makes Vivekananda not merely a great *ṛṣi* or sage but also a patriot and epoch-maker. From him proceeded a wave of national awareness and patriotism, issuing in a great struggle to improve the lot of the common man. Whatever we have achieved by way of political independence, by way of social awareness and national solidarity, has come from that orientation of the ancient message of India's spirituality given by Swami Vivekananda.

Going to foreign countries, in America and England, he was confronted with a different situation. There were people who were lacking in nothing by way of social or material amenities; but they were lacking in something fundamental which had turned their very material advancements into ashes in the mouth. Outer wealth and glory had been achieved at the cost of inner richness and peace. The modern man was in search of a soul, a search in which his science and wisdom just failed him.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: HIS CENTRAL THEME

Swami Vivekananda stood before the western world as an authentic voice of the spirit in man and the spirit in the universe. To them he went as the teacher of Vedānta, of the inward contemplative life, the teacher of active tolerance and fellowship, the teacher of universal love. There, in the West, he stood forth as the representative of the *ṛṣis* of India and imparted their ancient message in keeping with the spiritual needs of the modern West. That is why Vivekananda is respected in the western world as a spiritual teacher and world thinker of a rare calibre. To the average youth of our country he makes an irresistible appeal as one who taught patriotism and national service in ever-memorable words, as one who worked and asked others to work for uplifting the vast millions in this country who are sunk in ignorance and poverty. To the nation at large he shines as the emblem of purity, spirituality, love, and energy through whose inspiration it hopes to build its body and mind anew.

These are the various aspects of his personality directly derived from the supreme strength of realized Vedānta. The richness and strength of this Vedāntic realization accounts for the many-sidedness of his character and message. He brings down Vedānta to fertilize the fields of common life so that life may be raised to uncommon heights and made capable to taste Vedānta at its purest source. Through him once more Vedānta spoke in accents of human happiness and welfare. He keenly felt the truth that the purer delights of spiritual life can be experienced only after man has been able to meet the demands of life's immediate and pressing needs. 'Religion is not for empty bellies', he said, and he found India full of empty bellies and naked bodies; he considered it a mockery to preach religion to a hungry man. Hence he became a teacher of love; of love of God flowing into service of man, of faith flowing into works, and both forging character which is manliness and manliness which is spirituality.

His message has great practical utility today; the political and social policy of India has to bear the impress of that spirituality which Swami Vivekananda gave to the nation out of the fullness of his realization. The nation wanted a teacher who would guide its thoughts so as to humanize its religion and spiritualize its social purposes and activities; and the nation got Swami Vivekananda at the right time. He made Indian philosophy concern itself with the problems of the common man. *But he has also warned us that all our politics* and *policies, our social developments and economic improvements, in short, all our deepest cravings for betterment, must be subordinated to the one fundamental national theme of spirituality.* In this emphasis on

the fundamental theme of Indian life, Swami Vivekananda stands as a unique figure among the great leaders who have come to this country in recent times.

At the time of Vivekananda, political subjection was lying heavy on the shoulders of India. Today it has been lifted; but along with political subjection there has been social decay, and it looked as if an old and rich civilization had ceased to grow. Swami Vivekananda wanted to make this civilization take a new shape and stand forth as a fresh, energetic, and vigorous civilization before the modern world. For that purpose, he wanted India to assimilate the spirit and technique of modern science which has come to us from the West; but this capacity to assimilate the dynamic scientific culture of the West depended upon a prior energizing of the national tradition in the minds of his countrymen. Without this strengthening of the national heritage, India's response to the West, he held, will result in a patchy imitation instead of a healthy assimilation. He warned us against that temptation and danger. He visualized a new India in which the spirit of equality, social awareness, and practical efficiency of the modern West would get happily blended with the mature gentleness and tolerance of Indian tradition, with its deep spiritual awareness and passion which has made Indian history a saga of spiritual aspiration and realization. He wanted India to be young, vigorous, and progressive; and yet he wanted all these to be achieved as the fulfilment of the spiritual ideal and purpose.

Therefore he placed before us his great message of nation-building based on spirituality. He wanted that all improvements to be effected in this country should be effected not at the cost of the national asset which is spirituality, but as flowing from it and leading up to it. He interpreted Indian history to demonstrate to us that progress in social and other lines is the fruit of the strengthening of the nation's spirituality, whatever other lessons the histories of other nations may teach. He gave that warning because he found a tendency around him to relegate religion to second place, or even to treat it as an enemy of social progress, and concentrate on material improvement and social progress so as to lead India on absolutely secular lines. This kind of tendency, useful within limits, might yet create mischief in our country and rob the nation of its spiritual stamina. It was therefore necessary that the warning should be issued, and the nation got it in time through the powerful and authentic voice of Swami Vivekananda. He warned us that if India gave up spirituality and her age-old way of life, she would perish. It is this spiritual asset which has made India a con-

tinuing concern, unlike other civilizations which have passed away. Taking the lessons of world history, he told us that if India gave up spirituality and took to any other ideal of life, she would be an extinct culture in three generations. Ancient Greece and Rome and some of the European states which had flourished for a time are nowhere to be seen in the world today. Even some of the nations of the contemporary world, though lacking in nothing by way of material advancement and worldly power, are finding their foundations shaken and are struggling to discover spiritual values to stabilize themselves. They find that something fundamental is lacking in the edifice of their civilization based upon the mere intellect of man, on the achievements of science and technology, and on the advancement of material prosperity. India discovered long ago that if there is to be stability in the structure of a civilization, it shall have to seek for other forces than the forces of muscle or brain or mere intellect. That is how some of the thinkers of Europe and America today are also thinking, and they are in search of that stabilizing force of spirituality of which they view India to be the representative and voice. We see all around us that in spite of material prosperity, in spite of social improvements, in spite of all that are based on sense values, there are forces that are trying to destroy civilization itself. In such critical periods of world history India has ever been a source of spiritual strength and sustenance to humanity. She has played that historic role in spite of her own disasters and sufferings and the vicissitudes that befell her. Her continued existence and vitality in spite of these national disasters, a fraction of which has wiped away other civilizations, imparts to her voice and message the compelling quality of lived and tested experience.

This wisdom tells humanity today through Swami Vivekananda that man's true welfare is basically spiritual and that material and social welfare is but a means to this end. Spirituality is the fundamental good in which are true peace and happiness. There are nations in the West today who have gone far in establishing a welfare state but whose citizens are far from being happy or secure. It is a tragedy that the more advanced a state is, the more insecure and unhappy are its people.

Among modern states, Sweden may be taken as an example of a state which has gone farthest in material advancement and social progress; some have called it not merely a welfare state, but a welfarest state. According to a dispatch published recently (31 December 1951) in the American *Time* from its Stockholm correspondent, the people in this welfarest state are anything but happy. The correspondent found that the state has provision for all its citizens from the womb

to the tomb, and even to salvation, for the state has provided paid preachers to care for the souls of the dead. He found the municipal services perfect, social amenities extensive, wealth plenty, and life easy, with no conceivable cause for unhappiness, insecurity, or worry. Is everything all right with the people of this welfarest state? he asked himself; and he went about to see if there was anything lacking. He found an undercurrent of unrest and unhappiness. A government official told him, 'In a country that has established an orderly society, there comes a time when one begins to ask oneself "What next?"' He found a lot of Swedes asking this question 'What next?' *tataḥ kiṁ*? as our own Śaṅkara expressed it long ago, and finding and receiving no answer; the resultant undercurrent of emotional unrest is giving rise to a variety of social maladies like alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, unhappy marriages, and loose morals. Sweden presents the picture of a society where man has all the good things of life and yet feels a gnawing vacancy in his heart. This inner emptiness becomes the cause of the instability of the outer structure; *for to gain the whole world by losing the soul is to lose the world so gained.* The hunger for God, the desire for spirituality, the craving for inner richness and fullness is a fundamental and basic urge in man; and a civilization that does not take note of it and provide for it will be building itself on sand. The philosophy that stands sponsor to such a civilization is naïve and shallow, having not dared to plumb man and nature to their depths.

The great sages of India knew man and his possibilities and needs most intimately and fully, and provided for them in their scheme of life through the twofold values of *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa*—social welfare and spiritual emancipation. Their maturest thought, Vedānta, is pervaded by a deep passion for truth and a deeper passion for human happiness and welfare. It takes man gently by the hand in his primitive state of childish exuberance and leads him through the delights and restraints of culture and civilization to the peace and fullness of perfection. With such a philosophy to sponsor it and sustain it, India has built an enduring edifice of culture in the life of a seventh of the human race with spiritual freedom as its watchword and tolerance and gentleness as its motto. It was this culture in all its force and charm that found living expression in our time in the lives and message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. They represent the Vedāntic passion for human welfare—human welfare in all its phases, material and moral, cultural and spiritual. This explains the variations in Swami Vivekananda's message and programme in the East and the West. To India's millions he gave out of Vedānta a message of hope through social security and welfare leading to a purer form of renun-

ciation and spirituality. To the materially advanced West he gave out of the same Vedānta a message of renunciation and self-realization as a value to be sought after directly and immediately.

Our country has been provided in Vedānta with a rational philosophy and religion which will answer every quest and thirst of the human intellect and heart. Swami Vivekananda preached a religion which is emotionally satisfying and rationally convincing. Its rationality is creative and inspires faith in life and its values, unlike modern rationalism which destroys hope after first destroying faith. Western man learned to swear by this rationalism from the time of the Renaissance. In the first three centuries it succeeded in withering his faith in God in the name of the faith in man. But in the first half of this twentieth century it has succeeded in whittling his faith in man also, leaving modern man like a rudderless boat in the storm-tossed sea of the modern world, without a faith to sustain him or hope to inspire him, but with enough cynicism yoked to animal vigour which seeks expression in a fantasy of self-and-world-destruction.

If the thinking people of America and England gave a spontaneous response to the message of Swami Vivekananda fifty years ago, it was because he had sensed this inner tension of the modern mind and had conveyed in his message the needed spiritual pabulum. The appeal of Vedānta to the modern man has been steadily deepening and widening since then. It inspires him with a rational faith and a realizable hope and restores to him in a purer form that zest in life which his cynicism had shattered. *To the earnest, seeking, storm-tossed souls of the modern world, a study of Swami Vivekananda's Vedānta has been, and is bound to be, like a bath in the Gaṅgā for a weary pilgrim, a refreshing experience, spiritual rebirth.*

Swami Vivekananda has left us a rich legacy of thought and inspiration. If India assimilates them, she will become the hope of the nations. That is the historically acquired role of India, according to Swami Vivekananda. He preached nation-building with this world-objective in view, to prepare India to discharge her world-responsibility. *And nation-building in India, according to him, is the gathering up of the nation's scattered spiritual forces.* And because he found her present economic and social maladjustments thwarting this higher expression of the national will and purpose, he became the first monastic advocate of what he happily termed 'a toned-down materialism' for his country. He had the fullest faith in the capacity of his people to assimilate moral and spiritual ideas. This assimilative power will gather momentum as the nation succeeds step by step in composing the distractions of its

battered body-politic. An India physically healthy, socially stable and strong, and morally and spiritually resurgent will confront the modern world with a challenge of goodwill and sincerity, fellowship and peace. It will be an utterly new experience to the world after centuries of experience of a different type of challenge, that of hatred, violence, and war. The world is waiting for that new experience with bated breath. And that experience will be vouchsafed to the world by an India fashioned and shaped by the ideas and ideals of Swami Vivekananda. The spirit of India brought him forth and fashioned him for this very purpose.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AS A NATION-BUILDER

EACH passing year finds our nation closer to the ideas and outlook of this great teacher only to discover that he had embodied its urges and expressed its aspirations in his own person six decades before the development of our national consciousness. At this time when our country is entering into a new phase of national development affecting all spheres of our life, it will be highly educative and beneficial for us to get more closely acquainted with the life and thought of one who loved our people with a pure passion rare in our long history. Writes Nivedita, his Irish disciple, in a moving passage (*The Master as I Saw Him*, pp. 49-50):

'There was one thing, however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was his love of his country and his resentment of her suffering. Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He never used the word "nationality", nor proclaimed an era of "nation-making"; "man-making", he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his Motherland. Like some delicately poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. There was no cry of fear, no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification, that he had not known and understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness.'

Swami Vivekananda's love for India flowed from his deep knowledge of her past history and culture and intimate acquiantance with

the mind and face of the India of his time. The first gave him strength and hope in India's mission in the world, while the second helped to make his vast spiritual and mental energies cut a new channel of national *sādhanā* through human love, fellowship, and service.

The India of history impressed him as a remarkable saga of human evolution in the moral and spiritual fields of experience. In the very first public lecture in the East after his triumphal return from his mission in the West, on January 16, 1897, at Colombo, he gave expression to this conviction in his heart in these words (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 105):

'If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *puṇya bhūmi* (holy land), to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for *karma*, the land to which every soul that is wending its way God-ward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all the land of introspection and of spirituality—it is India. Hence have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Hence have proceeded the tidal waves of philosophy that have covered the earth, east or west, or north or south. And hence again must start the wave which is going to spiritualize the material civilization of the world. Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions, in other lands. Believe me, my friends, this is going to be.'

Many a modern thinker, from the German Schopenhauer in the last century to the American Will Durant today, have echoed these sentiments of Swami Vivekananda. The international importance of the Indian cultural experiment and the significance of its striking continuity through the very long course of its chequered history are slowly attracting world attention. Referring to the dawning interest in Indian literature in the Europe of his time, Schopenhauer foretold (*The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, Preface):

'I believe that the influence of the Sanskrit literature will penetrate not less deeply than did the revival of Greek literature in the fifteenth century.'

About a century later, in 1942, Will Durant, in concluding the section on India in the first volume of his *Story of Civilization*, refers to the legacy of India as a continuing one, unlike those of the extinct ones of Egypt or Babylonia, Assyria or Greece, or Rome, and proceeds (*Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 633):

'It is true that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent to us such questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all, our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from

her in the future. As invention, industry, and trade bind the continents together, or as they fling us into conflict with Asia, we shall study its civilisations more closely, and shall absorb, even in enmity, some of its ways and thoughts. Perhaps, in return for conquest, arrogance, and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying, pacifying love for all living things.'

In the personality of his master, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda found a glowing and tangible demonstration of the validity of the India of books and the India of history. Says Romain Rolland (*Life of Ramakrishna,* p. 14):

'Ramakrishna was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people.... His soul animates modern India.'

India's past enthralled Swami Vivekananda and gave him hope. That was his first discovery of India. But a second discovery was awaiting him. For, India's contemporary backwardness, apathy, and weakness greeted him at every step during his five years of wandering as a lonely pilgrim through the length and breadth of the land. Swami Vivekananda as a wandering monk, the *parivrājaka,* will ever remain an inspiring picture for mind and eye for every well-trained youth of our country. During that extensive and intensive wandering, he saw the battered and bruised mind and body of his beloved country. This second discovery was a real shock to his sensitive mind, and he has given vigorous expression to the agony of his soul in his various epistles from the West and addresses in India. Being an intensely practical visionary and creative genius, he successfully tackled, even before his voyage to the West, the staggering problem presented by the two discoveries in a third discovery which he made during his meditation at Kanyakumari towards the end of his wanderings, and which found eloquent expression in the message he subsequently preached to his own people and to the world at large.

That message had in it the ring of authority and authenticity. To the world at large, it spoke the language of a pure spirituality free from all creedal and sectarian limitations. To his own country, it spoke the language of practical spirituality, of man-making and character-building, with renunciation and service as its motto and freedom and equality as its theme. The revitalization of India on these lines with a view to building up a healthy body-politic constituted Swami Vivekananda's national domestic policy; to this end he preached his message of practical Vedānta to his own people, laying stress on the need and the means to increase the energy of personal character, on self-control through

development of the will, and on the expression of this character and energy in channels of patriotic service in every field of national endeavour, be it as a private citizen or a man of any profession, a humble *grāmasevaka* or a high officer of the state. Alongside, he advocated the investment of national energy in a vigorous foreign policy designed to bring the modern world to an increasing awareness of its spiritual destiny and leading to international fellowship and peace.

After eight years of independence, we are beginning to glimpse the taking shape on the national horizon of a definition of our country's national and international mission on the lines envisioned by Swami Vivekananda. The next two decades will constitute the period of our greatest hopes and our greatest fears. The nation will get the strength to dismiss these fears and brighten these hopes by listening to its *yugācārya*, prophet of the age, Swami Vivekananda.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: THE SPIRITUAL TEACHER OF MODERN INDIA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA was in every sense of the term a world spiritual teacher. All his work in East or West was to summon men and women to their spiritual heritage. In line with the great sages and seers of this country, Swamiji taught men and women to realize the Divine that is embedded in man. All his activities in every part of the country and abroad have this one single objective. Whether he spoke of India's poverty, backwardness, untouchability, and the need for our industrial development, or whether he spoke in the West about the need to practise toleration in the world of religion, his primary object was to give to man the priceless gift of *ātmajñāna*, Self-knowledge, to make men realize the Ātman, the Divine that is within all. The way he developed a comprehensive spirituality out of this great Vedāntic idea is unique.

Religion has come to mean something very narrow in recent times. But when we speak of religion in connexion with Swami Vivekananda, there is nothing narrow or exclusive above it, nothing negative about it; it is pure spirituality. So far as India is concerned, this has been the teaching of her great masters, the sages of the Upaniṣads and the teacher of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. They taught us to view religion as a matter of *anubhava* or spiritual realization. 'Religion is being and becoming', said Swami Vivekananda. It does not consist in doctrines and creeds, dogmas and churches and temples, but it consists in a struggle to realize the Divine. This struggle and its end-achievement is religion, according to the Upaniṣads. Because of this broad view of re-

ligion, the Upaniṣads taught this country to practise toleration in the world of religion, toleration between people wending their way to the same goal. For the goal is one, but the paths are many, says Vedānta. The most ancient utterance which has inspired Indian culture and religion down the centuries occurs in the *Ṛg-Veda*: *Ekaṁ sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is one, sages call it by various names.' This great idea has rolled down the centuries, becoming strengthened, becoming expanded and reinforced by the contributions of subsequent teachers, of whom the greatest was *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His great utterance in the *Gītā* (IV. 11) has been the Magna Carta in the world of religion:

Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante, tāṁstathaiva bhajāmyaham;
Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ—

'Through whatever paths men come unto me, I receive them through those very paths; all paths, O Arjuna, eventually lead unto me only.'

It proclaimed the absolute freedom of each religion to strive and develop in its own way, and to take its votary to the highest realization.

This has been the sheet-anchor of India's religious policy. This was amplified by subsequent teachers as well. A very pronounced utterance of this idea is found in the *Bhāgavatam*, where it is said that it is one and the same non-dual Consciousness that is spoken of as Brahman by the philosophers, as Paramātman by the mystics, and as *Bhagavān* by the devotees (I. 2.11):

Vadanti tat tattvavidaḥ tattvaṁ yat jñānam advayam;
Brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate.

This was a remarkable utterance which, as I said before, has found echoes down the centuries; and in our time, in Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings we find the gathering up of these great spiritual ideas and inspirations, to become a powerful force for harmony and goodwill in the world of religion.

These ideas did not remain merely with the saints and devotees of God. They also became the sheet-anchor of political and state policy. Toleration and acceptance became the principle and policy adopted by the great emperors and kings of India. Among all such, the greatest, the most outstanding, is Aśoka. His famous Rock Edict XII, specially, propagates this idea of toleration:

'King Priyadarśin, the beloved of the gods, reverences persons of all sects, ascetics and householders, by gifts and various forms of reverence.

'But the beloved of the gods does not value either gifts or reverential offerings so much as that of an increase of the spiritual strength of the followers of all religions. ... One who reverences one's own religion and disparages that of another from devotion to one's own religion and to glorify it over all other religions does, by so doing, injure one's own religion more certainly.

'It is verily concord among religions that is right and proper, as persons of other ways of thinking may thereby hear the *Dharma* and serve its cause.'

Samavāya, concord, is alone *sādhu,* correct, says Aśoka in his edict.

Not merely a great emperor like Aśoka, but even lesser princes practised this idea of toleration. When Swami Vivekananda stood before the Chicago Parliament of Religions, he took the occasion to remind that august audience of his own credentials in the following significant words (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, pp. 1-2):

'I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both toleration and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. 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. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnants of the Israelites, who 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 am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnants of the grand Zoroastrian nation.'

This was how Swamiji presented the broad and sweeping ideas of Sanātana Dharma, the great and undying spiritual heritage of India. Today, when we have achieved our political independence, we are trying to implement these beautiful ideas, to create harmony, concord, and goodwill between the followers of the various religions in our country. The inspiration for this work will come to us from our ancient heritage; but that heritage has not remained static and finished; it has been reinforced and strengthened in the modern age by the experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Everything is positive in this heritage, there is nothing negative. Swamiji taught us to create unity and strength out of the diversity which is India.

He is a spiritual teacher of a unique type. The Sanskrit word for spiritual teacher is *guru.* The finest definition of the word *guru* has been given to us in Śaṅkarācārya's *Hymn to the Guru:*

Ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjanaśalākayā;
Cakṣurunmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ—

'I salute the *guru,* who, by applying the collyrium of wisdom to the eyes of one suffering from the myopia of spiritual blindness, opens his eyes (to light and truth)'.

This is the work of the *guru*; he awakens man to the realization of truth. Śaṅkarācārya also gives another significant definition to the word in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (verse 32): *Yasmāt bandha-vimokṣaṇam* —'From whom man receives freedom from bondage.' All bondages fall away with the touch of the *guru*. We have till now viewed this conception largely in a mystical, in a religious sense. In the life of Swami Vivekananda, however, we find the infinite extension of this conception; in him the concept of the *guru* achieves many-sidedness; he is not only the destroyer of bondage in the religious sense, but also of bondages of every sort—physical, mental, cultural, and, above all, spiritual. He strove to release man from all these diverse bondages so that the Divine within could manifest itself.

It is from this point of view that he defines religion as well as education. He has given us that beautiful definition of education: 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' Identical is his definition of religion: 'Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.' According to him, the destruction of bondage—external as well as internal—constitutes the whole scope of religion, and he expounds this idea in all his lectures and discourses. The eight volumes of his *Complete Works* give us the inspiration of an ideal of religion and of education which will help humanity at large—the poor, the rich, the backward, the oppressed, one and all—to destroy its bondages and realize the freedom that is the birthright of everyone. When the Swami appeared on the Indian scene, India's condition was so different from what it is today. Many of us today cannot visualize the conditions that obtained in our country in those days; to put it briefly, the nation then was asleep. And he took upon himself to awaken it; in fact, he was born for it. Himself awakened like Buddha, he strove to awaken men and women everywhere to the highest human excellence. This was his clarion call, and adapting the verse of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad, Utthiṣṭhata, jāgrata, prāpya varān nibodhata*, he proclaimed: 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!' He saw his nation asleep for centuries, involved in all sorts of political and social bondages, hugging to itself all sorts of social injustices, and content with political subjection, economic weakness, and social backwardness. And it pained him. He pictured to himself an India awakened, free and strong, marching in step with the advanced nations of the modern world. In the lecture that he delivered at Ramnad, near Rameswaram, on his return from the West, he expressed this idea in the very opening sentences (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 145-46):

'The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awakening,... India,

this motherland of ours—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet'.

This speech was given by him on 25 January 1897. Subsequently in several other speeches in various parts of India, particularly in Madras, Calcutta, and Lahore, he gave his message of India's awakening. He told his listeners that an awakened, self-conscious India would work wonders in the spiritual service of man, both within India and in the rest of the world. He conceived India as the spiritual *guru* of nations. As we deal with him as the spiritual teacher of India, our *rāṣṭra-guru,* and as the spiritual teacher of humanity, the *jagadguru,* he conceived India herself as the spiritual teacher of the world. But India needed to be transformed before she could function as a spiritual teacher. To equip her for this great function in the modern world, the Swami gave his message of practical Vedānta, the message of a comprehensive spirituality, which had the power to transform India politically, socially, economically, and culturally. It was a protean message from a protean personality.

The Swami spoke of national awakening. He saw that man in the Indian context had lost grip on the larger plan and purpose of human life; his life had become contracted, and contracted to such an extent that the next step was death itself. And so he warned us in one of his letters (*ibid.,* Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 322):

"All expansion is life, all contraction is death.'

He also wrote in another letter (*ibid.,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 52):

'India's doom was sealed the very day they invented the word *mleccha,* and stopped from communion with others.'

The national mind, he saw, had become contracted until it could not think of great themes; it could not strive for broad human ideals; it had become reduced to the narrowest circle of existence. Religion, which is such a beautiful idea, which is such a tremendous discipline of the human mind, by which man achieves the Infinite and the Immortal, became narrowed to what he termed a kitchen-religion, to a religion of don't-touchism. What must be the degradation of the na-

tional mind, he asked, when religion could become such a flimsy affair? Says he in deep sorrow (*ibid.*. Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 167):

'Think of the last six hundred or seven hundred years of degradation when grown-up men by the hundreds have been discussing for years, whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left, whether the hand should be washed three times or four times, whether we should gargle five or six times. What can you expect from men who pass their lives in discussing such momentous questions as these, and writing most learned philosophies on them?'

Swamiji felt that the Indian mind must be liberated from this narrow mould; it must be made to function dynamically, so that it can take its place in the modern world. This liberation of the human spirit in India was what was achieved by Swami Vivekananda. And he achieved it through his teachings, conveyed through his famous lectures and also letters. These two works of his from among his voluminous literature available in light volumes—*Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and *Letters*—are the greatest single influence in the creation of modern India. They are the powerful creative forces behind the nation's struggle for freedom and justice. These books have inspired more than three generations of Indian patriots and social workers. They are words of power. They have in them the power to awaken man to a consciousness of his true destiny, both individual and social. About this literature, the great French thinker and biographer of Swami Vivekananda, Monsieur Romain Rolland writes in his *Life of Vivekananda* thus (p. 162):

'His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports, must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero.'

This is the impression which Vivekananda's words produce on the minds of sensitive men and women everywhere. And in our country, since his time, there has been an ever increasing number of men and women who have responded to the great ideals and values presented by him. Immediately after his time came the great upsurge, first in Bengal and later in the other provinces of India, of social reform and of struggle for political independence, throwing up great movements and great patriots and leaders. As a result of these activities, as a result of the wide diffusion of these great ideas, we achieved political freedom in 1947.

Freedom is a great idea and sentiment. The human heart flutters at the very suggestion of the idea of freedom. Which organism in

nature doesn't like to have freedom? In fact, in the sweep of his comprehensive philosophy, Vivekananda saw that every activity in the world, every activity in nature, is motivated by the desire for freedom. To the question, 'What is life?', put to him by the Maharaja of Khetri, he gave a very significant answer:

> 'Life is the unfoldment and development of a being under circumstances tending to press it down.'

The desire to express itself against thwarting obstacles is the very spirit of life itself. The Indian nation had the experience of being thwarted at every step for the last seven hundred years. In the absence of political freedom, we as a nation could not express our spirit, could not express our ideas and ideals. These centuries of servitude had created a narrowness of outlook and a sense of defeatism within us. Slavery in its turn had engendered mutual jealousies and hatreds, and an appalling amount of social tyranny. This was the spectacle that he saw when he wandered through the length and breadth of India as a *parivrājaka,* a wandering monk. And he saw our country in a way few people have ever seen. He had seen India in all her glory in Sri Ramakrishna and in her great cultural heritage. Behind him was the experience of the India of books, of the India as expressed in Sri Ramakrishna. But in front of him he saw quite a different India—humanity reduced to dwarfish dimensions, humanity, three hundred million strong, 'crawling like worms on the fair soil of India, trying to spit their venoms on each other', to quote his own words in one of his letters. Centuries of slavery had produced social immobility, resulting in the accumulation of social problems like untouchability, social injustice, neglect of the masses and of women, and, above all, the political fragmentation of India. India as such did not find a place in the imagination of the people; that imagination was filled with caste and other divisive loyalties. He strove to create a national consciousness, an awareness of social urgency. He worked hard to create a body-politic in which India's pure and undying soul could find a living expression. For he realized, as few had realized before, that the soul of India is sound and unharmed, in spite of the sufferings of centuries. He further realized that this soul has a message for man in the modern world. It is not for nothing that God had preserved this country through the ups and downs of five thousand years of history. He must have had a great purpose in view. And the Swami visualized this purpose to be an international one. India has been preserved, he said, to be a witness, for all nations, to the reality of God, to the truth of the Divine in man. This is the undying legacy of the Upaniṣads to India and the world. Man has a body, he has a mind, he has the five

sense organs; but he is none of these. He is the Ātman, the Self, of the nature of purity, knowledge, freedom, and immortality: *Śuddha-buddha-mukta-svabhāva-paramātman*, as Vedānta expresses it.

To bring humanity to an awareness of this great spiritual fact was the main work of Swami Vivekananda in the East and the West. This is the work of true religion. It was done by the great sages of the Upaniṣads, by *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by Buddha, by Śaṅkara, and by the large galaxy of spiritual teachers of the Middle Ages in the past, and by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in our time. It is this role of a spiritual teacher that shone through him when he addressed the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893; he reminded that august audience that man is not a sinner, that he is not a creature of circumstances, but that he is a spark of the Divine. This is the saving message of Indian wisdom. And so, while addressing the whole of modern humanity through that Parliament, he recited, almost in ecstasy, the famous verse from the Upaniṣads bearing this hopeful message for man (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 11):

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ.
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntaṁ
ādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt;
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—

'Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion; knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over and over again. There is no other path to the goal.'

He continued (*ibid.*):

'Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss. Yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye, divinites on earth—sinners? It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.'

What is the authenticity of this message? Was it got from books or hearsay? No, says the Upaniṣad. This is a message which is taken from experience. The sages of the Upaniṣads had found this truth by churning life and experience. This is how the sages of India, ancient as well as modern, speak of religion. Religion is not an opinion. It

is a conviction; it is a realization. The language is *Vedāhametam*—'I have *known* this truth, I have realized this truth.' That was the ancient utterance; and it is also the modern utterance. When Vivekananda went to Sri Ramakrishna at the Dakshineswar temple and asked him, 'Sir, have you seen God?', Sri Ramakrishna did not say, 'Yes, I have read about Him, I have heard about Him'; but he said, 'I have *seen* Him, and you can also see Him'. This is the language of religion in India. When Buddha appeared before his disciples at Sārnāth, he also said: *Ehi paśya, ehi paśya*—'Come and see, come and see.'

Therefore, as already said, it was this work of awakening of the human spirit from the sleep of ignorance and delusion that Swamiji accomplished in the East and the West. But the method he adopted to achieve this end was different in the two hemispheres. In India he saw that the work of awakening was needed primarily in the socio-political field. He saw that the Indian men and women had to be educated into the values of citizenship, of social awareness, into the capacities for practical efficiency and organized co-operative efforts. The creation of such free and self-disciplined citizens was the aim of his message of practical Vedānta.

Virtues and graces so gained alone can become the basis of the highest spiritual development of man. Without this moral basis, religion becomes cheap and spirituality a sham. So, when he spoke of religion in India, he used a beautiful expression to characterize its content; he called it 'man-making religion'. Similarly, he called his scheme of education for India 'man-making education'. He wanted to make men of us; he saw that the masses of India had not achieved the full glory of human beings; if the Indian people cannot co-operate with each other, if they cannot help each other, if they cannot try to bring out the best from each other, how can they achieve the glory of human existence? Manliness connotes the virtues of strength, freedom, mutual help and appreciation, and equality. Man-making education and man-making religion are meant to create a pattern of excellence in the society as well as within its individual members. The concept of man and of his excellence in Swami Vivekananda's thought is the most progressive among such concepts today. Thus he released the forces of manliness to compose the distractions of his ancient, battered, long-suffering, gentle nation. We had lost this sense of manliness; we had become *creatures* of history instead of becoming its *creators*, and had developed a sense of helpless dependence. Even religion had become affected by this general weakness. Swamiji taught the nation to have *śraddhā*, faith in oneself. He also taught the nation like a true *guru*,

to develop faith in oneself before having faith in God. He said (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 190):

'If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you.'

First comes faith in oneself, then comes faith in God. So he exhorted (*ibid.,* Vol. III, p. 193):

'Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

In the absence of this manliness, piety lost its power and meaning; and so Swamiji told us to capture first that faith which is the root of manliness. This concept of *śraddhā,* of the Promethean fire in the heart of man, is what Swamiji brought out of the pages of the Upaniṣads, of the *Gītā,* out of the great teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, and, and out of the heart of the modern western culture. Manliness is the spirit of modern western culture; manliness was the spirit of ancient Greek culture. It was there in our philosophy also, especially in the *Gītā*; but we forgot it. We had not the energy to understand and assimilate it. When Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in the eleventh chapter to stand up and acquire the true glory of manhood, we are in the presence of this stirring message of manliness (*Gītā,* XI, 33):

Tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
Jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham—

'Therefore, stand up, O Arjuna, and acquire the glory (worthy of man); overcoming all thwarting obstacles, enjoy the wealth and welfare of your country.'

Translated into modern terms, this means that man in India shall wake up from delusion and laziness, develop manliness, overcome the thwarting obstacles of poverty, social backwardness, and ignorance by developing his intellectual strength, power of will, and character-efficiency, and enjoy the delights of the citizenship of a free and equalitarian social order.

This was a man-making message; it combined man-making religion with man-making education. The Swami called it 'Practical Vedānta'. Vedānta we have in our books; Vedānta we have seen in the lives of the great sages and saints of our country; but Vedānta as a sheet-anchor

of nation-building, of a dynamic social policy, by which the masses become transformed into dynamic centres of all-round social development—this type of practical application of Vedānta we had never witnessed in our country before. It was the supreme glory of Swami Vivekananda that he broadcasted this life-giving message of Vedānta to one and all.

He himself defined his life's task thus in one of his letters (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 104):

'To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and, at the same time, meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. This is my life's work.'

He said in his lecture in Madras on 'Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life' (*ibid.,* Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 245-46):

'These conceptions of the Vedānta must come out, must remain not only in the forest, not only in the cave, but they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish, and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman, and child whatever be their occupation, wherever they may be. If the fisherman thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if the student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better student; if the lawyer thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better lawyer, and so on. If you teach Vedānta to the fisherman, he will say, "I am as good a man as you, I am a fisherman, you are a philosopher, but I have the same God in me as you have in you". And that is what we want, no privilege for anyone, equal chances for all; let everyone be taught that the Divine is within, and everyone will work out his own salvation.

This is the universal message of Vedānta which Swami Vivekananda proclaimed from the housetops in the East and the West. In this great message, Swamiji emphasized two values which he considered the central values of Indian culture and civilization. And they are *tyāga,* renunciation, and *sevā,* service. He gave a compressed statement of the central values of Indian culture when he said (*ibid.,* Vol. V, Eighth Edition, p. 228):

'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

Let the people of India today be inspired by this message of renunciation—renunciation of the little self and manifestation of the higher Self—and its positive expression in service. Renounce the *kacca* ego

and manifest the *pukka* ego, as Sri Ramakrishna expressed it. Then only can a man establish harmony with his fellowmen and with the rest of creation; it alone enables a man to co-operate with others and work for general welfare. This alone makes possible national solidarity and integration. National life, intensified by these two forces, will express the purest and the best in its heritage; and they will stand guarantee to the continued unity and strength of the nation.

The nation heard Swami Vivekananda; it was thrilled; the leaven started working; and immediately after him, it had sufficiently leavened the body-politic to produce in all parts of the country a bumper harvest of men and women, institutions and movements, inspired by the ideal of renunciation and dedicated to the service of the people. How much renunciation the nation expressed when it was fighting for freedom! Young men cheerfully faced the gallows for the love of their country; they did not love their own little lives. All sorts of privations our men and women could undergo, because they had love for their country in their hearts and a spirit of dispassion towards their own selfish interests. This record of renunciation and service for about fifty years brought us the political independence in 1947.

For the past fifteen years, we have been enjoying political freedom. Can we say good-bye to these ideals today? Can the nation achieve greatness and glory without continuous inspiration provided by the values of renunciation and service? But it looks as if we as a people have begun to feel that renunciation and service were necessary only in the context of struggle for political freedom; but now that freedom is achieved, we can do without them. This grievously wrong conclusion is our biggest national problem today. If all the problems that have been accumulating around us for the last fifteen years are analysed closely, it will be revealed that the root of all our troubles is the fading of this spirit of renunciation and service in post-independence India. Today we need to inspire ourselves with this ideal once again. We cannot build up this great country, we cannot destroy its backwardness and make a truly progressive state, we cannot establish that hegemony of man over the environment, which is the meaning of freedom, until our people are once again inspired by this vision of renunciation and service. The best of human achievements proceed from us when we least think of ourselves. 'Not I, but thou' is always the law of man's higher life. 'He that findeth his life shall lose it,' says Jesus, 'and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' This has been the teaching of the great masters, both in the East and the West. Today the country needs the ministrations of the spirit of Swami Vivekananda. Our national deve-

lopment plans, our various community projects, our every department of national activity, needs men and women inspired by the vision, not of their own little selves, but of the larger self of society. We have to learn to live and act in a national development awareness and perspective. In fact, when he was addressing the citizens of Madras on his return from the West in 1897, on the arresting theme of 'The Future of India', he gave a stirring call to the nation to raise this idea of the service of man to a form of worship. Said he (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 300-301):

'So give up being a slave. For the next fifty years, this alone shall be our keynote—this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for that time from our minds. This is the only God that is awake, our own race—"everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears, He covers everything. All other gods are sleeping. What vain gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the God that we see all around us, the *Virāṭ*?...Worship It. Worship is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit word, and no other English word will do.'

Exactly fifty years after this was uttered, the country achieved political independence. He had spoken about patriotism; he himself was a patriot of a rare order. His patriotism proceeded from the awareness of the suffering of the millions of his countrymen; the millions, as he said, who had become 'next-door neighbours to brutes', due to oppression and neglect. He was inspired to think of the fine specimens of humanity that the masses of India are,—gentle, god-fearing, hospitable, cultured, though illiterate. They needed only a little help to raise themselves to their full manhood and womanhood. With a little social sympathy, state help, educational and economic development facilities, we can make angels of humanity out of them; so far they have only experienced neglect and oppression. Says the Swami in one of his letters (*ibid.*, Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 255):

'We as a nation have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all the mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and raise the masses. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them under foot.'

Says he in his famous Lahore lecture on 'The Vedānta' (*ibid.*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 430-31):

'The nation is sinking, the curse of unnumbered millions is on our heads—those to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink when they have been dying of thirst and while the perennial river of water was flowing past; the unnumbered millions whom we have allowed to starve in the sight of plenty.... Wipe off this blot. "Arise and awake." What matters it if this little life goes? everyone has to die, the saint or the sinner, the rich or the poor. The body never remains for anyone. Arise and awake and be perfectly sincere. Our insincerity

in India is awful; what we want is character, that steadiness and character that make a man cling on to a thing like grim death.'

This is true politics. Says the Swami in another of his stirring lectures (*ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 215):

'Everybody can show what evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who finds a way out of the difficulty. Like the drowning boy and the philosopher—when the philosopher was lecturing him, the boy cried, "Take me out of the water first"—so our people cry, "We have had lectures enough, societies enough, papers enough; where is the man who really loves us? Where is the man who has sympathy for us?" 'Ay, that man is wanted.'

This cry from his heart found response in a powerful movement of true politics, three decades later, in the great national movement of Mahatma Gandhi. That movement touched all aspects of the national life and galvanized the masses. Through the energy so generated, it won political independence for the nation. The Swami brought to bear upon the solution of the problems of the nation the spirit of true religion, the value of spirituality. He wanted to make India spiritual; for he knew and proclaimed that religion is the backbone of India. And he found the greatest obstacles to spirituality in poverty and ignorance. Quoting his own Master, Sri Ramakrishna, Swamiji said: 'Religion is not for empty bellies'; and he also added, 'I do not believe in a religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears, or stop the orphan's wails'. Thus, through the ministrations of practical Vedānta, the masses of our people, he held, would once again come to their own inheritance as human beings; and so he invoked the future India into existence by a stirring call to the common man ('Memoirs of European Travel', *Complete Works*, Vol. VII, Sixth Edition, p. 327):

'Let new India arise...out of the peasant's cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fishermen, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts, and from markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains.'

This is the voice of power such as one who takes rank as the *rāṣṭra-guru,* the teacher of the nation, the epoch-maker, alone can utter. We are engaged in a mighty task of nation-building today. But the Swami said that nation-building must be based on the prior achievement of man-making. A nation is built out of men and women—men and women endowed with a sense of worth and dignity within themselves. All his teaching in India has this one theme of 'nation-building through man-making'. The policy regarding education, the policy regarding social development, even industrialization through the Five Year Plans ll these things are subordinate to that one single theme of 'man-

making'. And so he asked us to keep constantly this idea of man-making before ourselves; the four hundred and forty million people of present-day India must be fed, clothed, educated, and enabled to realize their true human heritage. And that means that all national activities should be inspired by the spirit of service. 'Be and make shall be our motto', said he. We shall strive to become men and help others to become men. There is no place for selfish, self-centred attitudes. An individual or a group may have certain advantages, either of money or of power or of intelligence or of learning, but these advantages are not meant to be used for exploitation of others for selfish purposes. They are meant to be used for the good of others; and in one of his moving passages in a letter written from America, he has spoken about a type of treason which people more often indulge in than what is practised only once a while in any society. He says (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, Eighth Edition, p. 58):

> 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

He keenly hoped that the Indian youth whom he loved so much, from whom he expected so much, will not commit this treason. Today our universities turn out thousands of graduates every year. Many of them alas! answer to the above definition of a traitor. They do not cherish any sense of duty or responsibility to society. They bear no responsibility to anybody. They are always complaining that the State and the nation have not done enough for them; not once do they think of what they owe to the nation. The nation spends millions and millions of rupees to give education to our people; to educate a boy or a girl in medicine, in engineering, or any of these special technical lines requires nearly fifteen thousand rupees per student; for other subjects, it will be about half of this; but by way of fees, a student pays hardly three or four thousand rupees. The rest is paid by the nation, by the tax-payer. The student is literally indebted to the nation in the simple language of business, and yet an average student today has become so self-centred that he does not believe that he has any responsibility to the nation, that he owes something to the nation. He, on the contrary, feels that everybody else owes him. This is the most glaring example of the wrong education that the nation receives today. This is just the opposite of the ancient Indian idea, of the idea of the threefold debts with which every person is born; it is also against the modern evolutionary idea which emphasizes the enrichment received by an individual from the community's culture and tradition. Education helps an individual to assimilate the community's culture and tradition, enrich it by his or

her own life and work, and leave to posterity a richer legacy. Most people die in cultural debt, as they take in much more than they give out. It is only the outstanding individuals who live creative lives that die leaving society in debt to them. Among these, the most outstanding are the saints and the men of God.

If our administration and the services, in the centre and the states, and the workers in the political, educational, community projects, and industrial fields, become inspired by even a fraction of the patriotism and dedication breathed into the Indian life by Swami Vivekananda, the nation will become galvanized into action, and our development plans will move with accelerating tempo. The dynamism of the Five Year Plans proceeds not from the plans, but from the people called to implement them. The files in the Secretariats are static; but the men behind the files need not be static. Everywhere we are hearing, in the reports of various inquiry and assessment committees, that the progress of the plans is not satisfactory, that man is not adequate to the machinery created for their implementation. Whether it is community projects or national extension schemes, whether it is general administration or the management of big public sector projects, everywhere it is man that is found lacking; the machinery is there, the institution is there, but man is lacking; man, educated and trained, not only in the techniques of the jobs, but also in the social objectives of the plans, and enthused by patriotism and the glory of human achievement—such men are the products of deep convictions. Our education today arms us with only *opinions*, bundles of them, but does not fill us with *convictions*; hence the static character of the personality turned out by such education. 'Great convictions are the mothers of great deeds', said Swami Vivekananda. Hence he advocated a man-making education, a training of mind and heart, and not a mere stuffing of the brain. It is conviction in the heart reinforcing knowledge in the head, that makes for energy, drive, and dynamism of character. This invests even the little acts of a man's daily life with meaning and significance.

Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual teacher of a rare type. Himself immersed in the bliss of God, he came down to the most ordinary levels of life to uplift and brighten men. To him these were not two different disciplines, but one. And he taught us this truth in the great equation: 'Work *is* worship.' He taught us a philosophy which combines external action for the enrichment of society with internal action for the spiritual enrichment of the individual. In the language of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (IV. 18), action and inaction become one, *karma* and *jñāna* become one. This equation is the essence of Swami Viveka-

nanda's spiritual message. That message has been expounded to us in the eight volumes of his *Complete Works*. It has been beautifully summarized for us by his gifted disciple, Sister Nivedita, in a powerful passage in her 'Introduction' to the *Complete Works* (Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. XV):

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

Here we have power of language blazoning force of thought. It was this great thought that the Swami placed at the very basis of the life and activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, which he founded as an effective conduit for his ideas and plans: *Ātmano mokṣārtham, jagaddhitāya ca*—'For the spiritual liberation of oneself and for the welfare of the world'. No sharp distinction should be drawn between the one and the other; the word *ca,* meaning 'and', indicates their integral union. Serve humanity, and through that service, bring happiness around you, and through that very service, elevate yourself also morally and spiritually. Here is shown the technique of combining *tyāga,* renunciation, and *sevā*, service. The *Īśā Upaniṣad* had taught this very idea ages ago: *Tena tyaktena bhuñjītha*—'Enjoy through renunciation.'

Swami Vivekananda came in the unbroken line of spiritual teachers from the Vedic period to the modern age. It is they who imparted the energy and direction characteristic of Indian culture—its deep spirituality. It is because they came age after age that our nation is still alive, in spite of invasions, subjections, humiliations, and devastations, a fraction of which has destroyed many a nation and many a culture. But we still exist, not only exist but are strong and vital, thanks to the periodic touch of these master minds. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda brought youthfulness to the age-old Indian cultural experiment. By the end of the eighteenth century, India had become old and effete, broken and dispirited; but with the touch of Swami Vivekananda, old India became young once again. In the language of the late Dr. Brojendra Nath Seal, 'India is ever aging, but never old'. This is the historic and cultural significance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's statement in the *Gītā: Saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge*—'I shall be born again and again.' And this was what happened in India at the end of the last century. Through the touch of Swami Vivekananda, the Indian nation became youthful. And according to Indian philosophy, he who imparts youthfulness, vigour, and clarity of vision to a man or to a nation is the *guru* of that man or

that nation. In this sense, the Swami was really the *rāṣṭra-guru* and also something more. He did the same service to the West as well. Through such service in both the hemispheres he united humanity through the thread of Divinity running through all existence. And he did this stupendous achievement within a brief ten years of his all-too brief thirty-nine years, five months, and eighteen days of earthly life. He became a bridge between the East and the West, the old and the new. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, in his *Discovery of India*, discussing the contributions of Swami Vivekananda, says (p. 400):

'Rooted in the past, with full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems; he was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

It is the birth centenary of such a teacher that we will soon be celebrating in 1963-64. The whole nation will be galvanized by listening to his message, through literature, through meetings, through the radio and the film, and through diverse other means. So far as India is concerned, it will provide us with a rare opportunity to intensify our national integration programmes, to strengthen the moral fibre of our nation, to intensify the tempo of our Five-Year Plans, and to define the purpose and direction of our national development policies. It is our earnest hope that much good will come to man in India and in all other parts of the world through the various programmes of the ensuing Vivekananda centenary celebrations.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: HIS LIFE AND MISSION

TODAY, India is celebrating, with the rest of the world, the first birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda. He came in the unbroken line of spiritual teachers who brightened the sky of India from the Vedic period to the modern age. It is they who imparted the spiritual energy and direction characteristic of Indian culture. It is because they came, age after age, that India is still alive in spite of invasions, subjections, and devastations, while a fraction of such calamities has destroyed many a nation and many a culture in world history. The periodical touch of these master minds gave India renewed strength and hope every time.

By the end of the eighteenth century, India had become old and effete, broken and dispirited, and awaited either dissolution and death or reintegration and life. Her innate spiritual strength burst forth at the prospect of this danger, and a new life came to her by the beginning of the nineteenth century. She accepted the challenge of the age and resolved to meet the challenge in a creative, constructive manner. This rejuvenation process was spearheaded by a mighty and farsighted personality, Raja Rammohan Roy, who strove to awaken his countrymen, purify and strengthen the age-old culture of his people, and to effect a synthesis of the ancient Indian heritage and the modern western heritage. This process of reawakening continued throughout the century, throwing up great leaders and movements. And towards the end of the century, it found its full maturity and consummation through the lives and teachings of its most dynamic and authentic representatives, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Though born

in India, they represented the spiritual hopes and aspirations of all mankind. They were 'Universe Souls' in the language of Romain Rolland (*The Life of Ramakrishna*, Fourth Impression, p. 22).

Vivekananda took India out of her isolation of centuries and brought her into the stream of international life and thought. He awakened the people of India to the realities and demands of the modern age. Says Romain Rolland in his *The Life of Vivekananda* (Fifth Edition, pp. 286-88):

'So India was hauled out of the shifting sands of barren speculation wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hand of one of her own *sannyāsins*; and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds and spread by a series of great ripples into action. ... This "greater India", this new India... is impregnated with the soul of Ramakrishna. The twin star of the *Paramahamsa* and the hero who translated his thought into action, dominates and guides her present destinies. Its warm radiance is the leaven working within the soil of India and fertilizing it.'

Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual teacher of a rare type. Himself immersed in the bliss of God, he came down to the ordinary levels of men and women. To him, these were not two separate fields, but one; and he expressed this truth in his great equation 'work *is* worship'. He taught humanity a philosophy which combines external action, in a spirit of service for the enrichment of society, with internal action, for the spiritual enrichment of the individual. In the language of the *Gītā*, action and inaction, *karma* and *jñāna*, become one. This equation is the essence of Swami Vivekananda's spiritual message, a message which has been left to us in the eight volumes of his *Complete Works*. The spirit of that message has been beautifully summarized for us by his gifted western disciple, Sister Nivedita in a powerful passage in her 'Introduction' to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Says she (Vol. I, Fifth Edition, p. XIII):

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

Swami Vivekananda's span of earthly life was hardly forty years, but within this short period, he lived an intense life, first as a student in school and college, then as the foremost disciple of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, then as a wanderer across the length and breadth of India, and lastly as the spiritual teacher of West and East. His public teaching commenced with his speeches at the World's Parliament of Religions at

Chicago in 1893; and he passed away on 4 July 1902. He spent four intense years in the United States and England, and five equally intense years in India delivering his message of a universal and practical spirituality, and setting in motion a movement as an effective conduit for the furtherance of his message.

Everywhere, he taught man to realize his divine heritage. The innate divinity of man was the constant theme of all his teachings. *This teaching cuts across all divisions based on political or religious affiliations.* Its assimilation by man will make for a character at once deep and broad. He held that spirituality was the core of every religion; dogmatic exclusiveness and intolerance are no part of true religion. The more spiritual a man, the more universal he is. He held that the modern age stood in urgent need of this education from religion, by which men will learn to make their love of God flow into the love and service of all men. He worked hard to give this spiritual orientation to the world's religions, so that they may be transformed into wholly constructive forces and become capable of redeeming modern man from his inner impoverishment in the context of external enrichment.

While speaking on Vivekananda, it is best to let Vivekananda speak for himself. There is a beauty and a power in his words which fascinate the listener. Referring to this, Romain Rolland says in his *The Life of Vivekananda* (Fifth Edition, p. 146):

'His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!'

In a letter to an American lady written on 21 March 1895, Swami Vivekananda says (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* Fourth Edition, p. 211):

'My Master used to say that these names as Hindu, Christian, etc. stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we will have to work hard and must succeed.'

The closing words of his address on Hinduism delivered to the Chicago Parliament of Religions breathe the spirit of the universal and human, characteristic not only of him and of his great Master, but also of the Indian spiritual tradition, and express his appreciation of

the universality of the American mind, which conceived and realized such an international assembly of world religions. In his 'Paper on Hinduism' read at the Parliament, and addressing the American nation with deep feeling, Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Fifth Edition, p. 17):

'... If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite, like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Kṛṣṇa and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brāhmaṇic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.

'Offer such a religion and all the nations will follow you. Asoka's Council was a council of the Buddhist faith. Akbar's, though more to the purpose, was only a parlour-meeting. It was reserved for America to proclaim to all quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every religion.'

Pointing to the profound significance of the universal sentiments pervading Vivekananda's speeches at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, Romain Rolland observes (*The Life of Vivekananda*, Fifth Edition, pp. 39-40):

'Each time he repeated with new arguments but with the same force of conviction his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *Credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the most liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonized them into a magnificent synthesis, which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.'

He elucidated still further his conception of universal religion in two of his subsequent lectures delivered in California in 1900. Speaking on 'The Way to the Realization of Universal Religion', at Pasadena, he said (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, Fifth Edition, p. 372):

'I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

'Not only shall I do all this, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation, going on? It is a marvellous book—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books, are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them.'

Speaking in San Francisco a month later on 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion', he said (*ibid.*, pp. 385-86):

'What I want to propagate is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action. ...And this combination will be the ideal of the nearest approach to a universal religion. Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds *all* these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion, and of work were equally present in full! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character, I consider "one-sided"; and this world is almost full of such "one-sided" men, with knowledge of that one road only in which they move; and anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions is *my* ideal of religion.'

Swami Vivekananda defined his life's objective as twofold; firstly, to place before man in East and West a comprehensive message of man's spiritual development and realization in clear simple language; and secondly, to set in motion the wheel of such a spiritual message, to set in motion the wheel of *dharma*, *dharmacakra pravartana*, in the expressive words of Buddha.

Writing to an Indian disciple from America on 17 February 1896, Vivekananda expounded his first objective thus (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, Fourth Edition, p. 302):

'To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering yogism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work.'

Readers of Vivekananda's works know how great was his success in this field. Apart from his other books, his books on the four *yogas* —*Karma-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga*, *Jñāna-yoga*, and *Rāja-yoga*—have become classics on spiritual life and realization. The reader is impressed by their simplicity of language and profundity of thought. Above all, they carry the impact of the man behind the message, the powerful impact of realized truth.

On his second objective, he writes thus on 24 January 1894 in a letter from America to an Indian disciple (*ibid.*, p. 83):

'My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws.'

Before his passing away, Sri Ramakrishna had formed a new Order of monks out of his young disciples, with Vivekananda as their leader. The Order had taken on itself the responsibilty to protect and to enhance the deep spirituality and the spirit of universality which had found such a glowing expression in the life of the Master. Vivekananda now added to the inward spiritual life of the Order an outward programme of cultural and humanitarian activities, in which the Order sought the co-operation of laymen also. These two inseparable aspects of the movement initiated by him in the name of his Master became the Ramakrishna Math (Monastery) and the Ramakrishna Mission, with their headquarters just outside Calcutta at Belur Math, near Howrah, West Bengal. He gave the movement the inspiring motto: *Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*—'for the freedom of oneself and for the welfare of the world'.

Swami Vivekananda's lectures, letters, and discourses run into eight published volumes in English. They are also being made available during this centenary year in ten-volume editions in several of the Indian languages, and selections of them in several foreign languages as well. This vast literature can be aptly described as literature immortal; it is a strengthening, purifying, broadening, and illumining literature. It will educate the youth of today in the problems of the modern world and help him to solve them in the light of the eternal elements in the spiritual heritage of the East and the West. To the Indian youth, in particular, this literature carries the message of a man-making, character-building education and religion. Says Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 228):

'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service; intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of themselves.'

His literature will inspire our youth with these great national ideals of renunciation and service, intensifying which in their awareness and character they will acquire the necessary strength of will and purpose to build a free and equalitarian society in their beloved motherland.

It will educate them in the compelling message of international fellowship, co-operation, and welfare, and shape them into world citizens.

This is the type of awakening that he personally imparted to thousands of spiritually sensitive souls in East and West alike during his brief earthly career. The same work of awakening he has continued to impart to an ever-increasing circle of men and women through his literature since his death. Freely rendering the message of the Upaniṣadic verse, *Uttiṣṭhata! Jāgrata! Prāpya varān nibodhata!* he summoned humanity to 'Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached'. It is the awakened alert man, he said, that achieves science and civilization, morality and social welfare. It is the same awakening process carried still deeper that brings man to the feet of God and confers on him the fruit of spiritual realization and complete life fulfilment. He held this as the mission of Vedānta in the modern age.

Says he in ringing words (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Fourth Edition, p. 193):

'Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

It was this message of eternal India, the eternal music of the human soul, that Vivekananda broadcast in India and abroad. *He loved India, because he realized that India had lit the lamp of spiritual knowledge early in her history, and had kept it burning bright and pure through good and evil fortune for the service of the whole world.* A large component of India's foreign policy as revealed by her history, he held, had always consisted of this diffusion of spiritual knowledge in the contemporary world. She had conquered half the world through Buddha's wisdom and love. Her long cultural and spiritual education had so conditioned her that her expansion outside her borders can and will always be only of an intellectual and spiritual character.

In a letter from America to an Indian disciple dated 31 August 1894, we find Vivekananda referring to this conviction of his. He writes (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, Fourth Edition, p. 121):

'The whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummeries, and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come.'

Vivekananda summoned his countrymen to prepare morally and spiritually to render this same service now to the modern world (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 277):

'Up India, and conquer the world with your spirituality.'

And he warned his countrymen against the temptation to substitute the age-old spiritual idealism of India with the lesser ambitions for material or military glory. Says he:

'India is immortal if she persists in her search for God. But if she gives it up and takes to politics and social conflict, she will die.'

The current celebrations of the birth centenary of Vivekananda will acquaint India and the rest of the world with the life and work of one who represented in himself a condensed India and a synthesis of the best in the human heritage of East and West.

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

IN speaking on the subject of Swami Vivekananda we are dealing with the life and thought of a rare type of personality thrown up by the modern renaissance in India. Into his short span of thirty-nine years Vivekananda compressed an intensity of personal life and realizations and intellectual and social achievements which had a powerful impact on India and the western world, and which have permanently affected the destiny of the Indian people and their relationship with the rest of the world.

The earthly career of Swami Vivekananda begins with his birth in his parental home in Calcutta on 12 January 1863, and closes with his death on 4 July 1902 at Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order established by him near Calcutta. His life coincided with the most dynamic period of the modern transition in India, which resulted from the contact of the age-old Indian culture and tradition with the youthful culture of the modern West. Out of that ferment arose the modern Indian renaissance which had already proceeded with uncertain steps for more than half a century by the time Vivekananda appeared on the scene, and which found in him its most effective representative and exponent. How he equipped himself to play this role is a fascinating and rewarding study.

The formative influences that went to the making of Swami Vivekananda were fourfold: There was, first, his mastery of the Sanskrit language and, through it, of the philosophical and spiritual legacy of India's hoary cultural past; secondly, there was his mastery of the English language and, through it, of the scientific, artistic, and social thought of the modern West; thirdly, his five years' discipleship under

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), the most outstanding spiritual teacher of nineteenth-century India, in whose extraordinary life and realizations Vivekananda found verification of India's age-old spiritual legacy and its close kinship with the cultural legacy of the modern West; and, fourthly, his intimate knowledge of the India of his time gained from his years' journeys, mostly on foot, across the length and breadth of India.

It was during his student days at the Calcutta University that young Narendranath Dutta—that was the pre-monastic name of Vivekananda—came in touch with Sri Ramakrishna, who was then living in the temple garden of Dakshineswar, four miles north of Calcutta, and who was attracting the attention of some of the foremost leaders of the Indian renaissance movement at the time. Narendranath then was a typical representative of the modern youth, vital and vivacious, intolerant of superstition and religious bigotry, but hungry for a satisfying spiritual faith, rational and agnostic, but unwearied in his search for truth and for a rational basis for man's quest for higher values.

Sri Ramakrishna, on the other hand, was like a full-blown lotus attracting thirsty bees to suck its honey. During his intense spiritual practices of over twelve years, he had lived in turn the spiritual life of the Hindu, Muslim, and Christian seekers of God, and realized the truths imbedded in these world religions and their fundamental unity and harmony. His universal mind and heart embraced every spiritual idea and purpose, and stimulated every spiritual aspiration and struggle. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi in his 'Foreword' to the book *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*:

'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. ... In this age of scepticism Ramakrishna presents an example of a bright and living faith which gives solace to thousands of men and women who would otherwise have remained without spiritual light.'

In the words of Romain Rolland in his (*The Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 14):

'The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India.'

The coming together of the serene Ramakrishna and the dynamic Narendranath in the intimate communion of teacher-student relationship proved to be a great event in the history of modern India. Narendranath tested Ramakrishna's spiritual experiences and teach-

ings in the crucible of reason; and Ramakrishna fully encouraged his young disciple in this process. Inspired by the three thousand year-old spiritual literature of the Upaniṣads and its philosophy known as Vedānta, India has inherited a scientific tradition in the field of religion, with its stress on experiment and experience, on the one side, and tolerance and inter-religious fellowship, on the other. Ramakrishna re-authenticated and amplified this Vedāntic tradition and made it the basis of a comprehensive spirituality capable of nourishing all aspects of human life and endeavour.

It was this philosophy of Vedānta that Vivekananda took upon himself to preach to the Indian people and to the people of the West. But before he entered upon this mission of his life, he decided to see for himself the mind and face of contemporary India, which was to be the laboratory for the verification of his philosophy. He accordingly, plunged into the ocean of Indian humanity with only a staff and water-pot as his equipment, receiving the devoted hospitality of its princes and peasants, intellectuals and street sweepers, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. He shed tears seeing the dire poverty and misery of the common people; the heartlessness of the intellectuals and upper classes roused his indignation; and the various forms of social injustice and oppression which had thwarted the free development of man in India pained him in the extreme. His spiritual vision of the divinity of man received a rude jolt from this intimate contact with contemporary India, where he saw millions of fine specimens of humanity reduced to the position of being, to quote his own words, 'next-door neighbours to brutes'. Towards the end of these wanderings, in 1892, the firm decision took possession of his heart that the Vedāntic vision of human dignity should be implemented through practical measures, and that he should dedicate himself completely to the service of man, of God in man, everywhere.

These fourfold influences made his personality a synthesis of the finest heritage of East and West. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru in *Discovery of India* (p. 400):

> 'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

It was such a rich personality, so impersonal and universal, that took the universal spiritual message of Vedānta to the West and broadcasted it, first, through the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 and, later, through hundreds of lecturers and discourses in the United States and the United Kingdom. On his return to India in 1897, he

similarly imparted his message of practical Vedānta to his countrymen through scores of stirring lectures and talks in which he showed the way to the modernizing of the age-old Indian tradition, designed to brighten the lives of its millions and to strengthen the nation's age-old spiritual heritage as well.

'My ideal, indeed, may be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.'

This teaching cuts across all divisions based on political or religious affiliations. Its assimilation by man will make for a character at once 'deep as the ocean and broad as the skies', as he expresses it. He held that spirituality was the core of every religion; dogmatic exclusiveness and intolerance are no part of true religion. The more spiritual a man, the more universal he is. It is only such universal men that can realize the urge of the modern age for a universal society. He held that the modern age stood in urgent need of this spiritual education from religion by which man will learn to achieve inward depth to match his wide-branching interests and activities outside. He worked hard to give this spiritual orientation to the world's religions, so that they may be transformed into wholly constructive forces and become capable of redeeming modern man from his keenly felt inner impoverishment in the context of external enrichment.

His speeches and writings are available to us in the eight volumes of his *Complete Works*. In the following stirring call to man in every field of activity everywhere he has, however, conveyed the essence of his message:

'Arise, Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached!'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE OF RENUNCIATION AND SERVICE

THE Ramakrishna Ashrama Hospital, Trivandrum, is celebrating its Silver Jubilee in January 1967. It is one of the sixty or seventy medical institutions, large and small, apart from a number of educational, cultural, and other institutions of social service, conducted by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in various parts of India. In the context of the large number of medical service institutions, managed privately or by the state, obtaining in India, many of them are of very large dimensions, and in the context also of the increasing demands for medical services in the country, the few institutions conducted by the Math and Mission appear small and inconsequential. But their significance was never intended to be quantitative. It lies in an entirely different sphere, that of quality. For *these institutions seek to embody a sublime vision of man's glory and excellence, and of his relationships with his fellowmen.* This is the vision of the divine in the heart of man bequeathed by the ancient sages of India and reauthenticated and revitalized by her modern sages, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and of service as the way of inter-personal relationships.

'*Jīva* is *Śiva*', says Sri Ramakrishna in an equation; and adds, drawing its corollary: 'The service of *jīva* is therefore the worship of Śiva.' If the worship of God in a symbol or an image can elevate a man spiritually, how much more spiritually efficient must be the worship of Him in a man!

Swami Vivekananda was moved by the worship of *Śiva* in the Viśvanāth temple of holy Vāraṇasi; but he was appalled by what he

saw of the utter neglect of Him in the millions of human beings who throng to the holy city. And during his visits to the city he had charged his young admirers to enter into this higher form of worship—the worship of God in man. A group of earnest young men caught the music of this message in their hearts and organized nursing and care of sick and suffering pilgrims, helpless and forlorn, lying on the roadside. Very soon, these sporadic acts of 'the worship of God in man,' conducted till then under the name of a 'Poor Men's Relief Association', assumed the shape of an organized institution, the Ramakrishna Sevashrama or Home of Service in 1902, which soon developed into a full-fledged hospital under the Mission with over 175 beds. Its long record of efficient, devoted service to the people and the student community of Vāraṇāsi gave it the status of a pioneer laboratory for Swami Vivekananda's message of Practical Vedānta.

Another group of Vivekananda's young followers established a similar 'laboratory' in Kankhal near holy Hardwar which soon developed into a 50-bed Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama. Similar institutions soon sprang up in Vrindaban and Rangoon, Ranchi and Calcutta, Mayavati and Shyamalatal, Delhi and Trivandrum. The 150-bed strength of the Trivandrum Ashrama hospital is soon to be raised to 250. Everywhere, it was a channelizing of India's age-old spiritual vision and urge, with its accompanying austerity and devotion, into service of man as embodiment of the divine, and irrespective of caste and creed, race or nationality.

The impact of this orientation on the old Indian spiritual tradition has been slow but steady. Hindu orthodoxy in Vāraṇāsi and Kankhal, which had initially eyed with disfavour, and even contempt, Ramakrishna monks nursing patients and even doing the menial tasks of sweeping and cleaning the wards, and had given them the happy epithet of *bhangi* sadhus (sweeper monks), changed its attitude by the nineteen-thirties and realized the cogency and need for this practical orientation of their Vedānta as shown by Vivekananda, and began to look on the members of the Ramakrishna Order with respect and reverence. The age-old Indian method of peaceful social change through the example of a transformed minority, as referred to by Śaṅkara in the introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā*, became illustrated in this case: *guṇādhikaiḥ gṛhītaḥ anuṣṭhīyamānaśca dharmaḥ pracayaṁ gamiṣyati iti*.

Service rendered in a spiritual attitude, Vivekananda held, uplifted both the giver and the receiver. Vedānta has always upheld that man must grow morally and spiritually. That, and not organic satisfactions or survival of the species, or mere numerical increase, is the evolut-

ionary advance for man, says Sir Julian Huxley and other twentieth-century biologists. When man thus takes into account his own spiritual development in the context of his work in society, all his work turns into not only service, but veritable worship. By his work, he not only ensures the welfare and happiness of his fellow human beings, to whom he gives his service in a spirit of reverence, but also gains in spiritual stature himself. This is also the central message of the *Gītā* and the meaning of its pregnant utterance: *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*. This teaching ensures a double character-efficiency, namely, outward social efficiency and inward spiritual efficiency. Swami Vivekananda embodied this truth and vision of all-round character-efficiency in a brief utterance which he gave as the motto of his movement, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission: *Ātmano mokṣārthaṁ jagaddhitāya ca* —'For one's own spiritual freedom and the welfare of the world'.

This message of a comprehensive spirituality is the central note that runs through all the music of Vivekananda's *Complete Works* available in eight published volumes. It is a music not only to soothe one's nerves as all good music is, but also to rouse one to heroic action, to calm, silent, steady work in the service of all men and women, irrespective of caste and creed and nationality. Referring to Vivekananda's speeches, says Romain Rolland in his book, *The Life of Vivekananda* (Third Impression, p. 162):

'His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses'.

The central note of this music is, as mentioned earlier, a comprehensive spirituality, a double character-efficiency, leading to true life-fulfilment for all. This music finds responsive echoes from the hearts of millions in East and West today.

For India herself, Vivekananda's message of love and service helped to open up the springs of our national life which were lying choked up during the past few centuries. Our nation lost its political freedom and social dynamism when our people became narrow and self-centred, and largely ignored the existence and claims of their fellow-man next door, in pursuit of a static piety and an other-worldly salvation. We failed to grasp the vital truth that a *cheap religiosity* is neither the nursery of, nor the substitute for, *a robust spirituality,* yielding the fruits of manliness and strength, character and efficiency. And we paid the heavy price of our folly through repeated shocks of conquests and shame of subjections for a few centuries.

Vivekananda roused the nation from this sleep and delusion of centuries with his thundering message: 'Arise, awake, and stop not

till the goal is reached.' This goal he defined as the manifestation by each and every human being of his or her inborn divine nature. This is the one source of man's freedom and equality, of the artistic excellence of his life, and of the dignity and worth of his personality. Any society which upholds this truth and vision and embodies it in its body-politic is alone progressive, said Vivekananda. He saw Indian society progressive in its vision, but highly reactionary in its social embodiment. Writing in anguish from U.S.A. to a sensitive Indian youth about the prevailing callousness of the upper classes of India, he said (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 16):

'They little dream of the ages of tyranny, mental, moral, and physical, that has reduced the image of God (that is man) to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother (that is woman) to a slave to bear children; and life itself a curse.'

And he dedicated his superhuman energies to the incorporation of this glorious vision in the Indian body-politic, and summoned the youth of India to this high mission. Later in the same letter he wrote:

'I may perish of cold and hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.... Vow, then, to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.'

This sweet and strong music energized India and taught her to forsake the path of exploitation of man by man and follow the path of service. This was the mainspring of inspiration behind her decades-long struggle for political independence and social justice. That fount of inspiration seems to have slowly dried up during these years of our post-independence existence, which alone explains the pervasive mess in which our nation finds itself today.

The nation today needs to hearken to the dynamic message of Swami Vivekananda. That message proclaims (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 228):

'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.'

Our mood of helplessness today is the product of the want of faith in ourselves. We are sadly missing the touch of the heroic in our life and aspirations. It is precisely here that the nation can experience the galvanic touch, or in the words of Romain Rolland (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 162), receive a thrill through the body like an electric shock, by its education at the feet of Swami Vivekananda today. Says

the Swami in an inspiring passage (*The Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 193):

> 'Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

'Love thy neighbour as thyself', exhorts Jesus Christ. This is the central message of ethics and morality. But the human heart always asks a counter question: Who is my neighbour? The answer to this question given by the human heart ranges from the grossly self-centred and selfish to the utterly unselfish and self-effacing. The first type sees his neighbour only in himself and the few others close to him and who subserve his own interests. This is the utterly worldly man to whom the world and other human beings are but means to an end, that end being himself. It is consoling to realize that there are actually very few in the world who are as low as this in the moral scale.

The second type, who looks upon the whole world as his own self, stands at the other extreme end, the blazing example of spirituality, of unworldliness, of what every one can be at his or her highest and best. This is also a small minority. In between lie the vast mass of humanity endowed with moral awareness in varying degrees; among them are many whose moral awareness is high, but has got stuck up in a group or a sect, a system or a creed. Their neighbourly feelings extend only to the members of their group or sect, system or creed. Beyond that limited circle, it is either apathy and indifference or hostility and aggression. His heart has answered the question to itself that the demands of the moral dictum, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', has been fully met by his sectarian and group loyalties and services. But this is the sign of moral and spiritual stagnation. Jesus did not intend that his concept of neighbourliness should be cribbed, cabinned, and confined that way.

That is the significance of his luminous parable of the good Samaritan, by which he explained and illustrated the meaning of his utterance. To be true to Jesus, accordingly, one has to break down every barrier in the way of neighbourliness, be it a sect or a creed, a political group or a nation-state ideology. It is the ethical vision and urge that sustains us in our search for finding and loving our neighbours even within our own sect or group; but the vision itself and its urge cannot be confined there; it breaks down all barriers and marches on to discover the neighbour in every being; to the heart's searching question, 'Who is my neighbour?', the heart which is freed from worldly

stagnation gives the clear and convincing answer: Everyone, irrespective of caste or creed or nationality. Such a heart has broken through the stagnation of little loves and has launched itself on the current of a God-ward passion and a man-ward love, on the wings of a pure spirituality, unobstructed by any worldly considerations. Don't stop, but march on, is the clarion call of the spiritual core of all religions. Extend the range of your neighbourly love to those outside your group and sect, says the ethical urge in man; function in and through a sect or a church if you so choose, but don't die there, whispers the spiritual urge. The soul in man is greater and more glorious than sects and creeds, says Vedānta, and exhorts man to cultivate this attitude and urge of spiritual dynamics and march on to the infinite and the universal, which is the true destiny of every individual. Says Swami Vivekananda (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, Fourth Edition, p. 253):

'All expansion is life, all contraction is death.'

Love is life, expansion; hatred is death, contraction; service is expansion of the inner man, exploitation is his contraction. Renounce the limited self and manifest the higher self through love and service, says Vivekananda. 'Unless he erects himself above himself, how poor a thing is man!' sings Wordsworth.

'None lives, my boy, except he who lives for others, the rest are more dead than alive', writes Vivekananda in a letter to one of his young followers (*ibid.*).

Nation-building in India can be achieved only when the bricks constituted by our five hundred million population become joined to each other with the cement of love and service and stand before the world as an integrated national edifice. This is the work of education in moral and ethical vision which, having achieved a measure of national integration, will also help our people to rise above the merely national, and discover their neighbour in every member of the international community. This is the true direction and goal of Indian citizenship today. All our political and social processes, all our scientific and religious programmes, can have no nobler aims than these two. The sooner we consciously bend their energies in this higher direction, the wiser we shall show ourselves to ourselves and to the keenly observant world. It is in this high orientation of national energies and purposes that our nation will receive an invaluable education from the life and message of Swami Vivekananda.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

THE subjects of science and religion are getting more and more important to man in the modern age. They are two great disciplines, which, when combined harmoniously, can bring about an all-round expression of human genius. But, unfortunately, for the last few centuries, the relationship between the two has not been quite happy. In the twentieth century, however, a new approach is becoming evident, and the representative thinkers among scientists and religious people are beginning to discern a close interrelation between these two branches of human knowledge. They are slowly veering round to the point of view that science and religion can heartily embrace each other, without detriment to the cause for which each stands, and work for the good of humanity. It is being realized more and more by both that there are elements in science that religion can adopt in order to fortify itself, and elements in religion that can deepen and strengthen science. I shall here touch upon some of these points of contact, and discuss the methods and results of both the disciplines, against the background of the unity and totality of knowledge, and in the light of the synthetic approach and vision of Swami Vivekananda, who was an outstanding spiritual and intellectual luminary of the modern age and who worked successfully to bring about this great consummation. Writes Romain Rolland about him (*The Life of Vivekananda*, Third Impression, p. 310):

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action,

from the most spiritual to the most practical. ... He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'

The Scientific Discipline

The civilization in which we live today is the product of the discipline of the human mind known as science. When we study science at close quarters, in the way the great scientists have applied themselves to this pursuit, we find two aspects in its discipline. The first is *pure science*, science which tries earnestly to understand the truth of experience through a dispassionate inquiry; and the second is *applied science*, in which the truth discovered by pure science flows as inventions for the technical enrichment of human life. These two, science as *lucifera* and science as *fructifera*, science as *light* and science as *fruit*, always go together. Knowledge leads to power, and power leads to control and manipulation of the forces of nature, enabling man to condition his life and environment with deliberation. Every new discovery in pure science, at some stage or other, becomes converted into applied science, into control and manipulation of the forces of nature. And the result, as revealed in recent history, is the great saga of scientific discovery and invention resulting in the world-wide technological civilization of today. It is a most fascinating study how the human mind, disciplined in this pursuit of science, develops the capacity to wrest from nature truth after truth, hidden and jealously guarded by her, leading to our extraordinary age of nuclear science and space travel.

Limitations of Science

But, when we go deeper into this subject of science, its limitations become apparent. To illustrate: two branches of science, viz. physics, including astronomy, and biology, have given us a vast body of insights regarding the nature of the universe and man. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, physics was warped in its final judgements. It saw materialism and mechanism reigning supreme in the universe. There was then a cock-sureness in its pronouncements; but, in the twentieth century, an element of humility is discernible in the attitude of the great physicists of the age. In the nineteenth century, knowledge was not deep enough, and scientists looked only at the surface of things. But, along with the discovery of such facts as radio-activity and insight into the nucleus of the atom, the realization has come that there is a severe limitation placed on our knowledge regarding the truth of the external world. Science owns today that it deals only with the *appearances* of things and not with the *reality* behind these appearances. Some of the greatest of modern physicists tell us that what science

has revealed of the world around us is only the outer aspect of things. Behind this *observable* universe, there is an *unobservable* universe. This is a great confession of the limitations of science and its methods. Science is dealing with phenomena revealed by the senses or by apparatuses helpful to the senses. But these senses reveal so little, and what they reveal only tells us that there are realities behind the sense world determining it and controlling it. Science restricts itself to the understanding of the *observable* part of the universe and to controlling its energies for the uses of man.

A similar situation obtains in the science of biology. In the last century, it was cock-sure about its pronouncements. By a study of the different aspects of the phenomena of life it arrived at the great theory of evolution, from which it drew certain conclusions which directly led to a form of materialism that equated man with the animal, and both to a machine. Today, scientists tell us that they were not happy titles that Darwin chose for his famous books *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man.* Sir Julian Huxley suggests that these could have been more appropriately titled *The Evolution of Organisms* and *The Ascent of Man* (Sir Julian Huxley: *Evolution after Darwin,* Vol. I, The University of Chicago Press, p. 17). But then, these books appeared at a time when a fierce controversy was going on between emerging science and the entrenched Christian dogma, and this had its impact even on the choosing of the titles of great scientific books. The science of physics with its thoroughgoing materialism and mechanistic determinism, and the science of biology with its newly discovered evolutionary theory and its domination by the general materialistic outlook of science and scientists of the age, helped to shatter nineteenth-century man's faith in religion and spiritual values.

Limitations of Dogma-bound Religion

Added to this was the attack on religion from the great social idealists and revolutionary social thinkers like Karl Marx. It was the period of the industrial revolution. These idealists asked: If God is there in an extra-cosmic heaven, why is there so much suffering in this world, why are millions starving, and why are thousands of little children made to slave in factories and workshops for the gain of a few capitalist exploiters? This kind of inequality, this kind of oppression of man by man in the presence of an all-powerful God, is something we cannot understand or bear. Marx, accordingly, characterized religion as the 'soul of soulless conditions, the heart of a heartless world, the opium of the people'.

The result was that, by the end of the nineteenth century, religion and faith in God and eternal verities ceased to be the ruling ideas of modern civilization; the power of religion to influence human thinking and conduct disappeared; man lost the fear of God, and more especially the fear of the devil! Christian religious dogma had upheld the latter more than the former as conducive to moral control of human action and belief. But the scientific spirit shattered faith in the devil and, along with it, faith in God as well. These were treated as primitive superstitions unworthy of modern civilized man. Modern science treated religion as a dangerous error in the beginning and as a harmless illusion in the end.

But the two great world wars, and the various crises—economic and political—that followed the one and preceded the other in this twentieth century, brought about a certain chastening of the spirit of western thinkers, especially of those in the scientifically advanced countries of the West. Social thinkers became less and less cock-sure of their remedies for human ills. Even great scientists began to feel and express that science, as understood and pursued by them, was not enough. Einstein said: 'Science can denature plutonium; but it cannot denature the evil in the heart of man.' That is not its function. Most scientists agree today that science alone cannot ensure human happiness; it can only create *conditions* for his happiness; but it cannot ensure that man *shall be* happy or man *shall be* really fulfilled. That is not the function of science as understood in the positive sciences of physics, biology, etc.; it is the province of another discipline, the science of the inner nature of man, which is the true meaning of religion as understood in Indian thought.

Religion and Science in the Vedāntic Perspective

Modern civilization has overrated science and technology, just as the older civilizations had underrated it. There is need today to view science in its proper perspective—the perspective of total human knowledge and welfare. *This is one of the several vital contributions of Swami Vivekananda to modern thought.* Dealing with the complementary character of eastern contributions to religion and western contributions to science, he said in his lecture on 'My Master' delivered in New York in 1896 (*Complete Works*, Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, p. 155):

'Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonizing, the mingling of these two ideals. To the oriental, the world of spirit is as real as to the occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for; in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the occidental, he is a dreamer; to the oriental,

the occidental is a dreamer playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. Each calls the other a dreamer. But the oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this will claim that happiness is in the machine; but it is always in the mind. That man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else. And what, after all, is this power of machinery? Why should a man who can send a current of electrictly through a wire be called a very great man and a very intelligent man? Does not nature do a million times more than that every moment? Why not then fall down and worship nature?'

The Spiritual Urges in Modern Science

The universe was a mystery to man in the primitive stage; it has not ceased to be so for civilized man even in this twentieth century. We find scientists like the late Sir James Jeans writing books on the scientific view of the universe with such titles as *The Mysterious Universe*. Even after all these marvellous scientific discoveries and inventions, the scientist still treats nature as profoundly mysterious. In spite of all the knowledge that he has gained, the scientist feels that he has only scratched the surface of nature, that he is yet far far away from the heart of the problem of the universe. Says Sir James Jeans in his *The New Background of Science*, (p. 68):

'Physical science set out to study a world of matter and radiation, and finds that it cannot describe or picture the nature of either, even to itself. Photons, electrons, and protons have become about as meaningless to the physicist as x, y, z are to a child on its first day of learning algebra. The most we hope for at the moment is to discover ways of manipulating x, y, z without knowing what they are, with the result that the advance of knowledge is at present reduced to what Einstein has described as extracting one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible.'

If the mystery of the universe has eluded the scientist so much, the mystery of man has eluded him even more. The late Sir Arthur Eddington, the famous mathematician and physicist, concludes his book, *Space, Time and Gravitation* (pp. 200-201), with a pointed reference to this predicament:

'The theory of relativity has passed in review the whole subject-matter of physics. It has unified the great laws, which by the precision of their formulation and the exactness of their application have won the proud place in human knowledge which physical science holds today. And yet, in regard to the nature of things, this knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science

has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature.

'We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo! it is our own.'

Man as thinker, man as observer, man as the self has left his 'footprints on the shores of the unknown', on the shores of the 'not-self' aspects of the universe. It is time that science tried to unravel this remarkable mystery of man. There seems to be a profounder mystery hidden within it than in the depths of outer space or of the atom. It is time that science turned its attention to tackling this mystery. All other mysteries pale into insignificance by the side of this one; it holds the key to all other mysteries.

In a talk over the B.B.C. a few decades ago, Eddington posed this great question: 'What is the truth about ourselves?', and proceeded to answer:

'We may incline to various answers: We are a bit of star gone wrong. We are complicated physical machinery—puppets that strut and talk and laugh and die as the hand of time turns the handle beneath. But let us remember that there is one elementary inescapable answer: We are that which asks the question.'

We are that which asks the question. Man is primarily a subject; man cannot be reduced to objective dimensions. He is essentially the seer, the knower, the observer; he is the *dṛk* or *sākṣin* or *kṣetrajña*, in the language of Vedānta. Here Eddington throws a hint at 'aspects deep in the world of physics, but unattainable by the methods of physics', but containing tremendous philosophical possibilities for advancing man's knowledge of himself and of the universe; this is obviously outside the pale of investigation by the positive sciences and their methods.

Another scientist, the late Prince Louis de Broglie, an authority on quantum theory and wave mechanics, dealt with the same subject in an article on 'The Poetry of Science', contributed some years ago to the international monthly *Mirror*. Starting with a famous quotation from Blaise Pascal: 'In space, the universe engulfs me and reduces me to a pin-point; through thought I understand the universe', de Broglie concludes: 'In that sublime pun lies the beauty, the poetry of pure science, and its high intellectual worth.'

'What am I?' Physically, I am a speck of microscopic dust in the vast immensity of the universe. But *through thought I comprehend this universe.* Man as scientist comprehends, in a small formula given

by his thought, the vast phenomena of nature, with its immensity and variety. What must be the profound mystery of man who, in one aspect, is only a pin-point engulfed by the spatial immensity of the universe, but yet, in another aspect, is able to compress the whole of that immensity into a few formulae given by the power and penetration of his thought?

The Mystery that is Man

So man has dimensions that cannot be reduced to the merely physical, the merely material. These latter are his 'not-self' aspects which enter into the constitution of his body, which obviously is just a speck of dust in that vast world of the not-self; but there is in him also something transcendental, which cannot be so reduced. He is the self; that is his primary, inalienable aspect. And if science is to progress further, it has to choose for investigation this field of the mystery of man which towers over its erstwhile study, namely, the mystery of the external universe. This is a vast field of study—the field of man's awareness, the field of his consciousness, his ego, his being the *subject* and not the *object*; science will find here a vaster and more fascinating and rewarding field of study than in external nature. Already scientists in the West are slowly turning their attention to this great mystery, the mystery of 'Man the Unknown' in the words of Alexis Carrel, apart from that of 'Man the Known', which is the subject of the positive sciences like physics, chemistry, and biology, and behaviouristic psychology.

Man is the creator of science and technology, culture and civilization; he is also today the only possible destroyer of his civilization. Everything about him is a mystery. As Lincoln Barnett says in his study of Einstein's contributions to modern scientific thought (*The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Mentor Edition, pp. 126-127):

'In the evolution of scientific thought, one fact has become impressively clear: there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. All highroads of the intellect, all byways of theory and conjecture, lead ultimately to an abyss that human ingenuity can never span. For man is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature. The further he extends his horizons, the more vividly he recognizes the fact that, as the physicist Niels Bohr puts it, "We are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence". Man is thus his own greatest mystery. He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. He comprehends but little of his organic processes and even less of his unique capacity to perceive the world around him, to reason and to dream. Least of all does he understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty: the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception.'

The Scientific Basis of Religion

Here is the meeting-point of science and religion, as revealed by Indian thought; for religion, as expounded in Vedānta, takes up the investigation of the mystery of experience where the positive sciences leave off. This 'Man the Unknown', man as the *subject* of experience, is its special field of investigation. Says Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 253):

'Beyond consciousness is where the bold search. Consciousness is bound by the senses. Beyond that, beyond the senses, men must go, in order to arrive at truths of the spiritual world, and there are even now persons who succeed in going beyond the bounds of the senses. These are called *ṛṣis* (seers of truth), because they come face to face with spiritual truths.'

Indian thought upholds both religion and science as valid disciplines in the pursuit of truth. India endorses the view expressed by Eddington about the spiritual kinship of science and religion (*Science and the Unseen World,* p. 54):

'You will understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront.'

India's thinkers never saw any contradiction between the two, unlike the scientists and theologians of the West. Such contradiction and conflict are the result of a narrow view of both science and religion which, however, the modern West is struggling to discard. Many students of science, not to speak of laymen, have vague and rather confused notion about what science means. The same is true about religion. To the ordinary man, science means no more than the gadgets like radio or television or other material benefits conferred on mankind by scientific technology. Students of science generally identify it with the several departments of science such as physics, chemistry, etc., which they study in schools and colleges. But we have to turn to the great scientists themselves to learn what science is; and from them we learn that it is the pursuit of truth—of truth hidden in the facts of nature, in the data revealed by the senses and the data revealed by experiments. It is a sincere, critical, detached study of experience, by which confused data are reduced to meaning and orderliness and brought under control. Says Karl Pearson (*Grammar of Science,* 1900, p. 6):

'The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance, is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgement upon these facts, unbiased by personal feeling is characteristic of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind.'

Science so understood is not tied up with any particular body of facts. In the words of one of the great biologists, J. Arthur Thomson (*Introduction to Science,* Home University Library Edition, p. 58):

'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterized as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought, which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. We may get a good lesson in scientific methods from a businessman meeting some new practical problem, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.'

Objectivity and precision, both as to thought and verbal formulation, are the two important characteristics of the scientific method. Any study possessing these characteristics will be science, whatever be the field of that study. Science as such is therefore not tied down to any particular order of facts, though the various departments of science like physics or chemistry, biology or sociology, are tied down to particular order of facts. These departments have limited scope, but science itself is *unlimited* in scope; and these various departments, starting with the study of separate fields tend, in their advanced stages, to overstep their particular boundaries and merge into one converging scientific search, the search for the meaning of total experience. In this expansive context, the idea of a science of religion, the science of the facts of the inner world of man, as upheld in ancient Indian thought, and as expounded in the modern age of Swami Vivekananda, becomes a study of far-reaching significance.

India's Vision of Universal Science-Religion

Religion as developed and understood in the West was, in its aims and methods and data, opposed to this spirit of rational seeking and investigation. It was taken as something finished and ready-made, which men were asked to believe—a creed or a dogma, a frozen piece of thought, which men were called upon to accept. That was why it came into fierce collision with the advancing tide of science with its spirit of free seeking and rational inquiry. In India, on the other hand, religion has always been understood to be a matter of seeking, finding, and verification, as any of the branches of science. This is a statement that will be found corroborated in the great Upaniṣads of ancient India and in the literature of Swami Vivekananda of our own times.

Tracing the recurring conflicts of science and religion in the West to the absence of this broad approach, Vivekananda said (*Complete Works,* Vol. II, Ninth Edition, p. 433):

'We all know the theories of the cosmos according to the modern astronomers and physicists, and at the same time we all know how woefully they undermine

the theology of Europe; how these scientific discoveries that are made, act as a bomb thrown at its stronghold; and we know how theologians have in all times attempted to put down these researches.'

When religion refuses to take the help of reason, it weakens itself. Alluding to this in the course of a lecture on 'Reason and Religion', delivered in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda said (*ibid.*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 367):

'The foundations have been all undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith, but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their idea of belief may be better translated as "not-thinking-carelessness".'

And pleading for the application of reason in the field of religion, he continued (*ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 367):

'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but it will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.'

A study of the Upaniṣads reveals that the subject of religion was approached in ancient India in an objective dispassionate manner; the aim of the study was to get at truth, and not to hug pleasing fancies and illusions or to idolize tribal passions and prejudices.

In several of his lectures and discourses, Swami Vivekananda has expounded the scientific approach to religion as upheld in Indian thought. In his lecture on 'Religion and Science', he says (*ibid.*, Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 81):

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so

the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law....

'Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.'

The Indian thinkers discovered by their investigations that there are two fields in which man functions: one, the external field; the other, the internal. These are two different orders of phenomena. The study of the one alone does not exhaust the whole range of experience. Also, the study of the one from the standpoint of the other will not lead to satisfactory results. But the study of the one in the light of the conclusions from the study of the other is helpful and relevant.

In a lecture on 'Cosmology', Swami Vivekananda said (*ibid.*, Vol. II, Ninth Edition, p. 432):

'There are two words, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the internal and the external. We get truth from both of these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics, and religion; from external experience, the physical sciences. Now a perfect truth should be in harmony with experiences in both these worlds. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm, and the macrocosm to the microcosm; physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and the internal world must have its verification outside.'

Thus the thinkers of ancient India said: Here is the physical life of man, and here is the physical universe that environs him. Let us study both in a scientific spirit. But let us also study him in his depths, his nature as revealed by his consciousness, his awareness, his emotions, his ego, and his sense of selfhood. These latter also constitute a vast group of phenomena that need to be investigated. Every advance in this field is bound to advance also man's knowledge about the truth of the mystery of the external world. For, to quote Eddington again (*Philosophy of Physical Science*, p. 5):

'We have discovered that it is actually an aid in the search for knowledge to understand the nature of the knowledge which we seek.'

The method of investigation in the field of religion is largely the same as in the positive sciences: collection of facts, their classification, a dispassionate study of these so as to reveal the law or laws underlying them, such knowledge leading to the control over the phenomena concerned, and, finally, the application of such knowledge for the alle-

viation of human suffering and the enhancement and enrichment of human life. This kind of study of religion, as a thorough scientific study of the facts of the inner life, was undertaken by the great thinkers of ancient India; the insights which they gained were re-tested and amplified by a galaxy of subsequent thinkers, *leaving to posterity the invaluable legacy of a rich and dynamic scientific tradition in the field of religion.* It is because of this adamantine base that Indian spirituality has stood the test of time. That also explains its hospitality to modern science, and its pride in the remarkable achievements of this sister discipline developed by the modern West.

Says Romain Rolland (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 196):

'The true Vedāntic spirit does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It possesses absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their co-ordination. Never having been hampered by a priestly order, each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe.'

After a thorough investigation into the real nature of man, the sages of the Upaniṣads made a fundamental discovery: Man, in his essential nature, is divine; behind the finite man is the Ātman, ever free, ever pure, and perfect. The body, the mind, and the ego are merely the externals of the real man who is immortal and divine. This discovery led to the further discovery that the same divinity is the ground of the world as well. This they termed Brahman, the totality of the Self and the not-Self, which they characterized as *satyaṁ jñānam anantam*— 'Truth, Awareness, and Infinity'. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. 1.3), we find this question put by an earnest student to a great teacher:

Kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati—

'What is that reality, O Blessed One, by knowing which we can know all that there is in the universe?'

Is there such a unique reality by knowing which we can understand all the manifestations of nature, internal as well as external? Is there a unity behind this diversity, a one behind the many? To this question, the teacher gave a very significant reply (ibid., I, 1.4):

Dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yad brahmavido vadanti parā caiva aparā ca—

'Two are the types of knowledge to be acquired by man; so say the knowers of Brahman. One is called *parā vidyā*, higher knowledge; the other is called *aparā vidyā*, lower knowledge.'

Both these must be investigated. Of these, the lower or ordinary knowledge, says the Upaniṣad, consists of the sacred Vedas, phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody, and astronomy. In fact, it includes all the sacred books, literature, art, history, and science.

Here we have a scientific mind of the highest order—impersonal, objective, and detached. There is no desire to put forth a pet opinion; truth alone is the motive power, even if that truth goes against one's pet attachments and aversions. The teacher says that even the Vedas, the sacred books of the people, belong to the category of lower knowledge. Who would dare to say that his own sacred books are ordinary, except he who is of a detached and scientific frame of mind, and is in search of truth and not dogma—he who has no truth to hide, no opinion to uphold, no prejudices to defend, who just wants to know the truth and is prepared to sacrifice everything else into the bargain? No religion except Vedānta has practised this bold detachment. The follower of every other religion, if asked what is ordinary knowledge, would unhesitatingly reply: 'All the sacred books of all the religions except my own.' But this teacher of the Upaniṣads had the detachment and boldness, proceeding from love of truth, to say that even the Vedas, held in such veneration by himself and by his people, were secondary; all the sacred books and all positive sciences and arts are but lower knowledge—*aparā vidyā*.

What, then, is left to be included in the category of *parā vidyā*, higher knowledge? The teacher proceeds to indicate this elusive theme. There is a tremendous field of knowledge still left, he thinks; but it belongs to a different order. So he says (*ibid.*, I. 1.5):

Atha parā yayā tad akṣaram adhigamyate—

'That is *parā* by which the Imperishable is realized.'

Science and all the rest deal only with things that change, that are perishable. As Eddington puts it, science gives us 'knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content'. The sacred books give us, says Sri Ramakrishna, only *information* about God and not God Himself. And yet we feel that, in the words of Eddington, 'all through the physical universe runs that unknown content'. What is that content? And how can we get at it? If the positive sciences cannot get at it, there must be another discipline, another line of inquiry, which must be able to give us this.

If the sacred books contain only *information* about God, there must be a discipline which gives us God and not merely *information* about

Him. It is this inquiry that pervades the Upaniṣads and that has made them immortal even as literature. And the nature and scope of that inquiry and the way it was conducted have something superb about them. There is no effort to uphold an opinion, however dear; no struggle to pronounce a dogma and cling to it, and thrust it upon others; no trace of tiredness or laziness of mind seeking a resting place on the way. Truth, and nothing but truth, is the watchword. Suffused with the spirit of truth, they declared (*ibid.*, III. 1.6):

Satyameva jayate nānṛtam
Saṭyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ—

'Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; the path to the highest excellence is spread out through truth only.'

And this path to the highest excellence is strewn with the debris of discarded opinions, pleasing dogmas, and broken hypotheses; thought was not allowed to rest on any of them for long; it forged ahead on the two wings of critical discrimination and inner detachment, wafted by the current of a single-minded passion for truth. One thinker puts forth his conclusion; another shows it as inadequate; this leads to further inquiry, leading to an deeper pronouncement. There was this graceful conflict of thought between the most gifted minds, through which thought forged ahead. There was no national dogma or authoritarian church to suppress or arrest it. The whole process reached its consummation in the profound discovery of the imperishable Self of man, the Ātman, and its unity with the Self of the Universe, the Brahman. The entire process was a joyous voyage of discovery; looking back, they saw that the steps left behind were also valid and that man travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher.

Modern Science and the Mystery of Man

Pleading for the viewing of man in his depths on the part of modern science, the eminent paleontologist, the late Père Teilhard de Chardin says (*The Phenomenon of Man,* Collins, London, 1959, pp. 35-36):

'When studied narrowly in himself by anthropologists or jurists, man is a tiny, even a shrinking, creature. His overpronounced individuality conceals from our eyes the whole to which he belongs; as we look at him, our minds incline to break nature up into pieces and to forget both its deep interrelations and its measureless horizons. We incline to all that is bad in anthropocentrism. And it is this that leads scientists to refuse to consider man as an object of scientific scrutiny except through his body.

'The time has come to realize that an interpretation of the universe—even a positivist one—remains unsatisfying unless it covers the interior as well as the

exterior of things; mind as well as matter. The true physics is that which will, one day, achieve the inclusion of man in his wholeness in a coherent picture of the world.'

The Upaniṣads discovered the finite man as but the outer crust or layer of the infinite and immortal man within. In his finiteness, he enters and is entered into by the finite world around him. In this, he is a speck of dust in the vast immensity of space in which 'the universe engulfs me and reduces me to a 'pin-point', in the profound words of Pascal quoted earlier. But in his infinite dimension as the imperishable Self, he *understands the universe*. The inner aspect of man, and, through him, of the universe, is slowly dawning on modern scientific thought. Chardin asks: 'Up to now has science ever troubled to look at the world other than from without?' (*ibid.*, p. 52). And he proceeds to say (*ibid.*, p. 55):

'In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least up to now except the *without* of things. The same intellectual attitude is still permissible in the bacteriologist, whose cultures (apart from substantial difficulties) are treated as laboratory reagents. But it is still more difficult in the realm of plants. It tends to become a gamble in the case of a biologist studying the behaviour of insects or coelenterates. It seems merely futile with regard to the vertebrates. Finally, it breaks down completely with man, in whom the existence of a *within* can no longer be evaded, because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge.'

And Chardin concludes (*ibid.*, p. 56):

'It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an "interior" appears at the heart of beings, as it were seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this "interior" should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily a *double aspect to its structure*, that is to say, in every region of space and time—in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: *coextensive with their Without, there is a Within to things.*'

Says the great physiologist and neurologist, Sir Charles Sherrington (*Man on His Nature*, Pelican Edition, p. 38):

'Today Nature looms larger than ever and includes more fully than ever ourselves. It is, if you will, a machine, but it is a partly mentalized machine and in virtue of including ourselves it is a machine with human qualities of mind. It is a running stream of energy—mental and physical—and unlike man-made machines it is actuated by emotions, fears and hopes, dislikes and love.'

In a lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', delivered in 1959 at the closing session of the Chicago University symposium on 'Evolution After Darwin' held to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Sir Julian Huxley, the noted biologist,

gave a spiritual orientation to the evolutionary process (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. III, pp. 251-52):

'Man's evolution is not biological but psychosocial; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization....

'All dominant thought organizations are concerned with the ultimate, as well as with the immediate, problems of existence or, I should rather say, with the most ultimate problems that the thought of the time is capable of formulating or even envisaging. They are all concerned with giving some interpretation of man, of the world which he is to live in, and of his place and role in that world—in other words, some comprehensive picture of human destiny and significance.'

Further, Huxley reveals the trend of evolution towards quality (*ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 261-62):

'It (evolutionary vision) shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

In his essay on 'Emergence of Darwinism', Huxley sums up the goal of the evolutionary process at the human level as 'fulfilment' (*ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 20):

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

And pleading for the development of a science of human possibilities, Huxley further says (*ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 21):

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

Kinship Between Vedānta and Modern Science

Swami Vivekananda has shown that Vedānta and modern science are close to each other in spirit and temper and objectives. Both are spiritual disciplines. Even in the cosmology of the physical universe, the two reveal many points of contact. The fundamental position in the cosmology of both is what Swami Vivekananda calls 'the postulate of a self-evolving cause'. Vedānta calls it Brahman which is a universal spiritual principle. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (III. 1) defines Brahman in a majestic utterance which will be welcomed by every scientific thinker:

Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti; yat prayantyabhisaṃviśanti; tad vijijñāsava; tad brahmeti—

'Wherefrom all these beings are born; by which, being born, they abide; into which, at the time of dissolution, they enter—seek to know That; That is Brahman.'

To the modern scientist, it is a material reality, the background material or stuff, as astrophysicist Fred Hoyle terms it. And both uphold the theory of evolution, cosmic as well as organic.

Referring to this spiritual kinship between modern science and ancient Vedānta, Swami Vivekananda said in his speech at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893 (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 15):

'Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusions of science.'

Although modern scientific thought does not yet have a recognized place for any spiritual reality or principle, several scientists of the twentieth century, including biologists like Teilhard de Chardin and Sir Julian Huxley, have endeavoured to soften the materialism of physical science and to find a place for spiritual experience in the scientific world picture. Even in the last century, Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, had protested against the association of science with any fixed dogma such as materialism, and termed materialism an 'intruder' (*Methods and Results,* Vol. I, p. 161). In this century, this protest has come from great physicists themselves. Sir James Jeans found that the final picture of the universe emerging from twentieth-century physical science was one in which matter was completely eliminated, 'mind reigning supreme and alone' (*The New Background of Science,* p. 307). Astrophysicist R.A. Millikan considered materialism 'a philosophy of unintelligence' (*An Autobiography,* last chapter). If twentieth-century physics is thus turning its face away from thoroughgoing materialism, twentieth-century biology is one step ahead of it in this orientation. *The whole of modern scientific thought is in the throes of a silent spiritual revolution with the emergence, on the horizon of scientific thought, of mind and consiousness, and the consequent need to develop what Jeans calls 'a new background of science'.* Julian Huxley and Chardin find the spiritual character of the world-stuff successively revealed in the course of organic evolution. Biology, in its theory of evolution, they hold, reveals what Chardin calls a *within* to nature,

over and above and different from the *without* of nature revealed by physics and astronomy. Vedānta terms the *within* as the *pratyak rūpa* and the *without* as the *parāk rūpa* of nature.

When the significance of this *within* of things is recognized in modern science, the scientific background material will undergo a spiritual orientation and thus come closer to the Brahman of Vedānta. The synthesis of the knowledge of the *within* and the *without* is what India achieved in its Vedānta ages ago as *samyak jñāna*, comprehensive or perfect knowledge, or philosophy. Reality itself does not know any distinction between a *within* and a *without*. These distinctions are made only by the human mind for the convenience of study and research.

As the different branches of the positive sciences are but different approaches to the study of one and the same reality, and as all such branches of study, when pursued far enough, tend to mingle and merge into a grand science of the physical universe, into a unified science of the *without* of nature, so the science of the *within* and the science of the *without* mingle and merge in a science of Brahman, the total Reality. This is how Vedānta viewed its *Brahmavidyā*, science of Brahman, the term Brahman standing for the totality of Reality, physical and non-physical; the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. i. 1) defined *Brahmavidyā* as *sarvavidyāpratiṣṭha*, the *pratiṣṭha* or basis of every *vidyā* or science. Says Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII. 2):

Kṣetrakṣetrajñayor jñānaṃ yat tat jñānaṃ mataṁ mama—

'The knowledge of *kṣetra*, the not-self (the 'without' of things), and *kṣetrajña*, the Self, (the 'within' of things), is true knowledge according to Me.'

Dealing with the all-inclusiveness of this Vedāntic thought as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, Romain Rolland says (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 289):

'But it is a matter of indifference to the calm pride of him who deems himself the stronger whether Science accepts free Religion, in Vivekananda's sense of the term, or not; for his Religion accepts Science. It is vast enough to find a place at its table for all loyal seekers after truth.'

In his lecture on 'The Absolute and Manifestation' delivered in London in 1896, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, Ninth Edition, p. 140):

'Do you not see whither science is tending? The Hindu nation proceeded through the study of the mind, through metaphysics and logic. The European nations start from external nature, and now they, too, are coming to the same

results. We find that searching through the mind we at last come to that Oneness, that universal One, the internal Soul of everything, the essence and reality of everything....Through material science, we come to the same Oneness.'

The *Bhāgavata* (XI. vii. 19-21) refers to this complementary character of science and Vedānta in a profound utterance:

Prāyeṇa manujā loke lokatattvavicakṣaṇāḥ;
Samuddharanti hyātmānam ātmanaivāśubhāśayāt—

'In the world, men who are efficient in the investigation of the truth of nature, generally uplift themselves by themselves from all sources of evil.'

Ātmano gururātmaiva puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ;
Yat pratyakṣānumānābhyāṁ śreyo'sau anuvindate—

'For a human being particularly, his *guru* (teacher) is his own self; because he achieves his welfare through (inquiring into) direct sense experience and inference based on the same.'

Puruṣatve ca māṁ dhīrāḥ sāṅkhyayogaviśāradāḥ;
Āvistarāṁ prapaśyanti sarvaśaktyupabṛṁhitam—

'In this very human personality also, wise men who have mastered the science and art of the spiritual life clearly realize Me (God, the universal Self of all) as fully manifest and endowed with all powers.'

The Vedāntic View of Evolution

Vedānta views the entire evolutionary process as progressive evolution of structure and form, and as greater and greater manifestation of the infinite Self within. It is evolution of matter and manifestation of spirit. Twentieth-century biology recognizes, in the first appearance of living organisms, the emergence, in rudimentary form, of the spiritual value of awareness.

This spiritual value of awareness grows, as it were, in richness and variety as we move up the evolutionary ladder. The evolution of the nervous system discloses progressive development of awareness in depth and range, and consequent increase in the grip of the organism on its environment.

This awareness achieves a new and significant dimension with the appearance of man on the evolutionary scene. The field of awareness of all other organisms is, largely, the external environment and also, to a small extent, the interior of their bodies—the *without* of nature. Man alone has awareness of the self, along with awareness of the not-self, of both the *within* and *without* of nature.

That is the uniqueness of man, according to both twentieth-century biology and ancient Vedānta. Self-awareness, which nature achieved through the evolution of the human organism, is a new dimension of awareness containing tremendous implications for man's destiny as much as for his philosophy of nature.

The Vedāntic view of evolution and of man's uniqueness finds a classic statement in the *Bhāgavatam* (XI. 11.28):

Sṛṣṭvā purāṇi vividhānyajayātmaśaktyā
vṛkṣān sarīsṛpapaśūn khagadaṁśamatsyān;
Taistaiḥ atuṣṭahṛdayaḥ puruṣaṁ vidhāya
brahmāvalokadhiṣaṇaṁ mudam āpa devaḥ—

'The divine One, having projected (evolved) with His own inherent power various forms such as trees, reptiles, cattle, birds, insects, and fish, was not satisfied at heart with forms such as these; He then projected the human form endowed with the capacity to realize Brahman (the universal divine Self of all), and became extremely pleased.'

India's Urge : Realization and not mere Speculation

Evolution has revealed that the mystery of existence stirs in man as the mystery of the self. *The mystery of the universe will ever remain a mystery until this mystery of the self is cleared.* Till then all our conclusions about the truth of the universe proceeding from science or philosophy, theology or logic, will be speculative ventures yielding mere postulates and conjectures. The Indian mind was not content to remain at the stage of speculation or conjecture in so important a field as the knowledge of the ultimate truth. Her thinkers boldly penetrated into the world within, taking the facts of awareness and the ego as the clue, as *footprints,* in the words of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (I. 4. 7); and when they penetrated to the depth, they discovered the infinite and the eternal behind the finite and the time-bound. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* registers this approach, and the object of its search, in another significant passage (III. 4. 1):

Yat sākṣāt aparokṣāt brahma
ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ—

'The Brahman that is immediate and direct—the Self that is within all.'

'That thou art' (*Tat tvam asi*), proclaims the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI. viii. 7). Again and again, the Upaniṣads reiterate this great Truth. If man as scientist has such a profound dimension that he can compre-

hend the vast universe in a formula given by his thought, what must be the dimension of man as the Ātman, the unchangeable, infinite Self? The mystery of the universe was finally resolved through the discovery of the solution to the mystery within man himself. *The sages of the Upaniṣads discovered the centre of the universe in the heart of man.* Through that discovery, man was revealed in his infinite dimension; and the universe was also revealed in all its spiritual glory. Realization of this truth is the only way to life-fulfilment, say the Upaniṣads. Says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (II. 15):

Yadātmatattvena tu brahmatattvam
dīpopameneha yuktaḥ prapaśyet;
Ajaṁ dhruvaṁ sarvatattvaiḥ viśuddham
jñātvā devaṁ mucyate sarvapāpaiḥ—

'When the self-controlled spiritual aspirant realizes in this very body the truth of Brahman (absolute Existence) through the truth of the Ātman (Self), self-luminous as light, then, knowing the Divinity which is unborn, eternal, and untouched by the modifications of nature, he is freed from all sins.'

This was a profound joyous discovery, as can be seen even from the language in which it is couched in the Upaniṣads. In reaching the ultimate Truth of the Ātman, they had reached also the ultimate of knowledge and awareness, peace and joy. Hence they communicated their discovery as the discovery of the inexhaustible mine of *satyam* (truth), *jñānam* (awareness), and *anantam* (infinitude), or of *sat* (existence), *cit* (knowledge) and *ānanda* (bliss). In the struggle to realize this truth and the life-fulfilment it involves, they saw the true meaning of the entire course of cosmic evolution, especially of human evolution.

The organism seeks fulfilment; that is the end and aim of all its activities and processes, says modern biology. In the Upaniṣads, we have the beautiful concepts of *mukti*, freedom, and *pūrṇatā*, fullness. We are bound now; we want to become integral, we must experience fullness. Jesus Christ calls it 'perfection': 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' (Matthew v. 48) To experience the delight of freedom, to enlarge the bounds of man's awareness, to get *bodhi*, complete enlightenment, as the Buddha expressed it, is the great aim of human evolution. Education, science, culture, socio-political processes, and religion are meant to increase and enlarge the bounds of this awareness and the range and depth of this fulfilment, by increasing man's knowledge of and control over not only the outside world but also the deep recesses within himself.

Knowledge is power in the positive sciences; it is still more so in the science of religion, the science of the inner nature of man, where the power that is gained is not only greater in terms of quantity but also higher in terms of quality.

While living as a prisoner in St. Helena, Napoleon made this significant confession:

'There are in the world two powers—the sword and the spirit. The spirit has always vanquished the sword.

'Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I founded great empires. But upon what did the creation of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love, and to this very day, millions would die for him.'

Vivekananda and a Science of Human Possibilities

India developed religion as a science, as what Julian Huxley calls 'a science of human possibilities'. In this connexion, I can do no better than quote a significant passage from Swami Vivekananda; though rather long, it is worth quoting in full in view of its relevance.

In his speech on 'The Powers of the Mind' delivered in Los Angeles, California, on January 8, 1900, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works,* Vol. II, Ninth Edition, pp. 18-19):

'Now, I shall tell you a theory, which I will not argue now, but simply place before you the conclusion. Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man, and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race; or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it perfection.

'Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are given barely enough food, clothing, and shelter, they will gradually go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilization. We know, also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means.

'We help the growth of trees, do we not? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the growth of man? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to other countries? Because, by these means, we can hasten the growth of races.

Now, can we not hasten growth of individuals? We can. Can we put a limit to the hastening? We cannot say how much a man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him wonderfully. Can there be any limit then, till you come to perfection? So, what comes of it? That a perfect man, that is to say, the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years hence, that man can come today. And this is what the *yogins* say, that all great incarnations and prophets are such men; that they reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently, there was such a man (Sri Ramakrishna) who lived the life of the whole human race and reached the end even in this life.

'Even this hastening of the growth must be under laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and understand their secrets and apply them to our own needs; it follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real end. Helping others with money and other material things and teaching them how to go on smoothly in their daily life are mere details.

'The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait and wait for ages, just a plaything in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of nature, and get beyond this little life. That is the great idea.'

The Vedāntic Message of Strength and Fearlessness

Spiritual knowledge confers on man infinite strength and fearlessness. That is the best proof of its truth and utility. Referring to this, Swami Vivekananda said in his lecture on 'Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life' delivered in Madras in 1897 (*ibid.*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 237-38):

'And in my mind rises from the past the vision of the great emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, and I see, as it were in a picture, the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our *sannyāsins* (monks) in the forest; the old man he was talking to, perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor, astonished at his wisdom, tempting him with gold and honour to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold, and smiles at his temptations, and refuses; and then the Emperor standing on his authority as an Emperor, says, "I will kill you, if you do not come", and the man bursts into a laugh and says, "You never told such a falsehood in your life as you tell just now. Who can kill me? *Me* you kill. Emperor of the material world! Never! For I am Spirit unborn and undecaying; never was I born and never do I die; I am the Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient; and *you* kill me, child that you are!" That is strength, that is strength.'

Swami Vivekananda also gives as illustration of spiritual strength the example of an Indian monk who was stabbed by a soldier during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The other soldiers captured this soldier

and brought him before the dying monk to be identified and, if identified, offered to kill him in revenge. But the monk, who had realized his Self and his oneness with all beings, seeing his assailant before him, broke his silence of fifteen years to say to his murderer with his dying breath and in a tone suffused with love: 'And thou also art He.'

The strength and fearlessness of Socrates in the face of death, and his gentleness, had its source in his spiritual knowledge. When Crito asked him: 'In what way shall we bury you, Socrates?' Socrates answered (*Dialogues of Plato,* Vol. I. Jowett's Edition, 1953, p. 474):

> 'In any way you like, but first you must catch *me,* the real me. Be of good cheer, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with *that* whatever is usual and what you think best.'

If man is to live a true life, if he is to achieve real life-fulfilment, he has to manifest the infinite Self within him by controlling and transcending his lower self, his finite sense-bound nature. There is a technique for achieving this, and the religions of the world tell us about it with varying degrees of clarity. *But in India alone did this subject receive a treatment at once scientific and thorough in its spirit and methods, and impersonal and universal in its results and applications.*

Science and Vedānta Complementary

Religion so expounded has a message for all humanity. Science through its technology may build for man a first class house, and equip it with radio, television, and other gadgets; the social security measures of a welfare state may provide him with everything necessary for a happy, fulfilled life in this world, and even, through the state church, in the world beyond; the man himself may give his house such arresting names as *'Śānti Kunj'* (Peace Retreat), or 'Happy Villa'. Yet none of these can ensure that he will live in that house in peace or happiness. For that depends, to a large extent, on another source of strength and nourishment, another type of knowledge and discipline—the knowledge and discipline proceeding from religion. *If man can have the help of the positive sciences to create a healthy external environment, and the help of the science of spirituality to create a healthy internal environment, he can hope to achieve total life-fulfilment; not otherwise.* This is the view of the Upaniṣads.

But today this is not the picture that modern civilization presents. Man in this technological civilization is feeling inwardly impoverished and empty in an environment of wealth, power, and pleasure; he is full of tension and sorrow, doubt and uncertainty, all the time. Juvenile

delinquency, drunkenness, suicide, and a variety of other maladies are ever on the increase. Why? Because man is not inwardly satisfied; he is smitten with ennui and boredom arising from the limitations of his sense-bound *Weltanschauung*. Indian thinkers foresaw this predicament of modern man ages ago. Says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI. 20):

Yadā carmavad ākāśaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ;
Tadā devam avijñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati—

'Men may (through their technical skill) roll up the sky like a piece of leather; still there will be no end of sorrow for them without realizing the luminous One within.'

Schopenhauer said a hundred years ago (*The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 404):

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

Today, man is his own major burden and problem. He can tackle and solve this problem not by going in for more positivistic science, more technology, more life's amenities, more socio-political manipulations of human conditions, but by the cultivation of the science of religion, by the understanding *and practice* of this science. Says Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, p. 35):

'You must bear in mind that religion does not consist in talk, or doctrines, or books, but in realization; it is not learning but *being*.'

It is in this sense that India understood religion; and it is this idea of religion that Swami Vivekananda expounded in the West and the East through his powerful voice. The end and aim of religion, as our ancient teachers put it, is the experience, *anubhava*, of God, through the steady growth in man's spiritual awareness. *That is the touchstone of religion.* There is such a thing as the spiritual growth of the individual, step by step. We experience this growth, just as we see a building rising up step by step, brick by brick. When we live the life of religion, strength comes to us, consciousness becomes enlarged, sympathies grow and widen, and we feel that we are growing into better men. It is only the strength that proceeds from such inward growth and development that will enable man to digest and assimilate the energies released by the progress of science. Such a man alone has the strength and wisdom to convert the chaos of life into a pattern of happiness and general welfare. If religion is taken away from society, what remains is simple barbarism. Ancient civilizations were

destroyed by barbarians bred outside those civilizations. But modern civilization, if it is to go the same way, will be destroyed by barbarians bred within the civilization itself. What can save us from this predicament is a little 'Christian love' in our hearts for our neighbours, in the words of Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 114), or a little more altruism, in the words of Pitirim A. Sorokin of Harvard University (*Reconstruction of Humanity*, especially part V). This love comes from the *practice* of religion, as defined by Swami Vivekananda and other great teachers of the world. Says Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, p. 358):

'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man.'

Again (*ibid.*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 58):

'Him I call a *mahātman* (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *durātman* (wicked soul).'

That is the function of religion; the finite man reaches out to the infinite man. No other discipline can give this education to man.

'Now comes the question, can religion really accomplish anything?', asked Swami Vivekananda, and proceeded to answer (*ibid.*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 4):

'It can. It brings to man eternal life. It has made man what he is and will make of this human animal a god. That is what religion can do. Take religion from human society and what will remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes. Sense-happiness is not the goal of humanity. Wisdom, *jñāna*, is the goal of all life. We find that man enjoys his intellect more than an animal enjoys its senses; and we see that man enjoys his spiritual nature even more than his rational nature. So the highest wisdom must be this spiritual knowledge. With this knowledge will come bliss.'

Conclusion

Understood in this light, there is no conflict between science and religion. Both have the identical aim of helping man to grow in spirituality, of ushering in a better social order which alone can provide him with the stimulus to total life-fulfilment. Each by itself is insufficient and helpless. They have been tried separately with unsatisfactory results. The old civilizations took guidance solely from religion; their achievements were partial and limited. Modern civilization relies solely on science; its achievements also have turned out to be partial and limited. *The combination to-day of the spiritual energies of these two complementary disciplines in the life of man will produce fully integrated human beings and thus help to evolve a complete human civilization for which the world is ripe and waiting.* This is the most outstanding contribution of Swami Vivekananda to human

thought today. This synthetic vision of his finds lucid expression in a brief but comprehensive testament of his Vedāntic conviction (*ibid.*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal.

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be *free*.

'This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

Vedānta expounded by Vivekananda as the synthesis of science and religion is also the synthesis of head and heart, of the classical and the romantic in the human heritage. The erstwhile tendency in modern education to treat the humanities and the sciences as mutually exclusive disciplines is giving place to the Vedāntic awareness that they are complementary to each other. Himself 'the personification of the harmony of all human energy', in the words of Romain Rolland which I have quoted at the beginning of this paper, Vivekananda has bequeathed to man, in a moving passage, his vision of the unity and synthesis of all human energy and aspiration. Making a prophetic reference to the future religion of humanity in the course of his lecture on 'The Absolute and Manifestation' delivered in London in 1896, he said (*The Complete Works*, Vol. II, Tenth Edition, p. 140):

'In Buddha, we had the great universal heart and infinite patience, making religion practical, and bringing it to everyone's door. In Śaṅkarācārya, we saw tremendous intellectual power, throwing the scorching light of reason upon everything. We want today that bright sun of intellectuality joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful, infinite heart of love and mercy. This union will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples.'

THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I AM glad to be called to address this distinguished audience on the subject of this evening's talk, 'The Meeting of East and West in Swami Vivekananda'. It is a great theme, a theme which can keep us engaged for days and days together. What Swami Vivekananda gave to humanity during his short life of thirty-nine years, five months, and twenty-two days, of which only a bare nine years formed the period of his public ministry, will take humanity centuries to understand and assimilate. He was a spiritual and intellectual genius of a rare order with a compelling message to modern man. That is why, perhaps, the organizers of this meeting chose this theme, a theme which is dear to the hearts of men and women both in East and West.

East versus West

The words East and West are here used to signify the Orient and the Occident and not in their contemporary cold-war contexts. During the last few centuries, these two halves of humanity had been brought together through the technological, commercial, and colonial expansion of the Occident; now that the colonial aspect of this relationship is fast coming to an end, the problem of the spiritual and human integration of the two halves is assuming special significance. The meeting of East and West is no more a theoretical question today. It was after the First World War that this problem first came to the fore and assumed importance; and the League of Nations had a department added to it charged with this mission—The Committee for Intellectual

Co-operation. That did some good work in its own way, and now, since the end of the Second World War, the problem has assumed greater urgency and importance in the wake of the liberation of many Afro-Asian nations from the Western colonial yoke. There is need to energetically initiate steps to bridge the gulf between man and man, between culture and culture; and this is being done today on a world scale by the U.N.O. through its general and specialized agencies, and more especially through its UNESCO, which is one of the finest international organizations ever set up by man, with high objectives and constructive programmes. The UNESCO, in my opinion, has done more creditable work than the other wings of the U.N.O. in cementing human unity.

Vivekananda and the Modern World

This great ideal of human unity is informing and sustaining several movements and institutions in the East as well as in the West. The modern world owes a deep debt of gratitude to Swami Vivekananda for having voiced, more than sixty years ago, powerfully and effectively, this deep hankering of the human heart.

After referring, in his lecture on 'Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life' delivered in Madras, on his return from the West, in 1897, to the first blessing which the ancient Upaniṣads of India convey to modern man in their message of strength and fearlessness. Vivekananda said (The *Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 240-41):

'The second great idea which the world is waiting to receive from our Upaniṣads is the solidarity of this universe. The old lines of demarcation and differentiation are vanishing rapidly. Electricity and steampower are placing the different parts of the world in inter-communication with each other, and, as a result, we Hindus no longer say that every country beyond our own land is peopled with demons and hobgoblins, nor do the people of Christian countries say that India is only peopled by cannibals and savages. When we go out of our country, we find the same brother-man, with the same strong hand to help, with the same lips to say godspeed; and sometimes they are better than in the country in which we are born.... Our Upaniṣads say that the cause of all misery is ignorance; and that is perfectly true when applied to every state of life, either social or spiritual. It is ignorance that makes us hate each other, it is through ignorance that we do not know and do not love each other. As soon as we come to know each other, love comes, must come, for are we not one? Thus we find solidarity coming in spite of itself. Even in politics and sociology, problems that were only national twenty years ago can no more be solved on national grounds only. They are assuming huge proportions, gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked at in the broader light of international grounds. International organiza-

tions, international combinations, international laws are the cry of the day. That shows the solidarity.'

Vivekananda not merely voiced these international aspirations, but also lived a life of that synthesis between East and West. His personality, his outlook, and his sympathies were international and human. And the way he developed into such a personality is a fascinating and rewarding study for all those who pay homage to this ideal and vision. To have the guidance of a great leader of the stature of Vivekananda, who had no provincial limits to his sympathies, whose heart embraced the whole of humanity, and who had the power, intellectual as well as spiritual, to impress himself upon the thought and culture of the modern age, is a rich and unique experience for the modern world. Nations, today, are in need of leaders of vision, of broad sympathy, and of great energy. India has been very fortunate in this field in this age of her tremendous transition. When she was entering into the modern age of her history, when she was passing through a momentous and critical period of transition, she was immensely fortunate to have had the guidance of a few great leaders who can be classed among the great leaders of mankind in virtue of their stature and attainments.

The Modern Renaissance in India

In the nineteenth century, India started writing the first pages of what we may call her modern history. This was made possible by her contact with the West through the United Kingdom. In the beginning of this contact, India experienced a period of bewilderment and confusion. But as years passed, the western leaven began to enter into the body and soul of India stirring it to its depths. It created a ferment which soon issued forth as a national renaissance, gentle and halting in the beginning, but, gathering momentum and force as the century rolled on, became a mighty flood in the last decade of the century. In the process, it threw up two gigantic personalities, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the initiator, and Swami Vivekananda, the consummator.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy's contribution to the birth and development of this renaissance and to making it flow into constructive channels is immense. He was a remarkable man. The whole of India today and also the West are indebted to this great personality for having voiced the aspirations of the twentieth-century man even in the early nineteenth century. He was a great man in every sense. He was born in 1774 and passed away in 1833. He hailed from Bengal, which was the first among all the regions of India to experience the impact of western

culture in a massive way, and which as a consequence became the pioneer of this renaissance. Ram Mohun Roy represented the synthesis of East and West in himself. He was intellectually alert and spiritually sensitive, intensely human, with vast sympathies for the freedom and happiness of man everywhere, utterly unprovincial and universal in outlook. He was an outstanding scholar, journalist, and writer with command of several languages, including English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and his own Bengali. This modern Indian renaissance, which bids fair to affect the culture and thought not only of India but also of the modern world in a profound way, could not have had a more worthy pioneer than this manysided genius. He can be considered to be the morning star of this great renaissance. He was in the United Kingdom during the last year of his life to represent the interests of the then Moghul Emperor of India before the Committee of the British Parliament, when he met several distinguished leaders of thought in the U.K.; and he passed away, while still on his mission, in Bristol in 1833.

There was nothing narrow, parochial, or small about this great man. He was big in every sense; and he imparted that bigness to his country's renaissance. *But he came a bit too early.* Neither India nor the West was then prepared to understand or to accept the implications of his message which spoke in terms of man as man and not in terms of a section thereof, and which upheld the great ideal of equality between nations and cultures and the synthesis of the material and the spiritual.

Ramakrishna and the Indian Renaissance

But he came, lit up the torch of human freedom, fraternity, and equality, and passed it on to his worthy successors who were also great, though not so outstanding. Five decades rolled on; the torch burned brighter and brighter until it became a mighty blaze at the end of the century in the personalities of Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86) and Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), in whom were gathered up and fused the rich cultural and spiritual inheritances of East and West. *We can never understand the true stature of these two master minds of modern India except in this world context.* They were not just little saints or little leaders of thought who give out a message of salvation and throw up a sect or a creed in a particular corner of the world. They were men endowed with the deepest vision and the widest sympathy, and they lived and worked for the fulfilment of human hopes and aspirations everywhere. In Sri Ramakrishna, we find the fullest expression of the eternal spirit of India. As Romain Rolland expresses it in his *Life of Ramakrishna* (1947 Edition, p. 14):

'The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India. He was no hero of action like Gandhi, no genius in art or thought like Goethe or Tagore. He was a little village Brahmin of Bengal, whose outer life was set in a limited frame without striking incident, outside the political and social activities of his time. But his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and Gods.'

In him, India's hoary spiritual legacy became alive and vital. And this legacy had always upheld the values of the universal and human, emphasized the spiritual growth of man, and actively promoted the principle of toleration and universal acceptance; Sri Ramakrishna represented an India which remembers herself in her ancient Vedas and Upaniṣads, in Buddha and Śaṅkara, and which continues to exist as a beacon of spiritual hope for man everywhere. She has ever paid homage to the highest and best in man and endeavoured to unite man with man through the indwelling Divine. It was that India, ever-aging but never old, that found its form and voice in our age in Sri Ramakrishna. His advent was a great event in the history of modern India; for in him, she rediscovered herself and re-authenticated for herself the fundamentals of her culture and religion. He strengthened the tree of Indian culture by nourishing and watering its roots and thus made a lasting contribution to the energizing and flowering of that renaissance.

We find as a running theme of Indian history the struggle to realize the meaning of human existence, to clear up the mystery of man and God. This is the meaning of religion according to Indian thought—the struggle of the human mind to peer through the mystery of existence and come face to face with truth. India did not subscribe to the idea of religion as a matter merely of creed, dogma, or conformity. Religion is the passion of the human heart to *experience* God. *In matters spiritual, India has never been lukewarm.* This passion and this earnestness pervade her ancient literature—the Upaniṣads. And these Upaniṣads put their stamp on all the subsequent philosophical, religious, and cultural developments of India. In this line of the Upaniṣadic tradition came Kṛṣṇa, the teacher of the *Gītā,* Buddha, Śaṅkara, the saints of medieval India and, in our time, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. These teachers taught in unison that divinity, purity, and perfection are inherent in the human soul and that the goal of life is to manifest this divine within. Thus defining the scope of religion and the goal of human existence, these great teachers and the movements proceeding from them had educated the Indian mind in the spiritual basis of human existence. India had responded to their message and held fast to the spiritual ideal in prosperity and adversity alike. This had given her an amazing vitality which explains the arresting continuity of her culture and life. Five

thousand years do not mean much in the context of evolution, even of human evolution; but in the context of the history and career of the various cultures that have come and played their part on the stage of the world, India's record is impressive both as to length and to quality. When all other cultures have played their parts and disappeared, India's culture has continued to exist, getting richer and stronger through her remarkable capacity for new assimilations and adjustments in every epoch of her history.

This arresting phenomenon is happening once again in our own time. The modern renaissance in India, which arose in the wake of her contact with the West, is infusing a new youthful vigour into her body and soul, and achieving two national purposes: Firstly, the assimilation of the spirit of the dynamic culture of the modern West, the reassessment of her own ancient heritage in the light of the total human legacy, the synthesis of the ancient and the modern in the world's heritage, and the ensuring thus of a dynamic national life and the thread of historic national continuity. Secondly, she is also re-entering, after a few centuries of immobilization, into the main stream of international life and thought and pouring out her quota of light and wisdom in the service of the rest of the world. It was these two purposes that she achieved through Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Sri Ramakrishna's life span was barely fifty years. But it was an intense life devoted to the search for spiritual truth, in the first part, and its dissemination among eager seekers, in the second. Such an intense life which re-lives the spiritual life of a whole people is the most dynamic force in history. It ceases to be just an individual life and becomes a world-moving force. Human history is the product of forces partly arising from external nature and partly from man himself. The ratio of this combination will vary according to the stage of cultural development reached by a society. The higher the stage of development the more the human contribution. And among such human contributions there is one that is dynamic and significant. That comes from the hero, the specially gifted individual in society. He fuses in himself the values, aspirations, and wills of his people, and marches onward carrying other members of the society with him, immediately or in due course. And the most dynamic among such heroes are the God-men, ablaze with divinity. Indian history has felt the impact of several such heroes who became her history's epoch-makers; and the most outstanding of them all were spiritual men, men of God. Each one of them represented in varying degrees a gathering up of

the past national heritage, a fusing of the historical and the contemporary urges and aspirations in themselves, and the setting in motion of a dynamic force for human betterment. Indian cultural history, in contrast to her political history, owes much to these epoch-makers. The first of such, of the pre-historic period, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose great thought and energy are palpable even today. His is the most pervasive influence on Indian culture and thought; next come Buddha and Śaṅkara, in the historic period.

And in our own time, there appeared Sri Ramakrishna. The mass of spiritual energy which he manifested in his life time did not vanish with the death of his body. Its power of impact has continued and will continue for centuries to come. Physical death has no significance in the case of personalities such as Sri Ramakrishna; they hardly lived in the physical plane even when they were alive. Each one of them is like an atom-smashing cyclotron which generates and holds immense energies within itself, the range and quality of which cannot be explained in terms of the size of the machine itself. Sri Ramakrishna's body was frail; but within that frail body was contained enormous energy—energy which was released by his penetration into the spiritual depths of his being. It was a mass of spiritual energy consisting of wisdom and purity, love and compassion. Sri Ramakrishna was ablaze with divinity. It was the play of this tremendous divine energy that was witnessed in a little room in the temple of Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, away from the rush and turmoil of the modren civilization which was centred in that city, the then capital of India. And yet, the energies released in the precincts of that temple had their powerful impact, first, on Calcutta, and, later, on other parts of India and abroad. This diffusion was accomplished by his foremost disciple, Swami Vivekananda, whose training and outlook were the opposite of his master's, and yet complementary to his, for which reason the master chose him as his effective conduit. In the words of Romain Rolland (*Life of Vivekananda*, 1947 Edition, p. 3):

'The great disciple whose task it was to take up the spiritual heritage of Ramakrishna and disseminate the grain of his thought throughout the world was both physically and morally his direct antithesis.'

The Profile of Narendra

Vivekananda's pre-monastic name was Narendranath Dutta, Narendranath or Naren, for short. Unlike Ramakrishna, whose wisdom and enlightenment owed nothing to institutional education, traditional or modern, Vivekananda was a full-fledged modern youth in education and upbringing when he first met Ramakrishna towards the end of 1881.

In his views and outlook, he represented young India in transition. India had, by then, been exposed to the powerful influence of modern western culture for over half a century through the new education introduced by the British Government, which was avidly sought after by the Indian youths. Modern science, Greco-Roman history, English literature, modern western history, and modern socio-political thought opened the mind of India to the rich cultural heritage of the western peoples and roused in it a mood of questioning, self-criticism, and a general spirit of restlessness. Narendra drank freely of this education; he was a keen student of western thought with its scientific spirit and its philosophy of rationalism and humanism. This philosophy had already dominated the western mind for nearly a hundred years, and now it found a fertile soil in India also. At college, Narendra was a handsome youth, intelligent, vivacious, and energetic. He was a keen physical culturist, a devotee of music, a student of science, and a lover of philosophy. He opened himself up to the influences of all the best elements in the western heritage and became a dynamic representative of that heritage. He was a picture of strength and manliness; he possessed the promethean spirit. And yet, this education and achievement did not satisfy his heart; it was restless with a nameless spiritual thirst and a yearning to realize truth. It was to quench this thirst that he went to Sri Ramakrishna.

His English and Indian professors as well as his fellow-students were impressed by his intellectual brilliance. His English Principal, William Hastie, a great scholar, said of him (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples*, Fourth Edition, p. 26):

> 'Narendranath is really a genius. I have travelled far and wide, but I have never yet come across a lad of his talents and possibilities even in German Universities amongst philosophical students. He is bound to make his mark in life.'

In spite of the intellectual agnosticism which modern education bred in him, he held fast to the ideals of purity and renunciation, which he had imbibed from his childhood days. He was a past master in meditation; and his passion for spiritual life grew with the years.

It was from a chance remark of Principal Hastie during a lesson on Wordsworth's poem, *The Excursion*, that Narendra heard the name of his future master for the first time. Explaining the poet's reference to trance, Principal Hastie had said that such religious ecstasies were the result of purity and concentration, that it was a rare phenomenon in modern times, and that he had known only one person who had experienced that blessed state, and that person was Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar.

Narendra's Search for Truth

Narendra soon realized the inadequacies of modern rationalism and humanism. Religion may have its faults; it may have blundered into dogmatism and intolerance; but it has a spiritual core which mankind cannot ignore without making itself poorer, said he to himself. The endeavours and conclusions of the sense-bound intellect cannot be the last word in man's search for truth. An intellectual approach to truth will end only in agnosticism; and often even in cynicism. But the whole being of man seeks to *experience* truth, to *realize* it. And he found that modern thought had no message to give to man on this theme. *This rising above rationalism to direct experience and realization, this growth of man from the sensate to the super-sensual dimension, is the special message of the Indian spiritual tradition;* and Ramakrishna embodied it in himself in its fullness.

Man may sharpen his reason and intellect; he may have the best of wealth and power; he may enjoy the delights of art and literature; yet his heart will continue to be a vacuum, and a prey to tension and sorrow, till he discovers his own spiritual dimension, till he realizes God. This is the testament of Indian thought. Says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI. 19):

Yadā carmavadākāśaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ;
Tadā devam avijñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati—

'Even if men (through their technical efficiency) will roll up the sky like a piece of leather, they will not experience the end of sorrow, without realizing God.'

Vivekananda felt the pang of this vacuum as a university student. That made him restless; he could have silenced his heart's craving for truth, learnt to live with his intellectual agnosticism, and made the best of the world with his undoubted talents. But he was made of a different stuff, and meant for a different role. His passion for truth would not allow him to compromise with a humdrum life. So like a 'hart that panteth after the water-brooks', in the words of the Psalm, his heart became restless for truth, and in this mood he went from place to place, from teacher to teacher, until an inexorable destiny took him to Sri Ramakrishna. 'Is there a God?' And, if there is, 'Have you seen Him?' were the questions that this young seeker put to every teacher. The history of religion tells us that when this question has been seriously put by any seeker, he has received a positive answer. The very soul of religion lies in the yearning behind this question.

None of the teachers gave him satisfactory replies. None, except one; and that was Sri Ramakrishna.

The Profile of Sri Ramakrishna

At the suggestion of a friend that he might get a satisfactory answer from Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda wended his way to the Dakshineswar temple on the left bank of the Gaṅgā, where lived Ramakrishna in a small room facing the holy river. He was a strange person. He had passed through a stormy period of hankering and search for God and had realized Him, first through one path, then through another, until he traversed not only all the recognized paths of the Hindu religion, but also of Christianity and Islam. He had realized that it is the same God that is worshipped in all the religions and that 'the paths are many, but the goal is one'. This realization had made him universal in outlook and sympathy with a deep love for man everywhere. He saw man in a new light; for he saw God in the hearts of all men. He saw God both with his eyes closed and with his eyes open. He was God-intoxicated and yet intensely human; with a smile on his face, he greeted every visitor and enfolded him in his pure love; and hundreds visited him—men and women, rich and poor, university students and pious householders, philosophers and artists, agnostics and holy men. He also, on his part, sought out the great and the holy. He conversed with all with infinite tenderness and sympathy. In the midst of serious conversations on God and the spiritual life, a chance divine suggestion would send him into divine ecstasy. Coming down from that state, he would become simple and playful like a child, and enjoy much fun and frolic with his listeners, especially the youthful ones. This combination of the divine and the human in him fascinated all who went to him, and his words held them in thrall. His room was 'a mart of joy', in the words of 'M', the author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. 'When the lotus opens', Sri Ramakrishna used to tell his young listeners, giving a parable to illustrate the magnetic influence of a man of God, 'bees come to it from all quarters on their own accord to seek its honey; it has not to send out an invitation'. This was literally true in his own case. He had prayed to the Divine Mother: 'Mother, don't get any creeds expounded through my mouth.' They are, as Jesus had expressed it, as *stones* to a hungry man. What he gave to all seekers without distinction was the *bread* of spirituality. The main theme of his conversations was man growing spiritually through the manifestation of the Divine within. A procession of seekers, which included such distinguished men as the great religious leader of the Brahmo Samaj, Keshab Chandra Sen, went to him from Calcutta and nearby

villages; it began as a trickle in 1875 and became a flood by the time he passed away in 1886. We get an arresting account of this pilgrimage of spiritually hungry souls to this unique teacher in that great book above referred to, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by Mahendranath Gupta, the highly gifted and intimate householder disciple of the Master, who was the Headmaster of a Calcutta school, and who hides his personality under the pseudonym 'M'.

Referring to this book and its author in his foreword to the English edition of the book, Aldous Huxley says:

'Making good use of his natural gifts and of the circumstances in which he found himself, "M" produced a book unique, so far as my knowledge goes, in the literature of hagiography. No other saint has had so able and indefatigable a Boswell. Never have the small events of a contemplative's daily life been described with such a wealth of intimate detail. Never have the casual and unstudied utterances of a great religious teacher been set down with so minute a fidelity.'

Narendra at the Feet of Sri Ramakrishna

The Master gave of his realizations to all who came to him; each received according to his or her need and capacity; the central theme of all his talks was spirituality and the way to achieve it; the same teaching was not given to any two seekers. No creed was expounded; no belief was criticized; but the spiritual life of the seeker was stimulated and deepened, and his vision and sympathy broadened. Thus he poured out a stream of truth and wisdom almost eighteen hours of the twenty-four. And to him went Narendra, his steps guided by a divine destiny, and asked the question which was agitating his heart for years and for which he could not get any satisfactory answer from any teacher till then: 'Sir, have you seen God?' 'Yes, my boy, I have seen Him', replied the Master with calm and loving assurance and added: 'I see Him more intensely than I see you here; and you can also see Him.'

This was new language indeed! It is difficult to express the powerful impact which these simple words made on the mind and heart of Narendra. He felt in the depth of his being that these words came from the depths of the Master's realization; and he decided to learn more of him and from him; every day brought him to a clearer awareness of the profound spirituality of the Master and the significance of his life and realizations.

Narendra grew into full spiritual maturity under the loving guidance of Sri Ramakrishna. Unlike other disciples, Narendra tested every

word of the teachings of his Master by his keen intellect and critical reason, and literally fought every inch of his way to spiritual truth and conviction. The Master on his part encouraged his gifted disciple in this. 'Test me as the money changers test their coins', the Master used to tell Narendra.

Narendra was to allude to this fact later when, as Swami Vivekananda, he had to deal with his own highly gifted but sceptical and rebellious disciple, Miss Margaret Noble, who later became famous in East and West as Sister Nivedita. Says she in her *The Master as I Saw Him* (Sixth Edition, pp. 12-13):

'Referring to this scepticism of mine, which was well known at the time to the rest of the class, a more fortunate disciple, long afterwards, was teasing me, in the Swami's presence, and claiming that she had been able to accept every statement she had ever heard him make. The Swami paid little or no attention to the conversation at the time, but afterwards he took a quiet moment to say, "Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way!" '

This training of Narendra at the hands of Sri Ramakrishna, by which the young dynamic intellectual became a man of God, one who saw God in himself and in all beings, one who became, like his Master, universal in his sympathy for man in the East and the West, is a momentous chapter in modern history, fraught with great consequences for the future.

Vivekananda sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna is an arresting phenomenon. No two people could have been more opposite in temperament, up-bringing, and mental make-up than these two; and yet no two people have been so intimate and attuned to each other as these. One was the complement of the other; the Master continuing his being in the disciple and the disciple fulfilling the life-work and mission of the Master. Before he passed away on 16 August 1886, Sri Ramakrishna banded the handful of his young disciples, fifteen in number, into a monastic order under Narendra's leadership. In due course, they assumed monastic names, he taking the name Vivekananda, meaning the 'bliss of discrimination', before his departure to the West in 1893.

The Meeting of Two Master-minds

Ramakrishna represented the eternal soul of India, calm and majestic, 'with a unifying, pacifying love for all living things', in the

words of Will Durant. In his foreword to the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, (Sixth Edition), Mahatma Gandhi writes:

'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. None can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of godliness.... His love knew no limits, geographical or otherwise. May his divine love be an inspiration to all who read the following pages.'

Vivekananda, on the other hand, represented the modern spirit of freedom and equality, manliness and energy of action. The intimate communion of the Master and the disciple demonstrated the basic unity of godliness and manliness. True godliness is the very consummation of manliness; true manliness, similarly, is an expression of godliness. As held in Indian spiritual thought, Nārāyaṇa (God) is the *sakhā* (friend) of Nara (man). As held in Christian spiritual thought, the Son of God is also the Son of man. This close communion between the ancient Indian legacy of godliness and the modern western legacy of manliness in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is what I have taken as the theme of tonight's lecture: *The Meeting of East and West in Swami Vivekananda.*

Ramakrishna gave himself to the world in Vivekananda. The coming together of any two gifted souls as teacher and student has always been an event of creative significance of varying measure in world history. In this case the two souls were not merely gifted but uniquely outstanding and creatively original; each was a complement to the other, and both together represented the totality of human outlooks and aspirations, tastes and temperaments. The creative significance of such a confluence is bound to be deep, abiding, and world-wide. In the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. 7):

Āścaryo vaktā kuśalosyalabdhā āścaryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ—

'Wonderful the teacher and very competent the disciple; wonderful becomes the seeker of knowledge when taught by a competent teacher.'

This confluence witnessed the emergence of a glorious vision of truth, of a more perfect excellence of character than achieved hitherto in East or West, and the striving for universal human happiness and welfare. Knowledge is a powerful force. Love is another powerful force. The more universal and pure the knowledge and love, the more dynamic they become. In Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, knowledge and love shed all their limitations and became a mighty force—pure, positive, and dynamic.

This supreme consummation cannot and will not remain confined to an individual like Vivekananda. Modern world conditions and the urges and needs of modern man make its achievement in some measure, by every man and woman in the present age, a desirable ideal and an imperative necessity. Modern education needs to be shaped to that end. Education should convey the heritage of the whole world to every man and woman, so that unlimited character-efficiency may be achieved, and a global outlook may be realized, to complement the global physical unity achieved by modern technology. Here is the world significance of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and the movement initiated by them. They have set in motion a powerful energy of spiritual vision dedicated to the forging of human unity through God—God dwelling in the heart of man, the God in man beckoning him to continue his evolution by going beyond his sense-bound personality to realize his divine dimension and his spiritual solidarity with all existence. *It is a vision backed by the intellectual and moral vigour of Vedānta and fulfilling the urges and aspirations of modern scientific and social thought.*

The education of Vivekananda in this universal vision and sympathy at the hands of his great master is a fascinating theme for all students of education and religion. There are two landmarks in this education which I would like specially to refer to. The first relates to the acceptance, by Vivekananda, after much struggle, of the truth of Śakti, the immanent aspect of Reality, the personal aspect of the impersonal Brahman; and the second relates to his acceptance of its positivistic corollary, namely, 'seeing God with eyes open', in the words of Sri Ramakrishna.

Narendra's Inner Conflicts

When he came to his master, Narendra was a votary of the personal but formless God as presented in the Brahmo Samaj, of which he was then a member. He did not relish the idea of God either as the impersonal Absolute or as the personal Śakti, the one source of all nature and its energies. These two represented the age-old conflict between the two schools of *jñāna* (the path of the impersonal God) and *bhakti* (the path of the personal God), with the God of the Brahmo Samaj partaking of the abstractions of both. The first is the path of negation, while the second is the path of affirmation, which latter, in its full and robust forms, involves also the path of *karma* or action. The differences in approach between these cannot and should not annul the unity of their common goal. But this was what happened in India in later ages, weakening both the paths and narrowing the minds of

their followers. This had meant in effect that there were two Gods —one that of the *jñānī*, and the other that of the *bhakta*. The *jñānī* dismissed the world as *māyā*, the God of the *bhakta* as a product of this *māyā*, and the *bhakta* himself as a weak sentimentalist. The *bhakta*, on his part, dismissed the transcendent God of the *jñānī* as a pure nothingness and the *jñānī* himself as a dry intellectual. The modern votaries of secular rationalism and scientific humanism, on the other hand, to whom the world itself is their god and reality, dismissed both the *jñānī* and the *bhakta* as vain dreamers and their gods as products of a pious wish-fulfilment.

Into this murky atmosphere of contemporary thought came the luminous vision of Sri Ramakrishna, who realized the fundamental unity of the God of the *jñānī* and the God of the *bhakta*, and the complementary character of the two paths of affirmation and negation. Romain Rolland opens his preface entitled 'To My Eastern Readers' to his *Life of Ramakrishna* with the following utterance of Sri Ramakrishna suffused with this unifying vision:

'"Greeting to the feet of the *jñānī*! Greeting to the feet of the *bhakta*! Greeting to the devout who believe in the formless God! Greeting to those who believe in God with form! Greeting to the men of old who knew Brahman! Greeting to the modern knowers of Truth...." (Ramakrishna, October 28, 1882).'

Sri Ramakrishna gently educated Narendra in this unifying vision during the six years of his discipleship. In the early stages, Narendra reacted violently to the concept of the impersonal and formless Brahman, as he had all along reacted to that of the personal God with form. To him and to many seekers of the personal God like him, the impersonal meant something inert and abstract, equivalent to the physicist's primordial nature, and the personal meant crude anthropomorphism and superstition. Sri Ramakrishna slowly made him understand the *spiritual* character of the impersonal Absolute through a convincing presentation of the philosophy of the path of negation. Brahman as the *Self* of all beings cannot be impersonal in the sense in which scientists present nature, or the cosmic dust, or the cosmic background material. Neither can Brahman, the One behind the many, be a person to be designated either as masculine or feminine; hence the preference of the neuter term 'It' to describe Brahman. The path to It is the path of negation, the path of *neti, neti;* by negating all objects and entities, all predicates and concepts, and even the ego, as belonging to the world of *māyā*, the seeker approaches Brahman as the transcendental Absolute, the Unconditioned, 'from which all speech and thought recoil, not being able to grasp It', the experience of which is best expressed

only through silence. Sri Ramakrishna had earlier followed this path under the guidance of his *guru*, Totapuri, and attained its consummation in the experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi.*

Narendra and the Critical Spirit in Religion

Narendra soon became fascinated with this path of the 'abysmal God'. He became eager to experience *nirvikalpa samādhi.* And he had it with the gracious help of his *guru.* But when he desired to pursue this path and its bliss of the unconditioned Brahman exclusively, Sri Ramakrishna reproved him and pointed out to him the path and goal of a comprehensive spirituality, in which the paths of affirmation and negation merge, and which he was to follow, and of which he was to be the teacher and exemplar to millions of people in the modern age.

Before meeting Narendra, Sri Ramakrishna had been heard to pray: 'O Mother, send me some one who will doubt my realizations.' Narendra's arrival at Dakshineswar signified the granting of this prayer. He was unlike all his other disciples. A staunch follower of the Brahmo Samaj cult of the personal God without form, he could not tolerate the worship of the personal God through various forms upheld in the Hindu religion and practised by his own master, Sri Ramakrishna. He used to criticize even Sri Ramakrishna's visions of divine forms and his worship of Kālī, the Divine Mother, before whom Narendra not only refused to bow down himself, but also criticized other fellow disciples for doing so. Sri Ramakrishna's reaction to this critical and even hostile attitude and conduct of his disciple was unusual and refreshingly modern. He told Narendra: 'Do not accept anything because I say so. Test everything for yourself.' Further, as mentioned earlier, the Master told him: 'Test me as the money changers test their coins.' This unique relationship is revealed in the following passage of the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* (Sixth Edition, p. 345):

> 'The liberty which Narendranath enjoyed in his association with Sri Ramakrishna was unusual, as will be gathered from the following incident. He often argued with the Master against image-worship. One day, when the latter could not convince him, he said: "Why do you come here if you won't acknowledge my Mother?" Narendra replied: "Must I accept Her simply because I come here?" "All right", said the Master, "ere long you shall not only acknowledge my blessed Mother, but weep in Her name." Then addressing the other devotees he said, "This boy has no faith in the forms of God and tells me that my supersensuous experiences are hallucinations, but he is a very fine boy, of pure instincts. He does not believe in anything unless he gets direct proof. He has studied much, and is possessed of great judgement and discrimination".'

Kālī, the Divine Mother

What did Sri Ramakrishna mean when he referred to Kālī as my 'Divine Mother'? What did he mean when he spoke about the worship of God with form? Why did he desire that Narendra should accept his Divine Mother?

To the unthinking observer, Kālī worshipped in the temple of Dakshineswar may be nothing more than an idol, like several other idols of gods and goddesses, 'superstitiously' worshipped by ignorant devotees. When such an unthinking observer becomes a thinking seeker, he will begin to discover meaning and significance behind all such worship, he will learn to pierce the outer crust and reach the inner truth visualized by the outer symbol. He will also understand that what a seeker seeks is *spiritual growth* and *realization* and not mere intellectual formulation.

A Fellow Student's Estimate of Narendra

One of Vivekananda's own fellow students in college, the distinguished intellectual and scholar, and author of *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, felt at first scandalized when he saw Narendra, the rationalist and iconoclast, fallen under the influence of an idolatrous teacher. Says he in a penetrating article published in *The Prabuddha Bharata* five years after Vivekananda's death in 1902 (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples*, pp. 81-82):

'I watched with intense interest the transformation that went on under my eyes. The attitude of a rampant Vedāntist-*cum*-Hegelian-*cum*-revolutionary like myself towards the cult of religious ecstasy and Kālī-worship may be easily imagined; and the spectacle of a born iconoclast and free-thinker like Vivekananda, a creative and dominating intelligence, a tamer of souls, himself caught in the meshes of what appeared to me as uncouth, supernatural mysticism was a riddle which my philosophy of the Pure Reason could scarcely read at the time. But Vivekananda, "the loved and lost" was loved, and mourned most in what I could not but then regard as his defection; and it was personal feeling, after all, the hated pathological element of individual preference and individual relationship, which most impelled me, when at last I went on what to a home-keeping recluse like myself was an adventurous journey to Dakshineswar, to see and hear Vivekananda's Master, and spent the greater part of a long summer day in the shady and peaceful solitudes of the temple-garden, returning as the sun set amidst the whirl and rush and roar and the awful gloom of a blinding thunder-storm, with a sense of bewilderment as well moral as physical, and a lurking perception of the truth that the majesty of Law orders the apparently irregular and grotesque, that there may be self-mastery in apparent self-alienation, that sense even in its errors is only insipient Reason, and that faith in a Saving Power *ab extra* is but the dim reflex of an original act of self-determination. And a significant confirmation of all this came in the subsequent life-history of Vivekananda, who,

after he had found the firm assurance he sought in the saving Grace and Power of his Master, went about preaching and teaching the creed of the Universal Man, and the absolute and inalienable sovereignty of the Self.'

Sri Ramakrishna's Divine Mother

The image of Kālī worshipped by Sri Ramakrishna as *Bhavatāriṇī,* the Saviour of the Universe, is made of basalt and stands on the chest of a white marble image of the prostrate body of Her divine consort, Śiva, the symbol of the Absolute. She wears a golden garland of severed human heads, and a girdle of human arms. She has four hands. The lower left hand holds a severed human head and the upper one grips a blood-stained sword. One right hand offers boons to Her children; the other offers them protection from fear. The majesty of Her posture combines the terror of destruction with the tender assurance of motherly love. She is the primordial cosmic Power, the totality of all existence, the glorious harmony of the pairs of opposites. She creates, preserves, and destroys. She has three eyes, the third, on the forehead, being the symbol of divine wisdom. She is Nature, *aparā* as well as *parā,* physical as well as spiritual, cosmic as well as divine; the Universal Mother, who reveals Herself to Her children under diverse aspects and under different divine incarnations; the visible God who leads the seeker to the heart of the divine Mystery; the gracious Mother who, if it so pleases Her, takes away the last trace of the finite ego from a seeker and merges it in the infinite and absolute consciousness of Brahman, the impersonal and formless God.

Idolatry is religion that *starts* and *ends* with the worship of an idol. An idol is a form of God visible and tangible to the senses. If such an idol, on the other hand, inspires the worshipper to go beyond the sense-bound world and realize the primordial divine spiritual energy behind the universe, it ceases to be idolatry; it then becomes the essential first lesson in the grand book of spiritual knowledge and experience. This is the Hindu approach to image worship; *and Sri Ramakrishna re-explored this path from the starting point to the goal, from the base to the summit.* His worship *started* with the image of Kālī; but it *did not end* there. It soon penetrated the outer crust of reality revealed to the senses as an idol, as a sensual form, the *mṛṇmayī mūrti,* and reached the heart of reality, the *cinmayī śakti,* the supreme energy of Consciousness behind the whole universe of man and nature. Sri Ramakrishna called this Reality by the sweet name of 'My Divine Mother', whom he approached through the path of affirmation, and who, he held, is the Śakti or primordial divine Energy of that Brahman, the Absolute of stillness and quiescence, which is the goal of the path

of negation and which he had later attained through his nirvikalpa samādhi experience.

The Old Testament also sings in its Psalms the glory of this impersonal-personal God (Psalm 139, 7-10):

> Whither shall I go from Thy spirit or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.
>
> If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me.

The nature of Kālī or Śakti realized by Sri Ramakrishna shines through his several expositions on the subject, as can be gleaned from the following passages of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (New York Edition, p. 106):

To explain the nature of Kālī to the scholar Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sri Ramakrishna sang the following song of poet-saint Rāmprasād:

> Who is there who can understand what Mother Kālī is?
> Even the six *darśanas* (Indian philosophical systems) are powerless to reveal Her.
> It is She, the scriptures say, that is the inner Self
> Of the *yogi,* who in Self discovers all his joy;
> She that, of Her own sweet will, inhabits every living thing.
>
> The macrocosm and microcosm rest in the Mother's womb;
> Now do you see how vast it is? In the *mūlādhāra* (sacral plexus)
> The *yogi* meditates on Her, and in the *sahasrāra* (the brain);
> Who but Śiva has beheld Her as She really is?
> Within the lotus wilderness (heart) She sports besides Her Mate, the Swan (Śiva, the Absolute).
>
> When man aspires to *understand* Her, Rāmprasād must smile!
> To think of knowing Her, he says, is quite as laughable
> As to imagine one can swim across the boundless sea.
> But while my mind has understood, alas! my heart has not;
> Though but a dwarf, it still would strive to make a captive of the moon.

Unity of Brahman and Śakti

Explaining to the Brahmo Samaj leader, Keshab Chandra Sen, the difference in approaches between the paths of negation, *jñāna,* and affirmation, *bhakti,* Sri Ramakrishna says (*ibid.,* p. 134):

> 'The *jñānis,* who adhere to the non-dualistic philosophy of Vedānta, say that the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction, the universe itself and all its

living beings, are the manifestations of Śakti, the divine Power (known also as *Māyā*). If you reason it out, you will realize that all these are as illusory as a dream. Brahman alone is the Reality, and all else is unreal. Even this very Śakti is insubstantial, like a dream.

'But though you reason all your life, unless you are established in *samādhi*, you cannot go beyond the jurisdiction of Śakti. Even when you say, "I am meditating", or "I am contemplating", still you are moving in the realm of Śakti, within Its power.

'Thus Brahman and Śakti are identical. If you accept the one, you must accept the other. It is like fire and its power to burn. If you see the fire, you must recognize its power to burn also. You cannot think of fire without its power to burn, nor can you think of the power to burn without fire. You cannot conceive of the sun's rays without the sun, nor can you conceive of the sun without its rays....

'Thus one cannot think of Brahman without Śakti, or of Śakti without Brahman. One cannot think of the Absolute without the Relative, or of the Relative without the Absolute.'

The Unity of the Impersonal and the Personal

Instructing the Brahmo Samaj leader, Vijay Krishna Goswami, in the dual nature of God as with form and without form, Sri Ramakrishna says (*ibid.*, p. 634):

'That which is Brahman is also Kālī, the Mother, the primal Energy. When inactive, It is called Brahman. Again, when creating, preserving, and destroying, It is called Śakti. Still water is an illustration of Brahman. The same water, moving in waves, may be compared to Śakti, Kālī. What is the meaning of Kālī? She who communes with Mahākāla, the Absolute, is Kālī. She is formless, and, again, She has forms. If you believe in the formless aspect, then meditate on Kālī as that. If you meditate on any aspect of Her with firm conviction, She will let you know Her true nature. Then you will realize that not merely does God exist, but He will come near you and talk to you as I am talking to you. Have faith and you will achieve everything. Remember this, too. If you believe that God is formless, then stick to that belief with firm conviction. But don't be dogmatic; never say emphatically about God that He can be only this and not that. You may say: "I believe that God is formless. But He can be many things more. He alone knows what else He can be. I do not know; I do not understand." How can man with his one ounce of intelligence know the real nature of God? Can you put four *seers* of milk in a one-*seer* jar? If God, through His grace, ever reveals Himself to His devotee and makes him understand, then he will know; but not otherwise.'

Narendra's Education in the Vision of the Impersonal God

Sri Ramakrishna led Narendra slowly and steadily to this truly Advaitic (non-dual) vision of the impersonal-personal God. Apart from instruction and discourse, his powerful spiritual influence helped to soften the hold of one or two obstinate dogmas over Narendra's mind and make it a free and untrammelled instrument for the vision of Truth

and his mission to humanity. At the very commencement of his discipleship, during his second visit to Sri Ramakrishna, Narendra, then about nineteen, received a glimpse of the impersonal God in *nirvikalpa samādhi* through the touch of the Master. Narendra's reaction to this unexpected and unprepared-for experience puzzled Sri Ramakrishna. In the words of Narendra himself (*Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, pp. 333-34):

'I found him sitting alone on the small bedstead. He was glad to see me and, calling me affectionately to his side, made me sit beside him on the bed. But the next moment I found him overcome with a sort of emotion. Muttering something to himself, with his eyes fixed on me, he slowly drew near me. I thought he might do something queer as on the preceding occasion. But in the twinkling of an eye he placed his right foot on my body. The touch at once gave rise to a novel experience within me. With my eyes open I saw that the walls, and everything in the room, whirled rapidly and vanished into nought, and the whole universe, together with my individuality, was about to merge in an all encompassing mysterious void! I was terribly frightened and thought that I was facing death, for the loss of individuality meant nothing short of that. Unable to control myself, I cried out: "What is this that you are doing to me? I have my parents at home!" He laughed aloud at this and stroking my chest said: "All right; let it rest now. Everything will come in time!" The wonder of it was that no sooner had he said this than that strange experience of mine vanished. I was myself again and found everything within and without the room as it had been before.

'All this happened in less time than it takes me to narrate it, but it revolutionized my mind. Amazed, I thought what it could possibly be. It came and went at the mere wish of this wonderful man! I began to question if it were mesmerism or hypnotism. But that was not likely, for these acted only on weak minds, and I prided myself on being just the reverse. I had not surrendered myself to the stronger personality of the man. Rather I had taken him to be a monomaniac. So what might this sudden transformation of mine be due to? I could not come to any conclusion. It was an enigma, I thought, which I had better not attempt to solve. I was determined, however, to be on my guard and not to give him another chance to exert a similar influence on me.

'...My rationalistic mind received an unpleasant rebuff at this failure in judging the true state of things. But I was resolved to fathom the mystery somehow.'

Sri Ramakrishna knew in his heart of hearts that Narendra would eventually grasp the truth of the unconditioned Brahman. He made him read books like *Aṣṭāvakra Saṁhitā* on the subject. To Narendra's mind, trained in the theology of the Brahmo Samaj, these writings appeared to be heretical. He would often rebel saying: 'It is blasphemy, for there is no difference between such philosophy and atheism. There is no greater sin in the world than to think of oneself as identical with the Creator. I am God, you are God, these created things are God—what can be more absurd than this? The sages who wrote such things must have been insane.' Sri Ramakrishna, amused at the

bluntness of his disciple but desiring to lead him to a more comprehensive spiritual vision, would gently admonish: 'You may not accept the views of these seers. But how can you abuse them or limit God's infinitude? Go on praying to the God of truth and believe in that aspect of His which He reveals to you.'

Narendra's Experience of the Nirvikalpa Samādhi

One day the Master tried to bring home to Narendra the identity of Ātman, the Self of man with Brahman, the Self of the universe, but could not convince him. Narendra went out of the room and discussed the topic with Hazra, another devotee of Sri Ramakrishna; and amidst derisive laughter, both dismissed the teaching as preposterous. Hearing the remark and laughter, Sri Ramakrishna came out of his room in a semiconscious state and, touching Narendra, went into *samādhi.* That holy touch revolutionized Narendra's mind, which began to see and realize that there was nothing but God in the universe. In the words of Narendra, closing his narration of the incident (*ibid.,* pp. 344-45):

'This state of things continued for some days. When I became normal again, I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita state. Then it struck me that the words of the scriptures were not false. Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the Advaita philosophy.'

Up till now, Narendra had achieved the experience of Brahman through the grace of his Master, unsought and unprepared. But while to the earlier two experiences he had reacted, first, with fear and, then, with hostility, he reacted to the third experience with understanding and appreciation. And, during the last year of Sri Ramakrishna's life, we find Narendra consumed with a raging spiritual passion and seeking with restless yearning for this very experience of Brahman from the Master. In the words of the author of *The Life of Sri Ramakrishna* (p. 588):

'We have seen Narendranath's aspirations for the highest truth and his struggle to attain it. Yet, one evening, as he was meditating, it came to him quite unexpectedly. At first he felt as if a light had been placed behind his head. Then he passed beyond all relativity and was lost in the Absolute. He had attained the *nirvikalpa samādhi!* When he gained a little consciousness of the world, he found only his head, but not his body. He cried out: "Ah, where is my body?" Hearing his voice, Gopal Senior came into the room. Naren repeated the query. "Here it is, Naren", answered Gopal. When that failed to convince Narendra, Gopal was terrified and hastened to inform the Master. The latter only said: "Let him stay in that state for a while! He has teased me long enough for it!" '

'You Have the Mother's Work To Do'

Romain Rolland narrates the same incident quoting from a letter written to him by Swami Sivananda, a fellow disciple of Narendra, on 7 December 1927 (*Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 268):

'One day, Swami Sivananda told me, he was present in the garden of Cossipore, near Calcutta, when Naren really attained this state. "Seeing him unconscious, his body as cold as that of a corpse, we ran in great agitation to the Master and told him what had happened. The Master showed no anxiety; he merely smiled and said: "Very well!" and then relapsed into silence. Naren returned to outward consciousness and came to the Master. The Master said to him: "Well, now do you understand? This (highest realization) will henceforward remain under lock and key. You have the Mother's work to do. When it is finished, She will undo the lock." Naren replied: "Master, I was happy in *samādhi*. In my infinite joy I had forgotten the world. I beseech you to let me remain in that state!" "For shame!" cried the Master. "How can you ask such things? I thought you were a vast receptacle of life, and here you wish to stay absorbed in personal joy like an ordinary man!... This realization will become so natural to you by the grace of the Mother that in your normal state you will realize the One Divinity in all beings; you will do great things in the world; you will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor." '

Narendra's Experience of The Personal God

You have the Mother's work to do, said Ramakrishna. We had seen earlier that Narendra had a poor opinion of his Master's worship of Kālī and of his various spiritual visions and experiences. But his seeking for *nirvikalpa samādhi* from the Master, referred to above, had been preceded by his understanding and acceptance of Sri Ramakrishna's vision of the truth of Kālī. This transformation, though coming on gently and steadily, was registered by an important event which occurred less than two years earlier, when Narendra experienced the delight of pure *bhakti* centred in the personal God.

In 1884, Narendra's prodigal father died suddenly of heart failure throwing the family into utter financial ruin. Being the eldest son, the burden of earning for the family of six or seven fell on Narendra. This introduced him for the first time to life's alter-face of sorrow and misery, and violently upset his erstwhile convictions as to the existence and truth of the benign personal God of monotheism. His biography by his Eastern and Western disciples contains, in its chapter entitled 'Trials and Hardships,' a vivid account, much of it in his own words, of his intimate contact with the tragic element in human life and of the tremendous reactions it produced in him. Facile philosophies and shallow convictions become shattered under its impact, leaving man, in ordinary circumstances, cynical and sour, with heart dried up and mind

empty, and in extraordinary circumstances, dynamic and cheerful, with heart warmed up with love and compassion and mind steady and pure. Such circumstances refer not to the presence or absence of intellect or wealth or power, but to the presence or absence of inward spiritual resources, to the presence or absence of the spiritual capacity to *digest* all experience. Narendra had these inner resources in abundance—he had zealously cultivated them even in the midst of intellectual storms and stresses—and he had the additional advantage of a supremely powerful resource outside of himself in the person of his extraordinary Master.

When he was in the very midst of this trial and hardship, Narendra had a transforming vision which brought him instant peace of heart and mind. To give it in his own words (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 93-94):

'The summer was over and the rains set in. The search for a job still went on. One evening, after a whole day's fast and exposure to rain, I was returning home with tired limbs and a jaded mind; over-powered with exhaustion and unable to move a step forward, I sank down on the outer plinth of a house on the roadside. I can't say whether I was insensible for a time or not. Various thoughts crowded in no my mind, and I was too weak to drive them off and fix my attention on a particular thing. Suddenly I felt as if by some divine power the coverings of my soul were removed one after another. All my former doubts regarding the co-existence of divine justice and mercy, and the presence of misery in the creation of a blissful Providence, were automatically solved. By a deep introspection I found the meaning of it all, and was satisfied. As I proceeded homewards I found there was no trace of fatigue in the body, and the mind was refreshed with wonderful strength and peace. The night was well nigh over.

'Henceforth I became deaf to the praise and blame of worldly people. I was convinced that I was not born like humdrum people to earn money and maintain my family, much less to strive for sense-pleasure.'

Unable to earn enough to keep his family above starvation, rebuffed everywhere, Narendra turned his mind to Sri Ramakrishna's blissful Mother and decided to ask him to intercede with Her on behalf of his starving family. To quote Narendra again (*ibid.*, p. 95):

'One day the idea struck me that God listened to Sri Ramakrishna's prayers; so why should I not ask him to pray for me for the removal of my pecuniary wants—a favour the Master would never deny me? I hurried to Dakshineswar and insisted on his making the appeal on behalf of my starving family. He said: "My boy, I can't make such demands. But why don't *you* go and ask the Mother yourself? All your sufferings are due to your disregard of Her." I said: "I do not know the Mother; you please speak to Her on my behalf. You must." He replied tenderly: "My dear boy, I have done so again and again. But *you* do not accept Her; so She does not grant my prayer. All right, it is Tuesday—go to the Kālī temple tonight, prostrate yourself before the Mother, and ask Her any boon you like. It *shall be* granted. She is Knowledge Absolute, the In-

scrutable Power of Brahman, and by Her mere will has given birth to this world. Everything is in Her power to give." '

Narendra waited for the night. At about nine, he walked across the courtyard and reached the temple. To continue the narration in his own words (*ibid.*):

'As I went, I was filled with a divine intoxication. My feet were unsteady. My heart was leaping in anticipation of the joy of beholding the living Goddess and hearing Her words. . . . Reaching the temple, as I cast my eyes upon the image, I actually found that the Divine Mother was living and conscious, the perennial fountain of Divine Love and Beauty. I was caught in a surging wave of devotion and love. In an ecstasy of joy I prostrated myself again and again before the Mother and prayed: "Mother, give me discrimination! Give me renunciation! Give unto me knowledge and devotion! Grant that I may have an uninterrupted vision of Thee!" A serene peace reigned in my soul. The world was forgotten. Only the Divine Mother shone within my heart.'

He returned to Sri Ramakrishna's room. The Master asked him whether he had prayed for the removal of his worldly wants. 'No, Sir, I forgot all about it. But is there any remedy now?' The Master asked him to go again. He went; but at the very sight of the Mother he again forgot his mission and prayed only for love and devotion. The Master sent him a third time with the reprimand: 'How thoughtless! Couldn't you restrain yourself enough to say those few words?' He went again; but, on entering the temple, a terrible feeling of shame overpowered him when he thought: 'What a trifle I have come to pray to the Mother for! It is like asking a gracious king for a few vegetables! What a fool I am!' He prostrated again and again and prayed for knowledge and devotion. He reported everything to Sri Ramakrishna and requested him to grant the boon himself. The Master replied: 'Such a prayer never comes from my lips. I asked you to pray for yourself. But you couldn't do it. It appears that you are not destined to enjoy worldly happiness. Well, I can't help it.' When Narendra insisted, the Master said in an exalted mood: 'All right, your people at home will never be in want of plain food and clothing.'

A heavy burden was lifted from Narendra's heart; subsequent events proved the truth of the Master's blessing with respect to his family. Sri Ramakrishna was in a state of ecstasy that night, for his beloved disciple had accepted his Divine Mother. Narendra also spent the night in an ecstasy of devotion and joy singing the song on the divine Mother glorifying Her omnipresence, and beginning with the lines: *Mā tvaṁ hi tārā*—'Mother, Thou art verily the Redeemer', which the Master had just then taught him at his request. *From that day onwards the dis-*

ciple became one in spirit with the Master who, on his part, had always treated him as non-separate from himself.

The rational mind of Narendra grasped the truth of Nature in a new dimension that night; it is not only energy—*śakti*; but also spiritual energy—*cit śakti*, of which all other energies are but manifestations. The Divine Mother of Sri Ramakrishna is this *cit śakti*. Long after, in a talk recorded by Sister Nivedita, Vivekananda confided to her his conviction in the profundity of the truth of Kālī, the Divine Mother, whose image he viewed as the symbol of the book of experience which the soul turns page after page, and in whose name men and women will find strength to sound many experiences to their depths (*The Master as I Saw Him*, p. 170):

'*You see, I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kālī*, and Mother.... And I believe in Brahman, too.'

Goethe expresses a similar conviction when he ends his *Faust* with the words:

'The Eternal Feminine leads us on and on.'

In a few touching lines, Walt Whitman sings the invocation of the Divine Mother (*Leaves of Grass*, Everyman's Library Edition, 1927, p. 279):

> Dark Mother, always gliding near with soft feet,
> Have none chanted for Thee a chant of fullest welcome?
> Then I chant it for Thee, I glorify Thee above all,
> I bring Thee a song that when Thou must indeed come,
> come unfalteringly.

'By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them'

The philosophic and spiritual vision which Ramakrishna imparted to Vivekananda had a profound impact on the subsequent career of the latter and the history of modern India. For it soon began to translate itself into action with a pervasive sweep unprecedented in the five-thousand year history of India. As it unifies the divergent approaches of affirmation and negation, of Śakti and Brahman, it also synthesizes the diverse paths of action and contemplation, work and worship, the secular and the sacred in a comprehensive spirituality. In it, the God-ward passion pours out also as a man-ward love and service. 'By their fruits ye shall know them', said Jesus about the truth or otherwise of man's ideological convictions. Such convictions have produced, as history has shown, in religious, political, and other fields of human

life, character-fruits of diverse quality, from the sweetest to the bitterest, with any number of strands in between. Apathetic withdrawal or energetic action, pessimistic resignation or optimistic struggle, egoistic self-assertion or spiritual self-denial, intolerance or universal acceptance, violence and aggressiveness or non-violence and gentleness, universal love or blind hatred, selfishness and exploitation or renunciation and service—all these are the character-fruits of man's philosophies, well thought-out or ill.

Sri Ramakrishna has coined a new term for this comprehensive philosophic and spiritual vision, namely, *vijñāna*. The fruit of this *vijñāna* in a character signifies the rare synthesis of the virtues and graces of the cultures of the East and the West. *This was the extraordinary achievement in the character and personality of Swami Vivekananda. This explains the unprecedented sweep and range of its energy resources. This alone explains also its tremendous intensity and the explosive impact of its brief ten-year ministry.* Vivekananda was the supreme example of what Herbert Spencer (*Study of Sociology*, Eighth Edition, p. 403) characterized as *uniting philanthropic energy with philosophic calm* which, in the Vedāntic terminology, means the union of Śakti and Śiva, or Kālī and Brahman.

Sri Ramakrishna: The Man And The Power

Romain Rolland, among several other sensitive thinkers, sensed the impact of these two dynamic spiritual leaders of modern India in a profound way. Says he in his preface, entitled 'To My Western Readers', to his *Life of Ramakrishna* (p. 8):

> 'For a century in new India, Unity has been the target for the arrows of all archers. Fiery personalities throughout this century have sprung from her sacred earth, a veritable Ganges of peoples and thought. Whatever may be the differences between them, their goal is ever the same—human unity through God. And through all the changes of workmen, Unity itself has expanded and gained in precision....
>
> 'From this magnificent procession of spiritual heroes whom we shall survey later I have chosen two men, who have won my regard because with incomparable charm and power they have realized this splendid symphony of the universal Soul. They are, if one may say so, its Mozart and its Beethoven—*Pater Seraphicus* and Jove the Thunderer—Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.'

The modern West is specially noted for its power of organization, with the help of which it has developed a dynamic and progressive society. It has imbibed this power from the philosophy of man developed in the Greco-Roman tradition, which had tested and verified its philosophy in its socio-political fields of endeavour. It was later ampli-

fied by Christianity passing through, first, the Greco-Roman and, next, West European experiences. *The capacity for organization is the fruit of a disciplined man-ward awareness.* This awareness gets its sustenance from a philosophy of man which treats him essentially as a member of a community or society, and which upholds the significance of that inter-acting social *milieu* for man's education, for his full growth and development.

This may be termed the *political* view of man as different from the *religious* view of him which inspired eastern cultures generally, arising from a different philosophy of man. This philosophy, which arose out of the several world religions, all of which had their birth in the East, viewed man primarily in his relation to God, and only secondarily in his relation to brother man. These religions also view man as possessing a higher dimension over and above his physical and sensate dimension; they also relate him to an eternal order over and above the time order. The mystical aspects of the world religions emphasize this transcendental view of man. All these elements in religion tend to put increasing stress on man as an individual in search of his otherworldly aspirations and goals and correspondingly decreasing emphasis on his man-ward awareness in a collective *milieu*. If the path of the latter is action in the world of time, in the world of other fellow human beings and in co-operation with them, which is the essential field of character training, the path of the former is contemplation and the 'flight of the alone to the Alone', which is the mother of all the gentler virtues and graces.

The impact of the mystical element in religion has been most pronounced on India. When it had for its base a strong man-ward awareness and social feeling, India remained strong and healthy. When that base was weakened, especially during the past thousand years, she became the prey to successive foreign invasions through internal divisions and the neglect and oppression of the common man. *The philosophic and spiritual vision of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is dedicated to the strengthening of this social base through the effective organization of the nation's material, moral, and spiritual resources with a view to enhancing the one supreme quest of the Indian mind, namely, spirituality.*

Sri Ramakrishna exhorted his disciples to avoid being one-sided and develop an all-round character in which contemplation and action stand harmoniously reconciled. And he held before them the example of Vivekananda as the perfection of such reconciliation. *One-sidedness has been the most serious drawback of the Indian character, pro-*

ceeding from the limitations of the prevailing religious outlook of her people. Ramakrishna showed the way to the removal of this limitation and the weakness of character resulting from it. Centuries earlier, the *Gītā* had shown the way, but the people had failed even to grasp it properly, and, even more, to implement it effectively.

When engaged in the world of action, unlike in the world of contemplation, we have to reckon with other persons. A man with a purely mystical attitude becomes a failure in the field of action; he does not develop character-efficiency; for he has no place for the objective in his subjective vision; this limitation is highlighted by Sri Ramakrishna in one of his parables:

A *guru* taught his young disciples the truth that God is in all beings. One day, when the disciples were in the forest gathering fuel, a mad elephant came their way. Hearing the shout of the driver on the elephant asking all to run away for safety, all the disciples ran away for safety, except one who, remembering the *guru's* teaching of the presence of God in all, recognized His presence in the elephant and began to sing hymns of praise to the 'God in the elephant'. The elephant rushed at the youth and, taking him by its trunk, threw him aside and went its way. His fellow disciples came in search of him and found him bruised and unconscious. They restored him to consciousness and brought him before the *guru*. When asked by the *guru* why he, like his fellow disciples, did not run for safety, the disciple replied that, following his teaching that God is in all beings, he tried to see God in the elephant. The *guru*, on hearing this, exclaimed: What a fool you are! God is certainly in the elephant; but is He not also in the driver of the elephant? And why did you not listen to 'the driver God' when he asked you to run for safety?

Sri Ramakrishna the man passed away in 1886. But Sri Ramakrishna the power, all-beneficent and luminous, continued, and still continues, to affect in a fundamental way the life and destiny of man in increasing numbers in East and West. Before he passed away, he felt the need for an organization, which would be an effective channel for the flow of his unifying vision to fertilize human life everywhere. And he set up such an organization, a *saṅgha*, with Vivekananda at its head. His deep concern to see that the organization remained intact is evident in his exhortation, a few days before his passing away, to Vivekananda to see that his young disciples were held together in a common dedication to the vision that he had imparted to them. To quote the biography of Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western disciples (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 147):

'It so happened that Naren had been called to the side of the Master some days earlier, when he was suffering intensely and could scarcely speak. The Master wrote on a piece of paper: "Narendra will teach others". Naren hesitated and said: "I won't do that". But the Master replied: "You *shall have* to do it"....

'Now that the last days were approaching, the Master set himself with greater energy than ever to mould, in a calm and silent way, the spiritual life of these boys, particularly that of Naren. Every evening he would call Naren to his room and for two or three hours at a time would impart final instructions to him on various spiritual subjects and advise him to keep his brother disciples together, how to guide and train them so that they would be able to live the life of renunciation.'

Referring to what Ramakrishna himself gained by coming into contact with the Brahmo Samaj and its leaders, Romain Rolland says (*The Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 186):

'It is easy to see what India gained from the meeting of Ramakrishna and the Brahmo Samaj. His own gain is less obvious, but no less definite. For the first time he found himself brought into personal contact with the educated middle class of his country, and through them with the pioneers of progress and western ideas....

'He was not a man to react like a strict and narrow devotee, who hastens to put up the shutters of his cell. On the contrary, he flung them wide open. He was too human, too insatiably curious, too greedy for the fruit of the tree of life not to taste these new fruits to the full. His long searching glance insinuated itself, like a creeper through the chinks of the house, and studied all the different habitations of the same Host, and studied all the different spirits dwelling therein, and in order to understand them better, he identified himself with them. He grasped their limitations (as well as their significance), and proportioned to each nature its own vision of life and individual duty. He never dreamt of imposing either vision or action alien to his proper nature on any man. He, to whom renunciation both then and always, so far as he was personally concerned, was the first and last word of truth, discovered that most men would have none of it, and he was neither astonished nor saddened by the discovery.'

Pointing out the truth of the utility of organization discovered by Ramakrishna through his contact with the westernized Brahmo Samaj, Romain Rolland says (*ibid.*, p. 188):

'The ascendency he exercised over some of the best minds in India revealed the weakness and needs of these intellectuals, their unsatisfied aspirations, the inadequacy of the answers they gained from science, and the necessity for his intervention. The Brahmo Samaj showed him what strength of organization, what beauty existed in a spiritual group uniting young souls round an elder brother, so that they tendered a basket of love as a joint offering to their Beloved, the Mother.

'The immediate result was that his mission, hitherto undefined, became crystallized; it concentrated first in a glowing nucleus of conscious thought wherein decision was centred, and then passed into action.'

Vivekananda: The Man And The Power

Vivekananda was extraordinarily gifted with the powers of both vision and action. In his Master and within himself, apart from the philosophy he had imbibed, he had seen and experienced the greatness and glory of man. But within a short time after his Master's passing away, he saw at close quarters the tragedy of man in India when he wandered over the length and breadth of his beloved motherland mixing with its princes and peasants, intellectuals and untouchables. On the eve of this great and unique pilgrimage, he declared at Banaras in 1890: 'I am going away; but I shall never come back until I have burst on society like a bomb, and make it follow me like a dog.' And within three years of this utterance, he had burst upon the attention of the international world through his speeches at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, followed by whirlwind lecture tours in U.S.A. and U.K., and in another four years, on the horizon of modern India through his famous speeches, later collected in the book *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*. About the impact of his speeches and utterances, Romain Rolland writes (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 162):

'His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel Choruses. I cannot touch these savings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero.'

Vivekananda: A Social Revolutionary

Upholding the supremacy of the Indian ideal of spirituality in his life and teaching, Vivekananda was yet appalled to see the poverty and degradation of masses of his countrymen; and he proclaimed in anguish: 'I do not believe in a religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or stop the orphan's wails'; and he quoted his Master's pungent words: 'Religion is not for empty bellies.' And for the first time in her long history, India got in him an outstanding spiritual leader tackling vigorously the pressing problems of the *secular* life of man, and pleading for what he terms a 'toned down' *materialism* for his country. *He traced the downfall of India to the forcing down the throats of one and all the mystical heights of religion with its neglect of social feeling and action and emphasis on renunciation and contemplation.* Says he (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 149-50):

'Yet, perhaps, some sort of materialism, toned down to our own requirements, would be a blessing to many of our brothers who are not yet ripe for the highest truths. This is the mistake made in every country and in every society,

and it is a greatly regrettable thing that in India, where it was always understood, the same mistake of forcing the highest truths on people who are not ready for them, has been made of late.... There has been ample provision made for them in our books; but unfortunately, in later times, there has been a tendency to bind every one down by the same laws as those by which the *sannyāsin* (monk) is bound, and that is a great mistake. But for that, a good deal of the poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been.'

Vivekananda was not a 'revivalist', but a social revolutionary. Reporting an important conversation with him during his second voyage to the West, Sister Nivedita records (*The Master as I Saw Him*, pp. 201-202):

' "I disagree with all those", he said, "who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new state of things must be a *growth* from within.

"So I preach only the Upaniṣads.... And of the Upaniṣads, it is only that one idea of *strength*. The quintessence of Vedas and Vedānta and all lies in that one word....

"But you may ask—what is the place of Ramakrishna in this scheme?

"He is the method, that wonderful unconscious method!...

"Hitherto the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its knowing only two words—renunciation and *mukti* (spiritual emancipation). Only *mukti* here! Nothing for the householder!

"But these are the very people whom I want to help. For are not all souls of the same quality? Is not the goal of all the same?

"And so strength must come to the nation through education."

'I thought at the time, and I think increasingly, as I consider it, that this one talk of my Master had been well worth the whole voyage, to have heard.'

Vivekananda: A Practical Visionary

Cornelia Conger, who had intimate association with Vivekananda during her childhood when her grandmother, Mrs. John B. Lyon of Chicago, had played host to him on behalf of the World Parliament of Religions, narrates an interesting incident in her memories of him, which brings out his keen desire to help the Indian people imbibe the western talent for organization (*Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, 1961, p. 138):

'Once he said to my grandmother that he had had the greatest temptation of his life in America. She liked to tease him a bit and said, "Who is she, Swami?" He burst out laughing and said, "Oh, it is not a lady; it is *organization*!" He explained how the followers of Ramakrishna had all gone out alone and when they reached a village, would just quietly sit under a tree and wait for those in

trouble to come to consult them. But in the States he saw how much could be accomplished by organizing work. Yet he was doubtful about just what type of organization would be acceptable to the Indian character, and he gave a great deal of thought and study how to adapt what seemed good to him in our Western World to the best advantage of his own people.'

In a letter written from Massachusetts, U.S.A., on 20 August 1893, to a disciple in India, after visiting a modern women's prison, the Swami poured out his agony at the condition and treatment of human beings in India (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, pp. 13-14):

'They don't call it prison but reformatory here. It is the grandest thing I have seen in America. How the inmates are benevolently treated, how they are reformed and sent back as useful members of society.... And, oh! how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low in India. They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up.... Religion is not at fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied. But it was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy —the want of heart.'

It was to provide this practical application, this sympathy, this heart, that he felt the need for the Indian people to cut out a new channel of practical efficiency from their national reservoir of spirituality, to strive to achieve character, and learn the secret of organized action. In a letter written from U.S.A., on 11 July 1894, to a young disciple in India, he says:

'Go to work, my boys; the fire will come to you! The faculty of organization is entirely absent in our nature, but this has to be infused. The great secret is absence of jealousy. Be always ready to concede to the opinions of your brethren, and try always to conciliate. That is the whole secret.'

Speaking on the 'Future of India' in Madras on his return from the West in 1897, he says (*ibid.*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 299-300):

'Why is it that organizations are so powerful? Do not say organization is material. Why is it, to take a case in point, that forty millions of Englishmen rule three hundred millions of people here? What is the psychological explanation? These forty millions put their wills together and that means infinite power, and you three hundred millions have a will each separate from the other. Therefore to make a great future India, the whole secret lies in organization, accumulation of power, co-ordination of wills.

"Already before my mind rises one of the marvellous verses of the *Atharva-Veda Saṁhitā* which says: "Be thou all of one mind, be thou all of one thought; for in the days of yore, the gods being of one mind were enabled to receive oblations. That the gods can be worshipped by men is because they are of one mind." Being of one mind is the secret of society.... And the more you go on fighting and quarrelling about all trivialities...the further you are off from that accumulation of energy and power which is going to make the future of India. For, mark you, the future India depends entirely on that. That is the secret—

accumulation of will-power, co-ordination, bringing them all, as it were, into one focus.'

Writing to the Prime Minister of an Indian princely state from Chicago in November 1894, he says (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII, Third Edition, p. 328):

'The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of organization and combination. That is only possible with mutual trust and co-operation.'

The Swami knew that over-organization was as bad as no organization. He felt that the West had inclined the former way where even religion had become overwhelmed, with ninety per cent energy spent on church organization and only ten per cent left for spiritual striving. Yet, he keenly felt the need for this faculty in the Indian context.

Writing to Mrs. Ole Bull of U.S.A. on 21 March 1895 from New York, he says (*ibid.*, Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 303):

'Organization has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done.'

The Swami exhorted his countrymen to learn from the English people their capacity for obedience with self-respect, which is the secret of collective action. Writing to his brother disciple, Swami Akhandananda, from London in 1895, he says (*ibid.*, pp. 322-23):

'Your idea is grand but our nation is totally lacking in the faculty of organization. It is this one drawback which produces all sorts of evil. We are altogether averse in making a common cause for anything. The first requisite for organization is obedience. I do a little bit of work when I feel so disposed, and then let it go to the dogs—this kind of work is of no avail. We must have plodding industry and perseverance.'

Again, writing to the same on 13 November 1895, he says (*ibid.*, pp. 350-51):

'It is not at all in our nature to do a work conjointly. It is to this that our miserable condition is due. He who knows how to obey, knows how to command. Learn obedience first. Among these western nations, with such a high spirit of independence, the spirit of obedience is equally strong. We are all of us self-important which never produces any work. Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy, and above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us.'

The modern western *promethean* spirit of energy and progress finds shining expression in the letter he wrote from Chicago on 24 January 1894 to the group of young disciples in Madras, in which he expounds his mission (*ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 29-30):

'Caste or no caste, creed or no creed, any man, or class, or caste, or nation or institution which bars the power of free thought and action of an individual—even so long as that power does not injure others—is devilish and must go down.

'My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work; I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion."

'Remember the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them.... Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and *we will do it.* You are all *born to do it.* Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto. Onward, brave lads!'

Referring to the synthesis of East and West sought to be achieved for his country by Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita, his Western disciple, says (*The Master as I Saw Him,* p. 45):

'His view was penetrative as well as comprehensive. He had analyzed the elements of the development to be brought about. India must learn a new ideal of obedience....The energy which had hitherto gone into the mortification of the body, might rightly, in his opinion, under modern conditions, be directed to the training of the muscles.

'To the Western mind, it might well seem that nothing in the Swami's life had been more admirable than this. Long ago, he had defined the mission of the Order of Ramakrishna as that of realizing and exchanging the highest ideals of the East and of the West.'

It is specially in his ideas and programmes relating to the education of the Indian people that Vivekananda reveals his spiritual kinship with the finest in the traditions of East and West. His utterances on this vital subject, scattered in the eight volumes of his *Complete Works,* are available in a small book entitled *Education,* which carries the following brief Foreword from Mahatma Gandhi:

'Surely Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.'

The Swami defines education 'as the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. Viewing the prevailing educational system against the background of the pressing problems of his nation, he said (*Education,* p. 7):

'Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider your self educated. Is this education?... Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry

for food is rising in the land of Bhārata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?

'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.

'The end of all education, all training should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control, and become fruitful, is called education.'

The Swami defines religion almost exactly as he defines education. Religion, to him, 'is the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. So defined, religion ceases to be a formal subscription to a creed or a dogma, or end up in the membership of a church or a congregation; it becomes an educative process; it becomes continued education.

Tracing the downfall of India to the continued sapping of the faith of the Indian people in themselves through a wrong understanding of religion, and to the sad neglect by them of their physical selves, he said (*ibid.*, pp. 42-44):

'The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It means faith in all because you are all. Love for yourself means love for all, love for animals, love for everything, for you are all one.... If the ideal of faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of great men and women, it is that faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great....

'Physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are lazy; we cannot combine. We speak of many things parrot-like, but never do them. Speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything. We must strengthen it. First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the *Gītā*. You will understand the *Gītā* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Kṛṣṇa better with a little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upaniṣads better and the glory of the Ātman, when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men.'

Vivekananda is the first monk and outstanding spiritual teacher in all history to uphold without any reservation the cause of women and the common people. 'In India there are two evils', he said, 'trampling on the women and grinding the poor through caste restrictions.' Revealing his resolve to undo this injustice, Sister Nivedita writes (*The Master as I Saw Him*, pp. 287-88):

'Our Master, at any rate, regarded the Order to which he belonged as one whose lot was cast for all time with the cause of Woman and the People....It was the one thought, too, with which he would turn to the disciple at his side, whenever he felt himself nearer than usual to death, in a foreign country, alone, "Never forget!" he would then say, "the word is 'Woman and the people!' "

His far-seeing mind grasped the significance of the modern age in the sure awakening of the suppressed millions everywhere. He called the present age the age of the Śūdra, the age of the proletariat.

Stirring the conscience of his countrymen, he said about their proletariat fellow-countrymen (*Education*, pp. 73-74):

'Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long like machines and the clever educated section have taken the substantial parts of the fruits of their labour. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact, and making a united front against this. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights. Therefore I say: Set yourself to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, "you are our brothers, a part and parcel of our bodies". If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold.'

Even while detesting the British subjugation of India, Vivekananda, in his creative role as the prophet of acceptance, as Tagore said of him, saw in it an opportunity to rescue India from its centuries-long stagnation, and utilized it accordingly. In one of his famous essays on 'Modern India', contributed to his Bengali monthly *Udbodhan* in 1899, Vivekananda said (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, pp. 472-73):

'The present government of India has certain evils attendant on it, and there are some very great and good parts in it as well. Of highest good is this, that after the fall of the Pāṭalīputra (Maurya) Empire till now, India was never under the guidance of such a powerful machinery of government as the British, wielding the sceptre throughout the length and breadth of the land. And under this Vaiśya (commercial) supremacy... the ideas and thoughts of different countries are forcing their way into the very bone and marrow of India. Of these ideas and thoughts, some are really most beneficial to her, some are harmful, while others disclose the ignorance and inability of the foreigners to determine what is truly good for the inhabitants of this country.

'But piercing through the mass of whatever good or evil there may be, is seen rising the sure emblem of India's future prosperity—that as the result of the action and reaction between her own old national ideals, on the one hand, and the newly-introduced strange ideals of foreign nations, on the other, she is slowly and gently awakening from her long deep sleep. Mistakes she will make; let her; there is no harm in that; in all our actions, errors and mistakes are our only teachers. Who commits mistakes, the path of truth is attainable by him only. Trees never make mistakes, nor do stones fall into error; animals are hardly seen to transgress the fixed laws of nature; but man is prone to err, and it is man who becomes God-on-earth.'

And in an inspiring poem entitled 'To the Awakened India', contributed to his English monthly, *Prabuddha Bhārata*, for its first issue after its transfer from Madras to its new home in the Himalayas, Vivekananda summoned India to wake up from her long sleep and resume her march for the welfare and happiness of all humanity (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, p. 387):

Once more awake!
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!

Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the roadside dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold, and free. Awakener, ever Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

Inviting the attention of the West to the new India that is rising on the horizon of the modern world out of the energy of Vivekananda's vision, Romain Rolland says (*Life of Vivekananda*, p. 316):

'So India was hauled out of the shifting sands of barren speculation wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hand of one of her own *sannyāsins*; and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action. The West ought to be aware of the tremendous energies liberated by these means.'

Rabindranath Tagore, himself a man of vision, recognized the depth and sweep of Vivekananda's vision and programme and its creative role in bringing out the best out of man. Pointing out the limitations of the message of the spinning wheel, which Gandhiji was then conveying to the Indian people, as a *bāhya kriyā*, 'external act', liable to be reduced in due course to a static *ācāra* or 'observance', 'which has been a recurring experience in India's past', and 'incapable, therefore, of rousing the

spirit of man to full creative life and action', Tagore said (*Prabāsī*, Vol. 28, p. 286):

'In recent times in India, it was Vivekananda alone who preached a great message which is not tied up with any do's and dont's. Addressing one and all in the nation, he said: In every one of you, there is the power of Brahman (God); the God in the poor desires you to serve (Him). This message has roused the heart of the youths in a pervasive way. That is why this message has borne fruit in the service of the nation in diverse ways and in diverse forms of renunciation. His message has, at one and the same time, imparted dignity and respect to man along with energy and power.'

Anyone reading the eight volumes of Vivekananda's published works and Sister Nivedita's masterly study of him in her *The Master as I saw Him* cannot but be struck by the sweep of his thoughts and the depth of his convictions. The one running theme of all his utterances is man—his growth, his development, his fulfilment. Referring to this theme, in his study of Vivekananda's speeches at the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago, Romain Rolland says (*The Life of Vivekananda*, pp. 42-43):

'Each time he repeated with new arguments but with the same force of conviction his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the most liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonized them into a magnificent synthesis, which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.'

In his studies of the human cultural heritage, Vivekananda saw, what I had referred to earlier, two distinct approaches to the problem of human development, one as cultivated by the East and the other by the West. These can be broadly stated, using the language of biology, as stress on the *environment* in the West and that on the *organism* in the East. From Greco-Roman times, the West has been specializing in the manipulation of the physical and social environments of man for ensuring his growth and fulfilment. The whole gamut of ideas and processes arising from this approach is conveyed to us by the rich modern words 'positivism' and 'humanism', which, in the wake of modern technological advances, are often qualified by the word 'scientific'. It is the conviction of positivism that human development is ensured by understanding, controlling, and manipulating the environment, natural and social, in which man's life is cast. Through technology and sociopolitical processes, man suitably disciplines and manipulates his environment, which is sometimes tractable, often intractable, with a view to ensuring his own self-expression. The product of such manipulation is

civilization. There is in this a sense of a fight with an external enemy. Such a challenge calls forth from the spirit of man the qualities of courage, faith, and confidence in himself, and the capacity for co-operation and team work. It disciplines his senses and mind in precision of observation and communication. It helps to endow him with a zest for life and for action and achievement. All these constitute, for man, the school for the development of character and practical efficiency. Here is a distinct philosophy of man, which Vivekananda called the philosophy of *manliness* and which he saw as the fundamental stimulus of the West from the Greco-Roman to modern times.

The Greek religion was an integral part of its positivistic philosophy, and it was essentially this-worldly and pragmatic. Though Socrates and the Greek mystery religions rise above the positivistic level, they were not integrated with the distinctively Greek outlook and thought, being foreign to both. This explains the disowning of Socrates by the Greek state and his trial and death. Their own great dictum, 'Man, know thyself', was not pursued by the Greeks beyond his social personality; neither did the Greeks experience the urge to subject these religious mysteries to that rational scrutiny which they so diligently and passionately applied to social and political phenomena, and in which their contributions were to become unique and lasting.

But what the Greeks neglected became the one ruling passion of the East, and especially of India. This registers the other approach, which stresses the *organism* and comparatively neglects the external environment. This is the approach of religion, specially in its higher mystical aspects; and all the higher religions of the world are eastern contributions to total human culture. It asks man to strengthen his 'within' and *bear* with the environment and, if strong enough, even to ignore it. It instils the virtues of patience and endurance in place of struggle and advance in the external world, enhances the capacity for renunciation and suffering in place of action and enjoyment, and generally upholds the line of least resistance in the external world. There is in this also a sense of fight with an enemy, but that enemy is within man and not outside of him. This approach gives man 'intimations of immortality'; it brings him into communion with a timeless order of existence within himself and in the world outside. This is also human fulfilment—but of a transcendental order. Its specific expression is found in the monastic life; and the mystical heights of all higher religions are monastic in mood and temper and approach. Herein is revealed another philosophy of man, the philosophy of *godliness* or *saintliness*, which Vivekananda recognized as the distinct message

of the East. Asia, generally, and India, particularly, have upheld this philosophy of man and sought to nourish their cultures and civilizations with it. It has profoundly affected western culture and civilization also, through Christianity, but has failed to become an integral part of it, just as the western philosophy of manliness has failed to become an integral part of most eastern cultures and civilizations. It uncovers a divine core in man, which makes him greater than all his external possessions and achievements; it reveals an inalienable spiritual focus within him, which proclaims his *intrinsic* value and dignity over and above his value for society. Herein is found the culmination of the Greek dictum: 'Man, know thyself'.

The dignity so revealed finds expression not only in the renunciation practised by spiritual seers and seekers, but also in the incidents of ordinary life; one such episode relating to one of his great elder contemporaries, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, was a favourite with Vivekananda. After referring to his high regard for Vidyasagar as a hero of social reform, Sister Nivedita says in her charming book *Notes of Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda* (Third Edition, pp. 35-36):

> 'But his favourite story about him was of that day when he went home from the Legislative Council, pondering over the question of whether or not to adopt English dress on such occasions. Suddenly, some one came up to a fat Mogul (Muslim nobleman) who was proceeding homewards in leisurely and pompous fashion, in front of him, with the news, "Sir, your house is on fire!" The Mogul went neither faster nor slower for this information, and presently the messenger contrived to express a discreet astonishment, whereupon his master turned on him angrily, "Wretch!" he said, "Am I to abandon the gait of my ancestors, because a few sticks happen to be burning?" And Vidyasagar, walking behind, determined to stick to the *chudder*, *dhoti*, and sandals, not even adopting coat and slippers.'

As the Greeks and others specialized in the subject of man in society, man in lateral extension, India specialized in the subject of man in depth, man in vertical elevation. Each has its glory and grandeur; each also has its limitations, which exactly render one the complement of the other.

In his own life, Vivekananda had plumbed the depths of both these philosophies; he had assimilated in his own personality the *manliness* of the West and the *saintliness* of the East. He saw clearly the excellences and limitations of each of these two human legacies which he embraced as two integral elements of a total human culture, and proclaimed the modern age as the era of their synthesis. In his philosophy of man, proceeding from Sri Ramakrishna's comprehensive spirituality of *vijñāna* referred to earlier, they cease to be contradictory and

become complementary. He comprehended the western concept of manliness and the eastern concept of saintliness in a newly defined philosophy of manliness, which dares to study man from his physical periphery to his spiritual core and to plumb life from the surface to the depths.

History reveals the insufficiency of each of these philosophies taken by themselves. The bitter lessons of the eastern neglect of the *environment* are writ large in the arrested development of millions of its human beings. Vivekananda demonstrated to the people of India the lesson of their history that to neglect the body and to concentrate on the soul is to court disaster for both soul and body. On the other hand, he demonstrated to the people of the West the lesson of their own history in the reverse. Positivism and humanism, even scientific humanism, are perfectly valid, he said, if they do not reduce the human soul to a mere function of the environment, if they do not lead to the swamping of the spirit of man by worldliness, by what one may call over-civilization. Man has an interior depth over and above his social personality, as he has a social personality over and above his individual egoistic self. The latter has to be surpassed and the former realized in each case, if he is to achieve fulfilment. 'In the last stages of life's journey', says Dr. Radhakrishnan, 'man walks in single file'. This surpassing of man constitutes both his death and resurrection. 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it', says Jesus (Matthew, 10.39). So long as this is not attempted and achieved, physical death, which is inevitable, will appear to him an unpleasant enigma and an unwelcome intruder, to which he shall ever remain unreconciled. No philosophy can achieve depth without tackling the problem of death. This has been the main weakness of the western philosophy of man from Greco-Roman times to this day. This basic tragedy of western man is noticed by western thinkers themselves. We have Schopenhauer telling us a hundred years ago, in what sounds as an apt critique of the modern welfare state, that the end of a sense-bound life is boredom (*The World as Will and Idea*, Translated by Haldane and Kemp, Vol. I, p. 404):

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

We have C. G. Jung discussing modern man in search of a soul. Making a distinction between worldly *achievement* and inner *culture*, and showing the undesirability of the modern pursuit of the first alone throughout life, he says (*Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, pp. 118-26):

'Nature cares nothing whatsoever about a higher level of consciousness; quite the contrary. And then society does not value these feats of the psyche very highly; its prizes are always given for achievement and not for personality—the latter being rewarded, for the most part, posthumously....

'Achievement, usefulness, and so forth are the ideals which appear to guide us out of the confusion of crowding problems. They may be our loadstars in the adventure of extending and solidifying our psychic existences—they may help us in striking our roots in the world; but they cannot guide us in the development of that wider consciousness to which we give the name of culture....

'The nearer we approach to the middle of life, and the better we have succeeded in entrenching ourselves in our personal standpoints and social positions, the more it appears as if we had discovered the right course and the right ideals and principles of behaviour. For this reason, we suppose them to be eternally valid, and make a virtue of unchangeably clinging to them. We wholly overlook the essential fact that the achievements which society rewards are won at the cost of the diminution of personality. Many—far too many—aspects of life which should also have been experienced lie in the lumber room among dusty memories....

'The afternoon of human life must also have a significance of its own, and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life's morning. The significance of the morning undoubtedly lies in the development of the individual, our entrenchment in the outer world, the propagation of our kind, and the care of our children. This is the obvious purpose of nature. But when this purpose has been attained —even more than attained—shall the earning of money, the extension of conquests, and the expansion of life go steadily on beyond the bounds of all reason and sense? Whoever carries over into the afternoon the law of the morning—that is, the aim of nature—must pay for so doing with damage to his soul just as surely as a growing youth who tries to salvage his childish egoism must pay for this mistake with social failure. Money-making, social existence, family, and posterity are nothing but plain nature—not culture. Culture lies beyond the purpose of nature. Could by any chance culture be the meaning and purpose of the second half of life?'

Treating this as the major drawback of Greek culture, which, it is being increasingly recognized, is also the major drawback of modern western culture, Lowes Dickinson says (*The Greek View of Life*, p. 68):

'The more completely the Greek felt himself to be at home in the world, the more happily and freely he abandoned himself to the exercise of his powers, the more intensely and vividly he lived in action and in passion, the more alien, bitter, and incomprehensible did he find the phenomena of age and death. On this problem, so far as we can judge, he received from his religion but little light and still less consolation. The music of his brief life closed with a discord unresolved; and even before reason had brought her criticism to bear upon his creed, its deficiency was forced upon him by his feeling.'

In his Preface to the above book, E. M. Forster refers to Greece as the land which 'encompassed within the tiny circuit of her city states much that *affects* and *afflicts* the modern man in his relationship to society' (italics not the author's).

While welcoming the truly positive elements of modern positivism, Vivekananda protested against its exaggerations, its negative features, when he said to Sister Nivedita (*The Master as I saw Him,* pp. 220-21):

'Remember! the message of India is always not the soul for nature, but nature for the soul.'

Vivekananda had noticed the western tragedy referred to by Lowes Dickinson. Comparing it with Indian experience, he said (*ibid.*, p. 116):

'Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter, but underneath it is a wail. It ends in a sob. The fun and frivolity are all on the surface; really, it is full of tragic intensity. Now, here, it is sad and gloomy on the outside, but underneath are carelessness and merriment.'

Nivedita refers to another such contrast expressed by the Swami 'with some exaggerations', but which 'is nevertheless essentially correct', as she puts it (*ibid.*, p. 110):

'Nothing, said the Swami, better illustrated to his own mind the difference between eastern and western methods of thought than the European idea that a man could not live alone for twenty years and remain quite sane, taken side by side with the Indian notion that, till a man had been alone for twenty years, he could not be regarded as perfectly himself.'

Thus viewing man integrally in his physical, social, and trans-social dimensions, and with a view to ensuring his total fulfilment, Vivekananda expounds a philosophy of man in which man, whether eastern or western, can feel at home and find the inspiration to achieve total life fulfilment. That philosophy finds expression in a brief statement of his, in which even postivism and secularism become integral elements of a comprehensive spirituality (*The Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal (of life) is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external (by science, technology, and socio-political processes) and internal (by ethics and religion).

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these, and BE FREE.

'This is the whole of religion.

'Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

At the back of this comprehensive spirituality stands his Advaitic vision, the vision of the unity of Brahman and Śakti, of the Impersonal-Personal God, which I had dealt with earlier. Referring to this vision

and its corollary, Sister Nivedita says ('Introduction' to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, pp. xv-xvi):

'It is this which adds its crowning significance to our Master's life, for here he becomes the meeting point, not only of East and West, but also of past and future. If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realization. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.

'This is the realization which makes Vivekananda the great preacher of *karma* (action) not as divorced from, but as expressing *jñāna* and *bhakti*. To him the workshop, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no distinction between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality. All his words, from one point of view, read as a commentary upon this central conviction. "Art, science, and religion", he said once, "are but three different ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand this we must have the theory of Advaita." '

It is this unifying vision that he imparted to India. *As the most outstanding creator of modern India, he conceived of her as a mighty laboratory to test and verify his vision and programme of a comprehensive spirituality in the life of a seventh of the human race.* He called it his 'domestic policy'; and he called the channelling of the energy of such an India in the spiritual service of the rest of the world his 'foreign policy'.

The India that has emerged during the last sixty years, since Vivekananda's passing away in 1902, bears the unmistakable impress of this great teacher. Within three years of his passing away, the first collective action of organized masses shook Bengal in the political field. The struggle for political freedom soon entered on a dynamic phase under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, creating a tremendous political and social awakening in the nation and hastening the entering of India into the modern age. Political independence came in 1947. A constitution for a sovereign democratic republic was proclaimed in 1950. Since then, this process has been intensified; and vast energies, long dormant in the people, have been released, and are being increasingly released, which are having their impact in all fields of national endeavour. India is steadily learning from the West, as Vivekananda had taught, the capacity for organized work, and using that capacity to remove the poverty and cultural backwardness of masses of her population. She is cultivating science and technology and modern

socio-political processes in a big way. All these form part and parcel of Vivekananda's message of Practical Vedānta; they are part and parcel of his scheme of a 'toned-down materialism to suit our purposes' with a view to strengthening the age-old spiritual and cultural tradition of the nation.

In this mighty adventure, India, along with other Afro-Asian nations, is receiving all kinds of technical and other forms of assistance from the advanced nations of the East and West. This was one of the aims which Vivekananda had cherished when he undertook his historic mission to the West in 1893. He had constantly emphasized, as I have mentioned earlier in this lecture, the international context and dimension of human problems and relationships in the modern age.

Vivekananda had assimilated the spirit of the West so thoroughly that any westerner would feel quite at home in his thought-horizon. But he represented within himself something more, namely, the resolution of the ever-present inner contradictions obtaining within western culture and thought. This something more in him is the precious gift of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna. Pointing to these dimensions of Vivekananda's personality in his penetrating study of his thought, Romain Rolland says (*Life of Vivekananda*, p. 192):

> 'I shall try to show how closely allied is the aspect of Vivekananda's thought to our own, with our special needs, torments, aspirations, and doubts, urging us ever forward, like a blind mole, by instinct upon the road leading to the light. Naturally, I hope to be able to make other westerners, who resemble me, feel the attraction that I feel for this elder brother, the son of the Ganges, *who of all modern men achieved the highest equilibrium between the diverse forces of thought, and was one of the first to sign a treaty of peace between the two forces eternally warring within us: the forces of reason and faith.*' (italics not author's)

The work which Vivekananda started in the field of dissemination of Indian spiritual thought in the West, under his programme of international commerce of ideas, has continued with increasing vigour since his passing away. The spiritual, cultural, and humanitarian movement which he had started in 1897 in the name of his Master, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, upholding the twin ideals of renunciation and service, has grown and is flourishing in India and abroad as a meeting ground of the tested culture values of the East and the West. This is revealed even in the inspiring motto given to it by Vivekananda: *Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*—'For one's own spiritual liberation and for the welfare of the world'.

What, in short, the world sees in India today is the capturing of a new youthful vitality and dynamism by one of the ancient living nations

of the world, constituting about a seventh of the human race. Therein we witness the energy of the vision of Vivekananda, expressed in his first public lecture on the Indian soil at Ramnad, near Rameswaram, on his return from the West, in 1897, getting translated into national achievement (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 145-46):

'The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awakening,... India, this motherland of ours...from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.'

Opening his lecture on 'The Work before Us' delivered in Madras on his return from the West in 1897, Vivekananda referred to the divergent paths which two gifted peoples of the ancient world took—the one, the ancient Greek, who studied the outer world, and the other, the ancient Hindu, who studied the inner world. The first has influenced most of the subsequent developments of culture and thought in the West, and the other has done the same in the East. And drawing his countrymen's attention to the scope of the modern renaissance in India as the assimilation by Indian culture of the culture values of the West, with a view to correcting the imbalances in her own heritage, he said (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 271):

'Today the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India. Thus slowly and silently the leaven has come; the broadening, the life-giving, and the revivalist movement that we see all around us has been worked out by these forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is before us; and although at first we have been deluded a little and wanted to narrow things down, we are finding out today that these generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books. They are the carrying out, to the rigorously logical effect, of the primary conceptions of our own ancestors. To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalize, is the end of our aims. And all the time we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our scriptures.'

In the same lecture, he declared his conviction that the undoubtedly rich western culture stands in urgent need of the spiritual message of Indian culture (*ibid.*, pp. 276-77):

'There have been conquering races in the world. We also have been great conquerors. The story of our conquest has been described by that noble Emperor of India, Aśoka, as the conquest of religion and spirituality.... The best work that you ever did for yourselves was when you worked for others, trying to disseminate your ideas in foreign languages, beyond the seas, and this very meeting is proof how the attempt to enlighten other countries with your thoughts is helping your own country.... Ay, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its miseries can

never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West. Slowly they are finding out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them as nations. They are waiting for it; they are eager for it.'

Vivekananda exhorted the educated youth of India to imbibe the modern spirit and become dynamic agents of social change and fearlessly cut out and remove all the dead wood in their national heritage. At the same time, he drew their attention to the imperishable element in their national heritage, namely, a scientific spiritual tradition, free and fearless, amplified and reauthenticated in this age by his own illustrious Master, and to the modern world's hunger for the same (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 43):

'The whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummeries, and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come.'

Vivekananda's love for India was the product of his love for man. To awaken men and women everywhere to their divine birthright was his life's mission. He saw man in the light of his own vision, and the vision of the Indian sages, as the Ātman, ever pure and ever free and infinite, assuring the infinite possibility of his growth, development, and realization. Speaking on 'The Mission of the Vedānta' at Kumbakonam in 1897, he summoned humanity to this spiritual adventure (*ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 193):

'Arise, awake! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. *None* is *really* weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him!... Teach yourself, teach every one his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

When pressed by his Indian disciples to return to India to serve the cause of his own people, he replied to them from New York on 9 August 1895 in these clear words embodying his glorious vision of human divinity and unity (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII, Third Edition, pp. 349-50):

'Doubtless I do love India. But every day my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called Man. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?

'There is but one basis of well-being, social, political, or spiritual, to know that I and my brother are one. This is true for all countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realize it more quickly than Orientals, who have

almost exhausted themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of individual realization.'

This vision of unity finds eloquent expression in a verse by the Indian philosopher Gauḍapāda of the seventh century A.D., in which he expounds the scope of Vedānta (*Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, IV. 2):

Asparśayogo vai nāma sarvasattva sukho hitaḥ;
Avivādo aviruddhaśca deśitastaṁ namāmyaham—

'I salute this well-known philosophy which teaches the solidarity of all existence, which strives for the happiness and welfare of all beings, and which is free from strife and contradiction.'

Vivekananda's Vision of the Future World Order

In a luminous passage in his lecture on 'My Master', delivered in New York in 1896, Vivekananda refers to the limitations of each of the cultural types developed and conditioned by religion in the orient, and by the physical sciences and the positivistic outlook in the occident. He points out their complementarity and says that the modern age will witness the emergence of a culture, neither oriental, nor occidental, but human, through a healthy interaction and assimilation among cultures; and he presents Ramakrishna as the powerful initiator of such a process in India. Though a bit long, it bears reproduction in this context (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV pp. 155-56):

'Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonizing, the mingling of these two ideals. To the Oriental, the world of spirit is as real as to the Occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the Oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for; in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the Occidental he is a dreamer; to the Oriental the Occidental is a dreamer playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. Each calls the other a dreamer. But the Oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this will claim that happiness is in the machine; but it is always in the mind. That man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else. And what, after all, is this power of machinery? Why should a man who can send a current of electricity through a wire be called a very great man and a very intelligent man? Does not nature do a million times more than that every moment? Why not then fall down and worship nature? What avails it if you have power over the whole of the world, if you have mastered every atom of the universe? That will not make you happy unless you have the power of happiness in yourself, until you have conquered yourself. Man is born to conquer nature, it is true; but the Occidental means by "nature" only physical or external nature. It is true that external nature is majestic, with its mountains, and oceans, and rivers, and with its

infinite powers and varieties. Yet there is a more majestic internal nature of man, higher than the sun, moon, and stars, higher than this earth of ours, higher than the physical universe, transcending these little lives of ours; and it affords another field of study. There the Orientals excel, just as the Occidentals excel in the other. Therefore it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn about the spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and mystery of this universe, he must sit at the feet of the Oriental to learn.

'I am going to present before you the life of one man who has put in motion such a wave in India.'

Aldous Huxley calls the human products of the ancient civilizations 'wise fools', and of the modern civilization 'intelligent fools', and urges the need to produce *intelligent wise men and women.*

Vivekananda: 'A Harmony of All Human Energy'

The philosophy and vision represented by Vivekananda is meant to produce such fully integrated men and women. He himself was a remarkable synthesis of diverse values—ancient and modern. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru (*Discovery of India,* p. 400):

'Rooted in the past, and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems; he was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

Rabindranath Tagore, himself a poet of international stature, said about Vivekananda to Romain Rolland once: 'If you want to understand India, study Vivekananda; in him everything is positive, nothing negative'. In his essays written in Bengali in 1909, and published in the new 15-Volume Bengali edition of his complete works under the general title 'Samāj', Tagore greeted Vivekananda as the meeting-point of East and West (*Rabīndra Racanāvalī,* Vol. XIII, p. 55):

'That great soul whose death occurred a few years ago in Bengal, that Vivekananda also rose keeping the East to his right and the West to his left and himself standing in between. The purpose of his life was not to contract India for all time to narrow thought-moulds by excluding the West from Indian history. To accept, to mingle, to create was, verily, his genius. He sacrificed his life to open up a communication line by which the achievements of India may be given to the West and the achievements of the West may be accepted in India.'

Let me refer to the glowing tribute of Romain Rolland in which he greets Vivekananda as the dynamic meeting point of East and West (*The Life of Vivekananda,* p. 310):

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four *yogas* in

their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human Energy.'

Athens, it has been said, was the school of all Hellas or Greece; and Greece, on her part, is the school of all that is essentially modern in the modern West. India, similarly, was the school of much that was distinctive of the East. And blending, naturally and gracefully, Greece and India within himself, Vivekananda today shines forth as the school of all mankind. He will educate modern man, both in East and West, so as to rescue him out of his provincialism in outlook and one-sidedness in character, and confer on him the realization of his total human excellence.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: INDIA'S EMISSARY TO THE WEST

I AM happy to be back in Delhi once again after spending a month and a half in Europe. I returned from Athens just two days ago after spending a week in Switzerland, 4 weeks in France, one day in Belgium, 2 days in Holland, a week in Yugoslavia, and 4 days in Greece. Earlier, I had an extensive lecture tour of U.S.A., Canada, and 22 other countries of South America and Far-East and South-East Asia from July 25, 1968 to December 31, 1969. In France and Yugoslavia, I was the guest of the respective Governments and, earlier in Geneva, I was the guest of the Temple of Understanding, Washington, participating in its Second Spiritual Summit Conference in that city from March 31st to April 4th. I was happy to spend these few weeks in those countries addressing the Universities of Bordeaux and Nancy in France, Belgrade and Novisad in Yugoslavia, and Athens in Greece, besides several public meetings and parlour groups. We have Ramakrishna Vedānta Centres in Gretz, near Paris and also in Geneva, in both of which I spent several happy days in the company of our monastic brothers and inmates.

This evening I am to speak to you on the subject of 'Swami Vivekananda: India's Emissary to the West'. I had several occasions to speak in Chicago and other places in the United States of America about Swami Vivekananda. He is the one person who stands as a golden link between India and the western world, and who promises to be such a link between India and the rest of the world as well. It is an extraordinary link, forged in the consciousness of the spiritual unity and solidarity of humanity. It is good that we try to understand the nature

of this link and the way it was forged by a great personality in the context of modern world conditions.

For the first time in our history of the past thousand years, our country produced a great teacher in Swami Vivekananda who took India out of her isolation of centuries and brought her into the mainstream of international life. This is a great work, whose beneficent results are slowly and steadily becoming evident as decades roll on. For centuries, we had put up a wall of custom around ourselves, never allowing ourselves or our ideas to go out and never allowing outside ideas to come in. It was Swami Vivekananda who pointed out to us that this was responsible for most of the ills of our body politic, arising from the long stagnation of our national life. Said he:

'India's fate was sealed the day she discovered the word *mlechha* and stopped communication with the world outside.'

We did not allow new ideas to come in, we did not allow obsolete ideas to die out, with the result that we stagnated for centuries. The disastrous results of this policy began to be felt by the nation from about one thousand A.D. In the next century we had a great visitor from Arabia, the critical and sympathetic scholar and historian, Alberuni, who had accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni on his Indian expeditions. Mahmud came to invade and to loot, but Alberuni came to study India. He knew Sanskrit and had great respect for India's culture. He has left us his impressions of India in his book *Alberuni's India,* where he has the following to say about the contemporary Indian mind and outlook (Dr. Edward C. Sachau's Translation, Vol. I, London, Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1910, pp. 22-23):

'The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge of science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurāsān and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is.'

How tragically true was that observation was to be proved by the events of succeeding centuries, with the national mind becoming rigid, narrow, and exclusive, and incapable of grasping and gripping the nation's problems. But throughout the ancient period, India presented

a different picture. She had an expansive mind and had influenced, and been influenced by, the rest of the world.

Now compare these remarks of Alberuni with the remarks of Swami Vivekananda made in a letter written from New York on 18 November 1894, to the Chairman of the public meeting held in the Calcutta Town Hall to felicitate him on his successful mission in America (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 1940 Edition, pp. 139-40):

'I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy, or holiness—the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one.

'To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and *the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.*

'Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself—is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a bye-word and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate.

'Give and take is the law; and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

'We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life, which the western nations have raised, are supported by the strong pillars of character; and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.'

When we study human history, we come across an arresting phenomenon in the fascination of the rest of the world for India. This is true whether it is the ancient Sumerians, the ancient Egyptians, the Greco-Romans, the medieval Europeans, the modern Europeans, or the modern Americans and Russians. Whatever be the civilization or the epoch, we shall always find the contemporary world keenly interested in India, so much so, that to come in touch with the mind and face of India was a recurring policy with those civilizations.

Referring to the four large epochs of India's recurring cultural contacts with the contemporary civilizations, Swami Vivekananda says (*Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, p. 69):

'India's contribution to the sum total of human knowledge has been spirituality, philosophy. These she contributed even before the rising of the Persian Empire; the second time was during the Persian Empire; for the third time, during the ascendency of the Greeks; and now for the fourth time, during the ascendency of the English, she is going to fulfil the same destiny once more.'

Greece had intimate contacts with India through the Persian Empire of the sixth century B.C. which had Indian soldiers in its army. Greek historians refer to the presence of Indians in Athens. The communications net-work opened up by that powerful empire from the seventh century before Christ had made possible the mutual contact of the two gifted peoples of the ancient world, namely, the ancient Greek and the ancient Indian, resulting in much give and take.

Referring to Indian influences on the ascetic practices in the West, the great Egyptologist, Sir Flinders Petrie says (*Egypt and Israel*, 1923, p. 134):

'The presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far west the Indian connections were carried, and the discovery of modelled heads of Indians at Memphis, of about the fifth century B.C., shows that Indians were living there for trade. Hence there is no difficulty in regarding India as the source of the entirely new ideal of asceticism in the West.'

There is contemporary evidence of the presence in Athens of Indian thinkers as early as the fourth century B.C. Eusebius (A.D. 315) preserves a tradition which he attributes to Aristoxenus, who was a pupil of Aristotle and a well-known writer on harmonies and whose date is given as 330 B.C., that some learned Indians visited Athens and had discussions with Socrates (*Preparatio Evangelica*, XI. 3):

'Aristoxenus the musician tells the following story about the Indians. One of these men met Socrates at Athens and asked him what was the scope of his philosophy. "An inquiry into human phenomenon", replied Socrates. At this the Indian burst out laughing. "How can we inquire into human phenomena", he exclaimed, "when we are ignorant of the divine ones?" '

There is also mention of the visit of Indians to Athens in the fragment of Aristotle preserved in Diogenes Laertius. According to Pliny, Eudoxus, the astronomer friend of Plato, was deeply interested in Indian thought.

Strabo, the Roman historian, says on the authority of Nicolaus of Damascus, that an Indian Embassy, including a thinker who burnt him-

self to death at Athens in 20 B.C., was sent to Caesar by the Indian King Poros. Plutarch also refers to the self-immolation and says that the 'Tomb of the Indian' is one of the sights shown to strangers in Athens.

Clement of Alexandria quotes the work of Polihistor who refers to an Indian Order, which included both men and women, who lived in celibacy, devoted themselves to truth, and worshipped pyramids (Buddhist *stupas*) which housed the bones of their God. According to the account of Philostratus, Appollonius of Tyana, the famous gnostic, journeyed to India and spent about four months at 'the monastery of the wise men'.

India was known to the rest of the world for two things, namely, wealth and wisdom. Wealth invited trade and wisdom invited participation in the mental life of India. Some people came to trade, some people came to learn of the wisdom of India, which latter had become, by the time Alexander appeared, proverbial. India's trade with the ancient world is well known. Many ports in the western and eastern coasts of India were dedicated to trading with Rome and the kingdoms of the Middle East and the Near East, to the west, besides China and South-East Asia, to the east. Even today our archaeology digs up ancient Roman coins from various places in South India. That is an indication of the extensive trade that we had with the Roman Empire with which India traded with her items of luxury. The Roman ladies seem to have been fond of Indian luxuries and so a lot of goods were transported in Indian ships as well as in Roman ships to the Roman ports. India also imported many goods from these countries, such as metals, horses etc. According to Roman historians, this trade with India began to drain away so much of Rome's gold into India at one time that Rome put a ban on Indian trade. No nation trades with another nation in luxury goods unless it has a flourishing industrial base and a tolerable level of economic prosperity, according to contemporary standards. The people of India down the ages were intelligent and hard-working, austere and thrifty. Her artists, artisans, and craftsmen created works of beauty, and these were wanted by other nations. And this is a feature true of modern India as well.

The other picture of India reveals her as a land of wise men. Her Vedas and Upaniṣads and other literature reveal a land of philosophers and thinkers of the first magnitude, who wrestle with the problems of human life and destiny with a dedication, competence, and thoroughness rare in the history of philosophic thought.

The ancient West was lured by this wisdom of India. In the Middle Ages, it trickled to the West through the Arabs, whose empire then controlled the Middle East. The Arabs also conveyed to the West the previously acquired scientific knowledge of India. For centuries together, that empire became the clearing house for ideas between East and West. The Arabs took freely from Indian culture and Indian thought. Similarly they took freely from Greek and Roman culture and thought and they built up a very magnificent civilization from the eighth century A.D., encompassing India in the east and Europe in the west.

When that empire fell in the middle of the thirteenth century and the Turkish power rose in its place, the West was cut off from India, because the Turkish empire was not so enlightened as the earlier Arab empire. Though thus cut off, Europe never ceased in its efforts to come in touch with India. Throughout Western history, especially Western European history, one can discern this constant desire to come in touch with India. When this desire was blocked by the Turkish power in the Middle East, the West Europeans tried to discover a sea route to India; and every student of history knows how England, France, Holland, Spain, and Portugal persistently bent their energies to finding a sea route to India and how one of them, namely, Portugal, sailing east, succeeded in finding such a route rounding South Africa, through the pioneering efforts of its Vasco da Gama, who landed at Calicut in Kerala in 1498. This event helped to take India again into the stream of international life. Similarly, the Spanish sailor, Columbus, sailing westward on the same mission, stumbled upon America in 1493, which he mistook to be India. And though the mistake was discovered later, the natives of America continued to be called Indians.

I had occasion to tell many American University audiences last year that their continent was discovered as a by-product of the search for India and that they may as well continue the search and discover for themselves the vast continent of India, geographical as well as cultural. *And this search is on in a big way on the part of the people of America since the end of the second world war.* India is luring modern America today. This lure was there even in the nineteenth century, which finds evidence in even the titles of books such as *Passage to India* by Walt Whitman. America is experiencing in this twentieth century what Western European peoples experienced earlier.

Thus throughout the millennia of history, India's wisdom has attracted the nations of the world. India's natural resources and industrial wealth, similarly, make her an attraction for trade as well. And

in the modern age, this trade has led also to her political domination and economic exploitation by the West.

But one thing we must remember when we discuss Swami Vivekananda's Mission to the West in the modern age. India never sent her own accredited cultural or spiritual emissaries to the western world throughout these five thousand years of history. India's own activity in the field of active dissemination of ideas was confined to the eastern half of the world, including Western Asia. And this she has done even before the torrential experience of it in the wake of Buddha and his dynamic movement. Evidences are accumulating to show that Indian ideas travelled to various parts of the Asian continent even before Buddhism; but, historically speaking, the most important contact of India with those countries began in the wake of Buddha and his great movement, when India herself became active in the dissemination of her spiritual and cultural treasures in these parts of the world. Buddhist emissaries scaled high mountains, sailed the oceans, braved hardships, and went over to Ceylon, South-East Asia, Middle East and Near East, China and, to a lesser extent, to Korea and Japan, carrying the message of Buddha—the message of peace, the message of love, the message of spirituality. This message had created a tremendous spiritual bond between India and the rest of Asia.

Thus India's own experience of missionary enterprise, of active dissemination of ideas, was confined to the continent of Asia throughout the historic period, and this includes the few official missions sent out by Aśoka in the third century before Christ to the sovereigns of the Middle East, namely, Antiochus Theos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus, according to the announcement in his *Rock Edict* XIII. These and the extensive contacts during the earlier Persian and Greek empires can claim some share in the spiritual and cultural developments in the Middle East during the next few centuries.

Apart from these efforts, India did not actively participate in influencing the western mind. She did not send out to the West any outstanding spiritual teacher or philosopher. The western people came to India on their own and took whatever they could from India's wisdom. This does not rule out the influencing of the Western peoples by thousands of individual Indians in the course of commercial and social contacts since the Persian Empire, and their being influenced by the Greeks and others in their turn. Alexander came to the western region of India in the fourth century B.C., conquering all the countries on his way, but he had a secret desire to come in touch with the phi-

losophic and spiritual thought of India. Greek historians have preserved the episode of his meeting with an Indian sage in the Punjab. As narrated in the *Classical Accounts of India* by R.C. Majumdar (pp. 444-46), the Emperor went to meet him and, impressed by his talk with him, invited him to accompany him to Greece. The sage declined the invitation. The Emperor persuaded and pressed him. Still he did not accept. Then asserting his position as the Emperor, Alexander drew his sword and threatened to kill him if he did not obey his behest. At this, the sage burst into a laughter. When the Emperor asked the reason for his laughter and whether he was not afraid of his sword, the sage replied that this was the most foolish thing that he had ever said in his life; that he, the Emperor of the material world, could never kill him, since he was not the body but the spirit, eternal and ever free, which no fire could burn, no water could wet, and no weapons could pierce. And for once in his all-conquering career, the Emperor came across a person who did not fear him. The whole world feared him; the whole world bent down before him; but he saw this one man in India before him who stood calm, and fearless of all the material power represented by this Emperor.

That this episode had an impact on the Greek mind is evidenced by the fact that more than one Greek historian of Alexander's campaigns have taken pains to record it. It provided them with one out of the many windows to Indian wisdom and its quality of strength and fearlessness.

But unlike as in the case of Asia, as I mentioned earlier, India did not actively participate in influencing the western mind. It is the western mind that came and took whatever it could get from the Indian tradition. We are not quite sure, however, how, and how much, India influenced the West in this indirect way. We have some studies by modern scholars, both western and Indian, on this subject. Dr. Jean Filliozat of the College de France, Paris, in his recent studies on the external cultural relations of ancient India, believes that the Upaniṣads had an influence on the thought of the Middle East in the first centuries of the Christian era. Professor E. J. Urwick of England, in his remarkable book, *The Message of Plato*, traces the major ideas of Plato to the Upaniṣads. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan devotes several lectures of his book, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, to a masterly discussion of the spiritual and cultural relations between India and Greece and India and Palestine.

These and other studies help to lift the veil that hides the great period of Indian cultural expansion when her ideas influenced the West.

But the lack of adequate documented historical material does not disprove the fact of Indian influence on the West; for history records such influences only when accompanied by military aggressions and violent invasions. History mostly behaves like contemporary newspapers, which publish in streamer headlines the story of a family quarrel and breakup, but silently ignore the stories of millions of well-adjusted families and social groups. History has similarly no eye or ear for silent influences and peaceful spread of ideas. And India had never engaged in any foreign aggressive wars throughout her long history, even though she had several times thrown up mighty empires ruling over her immense territory.

Referring to this unique feature of India's impact on the rest of the world, Swami Vivekananda says (*Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, 1963 impression, pp. 3-7):

'The debt which the world owes to our motherland is immense. Civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient and modern times, wonderful ideas have been carried forward from one race to another....but mark you, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets and with the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood... Each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of widows. This, in the main, other nations have taught, but India for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist.... Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but *every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it.* We, of all nations of the world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on our head, and therefore we live....

'Political greatness or military power is never the mission of our race; it never was and, *mark my words, it never will be.* But there has been the other mission given to us, which is to conserve, to preserve, to accumulate as it were into a dynamo, all the spiritual energy of the race and that concentrated energy is to pour forth in a deluge on the world whenever circumstances are propitious. Let the Persian or the Greek, the Roman, the Arab, or the Englishman march his battalions, conquer the world, and link the different nations together, and the philosophy and spirituality of India is ever ready to flow along the new-made channels into the veins of the nations of the world. The Hindu's calm brain must pour out its own quota to give to the sum total of human progress. *India's gift to the world is the light spiritual.*'

Pointing out that this silent influence is also going on in the modern age, Swami Vivekananda continues (*ibid.*, pp. 7-8):

'Those who keep their eyes open, those who understand the workings in the minds of different nations of the West, those who are thinkers and study the different nations, will find the immense change that has been produced in the tone, the procedure, in the methods, and in the literature of the world by this slow, never-ceasing permeation of Indian thought.

'But there is another peculiarity, as I have already hinted to you. We never preached our thoughts with fire and sword. If there is one word in the English language to represent the gift of India to the world, if there is one word in the English language to express the effect which the literature of India produces upon mankind, it is this one word 'fascination'.... Slow and silent, as the gentle dew that falls in the morning, unseen and unheard, yet producing a most tremendous result, has been the work of this calm, patient, all-suffering, spiritual race upon the world of thought.'

After a few centuries of cultural and social immobilization, India resumed this silent activity within a few years of the establishment of the British Empire in her territory in the last century. The initiative was taken by the Western Orientalists, to begin with. Their translations of Indian literature into the Western languages initiated a new era in the long history of Indian influence on the West, which promises to outshine all such past eras, *and promises also to be an immense two-way traffic productive of great blessings, as much to India, as to the rest of the world.* And Swami Vivekananda's appearance on the stage of Indo-Western dialogue at the end of the last century marks the attainment of spiritual and cultural maturity on the part of modern India, even though she was still a subject nation and politically muted.

The emergence of the modern western civilization has altered the international situation in a fundamental way. By absorbing the Greco-Roman heritage and combining with it modern science and technology, the western nations became, in the course of four centuries, the dynamic centres of vast energies which soon spilled over the whole world in both creative and destructive ways. India, along with much of Asia and the whole of Africa, became the helpless victims of colonial exploitations and political subjugations of one western nation or another. In spite of this, there was something in that Western culture which attracted the rest of the world and commanded its respect.

Out of the spiritual and intellectual ferment arising from the contact of India with the dynamic culure of the modern West, arose a renaissance of the spirit of India in the last century. Pioneered and led by the great Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other leaders in its early stages, it moved through the century with halting and uncertain steps, eventually to attain maturity and strength in the last quarter of the century in Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) and his great disciple, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). In them the modern Indian renaissance became an entirely positive force rooted in the spiritual core of the Indian tradition, and responding to the positive elements in the dynamic culture of the modern West, and capable of achieving a dynamic synthesis of East and West in modern India.

This renaissance made India expansive; its energy and dynamism could not be contained within the confines of India. It soon burst its national bounds and, for the first time in her long history, India herself took the initiative in, what may appropriately be called, a spiritual 'invasion' of the western world, the dynamic centre of the modern age, through her own anointed son, Swami Vivekananda. He had a fourfold training which equipped him for the successful invasion of the powerful citadels of modern western thought and culture. Firstly, his education in modern Western science, literature, and history; secondly, his assimilation of the positive elements in the Indian culture and tradition; thirdly, his discipleship at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, the very personification of the Indian spiritual tradition; and fourthly, his intimate grasp of the realities of contemporary India during his life as *parivrājaka* or wandering monk for six long years. As a result of this fourfold training, Vivekananda had become, for the first time in Indian and western history, an embodiment of the East and the West. In the words of Romain Rolland (*Life of Vivekananda*, Sixth Impression, p. 281):

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit; the four *Yogas* in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action, from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'

Says Jawaharlal Nehru of Swami Vivekananda, (*Discovery of India*, p. 401):

'Rooted in the past, and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems; he was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

Speaking to Romain Rolland, Rabindranath Tagore said:

'If you want to understand India, study Vivekananda; in him everything is positive, nothing negative.'

Confessing his admiration for Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda among the leaders of the modern Indian renaissance, Romain Rolland says, (*Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 8):

'From this magnificent procession of spiritual heroes whom we shall survey later, I have chosen two men, who have won my regard because with incomparable charm and power they have realized this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul. They are, if one may say so, its Mozart and its Beethoven—*Pater Seraphicus* and Jove the Thunderer—Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.'

During his wanderings in western India, Vivekananda heard of a world parliament of religions being organized in Chicago in 1893 as part of a Columbian Exposition in celebration of the fourth centenary of the discovery of America by Columbus in 1493. Earlier, a great scholar at Junagadh, impressed by his vast learning and restless energy, had told him to go to the West where 'your thoughts would be better understood than in this country', and had exhorted him: 'Go and take it by storm and then return.' While at Bangalore about October 1892, he specifically declared to the Maharaja of Mysore his intention of going to the West 'for finding means to ameliorate the material condition of India', and to take it in exchange the Gospel of the Vedānta. But he waited till he could complete his pilgrimage of India by visiting Rameswaram and Kanyakumari in the far south.

Towards the end of 1892, after visiting Rameswaram he reached Kanyakumari, India's 'Land's End' at the far south, where the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea merge in the Indian Ocean. After worship at Mother *Kumāri's* temple on the mainland, he swam over to a rock jutting out of the ocean, about 200 yards from the shore and, sitting on it, plunged into a deep meditation for several hours. *And for the first time in the history of religion, the subject of meditation of a great monk was Man, the God sleeping in man, and not any far-away deity.* He had known of the glory of man as the Ātman, the eternal and ever-free Self of man, in India's spiritual tradition. He had seen in his own Master, Sri Ramakrishna, the very embodiment of that eternal glory of the human spirit. He had realized that glory in himself. But in his wanderings in India, he failed to see that glory manifested even faintly in the millions and millions of his fellow-countrymen. Crushed by poverty and social oppression, bereft of faith in oneself, and reduced to utter helplessness and despair, he saw man in India long alienated from the divine within, and the Indian society long divorced from the spiritual vision of her Vedāntic sages. And he decided to dedicate his energies to the reinstatement of man to his pedestal of glory; for this he felt the need to combine the energies of modern western science with the energies of the Indian spiritual tradition. He felt the need to rouse the Indian masses to an awareness of their own inherent strength, with a view to freeing them from grinding poverty and social oppression first, before inviting them to scale the spiritual heights of their eternal religion. Dealing with Vivekananda's meditations at Kanyakumari, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by His Eastern and Western Disciples, says (pp. 254-55):

'Ay, here at Kanyakumari was the culmination of days and days of thought on the problems of the Indian masses. Here was the culmination of hours of

longing that the wrongs of the masses might be righted. His eyes looked through a mist of tears across the great waters. His heart went out to the Master and to the Mother in a great prayer. From this moment his life was consecrated to the service of India, but particularly to the outcast Nārāyaṇas, to the starving Nārāyaṇas, to the millions of oppressed Nārāyaṇas of his land.... And he saw that the *dharma*, and even the Vedas, without the people, were as so much straw in the eyes of the Most High. Verily, at Kanyakumari, the Swami was the patriot and prophet in one!'

Out of the meditations at Kanyakumari arose the conviction in him of the nature and scope of that world mission which Sri Ramakrishna had entrusted to him before he passed away six years earlier. He would go to the West and preach to its highly individualistic and intellectually self-conscious peoples the message of Eternal India, the spiritual message of *Sanātana Dharma*, the rational and universal message of Vedānta, and win their support for the material redemption of his own people. He would preach to his own people the message of Practical Vedānta, the message of the application of the Vedāntic message of the Ātman, coupled with the message of western science and technology and social ethics, to the practical problems of the Indian society, with a view to the eradication of ignorance and apathy, poverty and social injustice, by awakening and energizing them with faith in themselves, with faith in the Ātman sleeping within themselves.

The rock on which Swami Vivekananda meditated at Kanyakumari has since become known as the *Vivekananda Rock*, and a grateful nation, irrespective of caste, creed, and political affiliations of the right or the left, has now erected an impressive national memorial to him as a loving tribute to him as the awakener and *yugacārya* or epoch-maker of modern India, and as the intrepid and farseeing pioneer in the building of a bridge of understanding between East and West.

Like a second Buddha arising from his meditations at Buddhagaya and proceeding to Varanasi, Swami Vivekananda rose from his meditations at Kanyakumari and reached Madras with the same resolve of *bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya*, 'for the welfare of the common masses', 'for the happiness of the common masses'. At Madras he attracted the attention of a group of brilliant students of its university, who energetically took steps to organize the ways and means of his going to America to represent Hinduism at the proposed World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. With the help of these students, who represented the emerging spirit of young India, and aided by a few of the enlightened native princes, and armed with blessings of Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda set sail for the United States of America from Bombay on 31 May 1893.

The expanding spirit of India could not have a more worthy or competent emissary to send abroad than Swami Vivekananda. In his awareness and sympathies, he had become, as he said of himself later, a *condensed India.* No nation in world history has ever sent abroad so unique and world-moving a representative as Swami Vivekananda. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western disciples contains the following passage from a well-known writer, presumably Sister Nivedita, recording how well the Swami had fitted himself for his glorious mission (p. 285):

'During his travels, by turns he realized the essence of Buddhism and Jainism, the spirit of Rāmānanda and Dayānanda. He had become a profound student of Tulasidās and Niścaladās. He had learnt all about the saints of Maharashtra and the Ālwars and Nayanārs of southern India. From the *Paramahamsa Parivrājakāchārya* to the poor *Bhangi Mehtar* disciple of Lalguru, he had learnt not only their hopes and ideals, but their memories as well. To his clear vision the Moghul supremacy was but an interregnum in the continuity of Indian national life. Akbar was Hindu in breadth of vision and boldness of synthesis. Was not the Tāj, to his mind, a *Sakuntalā* in marble? 'The songs of Guru Nānak alternated with those of Mīrābāi and Tānsen on his lips. The stories of Prithvi Rāj and Delhi jostled against those of Chitore and Pratāp Singh, Śiva and Umā, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Sītā-Rāma and Buddha. Each mighty drama lived in a marvellous actuality, when he was the player. His whole heart and soul was the burning epic of the country, touched to an overflow of mystic passion by her very name.' He held in his hands all that was fundamental, organic, vital; he knew the secret springs of life. 'There was a fire in his breast, which entered into him with the comprehension of essential truths, the result of spiritual illumination. His great mind saw a connection where others saw only isolated facts; his mind pierced the soul of things and presented facts in their real order. His was the most universal mind, with a perfect practical culture. What better equipment could one have who was to represent before the Parliament of Religions India in its entirety—Vedic and Vedāntic, Buddhistic and Jain, Shaivic and Vaishnavic, and even Mohammedan? Who else could be better fitted for this task than this disciple of one who was in himself a Parliament of Religions in a true sense?'

Vivekananda as the first great Emissary to the West of an expansive modern India discloses a significant characteristic of the Indian tradition, and of the Indian political state as well. One of the favourite utterances of Vivekananda was: *All expansion is life, all contraction is death.* He saw the past few centuries of Indian history as a period of steady contraction; it was a grim struggle for national survival against overwhelming external political and cultural forces; it was steadily putting out the nation's creative fires. When the national life had thus reached its lowest ebb in the eighteenth century, there came the political and cultural domination of the dynamic West through the British subjection. But this final act in the tragic drama of national contraction did not lead, as was expected by many western people, and even

by some Indians themselves, at the time, to the final death of the hoary Indian tradition; on the contrary, the shock of the new conquest and subjection helped only to stir up and inflame the unsuspected energy reserves of the tradition and turn its course from contraction and death to expansion and life in the next century. And India's long historical conditioning produced leaders of the stature and quality of a Ramakrishna and a Vivekananda, both as products of this modern national life expansion and as its harnessers and harvesters, as its leaders and guides.

Welcoming this spirit of expansion of modern India, of which he was himself the spearhead, Swami Vivekananda said on his return from the West in 1897 (*Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, pp. 170-71):

'The first manifest effect of life is expansion. You must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead. I went to America and Europe, to which you so kindly allude; I had to, because that is the first sign of revival of national life, expansion. This reviving national life, expanding inside, threw me off, and thousands will be thrown off in that way. Mark my words, it has got to come if this nation lives at all. This question, therefore, is the greatest of the signs of the revival of national life, and through this expansion our quota of offering to the general mass of human knowledge, our contribution to the general upheaval of the world, is going out to the external world.'

National expansion is a phrase with frightful associations in the modern age. When the national life of a country expands, its energies spill over its own boundaries and adversely affect other countries far and near, politically, militarily or commercially. While it undoubtedly ignites the creative fires within its own boundaries, it often spells disaster and despair, shock and shame, to other countries. This is the nature of all national expansions of a *political* kind. The expansion of Britain, for example, from the sixteenth century onwards found expression not only in creative thought and achievements in science, politics, industry, and social thought within Britain, but also spilled over as colonialism and imperialism, conquest and war, affecting the lives of other peoples outside. This is true of all Greco-Roman and modern western nations in general, as it is true also of Japan and China in Asia. National expansions in all these cases have affected, and still affect, other nations politically and militarily in varying degress.

India is the only country in the world whose periodic expansions have not affected other nations militarily or politically. This is because her expansions have not been of the *political* type, but have been of a uniquely cultural or ideological type. In her long history of over five thousand years when, often, she had thrown up mighty empires with

impressive military strength, she has never practised military aggression on countries outside her borders, has never tried to influence the course of the lives of other nations *politically*. The philosophic and spiritual conditioning of her culture and outlook has precluded the possibility of her throwing a military or political challenge to other nations, even if she has developed political and military strength within her own borders. And yet, she has often experienced national expansions which have influenced other nations in the *non-political* fields. These expansions are of the *cultural* type, entirely non-political and therefore non-violent, being guided by her philosophic and spiritual vision of unity and universality.

The long history of India has shown that peaceful cultural expansions can be more dynamic and enduring than aggressive political or military ones. The history of the world demonstrates through India's long history that the world in the end belongs to the unworldly, and that the meek shall inherit the earth.

It is no wonder, therefore, that in the light of this historical experience and conditioning, the expansion of modern India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has entirely been of the *cultural* and not of the *political* type. The great leaders of her modern renaissance, including the ones who worked in the political fields, were cultural leaders, whose national vision ever strove to reach out to the international and human. They never strove to take India on the road of political aggression and expansionism. Ram Mohan and Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Gandhi, Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru were leaders of universal vision and sympathies. They spoke the authentic voice of India in the fields of philosophy and religion, or culture and international life; even the politics which some of them handled, namely, that of Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, were powerfully influenced by the traditional national vision, and bore the stamp of universality and humanism. *Through them India seeks to demonstrate to the world that to be strong need not mean to be fearful, to be peaceful need not mean to be weak, but that strength and peacefulness can co-exist as much in a nation as in a person.*

This explains the fact that, even when she was a victim of British subjection, even when she was politically immobilised by foreign overlordship, India could still develop her national energies of culture and spirituality in the nineteenth century, and burst upon the international scene with a dynamic force, unique in world history, through an outstanding personality such as Swami Vivekananda, initiating thereby a

new era of dynamic expansion of the *cultural* type, entirely positive, peaceful, and friendly, characteristic of her national genius.

It is also significant that, even after the attainment of political freedom in 1947, and the establishment of a sovereign democratic republican state, deriving its strength from a population constituting a sixth of the human race, in 1950, India exerts no influence of a *political* kind on the rest of the world, not even on her neighbour and sister state, namely, Pakistan, does not strive to thrust her own political ideology to influence, by force or even silently, the political life in other countries. *On the other hand, in the political field, she is at the receiving end.* She has been constantly under pressure of political ideologies emanating, first from Britain and France, then U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., and now Communist China. And she is trying to handle these foreign influences in the light of her own vision and need. *If political influence had been India's field of action, she should have exerted her influence on the political fortunes of these and other nations. But she has not done any such thing.* The only political influence that modern India exerts on the contemporary world is the singularly non-political force emanating from Mahatma Gandhi's vision and technique of *satyāgraha*, the method of non-violent resistance to evil. The late Bertrand Russell used this technique in England in 1950 to try to force her to go in for nuclear disarmament. An influential section of Negroes in U.S.A. adopted and still adopts this method for securing civil rights. The latest example of a successfully concluded *satyāgraha* campaign in U.S.A. is the struggle of the grape-pickers in southern California under its leader, Mr. Cesar Chevez, who has a photo of Mahatma Gandhi hanging from the wall of his office.

India's expansion, therefore, is ideological and not physical; it is philosophical and spiritual and not political and military. This has been imprinted upon India by her own philosophical and cultural development and, more especially, by the powerful example of Emperor Aśoka who had, in the third century before Christ, proclaimed through his edicts and glowing example the Indian national policy of 'silencing the war drums' of hate and aggression in international relations and sounding the 'drums of *dharma*', proclaiming the soothing message of co-existence, friendship, and peace.

Swami Vivekananda was to warn his countrymen later on:

'India is immortal if she persists in her search for God; but if she gives it up and takes to politics and social conflicts, she will die.'

When we speak of Swami Vivekananda going forth as India's Emissary to the West, we have to keep in view the above significant factors,

which had two important bearings on his Mission; first, he was not being sent abroad by a free political Indian State; for India was then lying under the heavy weight of British political subjection. Second, he was not being sent abroad by a central Indian religious authority or church; for, the Indian spiritual tradition, with its emphasis on freedom to experiment and experience, did not permit the development of an all-powerful church or an authoritarian central creed, finished and final. This latter phenomenon was to cause serious difficulties for Swami Vivekananda to gain admission as a delegate to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, and which he was to overcome by the compelling force of his personality. He was sent abroad by the *expanding spiritual consciousness of India* in its wholeness, through the instrumentality of a group of nationally sensitive Indian people. He had told his devoted disciple, Alasinga Perumal, who was the head of the group of youths in Madras constituting a committee to raise subscriptions for the Swami's voyage to the West:

'If it is the Mother's will that I go, then let me receive the money from the people! Because it is for the people of India that I am going to the West—for the people and the poor!'

Swami Vivekananda left Bombay by steamer on 31 May 1893 and, passing through Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Hongkong, Canton, Nagasaki, Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo and Yokohama, he landed at Vancouver and thence reached Chicago by train by the middle of July 1893. From then on upto his first speech at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11 September, 1893, he had to face many hardships and sharp moments of despair. Referring to the initial difficulties which this Emissary of India had to face, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by His Eastern and Western Disciples, says, (p. 292):

'Burdened with unaccustomed possessions, not knowing where to go, conspicuous because of his strange attire, annoyed by the lads who ran after him in amusement, weary and confused by the exorbitant charges of the porters, bewildered by the crowds, chiefly visitors to and from the World's Fair, he sought a hotel. When the porters had brought his luggage and he was at last alone and free from interruptions, he sat down amidst his trunks and satchels and tried to calm his mind.'

More difficulties and disappointments lay ahead. The rudest shock came when he learnt from the Parliament's Information Bureau that the sessions were to commence only in September, that none could be admitted as a delegate without proper credentials from some organisation in India, and that even the time for such admission had gone by. Nothing illustrates the unorganizedness of Hinduism better than the manner of this going forth of Vivekananda. He wondered why he had

been so foolish as to have listened to those 'sentimental school boys' of Madras, who were ignorant of the necessary steps to be taken in order to become a delegate. In the words of Sister Nivedita, (quoted in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 294):

> 'To their unbounded faith it never occurred that they (the disciples) were demanding what was, humanly speaking, impossible. They thought that Vivekananda had only to appear and he would be given his chance. The Swami himself was as simple in the ways of the world as these his disciples; and when he was once sure that he was divinely called to make the attempt, he could see no difficulties in the way. Nothing could have been more typical of the unorganizedness of Hinduism itself than this going forth of its representative unannounced, and without formal credentials, to enter the strongly-guarded doors of the world's wealth and power.'

Added to this desperate situation was the other worry of a lean purse. But in spite of all these trials and hardships, he was determined not to give up, but to make every attempt to succeed in America; if he failed there, he would try in England, and if he failed there too, he would go back to India and wait for further commands from on High.

In order to save money, he decided to move to the less costly city of Boston. In the train to Boston he struck friendship with a fellow passenger, Miss Kate Sanborn who, deeply struck by his personality, invited him to be her guest. He consented and became her guest at her beautiful house called 'Breezy Meadows' in Metcalf, Massachusetts. By this arrangement the host had the advantage of showing her friends a curio from India and the guest had the advantage of saving his lean purse, though he had to experience hooting in the streets on account of his foreign dress and to answer queer and annoying questions from visitors. He was invited to address a large local women's club. The lecture was a success. Slowly some persons became interested in him and his work. Miss Sanborn introduced him to Dr. J.H. Wright, Professor of Greek at the Harvard University. Professor Wright was immediately struck by the genius of this young Hindu after a four-hour conversation and insisted that he should represent Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions, adding that that was the only way he could be introduced to the nation at large. When the Swami told him that he carried no credentials as was required to be a delegate, Prof. Wright made a remark which has become famous: 'To ask you, Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun to state its right to shine.' Prof. Wright did not just utter flattering words, but immediately wrote a letter introducing the Swami to the Chairman of the Parliament Committee on the selection of delegates stating, 'Here is a man who is

more learned than all our learned professors put together.' He also kindly presented the Swami with a rail ticket to Chicago and also letters of introduction to the Committee which had charge of housing and providing for Oriental delegates.

The Swami rejoiced at this literal manifestation of Divine Grace; he felt that the mission for which he left India was going to be fulfilled. Alighting at the Chicago railway station he found, to his dismay, that he had lost the address of the President of the Parliament of Religions. He tried to seek guidance from passers-by, but could not make them understand, it being the German quarter of the city. At length, he lay down to sleep in a huge empty box in the railroad freightyard, and trusting to the guidance of the Divine, he soon freed himself of all anxieties and fell asleep. On the morrow he was to shake America with his brief address at the Parliament of Religions! But now, as the Lord had willed, he should lie like an unknown and despised outcast, or more truly speaking, like a wandering monk in his own land, sleeping where the evening found him.

Morning came; he moved out and soon found himself on the Lake Shore Drive of the city where millionaires and merchant princes dwelt. Being extremely hungry, he commenced begging from house to house, asking for food and to be directed to the quarters of the Parliament Committee. Because of soiled dress and travel-worn appearance, he was rudely treated at some houses and insulted by servants in others. At length, exhausted, he sat down quietly on the roadside resigned to the will of God. Presently, the door of a fashionable residence opposite opened and a woman of regal bearing came out and approached him; she asked him tenderly in accents of high refinement, 'Sir, you seem to be in some trouble; are you a delegate to the Parliament of Religions? Can I be of any help to you?' The Swami told her his difficulties. She immediately took him to her house and, after bath and breakfast, conducted him to the offices of the Parliament and had him admitted as a delegate on the strength of the letter of introduction.

The woman who became the ministering angel to Swami Vivekananda at that critical hour was Mrs. Mary W. Hale; she and her husband and children, the Hale family, became his warmest friends, and their house became his permanent home in Chicago.

The holding of the Parliament of Religions, as part of the Columbian Exposition, was one of the greatest events in the history of the world, an important milestone in the hisory of inter-religious relation-

ships. It also marked a new era in the millennial history of Hinduism. Its full significance will be unveiled only with the lapse of time. Delegates representing diverse forms of organized religious belief came from different parts of the world. It helped to unify the religious vision of humanity, to broaden the outlook of religions, and to initiate an era of dialogue among them, which had largely functioned till then in isolation or at cross purposes. And it did something more; it made the West conscious of the rich spiritual heritage of the East, particularly of India. In the words of the Hon. Mervin-Marie Snell, President of the Scientific Section of the Parliament (quoted in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 300):

'One of its chief advantages has been in the great lesson which it has taught the Christian World, especially to the people of the United States, namely, that there are other religions more venerable than Christianity which surpass it in philosophical depth, in spiritual intensity, in independent vigour of thought, and in breadth and sincerity of human sympathy, while not yielding to it a single hair's breadth in ethical beauty and efficiency. Eight great non-Christian religious groups were represented in its deliberations—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism, and Mazdaism.'

The Parliament was a great concourse of some of the most distinguished personages of the world; a great mass of humanity, varying from seven to ten thousand in number, attended its sessions; it included many of the great philosophers of the world. More than one thousand papers were read by the different delegates. There were several sections, including a scientific section.

A noted American writer, referring to the Parliament and Swami Vivekananda, says (Quoted in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 301):

'Prior to the convention of the Parliament of Religions adjunct to the world's Columbian Exposition in 1893, which was convened in Chicago, little was known of Vivekananda in this country. On that auspicious occasion, however, he appeared in all his magnificent grandeur. It was on Monday, September 11, at 10 a.m., when the opening address was delivered at the Art Institute, Chicago, by Dr. Barrows, from whence the following few words: 'Since faith in a Divine Power, to whom men believe they owe service and worship, has been like the sun, a life-giving and fructifying potency in man's intellectual and moral development; since religion lies back of Hindu literature with its marvellous and mystic developments,... it did not appear that religion, any more than education, art, or electricity, should be excluded from the Columbian Exposition.'

'On that memorable Monday morning, there sat upon the platform of the great Hall of Columbus representatives of the religious hopes and beliefs of twelve hundred millions of the human race. It was indeed impressive. In the centre sat Cardinal Gibbons, highest prelate of the Roman Catholic Church on the Western Continent. He was seated upon a Chair of State and opened the meeting with prayer. On the right and left of him were gathered the oriental

delegates, whose brilliant attire vied with his own scarlet robes in brilliancy. Conspicuous among the followers of Brahma, Buddha, and Mohammad was an eloquent monk from India, Vivekananda by name. He was clad in gorgeous red apparel and wore a large yellow turban, his remarkably fine features and bronze complexion standing out prominently in the great throng. Beside him sat Nagarkar of the Brahmo Samaj, representative of the Hindu Theists; next was Dharmapala, Ceylon's Buddhist representative; next came Mazoomdar, leader of the Theists in India. Amongst the world's choicest divines, these and many more, whose names would be more or less familiar, must be left out for want of space. This will suffice to show the setting with which our subject was surrounded. 'In contact with the learned minds of India we have inspired a new reverence for the Orient.' In numerical order, Vivekananda's position was number thirtyone.'

On the opening day, the Chairman had called Swami Vivekananda several times to speak, but he had said, 'No, not now', until the Chairman was puzzled and wondered if he would speak at all. At length in the late afternoon, when the Chairman insisted, the Swami rose and surveyed in a sweep the large assembly before him. The whole audience grew intent; there was pin-drop silence. Bowing to Devī Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, he addressed his audience as 'Sisters and Brothers of America'. Before he could utter another word, the whole Parliament was caught up in a great wave of enthusiasm and hundreds rose to their feet with shouts of applause. There was cheering, cheering, cheering for full two minutes! The Swami was bewildered.

When silence was restored, the Swami continued his speech, replying to the words of welcome, by thanking the youngest of nations, namely, America, in the name of the most ancient Order of monks in the world, namely, the Vedic Order of *Sannyāsins*. He introduced Hinduism as the 'Mother of Religions', which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. He illustrated this by referring to the welcome and protection accorded by the Hindus to the Jewish refugees in the first century A.D. and the Zoroastrian refugees in the Eighth century A.D. And he ended by quoting two illustrative passages from the Hindu Scriptures: 'As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they may appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee! 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me!'

It was a brief but intense speech. Its spirit of universality, earnestness, and breadth of outlook completely captivated the whole assembly. He cast off the formalism of the Parliament and spoke to the people in the language of the heart. The phrase of five words which he initially

uttered: *Sisters and Brothers of America*, was a tongue of flame which set aflame the hearts of his listeners. Each orator had spoken of *his* God, of the God of *his sect*. He alone spoke *on behalf of all their Gods, and embraced them all in the Universal Being*. It was the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna breaking down the barriers between religions through the voice of his great disciple.

The Parliament gave him a tremendous ovation that afternoon, and the American nation, informed by the streamer headlines of the newspapers of his contribution at the Parliament, gave him its silent ovation the next morning.

During the ensuing sessions he spoke on *Why We Disagree* on 15 September, when he denounced the insularity of religions and narrated the illustrative parable of the 'Frog in the well', read his celebrated paper on *Hinduism* on 19 September, followed by a talk on *Religion not the Crying Need of India* on the 20 September, when he exhorted the Christian nations not to waste their resources on saving the *souls* of the heathens but to concentrate on saving their *hungry bodies* on *Orthodox Hinduism and the Vedānta Philosophy* and *The Modern Religions of India* on 22 September, on *The Essence of the Hindu Religion* on 25 September, on *Buddhism : The Fulfilment of Hinduism* on 26 September, and gave his *Address at the Final Session* on 27 September. Besides these, he addressed the Scientific Section and also gave four other lectures.

His paper on *Hinduism* is the most outstanding definition of the complex Hindu religion in all its comprehensiveness. The central import of this address is described with great insight by Sister Nivedita in her 'Introduction' to volume one of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* :

'Of the Swami's address before the Parliament of Religions, it may be said that when he began to speak, it was the religious ideas of the Hindus; but when he ended, Hinduism had been created....

'For it was no experience of his own that rose to the lips of Swami Vivekananda there. He did not even take advantage of the occasion to tell the story of his Master. Instead of either of these, it was the religious consciousness of India that spoke through him, the message of his whole people, as determined by their whole past. And as he spoke, in the youth and noonday of the West, a nation, sleeping in the shadows of the darkened half of the earth, on the far side of the Pacific, waited in spirit for the words that would be borne on the dawn that was travelling towards them, to reveal to them the secret of their own greatness and strength.

'Others stood beside Swami Vivekananda, on the same platform as he, as apostles of particular creeds and churches. But it was his glory that he came to

preach a religion to which each of these was, in his own words, 'only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal.' He stood there, as he declared, to tell of one (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) who had said of them all, not that one or another was true, in this or that respect or for this or that reason, but that 'All these are threaded upon Me as pearls upon a string. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there.' To the Hindu, says Vivekananda, 'Man is not travelling from error to truth, but climbing up from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher.' This, and the teaching of *mukti*—the doctrine that 'Man is to *become* divine by *realizing* the Divine', that religion is perfected in us only when it has led us to 'Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, that One who is the only Soul, of which all souls are but delusive manifestations'—may be taken as the two great outstanding truths which, authenticated by the longest and most complex experience in human history, India proclaimed through him to the modern world of the West.

'For India herself, the short address forms, as has been said, a brief Charter of Enfranchisement. Hinduism in its wholeness, the speaker bases on the Vedas, but he spiritualizes our conception of the word, even while he utters it. To him, all that is true is Veda. 'By the Vedas' he says 'no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times.' Incidentally, he discloses his conception of the *Sanātana Dharma*.... To his mind, there could be no sect, no school, no sincere religious experience of the Indian people—however like an aberration it might seem to the individual—that might rightly be excluded from the embrace of Hinduism. And of this Indian Mother-Church, according to him, the distinctive doctrine is that of the *Iṣta-Devata*, the right of each soul to choose its own path and to seek God in its own way....'

'Yet would not this inclusion of all, this freedom of each, be the glory of Hinduism that it is, were it not for her supreme call, of sweetest promise, 'Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye that dwell in higher spheres! For I have found that Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. And knowing Him, ye also shall be saved from death!' Here is the word for the sake of which all the rest exists and has existed. Here is the crowning realisation into which all others are resolvable.'

In conclusion he presented his idea of a universal religion without temporal, spatial, or sectarian bounds, and declared:

'Offer such a religion and all the nations will follow you. Aṣoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith. Akbar's, though more to the purpose, was only a parlour-meeting. It was reserved for America to proclaim to all quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every religion.

'May He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to carry out your noble idea. The star arose in the East, it travelled steadily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world; and now it is again rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the Sanpo, a thousandfold more effulgent than it ever was before.

'Hail Columbia, motherland of liberty. It has been given to thee, who never dipped her hand in her neighbour's blood, who never found out that the shortest way of becoming rich was by robbing one's neighbours, it has been given to thee to march in the vanguard of civilization with the flag of harmony.'

And in his *Address at the Final Session*, the Swami rose to luminous heights and, highlighting the achievements of the Parliament, uttered these prophetic words of hope:

'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. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of his resistance: "Help and not Fight", "Assimilation and not destruction", "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."'

'His words are great music', says Romain Rolland about Vivekananda's utterances (*Life of Vivekananda*, p. 146). Vivekananda set to music the tune that was haunting the hearts of millions in the modern world—the tune of unity and harmony, of love and peace, the tune of the divine in the heart of man.

With his appearances in the Parliament, the unknown monk blossomed into a world-figure, the obscure wandering monk of India became the prophet of harmony and peace and of East-West unity. His name resounded on all sides. His life-size pictures were seen posted up in the streets of Chicago with the words 'The Monk Vivekananda' beneath them, with passers-by doing reverence with bowed head. The press extolled him as a Prophet and Seer. *The New York Herald* spoke of him in these words:

'He is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation!'

The Boston Evening Transcript wrote of him:

'He is a great favourite at the Parliament from the grandeur of his sentiments and his appearance as well. If he merely crossed the platform he is applauded; and this marked approval of thousands he accepts in a child-like spirit of gratification without a trace of conceit.... At the Parliament of Religions they used to keep Vivekananda until the end of the programme to make people stay till the end of the session. On a warm day, when a prosy speaker talked too long and people began going home by hundreds, the Chairman would get up and announce that Swami Vivekananda would give a short address just before the benediction. Then he would have the peaceable hundreds perfectly in tether. The four thousand fanning people in the Hall of Columbus would sit smiling and expectant, waiting for an hour or two of other men's speeches, to

listen to Vivekananda for fifteen minutes. The Chairman knew the old rule of keeping the best until the last.'

The Review of Reviews described his address as 'noble and sublime'. Among personal appreciations, the one by the Hon. Merwin-Marie Snell is specially noteworthy (quoted in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda,* p. 312):

'No religious body made so profound an impression upon the Parliament and the American people at large as did Hinduism.... And by far the most important and typical representative of Hinduism was Swami Vivekananda who, in fact, was beyond question the most popular and influential man in the Parliament. He frequently spoke, both on the floor of the Parliament itself and at the meeting of the Scientific Section, over which I had the honour to preside, and on all occasions he was received with greater enthusiasm than any other speaker, Christian or Pagan. The people thronged about him wherever he went and hung with eagerness on his every word.... The most rigid of orthodox Christians say of him, "He is indeed a prince among men."'

Vivekananda had often to deal with religious bigotry or wilful misrepresentations of India. An incident that occurred in the Parliament, as told in the second volume of the *Historians' History of the World* (pp. 547-48) by *The Times*, is illustrative of the boldness and self-confidence of this great Emissary of India (quoted in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda,* p. 314):

'A striking illustration of what in another case would be termed insularity of outlook was brought to view by a noted Hindu when addressing a vast audience at the World's Congress of Religions in America, in the city of Chicago, in 1893. Pausing in the midst of his discourse, the speaker asked that every member of the audience who had read the sacred books of the Hindus, and who, therefore, had first-hand knowledge of their religion, would raise his hand. Only three or four hands were raised, though the audience represented, presumably, the leading theologians of many lands. Glancing benignly over the assembly, the Hindu raised himself to his full height, and in a voice every accent of which must have smitten the audience as a rebuke, pronounced these simple words, "And yet you dare to judge us."'

Though he was acclaimed by press and people, and though the mansions of some of the wealthiest of Chicago society were open to him, his heart bled for the poor of his distant land. On the very day of his triumph, he was the guest of a wealthy Chicago citizen. In the princely room allotted to him, he could not sleep at night when he thought of the terrible contrast of the opulence of America and the poverty of his own people. His bed of down seemed to him a bed of thorns. His pillow was wet with his tears. He gazed in sorrow through the window into the darkness outside. Overcome with emotion, he fell to the ground crying out, 'O Mother, what do I care for name and fame when my motherland remains sunk in utmost poverty! To what

a sad pass have we poor Indians come when millions of us die for want of a handful of rice, and here they spend millions of rupees upon their personal comfort! Who will raise the masses in India? Who will give them bread? Show me, O Mother, how I can help them.'

Surely was he the Emissary of India, of the *people* of India, whose weal and woe was uppermost in his mind even when lionized by the most affluent nation on earth!

He intended his work in America to have a twofold effect, namely, educating the American nation in the rational and universal spiritual message of India's Vedānta and eliciting its sympathy and help and its scientific know-how for the material redemption of India.

America at the time of Vivekananda's visit was celebrating, through the Columbian Exposition, her great achievements in science and technology, industry and social progress. Side by side, America had been experiencing a spiritual hunger which industry and wealth could not extinguish. Religion has been one of the prominent urges of America from the time of its founding fathers, along with the spirit of liberty and human dignity. The American constitution made the state secular, separating the church from the state. American religion centred in the churches was riddled with bigotry and intolerance, sectarianism and denominational exclusiveness. This was in contrast to the liberty and tolerance of its political state. Apart from the denominational religions, the state had cultivated, from President Washington in 1776 onwards to President Nixon in our time, what American historians call 'a civil religion' of its own, but without any mystical elements. It was the religion that the American Presidents and other high state dignitaries invoked on state occasions with a general commitment to God, but not any denominational God, not even the Christian God. The universality and tolerance of this civil religion, which embraced all Christian and non-Christian denominations within the vast United States of America, stood in sharp contrast to the exclusiveness and intolerance of its several denominational churches.

The progress of science and rationalism in the nineteenth century steadily undermined the foundations of all Christian denominations. Humanism, which rationalism offered as a substitute, could not, however, quench man's spiritual thirst. In the third decade of the nineteenth century, America threw up several religious movements which, while tending to uphold reason, sought to fulfil also man's hunger for spiritual *experience*. Christian Science, New Thought, and a few decades later, Theosophy, were such movements which drew to themselves

the more vigorous 'dropouts' from the denominational churches. They were, however, largely pseudo-science and pseudo-christianity. They had been influenced in varying degrees by Indian thought which had started percolating to the West through translations of the Hindu sacred books by the orientalist scholars. *The American spirit was thus getting impregnated by the infiltration of Hindu thought.* This process became intensified when the three American stalwarts emerged on the scene, namely, Emerson, Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. From 1830 onwards, references to Hindu religious texts began to appear in Emerson's *Journal.* Thoreau's work *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* is an enthusiastic eulogy of the *Gītā* and some of the great poems and philosophies of India. He took for his motto *Ex Oriente Lux*—'Light from the East'. Walt Whitman, who died only a year before Vivekananda's arrival in America, had expressed Vedāntic ideas and sentiments in his books, especially in the *Leaves of Grass.* His book, *Passage to India,* bears a highly symbolic title. His '*A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads*' contains his admission of Hindu influence on him.

These various spiritual influences, fermenting and working for half a century, added to the rational spirit engendered by the contemporary scientific revolution, predisposed the American spirit to Vedānta. When Vivekananda stood before the Parliament of Religions on its opening day, the moment was ripe with this potentiality. There was discernible the expectation of a *message* and not mere oratory. In the words of Sister Nivedita in her penetrating 'Introduction' to Vivekananda's *Complete Works,* Vol. I:

'The vast audience that faced him represented exclusively the occidental mind, but included some development of all that in this was most distinctive. Every nation in Europe had poured in its human contribution upon America, and notably upon Chicago, where the Parliament was held. Much of the best as well as some of the worst of modern effort and struggle is at all times to be met with within the frontiers of that Western Civic Queen, whose feet are upon the shores of Lake Michigan, as she sits and broods, with the light of the north in her eyes. There is very little in the modern consciousness, very little inherited from the past of Europe, that does not hold some outpost in the city of Chicago. And while the teeming life and eager interests of that centre may seem to some of us for the present largely a chaos, yet they are undoubtedly making for the revealing of some noble and slow-wrought ideal of human unity, when the days of their ripening shall be fully accomplished.

'Such was the psychological area, such the sea of mind, young, tumultuous overflowing with its own energy and self-assurance, yet inquisitive and alert withal, which confronted Vivekananda when he rose to speak. Behind him lay a world that dated itself from the Vedas and remembered itself in the Upaniṣads, a world to which Buddhism was almost modern; a world that was filled with religious systems of faiths and creeds; a quiet land steeped in the sunlight of the tropics, the dust of whose roads had been trodden of the feet of the saints

for ages upon ages. Behind him, in short, lay India, with her thousands of years of national development, in which she had sounded many things, proved many things, and realized almost all, save only her own perfect unanimity from end to end of her great expanse of time and space, as to certain fundamental and essential truths, held by all her people in common.

'These, then, were the two mind-floods, two immense rivers of thought as it were, Eastern and Modern, of which the yellow-clad wanderer on the platform of the Parliament of Religions formed for a moment the point of confluence. The formulation of the *Common Bases of Hinduism* was the inevitable result of the shock of their contact, in a personality so impersonal!'

After this tremendous stir in Chicago, Vivekananda spent three years in America, undertaking whirlwind tours through its cities and towns, lecturing and teaching, correcting false ideas about India sedulously spread by bigoted Christian missionaries, and combating bigotry and intolerance of the churches. He also received warm support and encouragement from hundreds of liberal Christians and from several agnostic and rationalistic people of America.

He soon began to concentrate also on training an intimate band of disciples, who would have a deeper insight into the broad spirituality of Vedānta, and on publishing a few books on important aspects of Vedānta. His young American disciple hailing from Detroit, Miss Christina Greenstidel, was later to go to India to help his mission there as Sister Christine. Important books like *Karma Yoga*, and *Rāja Yoga* came out in quick succession. He started the first Vedānta Society in America in New York in 1896, and spoke for the first and only time on his great teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, in New York in his famous lecture on 'My Master'.

In the meantime, news of his tremendous success in America reached India and roused a wave of national pride and enthusiasm. His fellow disciples in Calcutta remembered Sri Ramakrishna's prophecy that Naren (Vivekananda) would shake the world. And he kept writing a barrage of epistles to his young friends, spiritual brothers, and distinguished personalities in India exhorting them to be up and doing to raise the condition of the common people and the women of India and bridge the gulf between Hindu philosophic vision and Hindu social practice. He guided his disciples and brothers in India to organize themselves for the service of the nation, to start journals, and publish books conveying the message of Practical Vedānta, the message of the new *yugadharma,* all of which were to become galvanized when he would be returning to India early 1897, to burst upon it like a spiritual avalanche, giving a stirring message of man-making and nation-building

to his people, in a series of lectures which now comprise the well-known book *Lectures from Colombo to Almora.*

He broke his stay in America by a first visit to England from August to December 1895. He again visited England from April to July 1896 and again from October to December 1896, on his way back to India. He delivered several lectures in England, including the famous lectures on *Jñāna Yoga.* He also met distinguished orientalists like Max Muller in England and Paul Deussen in Germany. England gave him four of his greatest disciples, namely, J. J. Goodwin, his devoted stenographer in America, to whom the world owes the preservation of much of Vivekananda's speeches in the West and in India, Miss Margaret Noble, who later came to India to carry on his mission there as Sister Nivedita, and became his best interpreter to the world, especially in her famous book, *The Master As I Saw Him,* and Captain and Mrs. Sevier, who also later accompanied him to India and founded the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati in the district of Almora in the Himalayas. He met several distinguished thinkers in England and the continent, as also in the United States, where, among others, the philosopher and psychologist William James and electrician Nicolas Tesla showed sympathetic interest in him and in his thought.

Before returning to India at the end of 1896, the Swami had consolidated his American work by getting two of his brother-monks to continue the work in his absence, namely Swamis Saradananda and Abhedananda. After completing the first stage of consolidation of his work in India from January 1897 to June 1899, the Swami left India in June 1899 on a second tour to America and Europe, when a second Vedānta Society was started in San Francisco and Swami Saradananda, who was recalled to India from America for the Indian work, was replaced by another brother-monk, Swami Turiyananda. In 1900, Swami Vivekananda addressed the Congress of Religions in Paris and travelled through several European countries, before he returned to India towards the end of 1900. And he passed away on 4 July 1902, at the young age of 39 years 5 months, and 22 days.

Swami Vivekananda was a great admirer of the western spirit and achievements. He admired its science, its technology, its industrial efficiency, and its humanism. And he also told his Indian followers that the western connection of India through Britain had helped to break India's ossified and stagnant society and civilization, throwing open the possibility of building up a more dynamic and creative society and civilization in its place in the modern age (*Letters of Swami Vivek-*

ananda, Second (New) Edition, p. 45). But he found the western philosophy of man shallow and harmful, and unfitted to lead man to total fulfilment. Modern western civilization is frankly materialistic and secular. It neither seeks nor derives any inspiration from western religion, which had functioned as its antagonist from the sixteenth century. Its concept of man is merely as a biological organism seeking organic satisfactions and organic survival. Such a philosophy may be a dynamic progressive force in the short run; but it is fraught with evil in the long run, firstly, because it falls far short of the truth about man as ascertained by a scientific and penetrating study of man in depth such as was undertaken by the Vedānta in India; secondly, because it does not explain ethical or aesthetic phenomena or spiritual experience, which involve a view of man deeper than the ego centred in his organic individuality. Swami Vivekananda foresaw that these severe limitations in its philosophy of man were bound to turn its successes into ashes in its mouth at no distant time. He warned often while he was in the West that the West was sitting on a volcano, and pointed it out in the clearest tones on his return to India. Says he (*Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, p. 57):

'The whole of western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. You will find that the very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang up are the very centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground, and make spirituality the basis of her life. And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upaniṣads.'

The Upaniṣads speak of man as essentially divine; and Vivekananda defined religion as the manifestation of this divinity already within man. It was this vision of man that he presented with telling effect, first, during his addresses at the Parliament of Religions, when he had called humanity 'Children of Immortal Bliss', and, next, in his subsequent lectures and discourses, including those on the subject of *Rāja Yoga*, the exposition of which by him, with all its experimental approaches and attractions, is a masterly presentation of India's scientific approach to religion. In the flysheet to the edition of his *Rāja Yoga* is contained his testament, in a brief utterance, of a practical spirituality comprehensive of man's external and internal life, of his search for *abhyudaya* or socio-political welfare in the external field and of his search for *niḥśreyasa* or spiritual emancipation, through moral and spiritual growth, in the inner field, leading to total fulfilment:

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal (of life) is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature external (through physical science, technology, and

the socio-political processes), and internal (through the science of religion). Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and *Be Free*. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

Since Swami Vivekananda uttered that warning in 1897, the West has experienced two world wars, the second more shattering than the first, with recurring political and economic crises in between. The end of the second World War found Europe disillusioned and at the end of its tether, but America at the height of its power and glory, with disillusionment two decades away. But the twenty-five years of post-war history of America has only confirmed Vivekananda's diagnosis of modern western man's ailments. Modern man's material affluence stands in sharp contrast to his inner poverty and insufficiency. His puny ego is a fugitive entity ever at the mercy of the pulls of his sensate nature and ever a prey to tensions, leading to increasing ailments, both psycho-somatic and psychic. Western thinkers are becoming more and more alive to this problem. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* is how the late Zurich psychologist Jung characterized him in his book of that title. Modern man is 'alienated' from his own true self, declare other psychologists. In the meantime the crisis deepens with every passing year; and the younger generation is dazed and bewildered.

Western Society wobbles from crisis to crisis with its sex explosions, crime explosions, drug explosions, and other similar distortions of the human psyche. And these ailments of the West tend to affect the whole world. After the First World War and the trade depression that followed in the wake of the Wall Street collapse in America, it used to be said that if America sneezed, Europe caught cold. Today, however, if America sneezes, the whole world is likely to catch cold, and not merely Europe. The spiritual health of a powerful nation like America is necessary for the spiritual well-being of the whole world as much as of America.

While some of the western thinkers are achieving a correct diagnosis of the modern ills on the lines seen by Swami Vivekananda, very few have the insight into the problem to be able to prescribe the correct remedy. In fact, it is generally the case that most of the remedies proposed, and even applied, are worse than the disease. That is because the diagnosis and the remedy are based on the same discredited philosophy of man as merely an organic entity seeking organic satisfactions. The deeper spiritual dimensions of man remain increasingly ill-nourished. As a result, mere pursuit of false values of material

success and affluence have begun to repel thousands of the sensitive young minds, as also some thinkers, in Europe and America today. Vedānta and the spiritual core of all religions have always maintained that worldliness is a spiritual disease and that 'living in the world' is not the same as 'being worldly'. While living in the world, man has to strive to achieve awareness of his true spiritual nature. If this is not done, his life becomes a false life and his living in the world becomes his living in worldliness. The so-called 'normal' 'adjusted' life is truly the abnormal and false life. What Vivekananda conveyed as the Vedāntic conviction over seventy years ago is being echoed by some western thinkers themselves today. Says the English Psychiatrist R.D. Laing in his *The Divided Self* (Preface to Pelican Edition, 1964):

'Thus I would wish to emphasize that our 'normal' 'adjusted' state is too often the abdication of ecstasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities, that many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adjust to false realities.'

For want of the guidance of an authentic spiritual tradition, post-war western youth are taking to easy and dangerous ways of achieving this ecstasy and transcendence through drugs and other harmful media. Many turn to India, not to grasp the Vedantic vision of the divine in the heart of man and to take authentic steps towards its realization, but to search for means to achieve some psychic 'trips', remaining, however, tethered to his organic dimension. The minority of truth-seeking groups among them, however, become drawn to the spiritual beauty and rational strength of Vedānta. In a letter written in 1894 from America about the best gift that India has to give to the waiting world of such seekers, whose number has been steadily on the increase since his time, Swami Vivekananda says (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 43):

'The whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummeries, and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitude unto the present day. Now the time has come!'

In his illuminating lecture on 'The Mission of the Vedānta' delivered in India in 1897, Vivekananda predicted, on the basis of his mastery of *adhyātmavidyā*, of the science of man in depth, the disillusionment in store for the West (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 181-82):

'There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the western world. There, too, they have their thinkers, great men. And they are already finding

out that this race after gold and power is vanity of vanities; many, nay, most of the cultured men and women there, are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilization, and they are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy; the religion they have had, Christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood, and is, as understood hitherto, found to be insufficient. The thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the Vedānta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they are hungering and thirsting. And it is no wonder that this is so.'

The West is responding to the call of the East, especially of India, in a big way today. Vivekananda's message has continued to be spread in the West by the growing Vedānta movement conducted by his Ramakrishna Order, which conducts its work in the West depending entirely on the people of the West for its finances, and never on India. It is also being spread by several Western personalities and groups, students and writers. Max Muller wrote his *Ramakrishna : His Life and Sayings* during Vivekananda's own lifetime. Western books on Hinduism and Indian culture are a legion. And within twenty-six years of Vivekananda's passing away, there appeared the most remarkable Western response to his and his Master's message in Romain Rolland's *Life of Ramakrishna* and *Life of Vivekananda.*

In his *Life of Vivekananda,* Romain Rolland summons the West to grasp the hand of friendship extended by India through Vivekananda and others (p. 295):

'And that is where we find the hand of our allies, the thinkers of India, stretched out to meet us: for they have known for centuries past how to entrench themselves in this *Feste Burg* (a stronghold sure) and how to defend it while we, their brethren of the Great Invasions, have spent our strength in conquering the rest of the world. Let us stop and recover our breath! Let us lick our wounds! Let us return to our eagle's nest in the Himalayas....

'Among the spiritual ruins strewn all over Europe, our "Mother India" will teach you to excavate the unshakable foundations of your Capitole. She possesses the calculations and the plans of the "Master Craftsman". Let us rebuild our house with our own materials.'

And Rolland concludes his *Life of Vivekananda* with an invitation to the West (which is what he means when he addresses the Europeans,

since he was writing in French) to respond to the message of the East through Vivekananda, the great Emissary of Modern India, the message of the spiritual awakening of modern humanity, for which Vivekananda had sounded his clarion call: 'Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached' (p. 315):

> 'The work begun by the two Indian Masters will be carried on resolutely by other workmen of the spirit in other parts of the world. In whatever tunnel a man be digging, he is never out of sound of the sap being dug on the other side of the mountain....
>
> 'My European companions, I have made you listen through the wall, to the blows of the coming one, Asia.... Go to meet her! She is working for us. We are working for her. Europe and Asia are the two halves of the Soul....'

Out of the nine years of his public ministry, from the Parliament of Religions in 1893 up to his death in 1902, he gave over four most intense years to the West. The intensity of his nine years of work in the West and in India, the output of spiritual, intellectual, literary, and organizational work, besides the travelling involved during the period, is unprecedented. As a teacher of modern India and as her cultural and spiritual Emissary to the West, Vivekananda has illumined the horizon of national and international life, which has no parallel in world history. He was a man with a message and he delivered it fearlessly and intensely. He had said of himself: *Buddha had a message to the East; and I have a message to the West.* The West will one day learn to feel proud of this Emissary of modern India and learn from him the philosophy of a comprehensive spirituality and of total life-fulfilment and the way to its own redemption from a soul-killing materialism. When that response comes from the West, the tunnel connecting East and West would be complete, and a new culture, neither eastern nor western, but just human, would be evolved, making for the spiritual growth of man everywhere and tending to develop a 'mankind-awareness' in all nations, and marking the fulfilment of the purposes of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the modern age.

Part Four

INDIA'S EDUCATIONAL VISION

I AM thankful to the Calcutta University for inviting me to address its Convocation. The opportunity to share the joy of thousands of students receiving their degrees and diplomas affords a welcome stimulus to a speaker who is invited to address a University Convocation. I congratulate those among the students here who are the happy recipients of degrees and diplomas today. You have crossed a milestone in your life; it has involved much hard work and struggle on your part. But it needs no saying on my part that the road ahead is harder still; it will demand of you much greater effort and struggle. What is it that will sustain you in this arduous journey of life? And what is that journey's destination?

A University Convocation address is a fit medium to summon the youthful traveller who has crossed the milestone of formal education to pause, to look back over the road traversed, to look forward to the long, long way still lying ahead, and to try, if possible, to get a glimpse of the meaning and significance of all this that we call our education and life endeavour.

Our Emerging Nation

What is the society that is waiting to receive an Indian youth who has completed his university education today? In a national system of education, this is a vital question to be asked and answered by every student. If there is one characteristic that distinguishes modern India from all her past epochs, it is the quality of youthful dynamism. What we witness all around us today is the rapid modernization of an ancient society; sensitive minds can catch the sounds of crumbling social edifices all round and the coming up of new ones. It is already evident

that the modern transition in India is not going to be a mere patchwork affair. The nation is dead set to create a new future for itself and not a mere repetition of any of its past epochs, however glorious they may have been. The revolutionary aim of the modern renaissance in India was termed *root and branch reform* by Swami Vivekananda, one of its most authentic leaders and spokesmen. Conveying Vivekananda's vision of the India of the future, Sister Nivedita says in her famous book *The Master as I Saw Him* (pp. 201-202):

'I had asked him, in the morning, to tell me, in broad outline, what he felt to be the points of difference between his own schemes for the good of India and those preached by others. It was impossible to draw him out on this subject. On the contrary, he expressed appreciation of certain personal characteristics and lines of conduct adopted by some of the leaders of other schools, and I regarded the question as dismissed. Suddenly, in the evening, he returned to the subject on his own accord.

'"I disagree with all those", he said, "who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new state of things must be a *growth from within.*" '

New India, a Growth from Within

What is the meaning and significance of the national hope voiced by Vivekananda in the above passage? Let us view the three constituent elements in this hope: First, he refers to the strong points in the old Indian tradition; second, he speaks of the strong points of the modern age, meaning thereby the tested and universal elements of the modern Western tradition; and third, he envisages the forging of new India as a *growth from within*, by the assimilation by her people of the strong points of the modern age with the strong points of their own age-old national tradition.

The strong points of any cultural tradition lie primarily in its concept of human excellence and in the measure of its achievement. Among the many cultural legacies that the modern age has inherited, we can discern two types, one represented by the Greco-Roman and the other by the Indian. In each of these two legacies, we can discern a distinctive view of man and his highest excellence. The initial material bases of culture were generally common in almost all developed cultures of the past; these are a certain measure of socio-economic security through settled agriculture and simple arts and crafts, and some measure of effective socio-political organization. Once this is achieved, cultures begin to diverge from each other; the sole determinant of the divergence

of each culture from the rest, at this stage, is the direction of its mental life, the questions it asks, and the answers it receives, from experience. These stirrings in the mind of man signify the onset of a conscious and deliberate control and guidance of life's forces. In man, biological evolution, at this level, becomes self-conscious and purposive. It advances from the organic or physical to the higher fields of mind and thought. Twentieth-century biology recognizes this as the special field of human evolution where, in the words of Sir Julian Huxley, quality replaces quantity as the central criterion of progress. Endowed with the unique capacities for speech communication and transmission accumulated experience, man becomes endowed with a highly resilient cultural inheritance over and above his largely fixed and static genetic inheritance. With the aid of these, the mental component of culture advances from generation to generation, limited only by the prevailing level of technological efficiency.

Concepts of Human Excellence : Greek and Indian

It was this advance of evolution into the higher fields of mind and thought, into what Julian Huxley terms 'the science of human possibilities', that took place in two distinct areas of the ancient world, namely, India and Greece. The fruits of that advance have an universal and undying quality about them. They have nourished India, and through her, the Asian countries, on the one side, and the Greco-Roman world, and through it, the modern Western world, on the other.

The concept of man and his excellence in modern Western culture is derived from the ancient Greek concept of man as essentially a member of a community. The concept of human excellence in ancient Chinese culture is closely akin to this Greek type. This is what one may call the *political* view of man, in which even religion is viewed from the political point of view, tending to make it this-worldly and communal. Out of this view, however, has arisen all political, economic, and social struggles to improve the lot of man, on the one hand, and aggressive wars and colonial exploitations, on the other.

The finest fruit of this view is humanism. It tends to concentrate the energies of a culture in the field of the amelioration of the lot of man in *this* world. With its stress on social ethics, it helps man to achieve character, by educating him in social virtues and graces. By upholding the dignity of man, it enhances individual freedom and responsibility, and the sense of equality between man and man. On the intellectual plane, it directs the mental life of man to the adventure of knowledge, to the inquiry into the phenomena of nature and man.

Through the knowledge so gained, man achieves increasing control over nature's forces and the forces of collective human life. The first constitutes scientific, and the second socio-political, technology. Armed with these two disciplines, man achieves increasing hegemony over his external environment, and steady enhancement of his own welfare, individual and collective.

The Greek Concept of Man : Its Strength and Weakness

This was the concept of human excellence upheld in Greco-Roman culture. It gives us a picture of disciplined energy and resource, physical, emotional, and intellectual; it conveys the idea of man fired with the Promethean spark, unafraid of nature, unthwarted by obstacles, and inspired by the heroic maxim of 'dare, ever dare, and always dare', as voiced by Danton of the French Revolution. This concept of man was the priceless legacy left by the Greco-Roman culture to the modern Western culture. The Greco-Romans did not contribute much to the sciences of nature; they were largely averse to experimental science. Their special field was the science of man, of man in society, of man, frankly this-worldly, creating and enjoying the delights of culture and civilized existence. To quote from E. M. Forster's preface to Lowes Dickinson's *The Greek View of Life:*

> ' Greece hadn't science, it is true, and she had no global commitments, but she encompassed within the tiny circuit of her city states much that affects and afflicts the modern man in his relationship to society. And because her writers were intelligent and because they were sensitive, she has been able to send us news on these urgent matters which is still fresh, although it is over two thousand years.'

India and the Challenge of the Modern West

Into this Greco-Roman humanist legacy, the modern West has infused a new energy, namely, the energy of science and technology. The combined energy of the ancient and the modern in the Western tradition has burst all regional bounds and become pervasive of the whole world, throwing a challenge to every cultural legacy in the modern world. It is this challenge, with its strong and weak points mixed up together, that India has been facing since the nineteenth century. Few cultures in the modern world have been able to stand up to this powerful challenge. In the passage from Nivedita quoted earlier, we have seen Vivekananda referring to the strong points of the Indian cultural tradition. What are these strong points in our culture which can stand up to the modern challenge, meet it on an equal footing, and contribute something substantial to its enrichment, even while enriching itself with its contributions?

I have earlier said that India has been experiencing the crumbling down of many of her old social edifices in the wake of her contact with the West. Old social edifices crumble when the values which sustain them become outworn and obsolete, just like old buildings falling apart when the cement between their bricks becomes weak and loses the power to bind. It can be expected therefore that nothing that is weak in the Indian cultural tradition, nothing that is outworn and obsolete, nothing that is out of tune with the demands of the modern age, will be able to stand the onrush of the modern transition. It is worthy of mention that all the leaders of the modern renaissance in India, who had insight into the inherent strong points of the Indian tradition, welcomed the impact of the modern Western Culture on India and the opportunity it provided to build a stronger and purer India.

Vivekananda and the Indian Renaissance

This positive approach is most evident in Vivekananda who, in the sweep of his thought and the loftiness of his vision, may be ranked as the foremost architect not only of his own country's future, but, what may eventually turn out to be, one of the architects of a more healthy future world order as well. Speaking about him to Romain Rolland, Rabindranath Tagore said:

'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him, everything is positive and nothing negative.'

In his book, *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru says about him (p. 400):

'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems; he was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

If Vivekananda envisaged a 'root and branch reform' and welcomed the impact of modern world forces in India, he also had intimate communion with, and faith in, the strong and undying elements in his country's heritage. He had seen in the glorious life of his own master, Sri Ramakrishna, the reauthentication of these strong and undying elements, and also experienced them in his own life. This strong and undying element is initially the contribution of the Upaniṣads in their vision of a new dimension of human excellence distinct from the one bequeathed by the Greeks. As the Greeks and others specialized in the subject of man in society, man in space and time, India through the Upaniṣads specialized in the subject of man in depth, man above and beyond his political and social dimensions. This yielded the *spiritual* view of man as distinct from, as was stated earlier, the *political*

view of the Greeks. Ancient Greece studied the *without* of nature as revealed by the senses, and ancient India inquired into the *within* of nature as revealed in one of nature's unique products, namely, man, as revealed in the depths of his consciousness and ego sense.

The Upaniṣads and Indian Culture

It was an inquiry which challenged not only life but also death, and did not stop till it had revealed the immortal and divine Self of man, the Ātman, of which, as the Vedas express it, life and death are but shadows—*yasya chāyā amṛtaṁ yasya mṛtyuḥ.*

No culture can achieve depth without its sponsoring philosophy tackling the problem of death. This was one of the major drawbacks of Greek culture, which failed to assimilate to itself the deeper legacy left by Socrates and the Mystery Religions. This may also be said of the modern Western culture which has failed to *assimilate* to itself the deep spirituality of the Christian religion. Says Lowes Dickinson in his *The Greek View of Life* (p. 68):

'The more completely the Greek felt himself to be at home in the world, the more happily and freely he abandoned himself to the exercise of his powers, the more intensely and vividly he lived in action and in passion, the more alien, bitter, and incomprehensible did he find the phenomena of age and death. On this problem, so far as we can judge, he received from his religion but little light and still less consolation. The music of his brief life closed with a discord unresolved; and even before reason had brought her criticism to bear upon his creed, its deficiency was forced upon him by his feeling.'

What the ancient Greeks neglected became the ruling passion of the ancient Indians. Starting as a trickle in the earlier period, this intimation of something profound and significant within man became a flood in the epoch of the Upaniṣads, issuing in a systematic, detached and scientific pursuit of the truths of the inner world, of the depths of experience. The Upaniṣads convey to us an impression of the tremendous fascination that this new field of inquiry held for the contemporary Indian mind. And that fascination has continued to hold India's mind in thrall down to our own times. This new field is today beginning to attract the serious attention of advanced thinkers in the modern age.

The Indian Concept of Man: Its Strength and Weakness

By their emphasis on inner penetration, by their whole-hearted advocacy of what the ancient Greeks centuries later formulated in the dictum 'Man, know thyself', but at which they themselves had stopped half way, the Upaniṣads gave a permanent orientation to the Indian

cultural experiment, and initiated a scientific and non-dogmatic tradition in the field of religion. To adapt E. M. Forster's remark about the legacy of Greece, quoted earlier, 'much that *affects* us and *afflicts* us' in India, and in the countries influenced by Indian culture, is the fruit of this Upaniṣadic orientation. The stress on inward depth had, however, one special consequence for Indian culture, in that all its expansive outward movements throughout history have been non-aggressive; every word of its message for man 'has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it...and therefore we live', as remarked by Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 106).

The supreme fruit of this inward penetration was, as was said earlier, the discovery of the Ātman, the immortal divine Self of man and the universe, infinite and therefore non-dual. Referring to the significance of this concept of human excellence in his address at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda says:

> 'Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect? ... The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?—was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair.'

The answer to this cry of the human heart came to the purified heart of an Upaniṣadic sage who proclaimed his realization in trumpet voice to all humanity, addressing them as *amṛtasya putrāḥ*, children of immortality:

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
ā ye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ;
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam
ādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt;
Tameva viditvā ati mṛtyumeti,
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—

'Hear, ye children of immortality! Even ye that reside in the higher spheres! I have *realized* the infinite Self of man, luminous as the sun and beyond all darkness (of ignorance and delusion). Realizing Him alone can man transcend death; there is no other way to the goal.'

Īśāvāsyamidaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat—'All this that is changeful in this ephemeral world must be enveloped by the Lord', sings the opening verse of the *Īśā Upaniṣad*.

The Upaniṣads exhort man to realize this truth for himself. In the trail blazed by this spiritual discovery marched India, first one part, then another, until the initial spiritual leaven had leavened the whole country. It is an arresting procession of spiritual seekers, among whom the most epoch-making luminaries were Buddha, Śaṅkara, and Caitanya in the historic past, and Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the present.

Universality, non-aggressiveness, and humanism are three of the essential values which Indian culture derived from the spirituality of her Upaniṣads. Its concern is with man as such and not with man cut up into caste, creed, sect, or race. The achievement by man of his highest glory and excellence is what it seeks and advocates. The Upaniṣads taught India to see that excellence in spirituality.

The distinctiveness of a culture is revealed in the type of man in whom that culture finds its own highest excellence embodied. A culture is worldly, if worldly success is what its most admired hero represents; it is spiritual or unworldly, if renunciation and spirituality are what its most admired hero embodies. Such admiration acts as a silent leaven in the rest of the body politic. If there is any truth in calling Indian culture spiritual, it is not because all or most of the Indians are more spiritual than other people; but it derives from the fact that the most admired hero of the Indian people has been, and is, the man of God; and that the deepfelt aspiration of the Indian people is to be spiritual themselves. To quote Dr. Radhakrishnan from his book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (pp. 381-82):

> 'The ideal man of India is not the magnanimous man of Greece or the valiant knight of medieval Europe, but the free man of the spirit, who has attained insight into the universe by rigid discipline and practice of disinterested virtues; who has freed himself from the prejudices of his time and place. It is India's pride that she has clung fast to this ideal and produced in every generation and in every part of the country, from the time of the *ṛṣis* of the Upaniṣads and Buddha to Ramakrishna and Gandhi, men who strove successfully to realize this ideal.'

If *adhyātma vidyā*, the science of spirituality, is the strongest element in the Indian heritage, positive sciences and technology form her weakest points. She had made splendid contributions in these fields for centuries. But drawn by the lure of the divine within, and following the technique of meditation and inner withdrawal, she comparatively neglected the world without and the technique of action and struggle in the outer world; and this neglect of man's outer life became almost cruel in succeeding centuries. This is the one single cause behind almost all the maladies afflicting modern Indian society, not only its

poverty and ignorance, but also its piety-fringed worldliness and social harshness. A policy that produced a few spiritual giants produced also millions of arrested and stunted personalities and any number of selfish crooks in between.

Vivekananda's Tackling of Our National Weaknesses

The experiences of ancient Greece and the modern West, on the one side, and India on the other, reveal the strength and weakness of all specializations in the field of culture; it also demonstrates the partial character of all existing cultures, and their complementarity. This is particularly true of the Indian and Western cultural legacies. That these two are not antithetical but basically akin was brought home to our people by Vivekananda who traced the cause of our national degradation to our attitude of false superiority, to our considering ourselves as the 'chosen people', and to our consequent policy of national isolation from the rest of the world. Speaking on the subject of 'The Work before Us' in Madras in 1897, Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 272):

'We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. That we did not go out to compare things with other nations, did not mark the workings that have been all around us, has been the one great cause of this degradation of the Indian mind. We have paid the penalty; let us do it no more.'

In a letter written from Bombay in September 1892, the Swami writes (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* Fourth Edition, p. 54):

'So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again. And over and above all, we must cease to tyrannize.'

Writing from Yokohama in July 1893, he exhorts the nation thus (*ibid.*, p. 64):

'Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march. Do you love man? Do you love your country? Then, come, let us struggle for higher and better things. ... India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men ... to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large, and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers.'

Writing from New York in November 1894, he says (*ibid.*, p. 148):

'To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

'Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself—is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate.

'Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

'We must mix therefore with all the races of the earth.'

Assimilation of Western Values by Modern India

What India is dead set to achieve in the modern age is the correcting of this centuries-old imbalance in her outlook and way of life. No more is she going to neglect her outer life. This mood and earnestness is writ large on her modern renaissance which has for its aim the all-round flowering of her national genius. All the movements of India's soul—political, economic, or cultural—during the past sixty-five years of this century, have had for their one aim the awakening of our people to the realities of the modern age. The nation has been engaged in educating herself in the fundamental values, the strong points, of the modern Western culture. The first value to be absorbed was political freedom. To a people who had for centuries looked on political freedom and political slavery with an almost equal eye in their pursuit of a post-mortem salvation, political awakening was the necessary prelude to the correction of all other national imbalances. All the virtues and graces of man's social existence proceed from political freedom. Such freedom and the sense of responsibility that flows from it are the twin values that constitute the primary dignity of man. This is the modern concept of citizenship in which man achieves self-realization in the context of a free society. The adoption by free India of a democratic republican constitution for herself marks a milestone in the political education of our people. *The constitution is the first of a series of new documents, to be followed by others in due course, including a common civil code for all, which will eventually replace all existing religious codes of the country in so far as they deal with the secular life of the Indian people.*

Nation-building in Modern India

These new documents will complete the process of nation-building in India out of her diverse racial, linguistic, and religious elements; they will constitute the new national *dharma-śāstra* of this age, and provide the necessary firm secular base for Indian spiritual life, allowing for the release of the truly spiritual forces of all her great religions, what one may call her national *mokṣa-śāstra* traditions, into creative and constructive channels. *It is only when the spiritual forces of the great world religions in India become fused into a unified current of a Godward passion and a manward love that she will achieve full nationhood.*

Citizenship in a democracy involves, as I said earlier, not only freedom but also responsibility. This sense of social responsibility releases the energies of the citizen for the service of his fellow-citizens, ensuring thereby the all-round development of society, and its unity and integrity. If 'we, the people of India', have given ourselves a free constitution, as the preamble to our constitution proclaims, it is again we, the people of India, on whom lies the responsibility to ensure the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation through hard work and mutual co-operation. *In this sphere of practical politics, success depends upon the whole nation living down much of its own obsolete traditions, and assimilating the traditions of the modern West.* Such assimilation depends upon the igniting of the Promethean spark in every one of our citizens, making him or her a reservoir of disciplined energy and resource.

This is what is being done in our country since our independence. During the last eighteen years after independence, India has achieved by way of economic development and social transformation more than what she had achieved in the hundred years before independence. This is proof of the youthful vitality of the nation, and its assimilation of the spirit of energy and progress, action and endeavour, of the modern West. Under the pressure of mounting problems yet remaining to be solved, the nation should not fail to recognize its own solid achievements. Constant self-deprecation saps the vitality of a nation, says Vivekananda, by destroying its faith in itself. *Ajñaśca aśraddadhānāśca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati*—'the ignorant, the faithless, and the doubting come to ruin', says the *Gītā* (IV. 40).

Modern India : the Meeting Ground of the Ancient Greek and the Ancient Hindu

Nation-building in the case of India, we should always remember, means nothing more than forging a new body-politic for her undying

soul. That soul had so far been housed in a body inconsistent with its own majesty and glory. No other society in the world has exhibited such a contrast between ideals and realities as India in her spiritual vision and her body-politic. In the poignant words of Vivekananda (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 69):

'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.'

For the first time in her long history, India has resolved to translate her vision of human excellence into reality by earnestly embarking on the creation of a free and equalitarian society offering opportunities for self-development to every one of her citizens.

Nivedita, in her book quoted earlier, refers to the words of Vivekananda, uttered during his second voyage to the West, giving this much-needed orientation to the Indian tradition (p. 203):

'Hitherto, the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its knowing only two words—renunciation and *mukti* (salvation). Only "*mukti*" here! Nothing for the householder!

'But these are the very people whom I want to help. ...

'And so strength must come to the nation through education.'

Pointing to the importance of this utterance, Nivedita remarks (*ibid*):

'I thought at the time, and I think increasingly as I consider it, that this one talk of my master had been well worth the whole voyage, to have heard.'

Whatever success India has so far achieved in this adventure, in this war against poverty, social injustice, and general stagnation, is the fruit of her assimilation of the spirit of humanism and progress of the modern West. This is the tribute that our ancient nation is paying today to the spirit of ancient Greece and the modern West; it is the finest tribute that any culture can pay to another. It was Vivekananda, as I have already said, who first pointed out the basic kinship between the strong points of the two cultural legacies of India and the West. He foresaw that modern world conditions afforded the best opportunity for the evolution of a complete human civilization by the cross-fertilization of these two legacies. He considered India to be the finest laboratory for this momentous cultural fusion; he preached the Indian national philosophy of Vedānta in East and West alike, in view of its synthesis of the inner and outer aspects of human life in its synoptic vision of a comprehensive spirituality; and he bent the energies of her

modern renaissance in that high direction. Stressing this central feature of the Indian renaissance in his lecture on 'The Work Before Us', Vivekananda says (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 271):

'England, nay the whole of Europe (and America), has to thank Greece for its civilization. It is Greece that speaks through everything (in the West). Every building, every piece of furniture has the impress of Greece upon it; European (Western) science and art are nothing but Grecian. (Words within brackets not Vivekananda's).

'*Today the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India.* Thus slowly and silently the leaven has come; the broadening, the life-giving, and the revivalist movement that we see all around us has been worked out by these forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is before us; and although at first we have been deluded a little and wanted to narrow things down, we are finding out today that these generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books. They are the carrying out, to the rigorously logical effect, of the primary conceptions of our own ancestors. *To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalize, is the end of our aims.* And all the time, we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our scriptures.'

Spirituality and Evolution

In developing and perfecting its *adhyātma vidyā*, the science of the Self, India has given a spiritual direction to human evolution consistent with the dignity of man and his infinite potentialities. Twentieth-century biology, as I said before, enthrones quality over quantity as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, and upholds fulfilment as its goal, in place of numerical increase or mere survival. The Upaniṣads uphold that this search for fulfilment will take man progressively beyond his physical and sensate awareness which is finite and limited, and give him a glimpse of his infinite spiritual dimension. It is only through such spiritual growth that man can achieve fulfilment by realizing his true dimension as the Ātman, which is infinite and universal, and embrace his fellow-beings in bonds of love and service.

This is the strongest of the strong elements of the Indian heritage referred to in the remark of Vivekananda quoted in the earlier part of this lecture. It is an element needed to be fostered not only by India, but also by the modern world. As the modern West has posed a challenge to India, India in turn has thrown a challenge to the West. Both are healthy challenges, adequate response to which by each will ensure the steady march of man everywhere to the evolutionary goal of fulfilment. The West has need to find a remedy for what E.M. Forster, in the passage quoted earlier, refers to as those elements of her Greek legacy which *afflict* her. This malady that afflicts the modern West

has been best described by the German philosopher, Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 404):

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

Since the two legacies are complementary, and since the Indian contribution refers to man in depth, the West may find in the Indian legacy that sought-for remedy for the weak points of her otherwise noble and dynamic cultural tradition. Vivekananda refers to this in his lecture on 'The Mission of the Vedānta' delivered in India in 1897. Though a bit long, it will be found relevant in the present context. Says the Swami (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 181-82):

'We have, as it were, thrown a challenge to the whole world from the most ancient times. In the West, they are trying to solve the problem how much a man can possess, and we are trying here to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle and this difference will still go on for some centuries. But if history has any truth in it, and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be that those who train themselves to live on the least, and control themselves well, will in the end gain the battle, and that those who run after enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they may seem for the moment, will have to die and become annihilated. There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western world. There, too, they have their thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that this race after gold and power is all vanity of vanities; many, nay, most of the cultured men and women there are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilization, and they are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils..., but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy; the religion they have had, Christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood, and is, as understood hitherto, found to be insufficient. The thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in Vedānta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they are hungering and thirsting. And it is no wonder that this is so.'

Practical Vedānta

The strong point of the Indian tradition is, as we have seen, its vision of the spiritual dimension of the human personality, and the scientific tradition of religion in which this vision is embodied. Stres-

sing as it does the spirit of seeking and inquiry, and upholding experiment and experience as the criterion of true religion, the Indian tradition frees religion from all dogmatic and credal limitations and blends with the spirit of modern science. This Indian spiritual tradition has within it the energy and the power to *deepen* the scientific humanism of the modern West. The Western tradition, similarly, has the energy and the power within it to *broaden* the scope of the Indian tradition, channelling its blessings from a small minority of the spiritually gifted to the millions of ordinary men and women. This synthesis of the inner and the outer, of the sacred and the secular, had already been achieved *in the plane of thought* in the unifying philosophy of Vedānta, and especially in its great formulation, namely, the *Gītā*. Its achievement *in the plane of the work-a-day world* is what Vivekananda gave to modern India as his unique contribution in his philosophy and programme of Practical Vedānta, and what the nation is engaged in ever since.

Our programme of material improvement of the country does not necessarily commit us to the philosophy of materialism. On the other hand, our spiritual philosophy, as Vivekananda pointed out, considers involuntary poverty to be unspiritual and commits us to the improvement of the material condition of the people with a view to improving their spiritual life. This is the meaning of his plea for what he terms a 'toned down materialism' for India. 'I do not believe in a religion', says he, 'which cannot wipe the widow's tears or stop the orphan's wails'; again, 'even if a dog goes hungry in my country, my religion will be to find food for that dog'.

Our Youth and Our Emerging Nation

Such is the Indian society that is waiting to receive each and every one of our youths who complete their university education today. *It is a society of bubbling hopes and mounting problems, with an impressive past and a glorious future.* Every youthful generation of modern India owes it to itself and to the nation at large to strive to become strong and dynamic. Such strength is the product of faith in oneself and in one's country's heritage, reinforced by the *assimilation* of all available knowledge, national and international. This is the aim of all true education. Vivekananda defined the scope of our national education as the assimilation of the spirit of Vedānta and modern science. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in a memorable passage (I.1.10) refers to the energy of character generated by education:

Yadeva vidyayā karoti, śraddhayā, upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati—'What is done through mastery of the know-how, through faith (in oneself and one's cause) and through inner meditation—that alone becomes charged with the highest energy'.

Revolution : the Indian Way

In the passage from Nivedita's book quoted at the beginning of this lecture, Vivekananda had told us that new India will be a *growth from within;* and that this growth from within will be the result of the assimilation by her children of the strong points of the ancient Indian and the modern Western traditions. This is a significant point to remember in studying the development of modern India. In these three words, namely, *growth from within,* Vivekananda has given to our nation its *national educational vision.* Nations have been shaped by impact from outside either by a military or an ideological invasion; in such cases, the energy within the nation succumbs to the outside impact. Nations have also been shaped by violent revolutions from within due to the explosion of long-thwarted social aspirations. But India in her long history has stood many such outside impacts, revealing thereby the presence of a tremendous core of inner strength. She has also avoided violent explosions from within by timely adjustments. But the inner strength demonstrated by India during the past several centuries was defensive in its posture and apologetic in its expression, when neither did the tree of Indian life put forth fresh shoots nor did it die. It was a period of general national stagnation. *But today our ancient motherland is bubbling with a new youthfulness; it is bursting with a new life, inner and outer, by the assimilation of all available nourishment of knowledge and ideas.* The process undoubtedly will be intensified in the coming decades. Nothing can hinder or stop it.

The growth of a new and dynamic India, effecting revolutionary changes within her own body-politic consistent with her vision of human excellence, and exerting her distinctive influence on the rest of the world, is the vision that should inspire all our, education and politics, life and religion.

If this is the aim of the modern renaissance, who are the agents to work it out? The instruments of social change in any modern society are the educated youth of that society. Ever since India began to experience her modern renaissance over a century and a half ago in the wake of Raja Rammohun Roy, her educated youth have been the mainstay of all her revolutionary movements in the social, political, cultural, and spiritual fields.

Our Educational Stagnation

This is the national context, awareness of which will make our education purposive not only during the formal schooling period, but throughout life. Most of the ailments of our present-day educational system, most of the maladies afflicting our students and teachers, proceed from educational objectives too narrowly conceived, namely, examinations and jobs. Our educational vision must assimilate the wisdom of Sri Ramakrishna's conviction: 'As long as I live, so long do I learn'. Education so conceived becomes continual growth of personality, steady development of character, and the qualitative improvement of life. A trained mind has the capacity to draw spiritual nourishment from every experience, be it defeat or victory, sorrow or joy. Education is *training* the mind and not *stuffing* the brain. Character efficiency is the fruit of the former, while the latter produces mental stagnation and its attendant character deficiencies. Every country today is suffering from this undue stress on examinations and the stuffing-the-brain process behind it; but it is prevalent in its most harmful form in our education. The definition of current American education given by an American journal (*National Parent-Teacher Journal,* April 1955) as 'the mysterious process whereby information passes from the notes of the professor on to the note-book of the student, through his pen, without entering the mind of either of them', is an apt description of much of what passes for eduction in India today.

Our Educational Vision

This educational stagnation can be removed only by treating education primarily as training of the mind and, as Vivekananda defines it, as 'the life-building, man-making, character-making *assimilation* of ideas'. The entire educational method and programme should keep this high objective in view. Vivekananda's writings 'make their own irresistible appeal', as remarked by Gandhiji in his Foreword to *Education,* the little selection of Vivekananda's utterances on education. Here are some of these precious utterances:

'Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated? Is this education?... Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bhārata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?

'We Want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own

feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.'

Again:

'The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.'

In the light of these ideas of Vivekananda, let us assess our developmental activities, in general, and education, in particular. All our nation-building programmes should have two objectives—one short-term, the other long-term. Too much stress on the short-term, and too little or none at all on the long-term, is what is actually obtaining in our educational, political, and other fields. The short-term objective in politics is what we stress when we view it from one election to the next; this is the way of the *mere politician.* Its long-term objective is the political education of the Indian people so that every citizen becomes an intelligent participant in the national life, and the state becomes strengthened with the strength and efficiency of its 450 million awakened citizens; this is the way of the *statesman* who combines the short-term and long-term objectives in a synoptic vision of total human evolution. India had the recent example of such a statesman in Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, who never lost sight of the qualitative improvement of man. Education, similarly, has been viewed only in its short-term objective by most of the Indian students and, it is sad to note, by the Indian state as well. To the student, it means merely passing an examination and securing a job; to the state, it means largely turning out so many mechanics and fitters, doctors and lawyers, teachers and clerks, and a host of other social functionaries. The state has need of the services of thousands of well-trained technicians of all types for its developmental programmes; it is also imperative that, with a view to strengthening the democratic base of Indian life, universal compulsory education, up to the primary level to begin with and up to the school final level eventually, is achieved with the minimum possible delay. This is therefore a legitimate and urgent objective; what is not so legitimate is the ignoring of the long-term objective, which, as we have seen before, is the qualitative improvement of man through the qualitative improvement of education at all levels, which means the progressive assimilation by every citizen of the finest heritage of East and West; citizens in whom the diverse forces of the spirit—faith and reason, the sacred and the secular, and meditation and action—so long at loggerheads with each

other, have achieved a happy synthesis, giving man an experience of complete fulfilment.

Conclusion

This is our educational vision. A nation without vision perishes. Since India has not perished, and shall not perish, let us cease to divorce our short-term objectives from the long-term ones, and make education the surest means to human fulfilment, individual and collective. Even while planning our institutional programmes of education through schools, colleges, and universities, let us also not lose sight of the fact that the highest education is gained not from institutions, however well conducted they be, but from illumined men and women. The former give us only *aparā vidyā* or ordinary knowledge, while from the latter we get *parā vidyā* or supreme knowledge. Narendranath Datta was one of the brilliant students who blazoned the name of the University of Calcutta. But this student, let us never forget, became Vivekananda, who, in the words of Romain Rolland (*Life of Vivekananda,* Third Impression, p. 192):

'Of all modern men achieved the highest equilibrium between the diverse forces of thought, and was one of the first to sign a treaty of peace between the two forces eternally warring within us: the forces of reason and faith.'

only after he secured a still higher education at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, who himself, strange to note, did not undergo any institutional education.

India's educational vision whispers into the ears of every student who passes out of her institutions of higher learning that there is a still higher education which yields the knowledge of the infinite Self of man, the Ātman. Surplus human energy accumulated at the secular or sensate level of life, if not channelled into this higher spiritual direction, will recoil on the personality and create emotional disturbances and inner tensions, leading man further and further away from his ideal of fulfilment, in spite of all the technological products of his wealth and power, knowledge and leisure. Our institutional education will be judged a complete success only if the students it turns out are not insensitive of these gentle whispers, but are moved, by the fascination of this deeper mystery, to continue their education throughout life through the medium of their life and work, to convert their very bread-winning into self-knowledge, until the highest spiritual knowledge is gained. In the passionate words of poet Tagore (*Lectures and Addresses,* pp. 27-28):

'The object of education is to give man the unity of truth.....

'I believe in a spiritual world, not as anything separate from this world, but as its innermost truth. With the breath we draw, we must always feel this truth, that we are living in God. Born in this great world, full of the mystery of the infinite, we cannot accept our existence as a momentary outburst of chance, drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere.'

For all students of the modern age, ancient India presents the glowing example of Nārada of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as the prototype of this spiritual sensitivity in a student of learning and talent, who was dissatisfied with institutional education and mere book knowledge, and who used both as spurs to spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

Let me conclude this discussion of our national educational vision with the clarion call given to us by Swami Vivekananda: 'Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached!'

EDUCATION AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

THE subject of 'Education and Traditional Values' should be treated as of utmost importance by our country today, when it is passing through a tremendous transition.

The forces generated by science and the democratic idea have been operating in the modern world for over three centuries to transform human life. Already a vast amount of transformation has taken place in some areas, and the impact is being felt in the rest of the areas of the world as well. Our country has been feeling the effect of these forces in a general way for the past half a century; but since our attainment of political independence and the initiation of our five-year plans, we are being thrown, with increasing momentum year by year, into the very vortex of these forces. India, today, has to reckon with them. Many an old cultural, social, and religious landmark in our country is crumbling down and vanishing in the wake of the fast-moving pace of our industrialization programmes. Human adjustment to these fast-moving changes in the social and cultural *milieu* is becoming increasingly difficult. In the absence of such adjustment, man gets twisted and mis-shapen, and becomes a focus of tension and sorrow. A chain is as strong as its weakest link. The modern age in India is the link between her hoary past and her endless future. The modern age demands of our citizens an understanding of these forces, an acceptance of them, and an intelligent assimilation of their values, so that India may forge a new character and a new destiny for herself. This is the problem before Indian education today.

Compared to other countries, there is something special and, if I may say so, significant in the interaction and outcome of these mod-

ern forces in the Indian context. For that context is constituted of a deep and abiding religious consciousness, which derives its strength from a rational and comprehensive philosophy. Since historic times, religion has been the most vital force moulding our individual and collective life; it is so even today. The Indian tradition is shot through and through by the religious idea and impulse. It has given to the Indian tradition strength and vitality to stand the vicissitudes of her long history, resilience and adaptability to adjust to changing times and conditions, and an amazing assimilative power to synthesize the new with the old, making for continuity in the context of progress. Says Jawaharlal Nehru in his lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda' delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, in 1949 (*Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,* p. 2):

> 'India never ignored, in the course of her long history, and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life, and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth and has always welcomed the searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality, and at the same time she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for the truth in their own way.'

The Main Problem of Indian Education

The problem for India in the modern age is the assimilation of the forces released by science, technology, and democracy which are being grafted on to her traditional tree. The success of this experiment depends upon two factors: one, the vitality of the spiritual sap running in the tree, and two, its hospitality to the new forces contained in the grafts.

These new forces in the grafts had their birth first in Europe, and later in other parts of the western world, including the U.S.S.R. They had a revolutionary effect on those countries. The intellectual force of science and the social force of technology and democracy have had devastating effects on the traditional thought and life of the western man. These new forces could not be assimilated to the western religious consciousness and cultural tradition, which did not prove a hospitable soil to them. The result is a schism in the mind of the western man, indicated by ever-recurrent conflicts—faith in conflict with reason, the spirit at loggerheads with matter, and man in opposition with the universe and with brother man. In such a situation, the human mind despairs of all higher spiritual values, and tends to get involved and entombed in tangible material pursuits. The once powerful Christian and humanist tradition has become reduced to a thin veneer of the more dominant modern tradition.

'What are the driving forces of our culture?', asks Mr. C.J. Dippel, Chief Chemist in the Philips Physical Laboratory at Enidhoven, Holland, in his article on 'Renewal or Leave Taking' (appearing in *Delta—A Review of Arts, Life and Thought in the Netherlands,* Autumn 1960, p. 17) and continues:

'Lust for power, productivity, the creation and satisfaction of needs, speculation on man's material instability, excessive consumption, expansion, an ideology of liberty accompanied by the most primitive rules for the selection of leaders. The cause or the result: an enormous diversity of moral values, varying from a reckless hedonism to a cynical moral vacuum; speed, turbulence; an almost automatic compulsion to run after the fruits that our culture holds out to us. The stabilizing factor of our society is its material success and managerial character; the general herd merely adds its vitality—without responsibility—to the inertia of this cultural movement. It is clear that "things first", "people second" is a guideline that we share with Soviet Communism. Hence the overriding force of economics. The question "what should be done" is decided for us on the free market and in the sphere of power politics. Our Christian past has become a burden and nothing more. We have probably never yet rightly understood the social and cultural implications of the Gospel.'

If even a part of this estimate is true, India has to view with deep concern the outcome of her grafting experiment. Her handling of these new forces, the method and manner of her approach as much as the outcome of her endeavours, is of more than national significance and relevance.

A period of profound transition is not the time for complacency. India has experienced stormy periods in her long history. She has responded successfully to all such challenges on the strength of her tenacious loyalty to fundamental spiritual values, which she consequently placed at the foundation of her national culture and tradition.

Addressing the assembled congregation at St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, on 24 August 1962, on the occasion of his enthronement as the eleventh Metropolitan of India and the fifteenth Bishop of Calcutta, Rev. Dr. Lakdasa De Mel referred to India's unbroken cultural tradition since the days of the Indus Valley Civilization, and said (*Statesman,* 25 August 1962):

'What had distinguished Indian history during these 5,000 years was the conspicuous spiritual quest of the people.'

It is this faith in spiritual values, which has been tested in good and evil fortune, that is being challenged and menaced by the most powerful storm yet experienced by her, viz. the modern transition. All the previous challenges were mild in comparison, being only fractional whereas this one is total. Is there not something in her age-old heri-

tage which has the vitality to welcome these new forces—the intellectual force of tested and verified truth which is science and the social force of technology and democracy—and assimilate their values into, first, the national heritage and, through that, into the human heritage, so that these may emerge stronger and richer than before? This question widens the scope and deepens the significance of education for our democracy today.

The Source of the Vitality of the Indian People

A long history of five thousand years, uninterrupted and continuous, lies behind India. Some profound social insight and wisdom must be present in the Indian tradition to account for this miracle of national longevity. It is resilience, adaptability, and assimilative power that enable an organism to live and thrive. Their presence indicates youthfulness; their diminution indicates onset of old age; their total absence spells death. Cultures and civilizations have passed through the three stages of birth, youthful vitality, and old age, to end eventually, invariably, in death. But India has been an exception to this rule. The only conclusion to be drawn from this arresting fact is that, somewhere in the depths of this culture, there must be a focus of undying, youthful vitality, making for fresh outbursts of adaptations and assimilations in times of crisis; so that history, in the case of India, becomes a series of rejuvenations, following each cycle of birth, development, and decay, but never the final death. Writes Will Durant in his *Story of Civilization* (Vol. I, *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 633):

> 'One cannot conclude the history of India as one can conclude the history of Egypt, or Babylonia, or Assyria; for that history is still being made, that civilization is still creating....We cannot claim for this civilization such direct gifts to our own as we have traced to Egypt and the Near East; for these last were the immediate ancestors of our own culture, while the history of India, China, and Japan flowed in another stream, and is only now beginning to touch and influence the current of occidental life. It is true that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent to us such questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all, our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in the future. As invention, industry, and trade bind the continents together, or as they fling us into conflict with Asia, we shall study its civilizations more closely, and shall absorb, even in enmity, some of its ways and thoughts. Perhaps, in return for conquest, arrogance, and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying, pacifying love of all living things.'

This continued youthful vitality of India has its origin in her spiritual thought and social philosophy. The Upaniṣads are the source of

her spiritual and philosophical thought, of which the fundamental ideas are: (1) the divinity of man; (2) the non-duality and spiritual character of the ultimate reality; (3) the basic solidarity of all existence; (4) realization, and not a mere belief or creed, as the criterion of religion; and (5) the harmony of religions. These concepts breathe the spirit of the universal and human, and mark human culture at its highest and best. They gave rise to the values of tolerance, peace, gentleness, and non-aggressiveness, which became the distinctive marks of Indian culture and tradition, finding expression both in individual behaviour and State policy. Religion was, and continues to be, the source and sustenance of this culture and tradition. India did not allow the universal values and outlook of her religion to be smothered by the limitations of political affiliations. There was no identification of religion and the State. Her concept of religion did not permit a rigid creed or an exclusive, all-powerful church to get established on the Indian soil. Says Dr. Radhakrishnan (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought,* p. 322):

> 'The emphasis on the goal of spiritual life bound together worshippers of many different types and saved the Hindus from spiritual snobbery.'

Absence of rigidity made for hospitality to new ideas. This left the way clear for experimentation from within and assimilation from without. Indian culture, religion, and society bear the impress of this long-continued, and still continuing, experimental and assimilative approach and process. This explains India's diversity and richness, on the one side, and its vitality and uninterrupted continuity, on the other.

The Spiritual Background of Indian Polity

Its social philosophy derives from its spiritual thought. Unity in diversity became the ruling idea, and not uniformity. The fact of social change was recognized by her thinkers who, while accepting the need for change, advocated also the need for preserving the continuity of tradition. *India's social philosophy enshrines the wisdom of the reconciliation of tradition and change.* The central ingredient of this wisdom is enshrined in her concepts of Śruti and Smṛti, and their interrelation. In the light of these concepts, we find that every tradition embodies two elements: (1) a set of universal, eternal, and fundamental principles and (2) a group of values derived from the first and finding expression in individual and collective attitudes and behaviour. These latter are limited, temporary, and relative in their scope and authority. The first should be upheld, while allowing the second to respond to the urge for change. In Sanskrit, this idea is expressed by saying that the Smṛtis change, while the Śruti remains. The term 'Śruti' represents

the spiritual content of religion and is always meant to be a singular, while the term 'Śmṛti' represents its socio-political expression and always denotes a plural. The same idea is expressed in another way. *Dharma* or spiritual tradition has two aspects—the *sanātana dharma* and the *yuga dharma,* tradition eternal and tradition valid for only an epoch or an age. The first connotes the Śruti and the second the Smṛti. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Religion and Society,* p. 113):

'The Hindu view makes room for essential changes. There must be no violent break with social heredity, and yet the new stresses, conflicts and confusions will have to be faced and overcome. While the truths of spirit are permanent, the rules change from age to age.'

In his 'First Public Lecture in the East', delivered in Colombo on January 15, 1897, on his return from the West, Swami Vivekananda, referring to the impact of Indian spiritual ideas on the modern world, spoke as follows on the subject of this central ingredient of the wisdom of the Indian tradition (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 111-12):

'At the same time, I must remark that what I mean by our religion working upon the nations outside of India comprises only the principles, the background, the foundation upon which that religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do not rightly find a place in the category of religion. We know that, in our books, a clear distinction is made between two sets of truths. The one set is that which abides for ever, being built upon the nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, and so on; there are also the principles of cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, or more correctly speaking, projection, the wonderful law of cyclical procession, and so on; there are eternal principles founded upon the universal laws in nature. The other set comprises the minor laws, which guide the working of our everyday life. They belong more properly to the Purāṇas, to the Smṛtis, and not to the Śruti. These have nothing do to with the other principles. Even in our own nation these minor laws have been changing all the time. Customs of one age, of one *yuga,* have not been the customs of another, and as *yuga* comes after *yuga,* they will still have to change.'

The Happy Outcome of The Traditional Indian Outlook

The fruit of this social wisdom is seen in the absence, in ancient and modern Indian history, of violent social upheavals or bloody revolutions; instead, we see only steady adjustments and adaptations to new situations, keeping basic values intact. The Indian social experience has uniformly been evolution and not revolution; or rather, evolutionary changes of a revolutionary nature, without, however, serious social conflict and violence. The impact of Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, Śaṅkara and the later reformers, has always been creative and constructive, peaceful

and pervasive. India responded to them in a natural way, and became richer in the process. A study of the history of India shows that the concept of an unchanging Indian society is a thorough misnomer. Both in religious concepts and forms, as well as in social values and processes, India has seen revolutionary changes. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Religion and Society*, pp. 114-15):

> 'Those who are familiar with the work of Hindu commentators on Hindu law works know the magnitude of the changes effected by them....Social flexibility has been the chief character of Hindu *dharma*. To uphold the *sanātana dharma* is not to stand still. It is to seize the vital principles and use them in modern life. All true growth preserves unity through change.'

Neither the Ṛg-Vedic gods and forms of their worship nor the Ṛg-Vedic society were in evidence a thousand years after the *Ṛg-Veda*. The very fact that there are several Smṛtis indicates social change; otherwise, the first Smṛti should have continued throughout. But the spiritual legacy of India, as represented by the Śruti, remains steady and clear to this day. Sri Ramakrishna's pithy saying so well explains this changing character of social laws, as represented by the Smṛtis, as nothing else can: 'The Moghul coins have no currency under the (East India) Company's rule.'

The Smṛtis themselves recognize this principle of social change. Says the *Manu Smṛti* (I. 85):

> *Anye kṛtayuge dharmāḥ tretāyāṁ dvāpare apare;*
> *Anye kaliyuge nṛṇāṁ yugahrāsānurūpataḥ—*

'There is one set of *dharmas* for man in the *kṛta yuga*; a different set for each of the *tretā, dvāpara*, and *kali yugas*; the *dharmas* change according to the change of the *yugas*.'

Regeneration of India: The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Way

Modern Indian history also illustrates abundantly this wisdom of Indian history. The verdict on Indian history by ignorant or prejudiced historians, both Indian and foreign, as well as by unsympathetic foreign social critics, during the last one century, harped on the following themes:

1. Indian society is built on the rigid hierarchy of the caste system.
2. Caste derives its strength and sanction from the Hindu religion.
3. It finds its extreme expression in untouchability.
4. Caste cannot be destroyed without first destroying the Hindu religion.

5. By destroying Hindu religion and caste alone can a new modernized India emerge.
6. Democracy, on the one side, and Hinduism with its caste, on the other, are irreconcilable.
7. The suppression of Hindu women derives from the Hindu religion.
8. Modern technology and industrialism will spell the final deathknell of Hinduism.
9. The various religions of India will ever remain in water-tight compartments, mutually hostile, if not warring with each other; this fact, added to the pernicious caste system, will never allow India to develop a national consciousness.

It is undoubtedly true that Indian society and the Hindu religion, during the last few centuries, did exhibit the above features in a rather prominent form. But the fault of the critics lay in exhibiting these foibles and follies as the wisdom of India. And the conclusion was clear to them: if these follies were to be overcome and a stagnant India made progressive, she has to cut adrift of her traditional moorings, borrow wisdom from outside, and reshape herself in a completely new way. This led to much iconoclastic thinking and action in the middle of the last century; it created its own counter-force in movements inspired by fear of the new, and in defence of everything old, in religion and society. This action-and-reaction process continued till the end of the century when the age-old, historically tested wisdom of India expressed itself, gently but effectively, in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The entire theme of Sri Ramakrishna's life was spirituality. In the words of Gandhiji ('Foreword' to *The Life of Sri Ramakrishna*):

> 'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face....Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of godliness....His love knew no limits, geographical or otherwise. May his divine love be an inspiration to all who read the following pages!'

Sri Ramakrishna did not disturb any of the existing religions, nor did he start any new religion. He loved all religions and sought God through all of them. Swami Vivekananda carried the mission of his master far and wide, the mission of the spiritual regeneration of humanity. Within India itself, he saw the main obstacles to this mission in the rigidities and in the decayed elements of the Indian tradition, of which caste-exclusiveness, untouchability, and self-centred religiosity formed the more harmful ones. In his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and in his *Letters*, he exposed these faults and foibles of the Smṛti

elements of the Indian tradition, and placed before the nation the strengthening, unifying, and broadening spirituality of the Upaniṣads, or the Śruti elements of that tradition. He had personally witnessed the power and glory of this Śruti constituent of his country's tradition in the blazing life of his master. And he, therefore, exhorted the nation to fearlessly do away with the stagnant elements of the national tradition and build a new body-politic, worthy to ensoul the age-old spiritual legacy of India and the scientific and social legacy of the modern world.

The Trumpet Call of Vivekananda

A few brief quotations from his letters, written from abroad to social workers in India between 1893 and 1897, will help to show how he galvanized the Indian tradition and made it progressive:

'So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again.' (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 54, Fourth Edition).

'I cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japs in one short letter. Only I want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan every year. To the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are you? ... talking twaddle all your lives, vain talkers, what are you? Come, see these people and then go and hide your faces in shame. A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out! Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallized superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your energy upon discussing the touchableness or untouchableness of this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the continuous social tyranny of ages—what are you? ... Come, be men! Kick out the priests who are always against progress. ... Root out priestcraft first. Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march. Do you love your country? Then, come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no, not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward! (*ibid.*, pp. 63-64).

'India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men—men, mind, and not brutes. The English government has been the instrument brought over here by the Lord to break your crystallized civilization, and Madras supplied the first men who helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish, thoroughgoing men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large—and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers?' (*ibid.*, p. 64).

'A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up—the gospel of equality.'

'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The Lord has shown me that religion is not at fault, but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines of *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika* (absolute and relative truth)....It is not their fault. They are children, yea, veritable children, though they be great and high in society. Their eyes see nothing beyond their little horizon of a few yards—the routine work, eating, drinking, earning, and begetting, following each other in mathematical precision. They know nothing beyond, happy little souls! Their sleep is never disturbed. Their nice little brown studies of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of degradation and poverty, that has filled the Indian atmosphere—the result of centuries of oppression. They little dream of the ages of tyranny—mental, moral, and physical—that has reduced the image of God to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother, to a slave to bear children; and life itself, a curse. But there are others who see, feel, and shed tears of blood in their hearts, who think that there is a remedy for it, and who are ready to apply this remedy at any cost, even to the giving up of life. And "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven".' (*ibid.*, pp. 68-70).

'The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits, and give freedom to society to grow. All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding religion accountable for all the horrors of priestcraft and degeneration, and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure, and what was the result? Failure! Beginning from Buddha down to Ram Mohan Roy, everyone made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down religion and caste altogether, and failed. But in spite of all the ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallized social institution, which, after doing its service, is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality. Every man born here (in U.S.A.) knows that he is a *man*. Every man born in India knows that he is a slave of society. Now, freedom is the only condition of growth; take that off, the result is degeneration. With the introduction of modern competition see how caste is disappearing fast! No religion is now necessary to kill it. The Brāhmin shopkeeper, shoemaker, and wine-distiller are common in northern India. And why? Because of competition. No man is prohibited from doing anything he pleases for his livelihood under the present government, and the result is neck and neck competition, and thus thousands are seeking and finding the highest level they were born for, instead of vegetating at the bottom.' (*ibid.*, pp. 75-76).

'My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you: "Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion."

'Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathizer in every reform, but the fate of a nation

does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon *the condition of the masses*. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we *will do it*. You are all *born to do it*. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto.' (*ibid.*, pp. 83-84)

'This idea of wonderful liberality joined with eternal energy and progress must spread over India, it must electrify the whole nation and must enter the very pores of society, in spite of the horrible ignorance, spite, caste-feeling, old boobyism, and jealousy which are the heritage of this nation of slaves.' (*ibid.*, p. 87)

'Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. But how hypocritically it says and thereby contradicts itself: "Social reform is not the business of religion"! True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a social law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come right.' (*ibid.*, p. 90)

'The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared with them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes (the State). Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man, every woman, must work out one's own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. (*ibid.*, pp. 109-10)

'The present Hindu society is organized only for spiritual men, and hopelessly crushes out everybody else. Why? Where shall they go who want to enjoy the world a little with its frivolities? Just as our religion takes in all, so should our society. This is to be worked out by first understanding the true principles of our religion, and then applying them to society. This is the slow but sure work to be done.' (*ibid.*, p. 137)

'I do not believe in a religion or God which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.' (*ibid.*, p. 141).

'To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindu from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

'Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself—is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate.

'Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

'We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life which the western nations have raised are supported by the strong pillars of character, and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.' (*ibid.*, p. 150).

'I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this: We have not done *badly* in the past; certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but *good*, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor from bad to good; but from truth to higher truth, from good to better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well—now is the time to do better. Now take the case of caste, in Sanskrit, *jāti*, i.e. species. Now this is the first idea of creation. Variation (*vicitratā*), that is to say *jāti*, means creation. "I am one, I become many" (various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of *jāti* was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his *prakṛti*, his *jāti*, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is interdining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is intermarriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India's downfall? The giving up of *this* idea of caste. As the *Gītā* says, with the extinction of caste the world will be destroyed. Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations the world will be destroyed? The present caste is not the real *jāti*, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of *jāti*, i.e. caste or variation. Any crystallized custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (*jāti*) from having its full sway, and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die.

'Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this: that India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not caste. Let *jāti* have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals—each developing his caste—Europe rose. In America, there is the best scope for caste (real *jāti*) to develop, and so the people are great. Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl

as soon as he or she is born. That is the real caste, the individuality, and *jyotiṣ* recognized that. And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety does not mean inequality nor any special privilege.'

'This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude. Of course, we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny, for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death. Now that that pressure has gone, we must move forward not on the lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but along our own line—our own road. Everything is hideous because the building is unfinished. We had to stop building during centuries of oppression. Now finish the building and everything will look beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan. I am thoroughly convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life; in India it is religion. Make it strong and the waters on either side must move along with it. This is one phase of my line of thought.' (ibid. pp. 191-93).

'My Master used to say that these names as Hindu, Christian, etc. stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we have to work hard and must succeed.

'That is why I desire so much to have a centre. Organization has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done. And here, I am afraid, I will have to differ from you—that no one ever succeeded in keeping society in good humour and at the same time did great works. One must work as the dictate comes from within, and then if it is right and good, society is bound to veer round, perhaps centuries after one is dead and gone. We must plunge heart and soul and body into the work. And until we be ready to sacrifice everything else to one idea and to one alone, we never, never will see the light.

'Those that want to help mankind must take their own pleasure and pain, name and fame, and all sorts of interests, and make a bundle of them and throw them into the sea, and then come to the Lord. This is what all the masters said *and did*.' (*ibid.*, p. 211)

'Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic *cowards* that you find among the educated Hindus? I hate cowardice, I will have nothing to do with cowards or political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash.' (*ibid.*, p. 243)

'What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many good things in ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future India, must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart!' (*ibid.*, p. 252)

'From the day when education and culture etc. began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilization as of western countries and the ancient civilization as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of

pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e. by spreading education among the masses.' (*ibid.*, p. 367)

The Impact of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda on Modern India

What was the result of Vivekananda's handling of the Indian tradition? Quoting several stirring passages from Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, Romain Rolland remarks (*Life of Vivekananda*, pp. 124-25):

'Imagine the thunderous reverberations of these words! The reader almost says with the Indian masses and with Vivekananda himself:

"Śiva! ... Śiva!"

'The storm passed; it scattered its cataracts of water and fire over the plain, and its formidable appeal to the Force of the Soul, to the God sleeping in man and His illimitable possibilities! I can see the Mage erect, his arm raised, like Jesus above the tomb of Lazarus in Rembrandt's engraving: with energy flowing from his gesture of command to raise the dead and bring him to life....

'...From that day the awakening of the torpid Colossus began. If the generation that followed saw, three years after Vivekananda's death, the revolt of Bengal, the prelude to the great movement of Tilak and Gandhi, if India today has definitely taken part in the collective action of organized masses, it is due to the initial shock, to the mighty

"Lazarus, Come forth!"

of the message from Madras.'

Again (*ibid.*, pp. 316-17):

'So India was hauled out of the shifting sands of barren speculation wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hand of one of her own *sannyāsins*; and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action. The West ought to be aware of the tremendous energies liberated by this means. The world finds itself face to face with an awakening India.... Whatever the part played in this reawakening by the three generations of trumpeters during the previous century (the greatest of whom we salute, the precursor: Ram Mohun Roy), the decisive call was the trumpet blast of the lectures delivered at Colombo and Madras. And the magic watchword was unity. Unity of every Indian man and woman (and world-unity as well); of all the powers of the spirit; dream and action, reason, love, and work. Unity of the hundred races of India with their hundred different tongues and hundred thousand gods.... Unity of the thousand sects of Hinduism. Unity within the vast ocean of all religious thought and all rivers past and present, western and eastern'.

Dealing with the spiritual source of modern India's social adjustment, through the activation of the Śruti content of its tradition, Rolland continues (*ibid.*, pp. 317-18):

'This "greater India", this new India—whose growth politicians and learned men have, ostrich fashion, hidden from us and whose striking effects are now apparent—is impregnated with the soul of Ramakrishna. The twin star of the Paramahamsa and the hero who translated his thought into action dominates and guides her present destinies. Its warm radiance is the leaven working within the soil of India and fertilizing it. The present leaders of India: the king of thinkers, the king of poets, and the Mahatma—Aurobindo Ghose, Tagore, and Gandhi—have grown, flowered, and borne fruit under the double constellation of the Swan and the Eagle—a fact publicly acknowledged by Aurobindo and Gandhi.'

The Indian tradition was fortunate to have a leader and innovator of the spiritual stature and credentials of Swami Vivekananda. Speaking about the impact of Vivekananda on Indian life and thought, Jawaharlal Nehru says (*Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,* p. 4):

'I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda. But I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him and I think it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, and they would learn much from them.'

Referring to the contemporary relevance of Vivekananda's ideas, he says (*ibid.*, p. 5):

'If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will feel is that they are not old. It was told 56 years ago, and they are fresh today, because what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems.'

Speaking further about Vivekananda's influence on Indian politics, he says (*ibid.*, pp. 6-7):

'He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like you may use any other word—of the national movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of spirit and fire that flows through Swami Vivekananda.'

Swami Vivekananda educated the Indian mind to discriminate between the essentials and the non-essentials of the national tradition, and to welcome and assimilate the modern forces of progress. This form of social education in a country like India can be done effectively only by a towering spiritual personality. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Speeches and Writings,* Vol. II, p. 191):

'Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings have prepared us for the new age of freedom in which we live. They tell us how best we can consolidate the freedom we have won.'

The fruits of this spiritual education of a whole people can be seen in the impressive achievements of India during the last sixty years in the field of fundamental social reform. Many of these reforms, such as removal of untouchability, opening of temples to the Harijans, reform and codification of Hindu law, ignoring of caste by the Indian constitution as a factor in inter-group relationships, breaking down of caste barriers, and even creed and race barriers, with respect to eating and marriage, and disappearance of opposition to sea voyage and foreign travel, are radical measures. Many of these are legal enactments backed by enlightened public opinion. They never gave rise to social conflicts, in spite of their radical impact on the old tradition; they helped, on the other hand, in the growth and renewal of that tradition.

The awakening of the Indian women and their rise to positions of the highest responsibility is another striking aspect of this peaceful evolution and growth of the Indian tradition in the modern age. It is noteworthy that, unlike several western countries, India did not experience a feminist movement; the significance of this fact lies in the way it reveals the social wisdom of the Indian tradition. *It is when a world-view goes counter to the claims and aspirations of women, and men uphold that world-view as against the spirit of the times, that a feminist movement takes place.* This is the experience of modern western history. But in India, men came forward to uphold the claims of women and move with the times; and in this they were sustained as much by the spiritual constituents of the Indian tradition as by the recent orientation of that tradition by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

The absence of opposition in India to social reform measures such as family planning, as noted by international study groups, is another instance of the adaptive character of the Indian tradition.

The Indian constitution, with its broad democratic frame and equalitarian objective, bears the touch of the wisdom and broad outlook of the Indian tradition and its capacity for assimilation. And the healthy functioning of democracy in India, and the success of its three general elections, involving over 200 million voters, the most stupendous democratic phenomenon in the world today, is another fruit of the vitality and wisdom of the national tradition.

Need for a Balanced Outlook between the Ancient and the Modern

Technological advance is bound to affect profoundly and recast in a revolutionary way our culture and tradition. But it will be only its peripheral aspects that will be so affected. And, thanks to the edu-

cation received by the nation from its great spiritual and social leaders like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, this recasting of the peripheral aspects will not only cause no concern, but will cause only satisfaction, to enlightened Indian minds. *But there is imperative need to stress the validity and relevance of the central aspects of our tradition if the fast coming peripheral changes are not to blow away the whole tradition itself.* This is where the role of national education comes in. *The nation needs to be continually educated in the abiding spiritual constituents of its tradition.* As Vinoba Bhave and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru have been expounding it in recent years, science must be combined with spirituality; or Vedānta is to be coupled with modern science, as Vivekananda long ago expressed it in his formulation of the content of Indian education.

Spirituality is the positive content of the Indian tradition; it is its undying constituent. The Upaniṣads are its fountain-source. The *Īśā* is one of the oldest of these Upaniṣads. It has been a source of deep inspiration to Indian thinkers and seekers in ancient and modern times. It asks man to feel the pulsations of the Divine in life and nature, and enjoy with zest the full life span of a hundred years through renunciation. *Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthaḥ*—'Enjoy through renunciation' —is its watchword. This idea was later developed by the *Gītā* into a comprehensive and practical spirituality, in its theory of detached action. Renunciation becomes joyous when it leads to higher levels of being and purer forms of delight. This positive concept of renunciation is the central concept of ethics, of *dharma*, in Indian thought. This dynamic teaching of practical spirituality has tremendous consequences for man and society; for the emphasis here is on character, leading to universality of vision, on the one side, and social efficiency, on the other. Life is viewed in a context of progress, development, realization, with the infinitude of being as the target of achievement. This man-making message was communicated to our country by Swami Vivekananda in a brief statement of national educational policy (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 228):

> 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.'

Since political independence, our national leaders have taken much pains to criticize again and again the negative features of the Indian tradition. One of the targets of attack has been Hindu communalism. There is no doubt that there are some narrow-minded communalists among the Hindus. But that such narrow communalism is not a pro-

minent characteristic of the Hindu people as a whole, or of their tradition, is proved by the fact that even the shock of partition of the country on communal grounds did not result in the Hindu community voting for a Hindu communal state in India, and that behind the broad secular constitution of the nation is the sustenance and support of the broad masses and enlightened sections of the Hindu community. The spirit of inclusiveness of the Hindu tradition is fully evident here; and we cannot but recall what Swami Vivekananda said on the subject of the Hindu tradition while addressing the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 3):

> 'I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.'

Casteism and untouchability have also been constantly exposed with a view to ridding India of these evils and making democracy a living reality. The public have received, through these and other criticisms by our national leaders, a measure of social education, which is very valuable; but, unfortunately, this educational process has been one-sided; it has exposed only the faults and foibles of the Indian tradition without directing the people's mind to the positive and permanent constituents of this tradition. This has resulted in creating an impression in the people, especially in the youth, that their country's tradition is mostly obsolete and that there is nothing in it worth preserving. *This has had, and is having, a highly deleterious effect on the national mind, national character, and work efficiency, by undermining its faith in the nation's legacy and, consequently, weakening its ability and strength to assimilate the best in the modern heritage.*

This has to be corrected by our education. A negative education is worse than death, said Swami Vivekananda. Education should acquaint the people with the life-giving, abiding, positive elements of the Indian tradition; this alone will help to forge a spiritually and socially efficient national character. *In this field, the importance of Vivekananda literature in toning up and invigorating our education cannot be overestimated.*

None had criticized the faults and foibles of the Indian tradition more vehemently than Vivekananda; but he did not stop with mere criticism and exposure. He also held before the people the glorious and imperishable, the pure and positive, constituents of their national tradition, and also showed the way of enriching the national tradition by assimilation of the tested values of the modern experience.

The progressive adaptation of the Hindu tradition to the requirements of the modern age and the liberation of its universal spiritual values, will also help in the realization of a similar integration by the Islamic, Christian, Parsee, and other great traditions of India. They will also learn to shed the parochial and the outworn elements of their traditions, and liberate their universal and human contents. *It is only thus that the process of nation-building in India will be consummated, and a free, equalitarian, spiritually oriented body-politic provided for Indian's undying soul.*

Objectives of Our Education: What They Ought to be

Our educational vision has to grasp the whole of India as a perennial laboratory for the achievement of human integration. Her immense variety and diversity, natural as well as human, which she has studiously fostered, form the data for its science of man and society. Based on the universal concept of man's divinity, she achieved in the past a measure of cultural unity and human integration which has stood firm against many a political cataclysm of long or short durations. The legacy so left is our starting-point. It has now to be enriched extensively as well as intensively, both within India as well as outside. This is very much facilitated by the world conditions created by the modern technological civilization. *A nation's educational policy, like its political policy, gets added dynamism and direction when to its domestic policy is added a foreign policy content as well.* The spiritually liberated man is the aim of Indian education: *Yā vidyā sā vimuktaye* —'That is knowledge which liberates'; and it was of this Indian educational vision that Rabindranath Tagore sang in a famous passage of his *Gītāñjali* (35):

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
> Where knowledge is free;
> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
> Where words come out from the depth of truth;
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
> Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
> Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action—
> Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Swami Vivekananda defines education as the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Similarly, he defines religion as the manifestation of the divinity already in man. Religion, according to him,

is also a process of education; in fact, it becomes continued education. This synoptic view finds eloquent expression in one of his oft-quoted passages (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 124):

> 'Each soul is potentially divine; the goal is to manifest this Divine within by controlling nature, external as well as internal.'

This is his concept of complete education in which man achieves social welfare by the mastery of the external environment through scientific, technological, and socio-political efficiency, and he achieves spiritual enrichment by the mastery of his inner life through religion.

Education so defined should place before itself clear objectives, if it is to find expression in practical measures of implementation. In the light of all that has been discussed above, we can discern six objectives for our education:

1. The training of our children to an appreciation of our nation's cultural heritage and to equip them with the desire and the capacity to enhance the same and leave to posterity a richer legacy.

2. The training of our children in talents and capacities by which they become productive units of society and the source of its economic strength.

3. The equipment of our children with the qualities of courage and vision to protect our newly won national freedom, to preserve its democratic structure, function, and liberties, and to carry the same to ever wider fields and ever higher levels.

4. The training of our children in virtues and graces that will make them emotionally stable individuals and enable them to live in peace, harmony, and co-operation with their fellow citizens.

5. The training of our children in virtues and graces that will make them international in their outlook and sympathies, and enable them to live in peace, harmony, and co-operation with the emerging world community.

6. The training of our children to an awareness of the spiritual and trans-social dimension of the human personality, and to a converging life-endeavour in the realization of this fact in and through life and action.

It is only thus that our education will become a fit discipline to help to continue the march of the Indian tradition from an impressive past to a glorious future.

EDUCATION FOR MAN-MAKING

I AM coming here to participate in this morning's function by a strange coincidence of good fortune. I came to Calcutta last morning from Delhi on my way to the Andaman Islands on a week's lecture tour, and I was anxious to visit this institution; since I could not come here during my last Calcutta visit a month ago, I decided to avail of this visit to come to this Home and meet its Secretary, Swami Punyanandaji, with whom I had intimate associations in the field of the Ramakrishna Mission work in Rangoon twenty years ago. When I asked over the phone this morning about his convenience, he merely said: 'You come straightaway; we have a function here; and you will also join it.' Thus I am here with you all this morning. And I am happy to find that it is a very auspicious occasion when you are having something like a Convocation of the Basic Training School section of this vast and varied educational institution. And Swami Punyanandaji has asked me to speak a few words at this farewell function. I do so gladly.

You have all completed your Basic Education Training Course and will soon be leaving for your respective fields of work. What is this training for? What does the nation expect from you all? What is the philosophy and technique which, if you adopt, will help you to respond to the nation's demands on you? I shall join with you today in asking these questions and seeking their answers.

From April to August 1961 I was on a four-month lecture tour of seventeen European countries, including the Soviet Union, Poland, Spain, and Czechoslovakia. Moving through those countries, seeing their prosperity, general human welfare, and the sterling social virtues

behind these achievements, I became convinced of the importance of an education—intellectual, technical, and, most important of all, social —which will help our people to develop those national traits which have made these western nations great and progressive. This was the feeling that Swami Vivekananda had when he visited the western countries. We have inherited a great culture and tradition, and we have also produced many great saints and sages who are really international in their stature. But yet, as a people, we have failed to develop those traits of character and social awareness which alone can make for general welfare and happiness through a wide diffusion of intelligence and efficiency among the people. Swami Vivekananda saw in the western people tremendous energy, self-discipline, efficiency, the spirit of social awareness, and co-operation. These are the virtues that will help us to build our society into a pattern of physical and mental health. He saw these things lacking in India. Jealousy, self-centredness, love of ease, utter lack of social awareness and work-efficiency, and too much talking and too little working, these traits of the Indian national character of his time pained Swami Vivekananda. And in his letters and speeches he has given expression to this anguish of his heart and the remedy for these ills. And he discovered that remedy in education and more education.

Our Indian children were getting education in his time, both school and college education. But he did not consider that as education at all. For he found it lacking in that essential content of character-building orientation which alone converts education, in his view, into a man-making and nation-building process. So he dreamt of the day when India would be able, freed from foreign control, to frame her own educational programme, keeping in view this high objective of the all-round development of the nation. He considered man-making to be the end and aim of all education. He has given many ideas on this subject of man-making education and man-making religion. This makes his literature an unfailing source of inspiration to everyone who wants to dedicate his energies to the service of his country, more especially in the field of education. And he placed education as the most important national activity for free India. To the question, have our women any problems at all, the Swami replied (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 231):

'Of course, they have many and grave problems, but none that are not to be solved by that magic word "education".'

This applied equally to the problems of men as well. Such was the faith of Vivekananda in education as the one solvent of the pro-

blems of our ancient society. Since his passing away in 1902, our country has been trying to evolve a system of education on national lines and suited to the national purposes. Great thinkers have entered this field and contributed their thoughts and the fruits of their experiments to the nation. We have Tagore's experiments, we have of course Gandhiji's great experiments, we have the Ramakrishna Mission's experiments, as well as many other individual experiments in various parts of the country.

Since independence, the nation has been trying to unify and channelize all these various insights on the subject of education into constructive policies and programmes; today, we witness a steady emergence of some sort of a broad policy and programme for the nation's education. It is not yet clear and precise; it is still in the experimental stage. But certain broad features of this educational programme and policy are visible on the horizon. The most important feature of this body of educational insights is that which forms the fundamental principle in the Basic Education programme. This programme contains within itself the basic ingredient of what Swami Vivekananda called man-making education. That basic ingredient is the emphasis on work, labour of the hand in association with labour of the intellect; such a combination will produce intelligent, socially efficient individuals, unlike the usual academic intellectual education, which turns out only individuals with information stocked in their brain, but without the capacity for practical expression. Knowledge gained through life and work, through experiment and investigation, is alone vigorous and fruitful, especially in the early stages. A mere intellectual education is valid only in the higher educational levels.

The emphasis upon work, upon the labour of the hand, is there in the educational systems of many modern states. I was particularly struck by this emphasis upon work, upon constructive enterprise on the part of children, which I found in the educational system of Soviet Russia. During the last few years, the whole world has become impressed by the achievements of the Soviet educational system, a system which has produced so many fruits of human achievements in the form of science and technology, economic development, and general human welfare. These Soviet educational achievements hold vital lessons for us in India today. We have learnt much from the British educational system; we have also tried to learn a little from the American educational system, a process which is getting intensified today as a result of increasingly closer cultural contacts with America after our independence; but we have now the opportunity to study at first hand, and

benefit from the impressive educational experiment of Soviet Russia in the wake of the newly forged Indo-Soviet cultural and economic collaboration. Thus learning from every nation the beautiful points in its system, and fusing them with our own national vision and purpose, we have to evolve an educational scheme for our country which will meet the demands of the modern age.

This emphasis upon labour is central to the Russian educational system; the joy with which the children of U. S. S. R. work and produce articles of beauty and utility in the process of acquiring knowledge and ideas makes the knowledge so acquired dynamic and creative. This element of joy in work and study which I witnessed in the institutions I visited during my all-too-brief eight days' sojourn in the Soviet Union last August impressed me greatly. And it is not only the students who experience this joy, but the teachers as well. Both feel a sense of joy and pride in the achievements of their country. In fact, this sense of pride and joy is a characteristic of not merely the Russian teacher and pupil, but also of the Russian worker, the Russian industrial executive, the Russian administrator, in fact, of every element in the Soviet society. I found in all of them a sense of pride in the creation of something unique and valuable for man everywhere through the experiments in their Soviet society; everyone is inspired by the vision of a new humanity freed from hunger, disease, social injustice, exploitation, and war. When I asked the Director of the Central Station of Young Naturalists in Moscow to explain the work and aims of his Station, he turned round to explain to me the activities and achievements of his institution with a rare fund of enthusiasm and pride, and spoke highly of the young trainees who flock to him year after year. Faith in oneself and in one's fellowmen, love of work, pride in the nation's achievements, and hope for the future of man everywhere are the characteristic traits of the average Soviet citizen today.

Now, when we turn to our own country, one of the things that strikes us is a lack of this sense of purpose, this sense of direction, this sense of enthusiasm in the work that we do. Swami Vivekananda had told us that national work should be suffused with national vision and enthusiasm and a spirit of joy. Otherwise, all work, he said, would become static, stereotyped, and meaningless, and a source not of freedom but of bondage. Whether it is teaching or learning, whether it is the simple household duties or the larger duties of government and administration, what we need to capture in every sphere of life is this national purpose and enthusiasm. Our country has become free after centuries of political and social immobilization; it has now got the op-

portunity to build the structure of an enduring society on the basis of justice and equality, human dignity and unity, inspired by the vision of general human happiness and welfare. Swami Vivekananda exhorted the youth of the country to be up and doing to achieve this goal. It was not the time to sleep, he said, nor to waste time in idle talk, but to work intelligently, moved by the spirit of love of man; for 'on our work depends the India of the future', said he.

I would request you to keep this idea constantly in your minds. Inspired by this vision and idea, whatever work you do, little or big, in any nook or corner of India, will have telling effect on the march of India to prosperity and progress. It is the cumulative result of such work by millions of dedicated men and women that creates a nation. Swamiji gave us this national vision—this vision which imparts a sense of urgency, a sense of sacredness, to the work that we do. Every citizen must be imbued with the sense of a mission, a sense of faith in his own work. The work that is done with faith, the work that is done with an awareness of the worth of one's contribution to the making of the nation, that work becomes most effective. In our *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, written nearly three or four thousand years ago, we find this definition of work efficiency (I. 1.10):

Yadeva vidyayā karoti, śraddhayā, upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati—

'Whatever work is done with *vidyā*, knowledge, through *śraddha*, faith, and backed by *upaniṣad*, meditation, that alone becomes most effective.'

Vidyā, knowledge, is necessary, knowledge of the methods and techniques of work, of the theoretical and practical aspects of a subject. But this knowledge will remain static until it is energized by *śraddhā*. And that energy needs to be disciplined and properly directed by *upaniṣad*, calm meditation. Any work which has these three sources of strength behind it will be most efficient. It alone will have world-moving power. Our country needs work of this type today in every department of national activity.

All creative work belongs to this category. You are here to receive training in Basic Education. Every work requires a prior training of the worker. He needs to know the pros and cons of the work so that he does it intelligently. There is thus need for the training and discipline that you undergo here for a year. What is Basic Education? What are you expected to do in this field? What are the methods and processes of this particular educational scheme? You learn these

things for a year here. That is the first equipment—*vidyā*, knowledge. The second equipment is *śraddhā*, faith. No one can impart a training in this to another person. Everyone has to capture it for himself or herself. *Śraddhā* is a spiritual value; when it moves a human heart, the man or woman concerned finds an intrinsic value in life and its activities, not to be equated with the monetary rewards or physical and mental pleasures that accompany them. True work is an expression of the human personality. It is the richness of the personality of the worker that imparts an artistic quality to his life and work. And this inner richness is the product of *śraddhā*. Faith in oneself, in the Divine within, is the greatest source of enrichment of a personality. Such a person works out of the fullness of his heart. By capturing this *śraddhā*, man achieves the true purposes of education; without it, the first equipment, namely, knowledge, does not shine, cannot become fruitful. Swami Vivekananda again and again referred to the importance of this value in education. Without *śraddhā* no great things can be done, said he. Modern Europeans and Americans have achieved great things because they had *śraddhā*. We lost the battle for national existence and freedom during the last few centuries because we lost *śraddhā*. Swamiji, therefore, placed this value at the centre of his national education programme. The greatness of a man is the greatness of his *śraddhā*. *Śraddhāmayoyaṁ puruṣo yo yat śraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*—'Man consists of *śraddhā*. Whatever be the measure of his *śraddha*, that will be the measure of his life as well', says the *Gītā* (XVII. 3). Hence Swamiji wanted us to acquire this *śraddhā*, this deep faith in oneself, so that we may develop into dynamic characters.

In his reply to the Address of Welcome given by the citizens of Calcutta on his return from the West in February 1897, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 319-20):

'What we want is this *śraddhā*. Unfortunately it has nearly vanished from India, and this is why we are in our present state. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in this *śraddhā* and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this *śraddhā*. My master used to say, he who thinks himself weak will become weak, and this is true. This *śraddhā* must enter into you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the western races is the outcome of this *śraddhā*, because they believe in their muscles, and if you believe in your spirit, how much more will it work! Believe in that infinite soul, the infinite power, which, with consensus of opinion, your books and sages preach.... Therefore, this *śraddhā* is what I want, and what all of us here want, this faith in ourselves, and before you is the great task to get that faith. Give up the awful disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be strong, and have this *śraddhā*, and everything else is bound to follow.'

Swamiji was not much impressed by our profuse faith in gods and goddesses; there was no strength and vigour in that faith, because it was not backed by *ātmaśraddhā,* faith in oneself. So he admonished us to have faith in oneself first before having faith in God.

It is only when we have real faith in ourselves, when our hearts pulsate with this burning faith, it is only then that our faith in God will shine. We had plenty of faith in gods and goddesses; yet our country remained broken, repeatedly subjected to all sorts of foreign tyranny; it has remained poor, backward, and weak all these centuries. But now, as the result of the teachings by men like Swami Vivekananda, we are gaining a bit of that *śraddhā* in ourselves. We are developing that kind of *ātmaśraddhā,* and the nation is moving onward. A new social awareness, a new spirit of earnestness and enthusiasm, came to our people in the wake of his teachings, and in a few decades we achieved our political independence. Only by cultivating the same virtues still more intensively can we hope to solve the social, economic, and other problems of our ancient country.

Efficiency is a value that is being discussed from various angles in modern industrial society; there is constant effort to find out and evolve methods designed to make workers in all fields of society more and more efficient. One important source of this efficiency, apart from knowledge of techniques, is the worker's deep faith in himself, and deep faith in the cause for which he is working. A labourer is working in a factory. Ordinarily, he works to earn his own living; his efficiency then will be that much only as would keep him in the job, and often, much less. But when he learns that the work he does has a larger bearing on the good of society, on the happiness and welfare of millions, he becomes more efficient; that awareness taps a new energy source in him, his higher Self, faith in which brings faith in his work for the good of other men. A student's study becomes more efficient when he keeps bright before his mind the individual and social objectives of that study. The same is the case with regard to the teacher and his work. This *śraddhā* must be captured by our people today. We are not called to hard work today to enrich a master, native or foreign. We work to uplift ourselves, our nation as a whole. If our workers, industrial executives, and citizens need this *śraddhā* today, our teachers need it a hundredfold more. Because, while the former handle only machines and tools, the teacher handles living persons like himself in his students. He has to impart manliness to them by evoking their *śraddhā* in themselves. That means that the teacher must have a fund of *śraddhā* within himself. He will then be a light kindling

other lights. This is how ancient India understood the teacher's role in education.

Thus the second value, *śraddhā*, is more important than the first one, *vidyā*, which remains sterile without the touch of the second. The Upaniṣad was not content with these two values, and so added a third value—*upaniṣad*, which means calm meditation. Action is of the body; knowledge is of the mind; *śraddhā* proceeds from the heart. The flow of the energy of man from faith (*śraddhā*), through *vidyā* (knowledge), to *karma* (action), is the basis of efficiency. This flow of energy has to be maintained. It often suffers shut-downs due to the ups and downs in the emotional life of the worker. Inner disintegration or want of integration results in outer disorganization and lowering of personality tone and efficiency. This has to be prevented. The personality should be provided with a built-in mechanism for automatic integrations and adjustments. This is achieved, says the Upaniṣad, through the technique of meditation. The worker and his work must be fortified by meditation, by diving into the ocean of strength, fearlessness, and resource which is his inner Self, the Ātman.

Thus every work achieves full efficiency only when inspired by these three values of knowledge, faith, and meditation. What a blessed insight has been bequeathed for man by the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in this great utterance: *Yadeva, vidyayā karoti, śraddhayā, upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati!*

As I said earlier, this type of efficiency is expected most from the teacher. For teaching is not instructing, but communicating. In teaching, the personality of the teacher is in communion with those of his students. Mere instruction does not need the services of a teacher today; it can be had through books, through notes, through radio, television, and even through the tape-record. A good deal of such instruction is being given today through such media. Such instruction is nothing more than conveyance of ideas from A to B. But education is not mere instruction; it is not just conveyance of ideas and information from one person to another, or from an instrument to a person. Education involves the play of the personality force. Ideas and information become alive and vital when touched by that force. What is then conveyed is not static information but a force, an inspiration. That can come only from a teacher—a living, pulsating person. Education is vital communication; it is communion of minds. Swami Vivekananda refers to this in his lecture on 'My Master' delivered in New York in 1896. Says he (*Complete Works*. Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, pp. 177-78):

'He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense. ... Therefore, first make character—that is the highest duty you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can teach it afterwards; they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master. ... For it is not what is spoken, much less the language in which it is spoken, but it is the personality of the speaker which dwells in everything he says that carries weight. Every one of us feels this at times. We hear most splendid orations, most wonderfully reasoned out discourses, and we go home and forget them all. At other times we hear a few words in the simplest language, and they enter into our lives, become part and parcel of ourselves, and produce lasting results. The words of a man who can put his personality into them take effect, but he must have tremendous personality. All teaching implies giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have something to give, and the other must be open to receive.'

Indian education today must take note of the deep and inspiring sentiments in the above utterance of Swami Vivekananda. Teachers and students in India must strive to make education a communion of minds and enrichment of personalities and not, as defined by an American critic (*National Parent Teacher Journal*, April 1955):

'That mysterious process whereby information passes from the lecture notes of the professor on to the notebook of the student, through his pen, without entering the mind of either'.

Our education must serve to further the aims of our democracy. We have to educate our children to be citizens of a democratic social order. They have to learn to live as free and equal men and women in a free and equalitarian society. No domination, no exploitation, no special privilege over others, but only the spirit of service shall be the motive force in inter-personal relationships. Education is the only means by which such a revolutionary change can be effected in our society which is still feudal in outlook, if not in structure. Even many of our so-called educated people are feudal in their mental make-up; they have not captured the spirit of freedom and equality in their relations with their fellowmen; many of our educated men exhibit the feudal outlook even in their relations with their educated wives. Citizens with feudal outlooks and feudal attitudes are tremendous sources of weakness for a democratic state which India is, and a democratic society which India hopes to be. This weakness has to be eradicated by educating all sections of our people in the robust democratic temper. All citizens, irrespective of their functions in society, are equal in their worth and dignity. Here the Vedāntic and the modern democratic ideals of man mingle and converge. Swami Vivekananda's teachings on education and religion have this end in view

Basic Education has been conceived in the light of this social objective. It represents not only a new method of education, but also a new philosophy of life. To quote the words of Gandhiji, the architect of the scheme:

'The ultimate objective of this New Education is not only a balanced and harmonious individual, but also a balanced and harmonious society—a just social order in which there is no unnatural dividing line between the haves and have-nots, and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom.'

Children imbibing these values from their earliest schooling years will, when grown up, become hard-working, co-operative, and peaceful citizens, worthy to become members not only of their own Indian society, but also of the emerging world community.

WOMEN IN INDIAN CULTURE

IT WAS a delightful experience for me today to enter the premises of this Home Science College and to participate in your prayer in its beautiful Sri Ramakrishna Temple. As Mrs. Rajammal Devadas, your Principal, said in her introductory remarks, I had been hearing about this college from her and from Sri Avinashilingam, its donor, for the past two or three years; but when I actually see it today, its dimension is far above my highest expectations. This beautiful campus, with its peace and quiet, is a home in the real Hindu sense, from where will radiate its noble message of a healthy, efficient, and peaceful home to all parts of our country through you and those who come after you to receive education here. This institution is an expression of Sri Avinashilingam's reverence for Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother and for Indian womanhood. Those who study here are certainly fortunate. Girls from all parts of India and outside come here to get not only an academic education, but also nourishing food for the soul. I have seen and addressed a few Home Science colleges, but this one is unique among them; here is present the one essential element of an Indian Home Science college, a pervading spiritual atmosphere, the brooding of the Divine Spirit over the troubled waters of life.

It is the atmosphere of peace that makes a home a real home. In a Home Science college, the most important aspect is the provision of an education which will help our women to run peaceful, efficient, happy homes. What is a home without the spirit of love and dedication pervading its activities and processes? That spirit is centred in the housewife or mother. We have the ancient saying that it is not the building that makes the home, but it is the wife, the mother, the woman who has found peace in her heart, that constitutes the home: *Na gṛhaṁ*

gṛham ityāhuḥ, gṛhiṇī gṛham ucyate (*Mahābhārata,* Bhandarkar Institute Edition, Book XII, Chapter 142, footnote). She is the living goddess functioning in the household. Our culture has upheld the type of woman who encompasses the whole family with her pure love. In modern times you find beautiful palatial buildings, but inside them often live the most unhappy men and women. They may use many articles to beautify their houses, but there may not be any beauty or orderliness in their lives. Tension abides in their hearts instead of peace. This type is on the increase in modern civilization. The subject that is much discussed in an advanced country like America today is the subject of tensions—tensions intrapersonal, interpersonal, and international.

The essence of all beauty is harmony. In an age like this, we are given many suggestions as to how to make the home look more beautiful through interior decoration and other measures. But the fundamental thing about making the home beautiful is to bring peace to the home. This can be brought about only by religion. Just as the food we take gives us strength and the knowledge we acquire gives nourishment to our minds, in like manner do we gain spiritual nourishment through the thought of God. But modern education is practically devoid of this nourishment. There is urgent need to tackle the problem of this malnutrition of the soul. It is the main aim of this institution to see that all the students who study here develop physically, mentally, and spiritually, and, through them, this nourishment will be carried to hundreds of homes in the country.

How does this institution propose to give the students this spiritual nourishment? That is the function of the beautiful Sri Ramakrishna temple in the campus; this temple is the soul of this institution. 'The life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is the life of religion in practice; his life enables us to see God face to face', writes Mahatma Gandhi in his 'Foreword' to the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna.* I was deeply impressed by the atmosphere in the temple when I attended your daily morning prayer just a few minutes ago. Through such prayers, one gets an experience of the intangible values of life, a communion with the deeper levels of our being.

The name of this campus itself is Saradalaya, a name associated with that symbol of purity and holiness, Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. The students and staff of this institution have thus a double source of inspiration behind them, namely, Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi. You will have occasion, during your stay here and later, to study the life of the Holy Mother. Swami Vivekananda spoke of her as the hope

and inspiration of Indian womanhood. Our country has produced many great women. In our own Tamilnad, we had Āṇḍāl, the God-filled woman, who has inspired thousands of men and women. The name of Sītā has been a perpetual inspiration not only in India, but also in the countries of South-East Asia. In his Madras lecture on 'The Sages of India' (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 255-56), Swami Vivekananda spoke of her thus:

'And what to speak of Sītā? You may exhaust the literature of the world that is past, and I may assure you that you will have to exhaust the literature of the world of the future, before finding another Sītā. Sītā is unique. That character was depicted once and for all. There may have been several Rāmas, perhaps, but never more than one Sītā! She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sītā; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child, throughout the length and breadth of the land of Āryāvarta. ... Sītā has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of Sītā. Any attempt to modernize our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sītā, is immediately a failure, as we see every day. The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sītā, and that is the only way.'

Our history has been inspired by thousands of women who had attained peace and poise and fullness through their spiritual life, and these values have become the inalienable characteristics of Indian womanhood. We had *Brahmavādinī* Gārgī in the Upaniṣadic age who participated in the intellectual life of the age. We had Āṇḍāl and Mīrā and a galaxy of others in the earlier and later Middle Ages. And in the modern age we have the unique example of Bhairavi Brahmani, who was the teacher of Sri Ramakrishna and who guided him in his spiritual *sādhanās.* We have also examples of heroic women who have used their gifts in the service of the nation in the fields of literature, statecraft, and war. In this long, unbroken line of heroic womanhood, Sarada Devi, of our own time, occupies a unique position.

She was married at the young age of five to the God-intoxicated Ramakrishna. Gossip-mongers in her village pitied her for being the wife of a mad man; but during the few occasions that Sri Ramakrishna went to the village in the next twelve years, she found in him only a loving saintly husband and friend. But the teasing by some of the village women intensified as she grew older until it became unbearable. Entering the age of eighteen, she decided to test for herself the truth of the gossip by presenting herself before her husband in the temple garden of Dakshineswar. She walked the long weary eighty miles, with the final stretch in a palanquin owing to illness and fatigue, in

the company of her father, and reached the Dakshineswar temple at night. She went straight to Sri Ramakrishna's room and presented herself before him, not without some misgivings as to how she would be received by her world-forgetting husband. But all her fears and misgivings vanished when Sri Ramakrishna received her with the utmost tenderness and cordiality, saying: 'Ah, you have come! But how nice it would have been if you had come earlier!' Such were the loving words with which Sri Ramakrishna welcomed her. Her mind was at last set at peace, and she found the village gossips utterly baseless.

There is a place for innocent gossip in every society. But the gossip of which Sarada Devi was a victim is the product of a dried-up heart and social irresponsibility, which is the root cause of much peacelessness and suffering in Indian social life. The eradication of this disturbing element in our social life will be the touchstone of our women's progress. Education has to help us to discipline ourselves, widen our sympathies, and intensify our social feeling. Our speech and act will then proceed from a fuller and richer personality and tend to enhance the peace and happiness of our fellowmen.

The Holy Mother was the embodiment of simplicity, love, and service. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother lived their married life as monk and nun, as teacher and disciple, and as teachers and guides of men and women—that is the wonderful story of their life. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother continued his spiritual ministration, and she was sought after by hundreds of men and women in India and abroad. This woman, apparently old-fashioned and simple, with no education worth the name, was yet modern, with an appeal to the moderns. In her artless simplicity and self-effacing love she seemed to represent the fulfilment of the urges of the modern age. As Sister Nivedita says (*The Master As I Saw Him,* pp. 147-48):

'To me it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. But is she the last of an old order, or the beginning of a new? In her one sees realized that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself, the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her saint-hood. I have never known her hesitate in giving utterance to large and generous judgement, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilization. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Is she tortured by the perversity of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments beyond her ken? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter, and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the

difficulty. Or is there need for severity? No foolish sentimentality causes her to waver. ...

'And yet is she, as one of her spiritual children said of her, speaking literally of her gift of song, "full of music", all gentleness, all playfulness. And the room wherein she worships, withal, is filled with sweetness.'

The remark of Sri Ramakrishna about Sarada Devi is significant: 'She is the goddess Sarasvatī, come to the world to give knowledge to mankind.' This knowledge is not book knowledge, nor secular information, but she is the *guru* who removes the miasma of ignorance and confers the gifts of spiritual illumination, which helps us to see our way even in the secular field of life. Hers is the wisdom which is the synthesis of the knowledge of the external world, which is positive science, and the knowledge of the internal world, which is religion.

It is an old saying in India that Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, the goddess of wealth and the goddess of knowledge, can never live together. But modern America is an example to disprove this belief. Swami Vivekananda was amazed to see the co-presence of knowledge and wealth in that country. The recent history of the West is the story of the advancement of knowledge leading to increase of wealth and power, of science as *lucifera* flowing into science as *fructifera*. The capacity for practical application of knowledge is the product of a disciplined mind. The basis of all wealth, economic, mental, or spiritual, is the discipline of the mind; it is the product of intelligent, honest, hard work. Love of ease, physical or mental, is the greatest enemy of all forms of wealth and welfare. Swami Vivekananda found intense love of knowledge in the women of the West. Indian women today have all the opportunities and facilities to pursue knowledge and the culture of their minds, and, thus enriched inwardly, to discipline themselves to achieve wealth, glory, happiness, and spirituality. But, unfortunately, the educated women of modern India, barring a few exceptions, love wealth and ease and comfort, more than knowledge leading to the culture of the mind and heart. Unlike in America, here women constitute only a small percentage of the audience at meetings and discourses at which serious subjects are discussed; and this, in spite of all the social facilities, leisure, and a modern education which they command. What a distance the modern Indian woman has to travel to acquire the grace of Sarasvatī and, through that, the grace of Her counterpart, Lakṣmī! Both the high goddesses will ever remain far from those men and women who prefer ease and frivolity to the austerity of knowledge and self-discipline. This is the austerity, *tapas,* constructive and creative—which ancient India practised, by which she became known the world over as the home of wealth, wisdom, and the arts. *Tad hi tapaḥ, tad*

hi tapaḥ—'That verily is *tapas,* that verily is *tapas*', proclaims the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (I. 9).

Our women are adept in certain types of austerities like fasting and other physical privations. These are certainly assets; but they are not enough; they become sterile in the absence of other positive disciplines; of these, control of speech and emotion and channelling their energies to socially beneficial purposes is the most important for the development of character and efficiency. Much unhappiness in home and society proceeds from the unrestrained speech of our women. According to Indian thought, the goddess of speech or *Vāgdevatā* is also the goddess of wisdom. By discipline and purification of our speech, we achieve wisdom and radiate peace and happiness. *Yogasya prathamaṁ dvāraṁ vāṅnirodhaḥ*—'The first doorway to *yoga* is discipline of speech', says Śaṅkarācārya in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (verse 367).

It is worth while to ponder over the significance of the advice that the Holy Mother gave to a visiting woman who was grieved over the thought of the imminent passing away of the Mother. 'Why do you fear? You have seen Sri Ramakrishna', assured the Mother, and added, after a pause, in a weak voice:

'Let me, however, tell you one thing. If you want peace of mind, do not look for faults in others. Rather look out to discover your own weaknesses. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one here is an alien or a stranger, my child. The whole world is your own.'

Rabia (A.D. 767-815) was a great saint of Islam like our Āṇḍāḷ of Tamilnad (seventh century A.D.). Someone asked her whether she loved God. 'Yes', she replied. 'But do you not hate the devil?' they inquired. 'My love of God does not give me time to hate the devil' was her characteristic reply.

In such characters we find the consummation of a woman's home-making virtues where, through the expansion of the heart, the whole world becomes the home.

Swami Vivekananda has bequeathed to us his vision of the future Indian woman. Writes Sister Nivedita (*The Master as I Saw Him,* p. 291):

'He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science women must learn; but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality. He saw clearly enough that the ideal education would be one that should exercise the smallest possible influence for direct change on the social body as a whole. It would be that which should best enable every wo-

man, in time to come, to resume into herself the greatness of all the women of the Indian past.'

Your college is fortunate in that it has the most valuable asset in its association with the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. This will be a perennial source of inspiration to one and all associated with it—students and staff, parents and management alike. I am happy to have spent a few minutes here. I am grateful to Dr. Rajammal Devadas for inviting me here and giving me an opportunity to study the working of this Home Science College.

Coming now to the formal task of inaugurating the College Union, I have great pleasure in doing so, and I wish your College Union all success in the coming years. The first duty of a Union in a Home Science College is to strive constantly to make the institution true to its name, to achieve the atmosphere of a home in the college campus itself, by fostering an active spirit of affection and fellowship, team spirit and dedication in the teachers and the taught as also between them. My thanks to you all.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO OUR WOMEN

I AM very happy to have this opportunity to come to this Home Science College once again and meet you all in the course of my present visit to Coimbatore in connexion with the Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations in the city. You have invited me to address you. What topic shall I speak on? During this Vivekananda Centenary year, the theme that comes uppermost to my mind is the subject of Swami Vivekananda; and standing before an audience of girl students, I am inclined to dwell on his contribution to the growth and development of Indian womanhood. During this tour of the South, I had occasion to visit several women's colleges in the city of Madras last week and address thousands of women students. When they listened to the exposition of Swami Vivekananda's message, I saw joy beaming from their faces; this was proof that this message was a message of strength and hope and joy. What, then, did Swamiji do for our women? What priceless legacy did he leave for them? When a father dies, he often leaves some property for his children. Has Swami Vivekananda left anything for the youth of India which, if appropriated by them, will enrich and ennoble them?

A study of his life and work will convince anyone that he has left an immense legacy for our youth, whom he loved as his spiritual children. And what he has left is a more permanent and substantial wealth than what any father leaves to his loving children. And the girls of India can claim a large share of his love and concern. He had full confidence in our women, and great respect for what they had done for the enrichment of our culture.

I shall try to tell you what he has left for you, and for millions of other girls in our country. Reading a book recently, with the title *Condition of Bengali Women around the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*, by Srimati Usha Chakravarty of Calcutta, I was struck by the immensity of the sufferings and privations of our women, both of the higher and of the lower social ranks. They did not get the light of education; they were steeped in superstition; they did not have faith in themselves; neither did they evoke respect from the men-folk, who treated them as far less than their equals. This picture was true not only of Bengal, but also of all parts of India. It was the surest index of the low state of Indian civilization and culture during the last and preceding centuries.

But soon light shone into this dismal atmosphere. Great men and movements arose to bring cheer to our women's hearts and lives. Men like Raja Rammohun Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar worked tirelessly to change the outlook of society towards women, and remove the chains from their minds and feet. Out of their efforts came greater freedom and opportunities for our women through education and social reform. Swami Vivekananda, who appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century, followed in the wake of these earlier benefactors and became a powerful champion of women's education and all-round development, and their freedom of self-expression in home and society. He restored to our women confidence in themselves, a mood of fearlessness, and a consciousness of inner strength.

The greatest blessing to man or woman is the light of knowledge coming from education. Where there is darkness there is fear, and fear is the mother of superstition and little-mindedness. The human mind, if enlightened, will experience no fear or superstition. Swamiji said to our women: Light the lamp of knowledge within yourself; gain the strength arising from knowledge; and become fearless, compassionate, and large-hearted; acquire practical efficiency. These were the four values proceeding from education that Swamiji emphasized again and again: knowledge, strength and fearlessness, compassion and large-heartedness, and practical efficiency.

Swamiji felt that all the problems of the Indian woman would be solved, largely by herself, as soon as she received education on the right lines. For a woman, the heart is the essence of personality. Education, apart from imparting information and ideas, should help to expand her heart, to strengthen her capacity to love, cherish, and protect. Out of this will flow the virtues of fearlessness and practical efficiency.

Such an education cannot be secular; it has to be spiritual. Secular education, narrowly conceived, makes for selfishness and exploitation. It ends up in bread-winning and money-making. Education is meant for the spiritual development and enrichment of man. It is that which liberates the human spirit from the limitations of finitude: *sā vidyā yā vimuktaye*. This is possible only when education is conceived on spiritual lines and imbued with spiritual purposes. Bread-winning is not neglected in such an education; it forms a small part, though an essential one, of such an education, which is the education of the whole man.

Education so conceived cannot be confined to the period of formal schooling. It begins in early childhood and continues throughout life. 'As long as I live, so long do I learn', said Sri Ramakrishna.

The first great virtue derived from education is fearlessness. Knowledge destroys fear. Physical science destroys fear proceeding from the external world; spiritual science destroys fear proceeding from within. Fear is the great enemy of the moral life. Truth and honesty, purity and love, cannot abide where there is fear. Moral virtues can flower and flourish only in a context of fearlessness. The mothers of the nation should especially be fearless and morally strong. A timid mother cannot inspire her children to greatness. Where there is no knowledge, there is fear. Our lives show the truth of this. The child of an illiterate mother falls ill; the mother does not know what to do; she gets frightened and upset. But if she was one who had studied a little of the science of the body, she would have known what was wrong with the child, and calmly set about to find a remedy. Fearlessness comes from knowledge of the laws governing the world. For knowledge is power. Still greater is the fearlessness that comes from the knowledge of God, of the immortal divine Self that is the Self of all.

Our earlier generations during the last few centuries had lived in fear. The children of today are more fearless. I have marked this fearlessness in our little boys and girls all over India. In them we see manifest the spirit of Swami Vivekananda. The first in the list of spiritual virtues enumerated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XVI. 1) is this virtue of *abhaya*, fearlessness:

Abhayaṁ sattvasaṁśuddhiḥ jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ;
Dānaṁ damaśca yajñaśca svādhyāyastapa ārjavaṁ.

The highest form of fearlessness is reached when we realize God. The Upaniṣads even define God as 'The Fearless *(abhayaṁ Brahma)*, and add that one who realizes Brahman, the Self of all, becomes fearless. This fearlessness comes from infinite knowledge, from knowledge of our oneness with all; this infinite knowledge connotes also infinite love; and where there is love, there is no fear, says Swami Vivekananda; where there is no fear, there will be no superstition either.

To free men and women from superstition, fear, wickedness, and narrowness, and help them realize their inborn divine nature, Swami Vivekananda advocates an educational programme in which science and religion shake hands. To put it in his own words ('Conversations and Dialogues', *Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 366):

'What we want are western science coupled with Vedānta, with *brahmacharya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's own self.'

Such a combination will result in all-round human development and welfare. There will ensue the full manifestation of the glory of human nature, lighting up every aspect of human life, individual and collective.

Education is to dispel three kinds of darkness. The first is physical darkness, the darkness which obstructs man's physical movements. The next is mental darkness proceeding from ignorance about the physical and the social world and their laws. And the third is spiritual darkness proceeding from ignorance about the laws that govern the spiritual world, the inner world of man.

The first darkness is removed by health and wealth; the second is removed by secular education. And the third is overcome only through religion which comprises spiritual knowledge accompanied by striving. This *striving* or *sādhanā* is the very essence of religion. Temples and churches, rituals and ceremonies, etc. constitute but the externals of this *sādhanā*. The inner core of this *sādhanā* consists of discipline and control of mind, loving remembrance of God, and meditation. All such *sādhanā* is a movement of the finite to the Infinite. Strive towards the Infinite, say the Upaniṣads, for therein alone is bliss. There is no bliss in the finite. Attachment to the finite is worldliness; and this worldliness is what obstructs the growth of the soul. Education must remove this obstruction; for all education is a movement from darkness to light. This is the deepest prayer of the human heart: *Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya*—'Lead me from darkness to light.' Through such education the home becomes a centre of delight, where each heart opens to the other and all open to the world of man outside. This is

the achievement of true universality. The mother is the symbol of this universality in the limited sphere of the family. She accepts every one in the family and rejects none.

But this quality has to transcend the limits of the family. It should also manifest in every member of the family, in every citizen of the country. Our hearts have to embrace not only the children of our own homes, but also the children of all homes. This is the true education of the citizen in whom is developed the urge to protect and to cherish, which is the characteristic of the mother-heart. India recognized the infinite reach of this mother-heart in her conception of God as the Divine Mother.

During the past few centuries we in India tended to be narrow and selfish; our social feeling became dried up. Our religious life became cramped by formalism and static piety. Professing to be formally religious, we became thoroughly worldly. This rank worldliness infects every aspect of our outlook and behaviour, making us unworthy as citizens of a free society. Our mothers' concern for children stop with their own; and yet they are not wanting in piety. Our men and women had little concern for the happiness of the other individual.

Our society became a fine example of static piety baptizing active worldliness. We invented cheap means to remove this worldliness; we dipped ourselves in holy rivers and performed rituals and other acts of piety. But *saṁsāra* or worldliness stuck to us all the same. Our pettiness and meanness inflicted much avoidable suffering on the weaker sections of our society, especially on the women and the masses. Our women, again, suffered more from each other than even from men.

Into this dark and dismal world of our social life penetrated shafts of light from the spiritual message of Swami Vivekananda, who taught us that the cure for worldliness is not a static piety, but a dynamic spirituality whose first step is the development of heart, of social feeling, the love and service of man in the light of the indwelling Divine. So expressed, religion becomes an education for character. He and his master, Sri Ramakrishna, taught us to live in the world as free beings, but not to allow worldliness to live in us. As Sri Ramakrishna aptly puts it: 'The boat will be on the water, but water should not be in the boat; that is dangerous for the journey.' And life is a journey to truth and excellence. Through discrimination and detachment the mind develops the capacity to cut down the jungle of worldliness. Relieved of this burden life progresses faster towards truth and excel-

lence. In this process, education and religion flow into a single unified discipline of life-fulfilment.

Our philosophy teaches us that women are manifestations of the Divine Mother. Men are taught to look upon women in this light. Women also are taught to be aware of this divine heritage of theirs and strive to manifest the divine in their life and behaviour. Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi or the Holy Mother came specially to help men and women to manifest their innate divinity. They saw God in the hearts of all men and women, irrespective of creed or sex. Your Home Science College is sanctified by a beautiful temple dedicated to them. This temple welcomes men and women of all religions, for it is the symbol of the vision of unity and harmony which was realized by Sri Ramakrishna. He taught that every religion is a pathway to God. It is for this universality of spirit that the whole world, as sung by the contemporary Muslim poet of Bengal, Kazi Nazrul Islam, has fallen at Sri Ramakrishna's feet.

Yours is a good institution with noble ideals and objectives. It has the special aim of bringing godliness into your lives and into your homes. Love of God will flow into love and service of man, for God dwells in the heart of man. With love in your heart, all your work will bear the impress of a rich and elevated heart. Love converts little actions into big and meaningful accomplishments. Without love, even big actions become trivial and meaningless. As Sri Ramakrishna said: 'All the various pursuits of life are so many zeros. Zeros have no value in themselves, but when the figure '1' is put before them, they become full of value. That one is God. First God, then the world.' Then everything in the world becomes significant—wealth, power, or pleasure. It is of this that Sri Ramakrishna, quoting a poet, sang: 'this world becomes a mansion of mirth—*saṁsār hocce majār kuṭī.*' This is the true criterion of the success of all education, especially of home science education. It is up to you, students and teachers, to give yourselves such an education, by which joy will abide in your lives and in your homes. You have my best wishes.

THE INDIAN IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD

IN the long course of her history, India has experimented with life from various angles and at various levels and has discovered many truths, and proved a few of them for herself and the world. The Indian mind long ago discovered that the object of life is not pleasure, much less pain, but knowledge, through a detached study of both. Pleasure and pain and all experience are the opportunity for the mind of man to gain knowledge and wisdom. Young immature cultures fail to grasp this vital truth, and they build their edifice on the shaky basis of the pursuit of pleasure; but such edifices fall, unable to stand the pressures from within and without. Indian culture has endured these thousands of years, surviving dark periods of challenge from within and without, because of its stable foundations furnished by her early thinkers and leaders, and because of the mature *Weltanschauung* or world-view which they had provided for her people.

Among the values which that *Weltanschauung* has placed before humanity, the most significant is the idea of the innate divinity of man. Men and women and all beings are divine in their essential nature. Indian thought views social evolution as the process of the incorporation of this great value in the texture of human relationships. From it are derived the values of freedom, equality, and the sacredness of personality. That forms the measure of social and cultural progress.

Among the various types of human relationships, that between man and woman is the most important. The status of woman is the most significant criterion of progress of any society or culture. The history of the different cultures presents various phases of the evolution of this idea.

In the lower levels of culture this status is one of dependence in theory and practice, woman being meant as an object of pleasure to man, the stronger sex. But in the earliest glimpse of recorded Indian society, we find this stage already passed. The *Ṛg-Veda* presents a picture of woman as the equal of man in civic and religious spheres. In the pursuit of knowledge and virtue, in the performance of rituals, in the composition of hymns, even in the harder fields of war and statecraft, we find the Vedic woman as a companion and help-mate of man. This equality in practice soon found its sustenance in theory. The Upaniṣads expounded the idea of man and woman as the equal halves of a divine unity, each the complement of, and incomplete without, the other. The Upaniṣads also discovered the real nature of man and woman to consist in the Ātman, the sexless Self, which is ever pure, perfect, and free. Associated with body and mind, it becomes conditioned as personality with its sex and other differentiations. This is *man* (or *woman*) the known, the subject of sociology and other empirical sciences, as contrasted with *man* (or *woman*) *the unknown*, the subject of spiritual sciences.

Man as known to sociology is limited, imperfect, and helpless; and he or she strives to become whole through associations with individuals and objects outside of himself or herself. The satisfactions proceeding from such associations range from the purely animal to the deeply spiritual, passing through the stages of the primitive and the cultured. It is the idea of restraint that characterizes progress from one to the other. And this restraint is the checking of the lower self, *man the known*, and the manifestation of the higher self, *man the unknown*, the Ātman.

This spiritual view of man as expounded in the Upaniṣads became the rock foundation of the Indian cultural edifice. It affected profoundly our theories of marriage and morals, inter-personal and inter-religious relationships, and our attitude to God and the world. Thanks to it, India has always upheld, in theory, the spiritual equality of man and man, and man and woman. But in social practice, there has been increasing laxity after the Vedic period, not because of deliberate human choice, but due to the vicissitudes of history. Deliberate human action, in the great epochs of Indian history, in the field of human relationships, has always tended to uphold the ideals of equality and freedom.

Indian thought views woman exactly as it views man, as a person with a destiny. The search for this destiny makes her a pilgrim in search of *abhyudaya and niḥśreyasa*—worldly excellence and spiritual

realization. In the sphere of the pursuit of *niḥśreyasa*, spiritual realization, which is the highest reach of life, woman as much as man has to walk in single file. Perfect freedom and independence, and the weight of responsibility involved in both, descend upon that individual, be it man or woman, who has no craving for external delights, and longs for God alone. Only the unworldly man or woman can bear the weight of this responsibility; and they form the truly free. Throughout our history, even in our darkest days, this type of woman has brightened our horizon. The *Brahmavādinīs* of the Upaniṣads, the Theri nuns of Buddhism, and the nuns of Jainism of earlier periods, and Bhairavi Brahmani, one of the *gurus* of Sri Ramakrishna, in our own time, proclaim the freedom of woman to scale the heights of spirituality.

It is in the sphere of *abhyudaya*, worldly prosperity, that the status of woman has suffered periodic diminution; it is necessary to point out that there can be no real independence in this sphere for either man or woman; interdependence is the law in this sphere, and it alone leads to success in achieving *abhyudaya*. But since the last fifteen hundred years, women have lost more and more of their freedom and become more and more dependent upon men; this is largely due to a natural social response to the challenge of disturbed social conditions and the consequent sagging of the human spirit, and not to the wickedness of men. But its long continuance has resulted in the arrested development of Indian society and stunting of our women's personality, as pointed out by Swami Vivekananda. That phase is now fortunately past. The society has set about the task of regaining the social balance. In modern times there are powerful social movements, which have the backing of the spiritual stimulus provided by Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, to give back to women their individuality and enable them to grow to their full stature and to take their equal place in home and society.

But it is noteworthy that India has not experienced a feminist movement. It is important to note the significance of this fact. *It is when a world-view goes counter to the claims of women, and men uphold that world-view as against the spirit of the times, that a feminist movement takes place.* This is the experience of modern western history. But in India men came forward to uphold the claims of women and move with the times; and in this, they were sustained as much by old Indian spiritual thought as contained in the Vedānta as by recent Indian spiritual experience as expressed in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement.

The aspirations of modern Indian women have to be viewed against this background. Free to seek the most advanced intellectual development, or pursue any social avocations, the Indian woman of today does not feel herself as a competitor of man, but as his comrade, whose good wishes and help she values.

This has led to important consequences for the national ideal of womanhood. For the first time after several centuries, marriage is becoming a comradeship of equals, a joint adventure in the enrichment of society and the enjoyment of its delights. Under the old joint family, woman as wife hardly got the chance to express herself. The impact of modern world forces has all but broken down that joint family, *making for the emergence of the wife as the queen of a limited household within, and as a citizen in an unlimited social field of endeavour without.*

It is this ideal that is gripping Indian womanhood today. She prefers to be the queen of a limited household to being an obscure item in a large joint family. *What is more, it is this ideal that the modern Indian man also seeks his wife to embody.* He does not seek a dependent or plaything in his wife, but an equal in intelligence, strength of character, and social feeling; not a woman to worship or be worshipped, but a companion who has the strength and will to share his joys and sorrows, burdens and responsibilities. In this we catch an echo of the earliest Indian social experience of the *Ṛg-Veda. In this realization of the manhood of man and the womanhood of woman in the context of the equality of the marriage relationship, India recognizes a significant experience of spiritual education.* Here is the emergence of a family unit out of the welter of the modern transition which will form the nursery of the nation's morals, the school of its religious attitudes, and the integrated brick of its social edifice.

Swami Vivekananda expressed the view that the old Indian civilization had comparatively neglected woman as wife to uphold woman as mother, whereas the modern western civilization has done just the reverse. To his judgement, both appeared as partial and imperfect experiments, and he exhorted both the civilizations to apply the required corrective.

Two egocentric individuals in search of life-fulfilment and brought into the most intimate social relation, are husband and wife in marriage. To realize this object of fulfilment, they have to learn to give of themselves to each other before seeking to take from each other. To teach only the wife to give, and emphasize this again and again, is to

upset the balance; and to make the husband learn to take and neglect to give leads to less than fulfilment for both. India leaned to this exaggeration, and her later literature is full of the *duties* of wives and the *rights* of husbands. It did help to develop some sterling other-regarding virtues in our women; but it tended, except in a few gifted cases, to dwarf the full personality of the generality of our women. Needless to say, it tended to exaggerate in less graceful directions the husband's personality as well.

Similar difficulties have arisen in the West in the reverse way by the wife's standing on her rights, flimsy and serious, and largely forgetting that it is more blessed to give than to receive. A healthy society is the product of a harmonious adjustment of rights and duties between wife and husband, where neither value impinges harshly on the smooth-functioning relationship.

It is in this sphere that Indian thought, with its spiritual view of man and life, has much to contribute to steady the feet of men and women in the East and the West. Man is not a static individual; the child grows into the boy or girl, and thence into the young man or young woman, to end in the old man and old woman. Sex-awareness, which rises and gets strong in the middle two-stages, tapers off at both ends. Woman as wife is largely a focus of biological and social value. The grasping ego being the centre out of which the energies of its personality proceed, it exudes very little of the flavour of the spiritual, while its morality is largely of the social kind, contractual and conventional. But such a wife or husband is only an abstract concept. Any actual wife or husband rises at least occasionally to heights of ego-transcendence, revealing the beauty, strength, and calm lying imbedded in the real Self behind the ego.

The increasing liberation of this deeper Self in the context of marriage is what is proposed by Indian thought. So far as woman is concerned, this is achieved by the wife growing into the mother, not merely or even necessarily biologically, but certainly spiritually. Motherhood is a spiritual transformation of wifehood. The wife may and does *demand and take;* but the mother feels it her privilege to *give.* Within the limited circle of her motherhood, she is the example of self-transcendence through self-effacement. If woman as wife is socially significant, woman as mother is spiritually glorious. If the spiritual is only coterminous with the biological, then woman as mother of a little biological group would have remained the highest moral and spiritual development possible for her sex. But the spiritual value transcends the biological and even the social, and finds expression in

an ideal of motherhood where love and service break the barriers of family, race, and creed, and assume a universal aspect. It is this spiritual elevation which is self-transcendence that enables woman even as wife to function effectively as a citizen, embracing with her mother-heart the millions of its body-politic. If this is called finding life—larger and fuller life—then the path to it is self-development through self-effacement. That is what a woman does when she grows from the wifehood to the motherhood ideal.

In this, no value is neglected or negated, but there is a growth from a lower to a higher personality, and a progressive manifestation of the inherent divinity. This, as I have pointed out before, is the Indian criterion of progress of an individual or a culture. This motherhood ideal is the highest reach of womanhood according to Indian culture. This symbol of self-effacing love has revealed to the Hindu mind the presence of a divine reality within, over and above the personality of the visible mother. To the Hindu, God is the Mother of all creation. *A nation that has educated itself to look upon God as Mother has learnt to invest its view of woman with the utmost tenderness and reverence.* The culture of the Hindu trains him to look upon all women, nay, to look upon the female of all species, as forms of the one Divine Mother. The mother is more worthy of reverence than father or teacher according to our scriptures. Says the *Manu Smṛti* (II. 145):

Upādhyāyāndaśācāryaḥ ācāryāṇāṁ śataṁ pitā;
Sahasraṁ tu pitṛn mātā gauraveṇātiricyate—

'From the point of view of reverence due, a teacher is tenfold superior to a mere lecturer, a father a hundredfold to a teacher, and a mother a thousandfold to a father.'

And what constitutes this abundant glory in the mother is her self-effacing love and compassion, which, to the Hindu, is a mark of high spirituality and true culture. And women in general have the privilege to attain to those. *It is this vision that India has always held out before her women and which her daughters have passionately struggled to realize in their lives.* Even the apparent failings of her women proceed largely from that passion. The practice of suttee, for example, proceeded from loyalty to the ideal of chastity which found itself threatened in a chaotic society.

The ideals of chastity and purity, unselfishness and service, simplicity and modesty, have been pursued by our women, drawn by that

vision of innate divinity. They have become the warp and woof of her being. The Indian woman cannot jump out of this inheritance of hers. Warned Swami Vivekananda more than fifty-six years ago (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 256):

'Any attempt to modernize our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sītā, is immediately a failure, as we see every day. The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sītā, and that is the only way.'

The old Indian woman has been nourished on the ideals of Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī. In the limited world in which she functioned, these ideals sufficed to sustain her. But the woman of today, thrown into a world of wide opportunities, finds these ideals lacking in all-round nourishment. Not that she is insensitive to these appeals; far from it; but she feels her newer aspirations and energies unsustained by them. Hence her unsteady steps, and the fuss which often accompanies her activities and movements in the wider world, for want of a total conviction proceeding from the sanctions of the national spiritual heritage. And it was this sanction that she received from Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and the Holy Mother.

Swami Vivekananda is the first monk in history to uphold and to work for the freedom and equality of woman *without any reservation*. While upholding the Indian ideal of motherhood before the modern woman, he wanted it to be the fulfilment of the modern ideal of wifehood and not its negation. This is to be achieved by woman remaining as woman and realizing the perfection inherent within her through her functions in the home and society. *This is the technique of practical spirituality which will help woman to combine energy, practically, and social feeling with poise and peace and inwardness.* The woman who stretches out her energies into the wider social field must have first learnt to establish peace and orderliness nearer home.

This is the ideal of womanhood which holds an appeal to the modern Indian woman. It connotes a largeness and richness of personality and a steadiness and strength of character, with vast inner energies released but held in poise and ease, *making for efficient work without fuss, and wide-field function without friction.* It is the fruit of a hard *sādhanā*, consisting of a detached pursuit of spiritual knowledge and excellence and the nourishment of the inner being through meditation and discrimination.

That is the contribution of pure religion; and the future Indian woman is inconceivable without this training of religion, according to

Swami Vivekananda. Writes Sister Nivedita (*The Master as I Saw Him*, Ninth Edition, p. 283):

'He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future, entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science women must learn; but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality. He saw clearly enough that the ideal education would be one that should exercise the smallest possible influence for direct change on the social body as a whole. It would be that which should best enable every woman, in time to come, to resume into herself the greatness of all the women of the Indian past.'

So educated, woman will realize her worth as woman and contribute her distinct share to the peace and prosperity of society. The modern woman's temptation to grow into the likeness of man is only a passing phase of this transition. Indian thought holds that by remaining true to one's own type, man and woman will eventually outgrow the sex awareness in the realization of the Ātman, the sexless Self, which is the true nature of both man and woman. Swami Vivekananda held this as the true direction of progress for man and woman. Says Sister Nivedita (*ibid.*, p. 293):

'He would never tolerate any scheme of life and polity that tended to bind tighter on mind and soul the fetters of the body. The greater the individual, the more would she transcend the limitations of femininity in mind and character; and the more was such transcendence to be expected and admired.'

Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, stands as an inspiring example to the modern Indian woman in her efforts to steady her steps through the welter of the modern transition. Herself an ideal wife and mother and nun, she is the perennial spring to nourish the life of woman in her varied roles. 'But is she the last of an old order, or the beginning of a new?' asks Sister Nivedita and continues (*ibid.*, pp. 147-48):

'In her one sees realized that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself, the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood. I have never known her hesitate in giving utterance to large and generous judgement, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilization. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Is she tortured by the perversity of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments beyond her ken? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter, and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty. Or is there need for severity? No foolish sentimentality causes her to waver.

'...He who has transgressed her code of delicacy and honour, will never enter her presence again. ...

'And yet is she, as one of her spiritual children said of her, speaking literally of her gift of song, "full of music", all gentleness, all playfulness. And the room wherein she worships, withal, is filled with sweetness.'

In this delineation of the ideal of Indian womanhood, there is little that is local and parochial and much that is human and universal. And it is natural; for ancient Indian thought has expounded the subject of man or woman largely in terms of *human* excellence and not in terms of the *national* or *racial.* And recent Indian thought, as expressed through Swami Vivekananda, consciously seeks the goal of the synthesis of eastern and western life values with a view to evolving a complete human culture and civilization.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VALUES IN HOME SCIENCE

I AM extremely happy to address this conference of the Home Science Association of India on 'Spiritual and Moral Values'. Yours is an association which seeks to brighten the home and family, which our nation regards as sacred. To talk on the subject of spiritual and moral values to the members of such an association is most appropriate. It is good for us to realize that the Indian home is still intact; it has not been seriously disrupted yet by the modern transition, though it is undergoing profound changes. The reason for this integrity of the Indian family is the strength of the age-old spiritual tradition of the nation behind it. Spirituality is what enables man and society to withstand shocks and overcome challenges. The more we intensify these spiritual values, therefore, the better will be man and his society. They ensure the manliness of man and the womanliness of woman. During this period of a revolutionary transition, we have to take steps to ensure the primacy of these values in our new social order. Colleges which train students, especially girl students, in Home Science, need to keep in view this pervasive value of spirituality with respect to everything that relates to the home and our emerging social order.

Wherefrom do spiritual and moral values originate? It is obvious that values other than those involved in the physical survival of an organism emerge in evolution only at the level of man. They are, therefore, the products of human nature and not of external nature. According to Indian thought, *values are created by man from out of himself in the course of his manipulation and control of the external physical world and the external social environment.*

Nineteenth-century scientific thought tended to mechanize all values and also man. But twentieth-century science is having a new look at the subject. Its revolutionary advances in many fields have tended to destroy the basis of materialism and mechanism as a valid philosophy. The second world war also contributed to the disillusionment about such facile theories and their social consequences, especially the dehumanization of man. Bertrand Russell voices this post-war disillusionment when he says (*The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

> 'The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism.
>
> '...Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

If values are not mechanical, and consequently do not proceed from external physical nature, they must be spiritual; and we must search for them in the depth of human nature itself. *A philosophy of values is a part of, and derives from, a philosophy of man in all his heights and depths.* Vedānta holds that man creates value from within himself in the context of his life and work; that context is provided by the two external environments, natural and social.

Out of the two, he only *manipulates* the first, but both manipulates and *enters*, and *is entered into by*, the second. It is while doing the latter that he becomes the focus of values and experiences fulfilment. Thus values are specifically the products of evolution at the human stage and are spiritual in nature, in the sense that they arise from the inner spiritual nature of man.

Ethical and moral values are spiritual values realized by man initially in the social context. The most enduring and basic element of that context is the home and the family. Early communist thought in the U.S.S.R. tended to belittle and eliminate the universally recognized importance of the family for human growth and development. But recent thought and social policy in the U.S.S.R. is definitely reversing that earlier trend.

As the most intimate and manageable among the social groups, the family is now almost universally recognized—barring, perhaps, in present-day China—as the indispensable nursery of human morals and manners. What is significant about the home is the sense of intimacy, the sense of belonging, among its members. Here is in evidence the presence of a value which binds individual to individual so as to result in an integrated human edifice, like the cement with respect to the

bricks in a building. This is the spiritual value of love and human concern. It is true that in the family context, this love is largely conditioned and limited by the physical and the biological, and is not far removed from the spirit of mutual concern exhibited by a similar animal group. It does not exhibit itself as a non-physical, truly spiritual value. In spite of this limitation, the human family, though thus biologically conditioned, uses this limitation as only a starting point, unlike the animal family which never rises above it. *The significance of the biologically conditioned human family is that it is the training ground for its members, through participation in the wider life of society, for the development of the truly ethical and spiritual forms of love and concern transcending not only the family, but even the entire human species, and embracing all living things.*

This training of man in the family and the social contexts introduces us to the idea of an *inner growth* and *development* of man apart from his more obvious physical growth and development, and deeper than what is achieved by his mere accumulation of knowledge and information. This is his growth in his spiritual dimension whereby he *expands* beyond his largely fixed genetic and biological constitution and *enters,* and *is entered into by,* thousands of other human beings. *This surpassing of himself by man is the sign of his spiritual growth.* If he does not do so, he is in the grip of spiritual stagnation and death, in spite of whatever grandeur may be found in his physical and intellectual life. As sung by Wordsworth:

> 'Unless he erects himself above himself,
> How poor a thing is man!'

The first fruit of this inner spiritual growth is morality and the ethical sense; the second fruit is art and aesthetic sensibility; and the third and finest fruit is spiritual realization. At every stage, man becomes an increasingly efficient creator of values from within himself through his interaction with and manipulation of his external natural and social environments, which he increasingly enriches and enlivens in turn, resulting in the qualitative improvement of human life and its social *milieu.* At every stage, what is achieved is the steady manifestation of an infinite and divine dimension of his personality—what Vedānta terms the Ātman, the infinite, immortal, and ever-illumined Self of man. And that is the true meaning of education and religion, says Vedānta. Both are processes of education, one its earlier and the other its later stages, by which the perfection imbedded within man is steadily made manifest through the removal of obstructions. Every

man is his own educator: *Ātmano guruḥ ātmaiva,* says the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI. 7.20); external teachers and books are but subsidiary aids.

And this Vedāntic picture of human destiny is receiving increasing endorsement from twentieth-century scientific thought, especially from its biological side. In the nineteenth century the concepts of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest dominated biology in its picture of evolution; it had, accordingly, no place for moral and ethical values which, as Thomas Huxley, Darwin's close collaborator and interpreter, showed in his *The Struggle for Existence in Human Society* and *Prolegomena to Evolution and Ethics,* involves not 'the survival of the fittest' but 'making as many as possible fit to survive', and involves also 'the repudiation of the gladiatorial theory of existence'. Nineteenth-century concept of evolution could find nothing in man or nature to account for the phenomenon of ethical and moral sense, and left philosophers to construct various contractual theories of ethics based on mere self-interest, including enlightened self-interest. This was at the back of the thorough-going materialism and open or veiled hedonism of that century.

This facile philosophy, with its highly circumscribed concept of human nature and destiny, received a severe jolt as much from the scientific developments of the present century as from its catastrophic political and economic crisis. If twentieth-century physics has tended to shatter the theoretical basis of materialism, twentieth-century biology is tending to free man from his mechanistic and hedonistic strait jackets and restore to him his spiritual integrity and destiny.

In a lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' given at a week-long conference of scientists discussing the subject of 'Evolution after Darwin' at the Chicago University in 1959, Sir Julian Huxley highlighted some of these revolutionary advances which the theory of evolution has registered during the last hundred years since the publication of Darwin's monumental work *Origin of Species.* In that speech which 'ultimately became the most controversial event of the celebration week', as the preface to the volume puts it, Huxley said (*Evolution after Darwin,* Vol. III, Chicago University Press, 1960, p. 251):

'Man's evolution is not biological but psychosocial; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by break-throughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization, of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Stressing the importance of quality as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, he further said (*ibid.*, p. 252):

'Man is therefore of immense significance.... He is a reminder of the existence, here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy equivalents, of a trend towards mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

And presenting the concept of fulfilment as the aim of human evolution, and criticizing the view that organic satisfactions are the be-all and end-all of human life, he said (*ibid.*, p. 259):

'But, like population explosion, this consumption explosion cannot continue much longer; it is an inherently self-defeating process. Sooner, rather than later, we must get away from a system based on artificially increasing the number of human wants and set about constructing one aimed at the qualitative satisfaction of real human needs, spiritual and mental as well as material and physiological. This means abandoning the pernicious habit of evaluating every human project solely in terms of its utility—by which the evaluators mean solely its material utility and especially its utility in making a profit for somebody.

'Once we truly believe (and true belief, however necessary, is rarely easy) that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for more human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

Man is therefore of immense significance, says Julian Huxley. It has its corollary in the social wisdom which says that the home is of immense significance; and what constitutes the home is not the building but the human beings within it, especially the queen who presides over it, its woman: *Na gṛham gṛham ityāhuḥ gṛhiṇī gṛham ucyate.* The home is the nursery of the nation's morals. Indian sociology speaks of the home as an *āshrama,* the venue of moral and spiritual striving where lives and functions the *gṛhastha,* householder or citizen. This moral and spiritual striving is what constitutes the driving force behind man's evolutionary advance by which he, though genetically fixed and socially conditioned, becomes mentally unconditioned and spiritually free.

The first significant break-through in evolution occurred when the living cell appeared. Twentieth-century biology calls the living cell *self-duplicating matter.* Starting with the living cell, organic evolution continued for millions and millions of years until a second significant break-through occurred with the appearance of man possessing the

capacity to create culture and tradition through his powers of thinking and speech communication. Culture is specifically a human phenomenon; it arises from the storing and transmission of experience. Animals have experience; but their brain is not developed enough to manifest thought; it cannot store experiences, communicate them through speech, and transmit them. Nature evolved these mental powers in the human brain, giving man the capacity to cumulatively reproduce and vary his experiences and transmit them to future generations. This is culture and tradition which twentieth-century biology, therefore, significantly terms *self-duplicating mind.* Man shares with the animals in his physical heredity through the genes. But he is unique in having a second heredity through the mind. The first is largely fixed and is conservative in its operation; while the second is resilient and creative, marking man's uniqueness among all living species. And twentieth-century biology definitely proclaims that the supreme opportunity for man lies in the second. Therein lies a possibility of growth and development for man far more significant and pervasive than what is possible at his physical level. It is this second inheritance that discloses the presence in man of a unique focus of freedom, his inalienable spiritual nature, and that makes education the most significant activity in a human society. What is fixed and final cannot be 'educated'; what is resilient and free can be. Functioning from a genetically fixed physical base, education registers the growth and manifestation of that resilient and free dimension of man's personality which we term the human spirit. Where this is not achieved, education is no education from the standpoint of that uniqueness above referred to, which marks man off from the rest of nature's evolutionary products.

Like man himself with his double inheritance, the home or the family, according to Indian social thought, also presents a double aspect—a static base and a dynamic superstructure. The first denotes the intimate, and apparently exclusive, biological setting of the family constellation of mother, father, and children, while the second denotes its flowering in ethical and spiritual awareness, and social identification and sympathy, which education, secular and religious, achieves for its members. By using his body as an instrument of his life's purposes, man becomes spiritually liberated. But the body becomes the tomb of his spirit if it dominates him and makes him selfish and self-centred. The home also becomes similarly the venue of his liberation if he is not attached to it but uses it as a base for advancing ethically and spiritually. Otherwise, the home becomes the venue of his spiritual stagnation and death when man becomes selfish and worldly, with vision

and interests circumscribed within the small genetic constellation of the family.

In virtue of the home being the venue of such an education in spiritual growth and social service, the *gṛha*, the home, and the *gṛhastha*, the householder or citizen are highly praised in Indian thought. Says the great law-giver Manu (*Manu Smṛti*, 6.90):

Yathā nadīnadā sarve sāgare yānti saṁsthitim;
Tathaiva āśramiṇaḥ sarve gṛhasthe yānti saṁsthitim—

'Just as rivers and streams find their refuge in the ocean, so also the members of all *āśramas* or social orders (such as *brahmacārin*, student, *vānaprasthin*, ascetic, and *sannyāsin*, monk) find their refuge in the *gṛhastha*.'

Increasing liberation of spiritual and moral values in the context of life and action is what imparts meaning and significance to all life and action which, without it, becomes in the words of Shakespeare, reduced to, 'a tale told by an idiot'. Indian spiritual thought upholds that the struggle to achieve this liberation is the one sure path of all-round life fulfilment for man everywhere.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK

I AM thankful to this Tata Institute of Social Sciences for inviting me to address its Convocation. Yours is the premier institution of its kind in our country with a high reputation for efficient management and purposeful teaching. I feel a sense of kinship with students and teachers of schools of social work and social sciences. That kinship arises from the common field of our study, namely, the science of man, and the common field of our practical endeavours, namely, his growth, development, and fulfilment.

I congratulate those among the students here who are the happy recipients of degrees today. Behind you lie hard work and struggle to master the knowledge and technique of your special discipline in particular, and of modern knowledge in general. But the road ahead, I need not remind you, is harder still; it is also longer and more momentous. How I wish that, by my participation in today's joyous function, I could help you even a little to make it more fruitful, though not less strenuous!

If I have accepted the kind invitation of your Director, Dr. M.S. Gore, who is my old friend since our Delhi days, to address your Convocation this evening, it is because of my secret desire and hope of being stimulated in your company—the company of a group of trained social workers and teachers—and to stimulate you, in turn, if I can, through the unpropitious medium of a conventional convocation speech.

The Philosophic Vision

Your own field of study is the science of man in society. Vast and highly important as it is, it is only a part of the wider field of the total science of man. Your field of work, similarly, though highly important

in this industrial age, is only a segment of the vast field of social work. No man's actual life or work touches more than a fringe of the total area of life and work in a society. But his *thought* and *vision* are not so restricted. They can encompass an ever-widening vista of life and existence, if not the whole of it. This steady expansion of thought and vision imparts a sense of depth and quality and significance to his otherwise humdrum life and work. This is philosophy, not as understood in its prosaic academic sense, but as spiritual vision arising from an inward growth and development. This inward growth emerges from a total alertness of mind and awareness when invested in the pursuit of truth and excellence in the context of one's life and work, however trivial in themselves these latter may be. The wider the range and variety of the data, the truer and firmer become the scientific theory based on them. The efficiency of a man's life and work, similarly, is directly proportional to his grip on the field of experience. The vaster the field and the firmer the grip, the greater becomes the efficiency of his life and work. This philosophic conviction finds expression in a famous passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I.i.10):

> *Yadeva vidyayā karoti, śraddhayā, upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati—*

'Whatever is done through *vidyā,* knowledge (mastery of the technical know-how), *śraddhā,* faith (conviction as to its worthiness and in one's ability to achieve it), and *Upaniṣad,* inward meditation (going into the subject in all its range and depth), that alone achieves superior energy (of efficiency).'

Social Work: Traditional and Modern

Social work, in general terms, is work done by man in the service of society. It remains restricted when confined to the rearing of a family, but becomes unrestricted when extended to society at large outside the immediate biological group. All such extension is the fruit of an ethical impulse expressing itself as charity and philanthropy. This was all the scope of social work until the onset of the modern industrial age. This is true not only of India, but of all human society, including the western, till about the eighteenth century A.D. In none of these was the need felt for widening the scope of social work, for organized social work, to tackle the challenge of social problems; whatever problems arose were such as could be handled by the prevailing institution of the joint family and by the spirit of philanthropy fostered in the individual members of the community by the teachings of religion. Problems calling for organized social work, including the active inter-

ference of the political state, are only the product of the special conditions arising out of the modern industrial and technological civilization. To quote Sir P.S. Sivaswami Iyer (*Evolution of Hindu Moral Ideals,* Kamala Lectures, Calcutta University, pp. 174-75):

'The idea of social service as now understood is a feature of modern times. As observed by Dean Inge with reference to early Christianity, there were no "causes" in antiquity.'

On the subject of social service, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says:

'The term social service is a comparatively new one in Great Britain. If it has been used previous to the twentieth century, it would have meant philanthropy and charity in the ordinary sense.'

Industrialism disturbs the patterns of the age-old social relations, stimulates increasing social mobility, raises the tempo of human appetites and their satisfactions, and gives rise to a large number and variety of social problems. Modern industrial civilization faced the challenge of these problems through the evolution of several types of specialized forms of social work with distinctive techniques and methods of approach, all based on a steadily developing modern science of sociology. Whether understood in general terms, as in the traditional society, or in special terms, as in the industrial society, all social work involves the raising of certain fundamental problems as to the nature and destiny of man and the meaning and significance of his social *milieu,* which a philosophy of social work is called upon to solve. I shall try my best to share with you what light India has shed on these momentous questions and on man's path to spiritual freedom and fulfilment.

Man versus Society

The family as the unit of society has ever been the nursery of the society's culture and morals. In the modern age, this concept of the family and its fundamental importance for society received a challenge from Marxist-Leninist thought. But that challenge has slowly worn away with the years, and the family has emerged unscathed out of the Bolshevik Revolution in the U.S.S.R. The family is a small, intimate biological group held together by bonds, biological and spiritual. When this group expands into a society in forming a clan or tribe or nation, the biological bond becomes less and less a determinant, while the spiritual bond becomes more and more dominant. This spiritual bond expresses itself as ethical awareness and social feeling. It is this awareness and feeling that are the stimuli behind all the efforts of man to achieve civilization, culture, and the higher life.

Thus, it is only in the social context, with its stimulus for the expression of his ethical and moral sense, that man achieves a more-than-biological personality. This discloses the presence of the spiritual man behind the physical man, a higher self behind his sense-bound lower self. The latter makes him essentially self-centred and a seeker of mere organic satisfactions and physical survival, through competition and struggle. The former makes him more and more other-centred and a seeker of ethical and other higher values. This betokens the first stages of the manifestation of the ever-present spiritual dimension of the human personality. And since this is achieved by him only in the social context, which also provides him, through its cumulative cultural tradition, with the wherewithal for the expansion of his knowledge and awareness, he is under obligation to society in a fundamental way. Apart from society, man does not evolve his truly human personality. *The sense of this social obligation and the methods and forms of its discharge, the rights of the individual in the context of the social group, and the relative claims of these obligations and rights constitute the social philosophy of any particular group of human beings.* This philosophy may be, and in all older civilizations invariably is, suffused, with a cosmical reference provided by religion.

The influence of this cosmical reference in religions had, and still has, one important social result, namely, the uniform emphasis more on duties than on rights, more on obligations than on privileges. This is why all work, including social work, done under the inspiration of religion possesses an intensity and depth rarely found in work done with purely secular motives. The significance of this fact of motivation for any philosophy of social work is great; and I shall discuss it in due course.

The Nature of Ethical Awareness

Every work produces a change in the ratio of forces in its environment. Man works to change his environment to suit his purposes. By working with his hands, the change effected in the environment was very little; then came tools which intensified the process which, however, reached revolutionary proportions in the modern age through the machines of modern technology.

Man's life is cast in two environments, natural and social. The change which tools and machines make in his natural environment makes its impact on his social environment as well. Social work has primarily to deal with man and his social environment and their interaction. Unlike the natural environment, which consists of impersonal

things and forces, the social environment consists of persons, which fact introduces, for the first time in the history of evolution, the concept of value into this objective world. Each person recognizes this value in himself, and often fails to recognize its focus in others. In the social setting of his life, he is always confronted with these other centres of value in the persons around him. The recognition and appreciation of this second focus has not been easy for man. He has treated his fellow man more as an impersonal object or thing, to be used to suit his own ends than as a person having his own ends. This is revealed in history's dark and dreary record of the exploitation of man by man. Such exploitation is not only of the much talked of economic and political variety, but also of the intellectual, moral, and religious types; it is not only man exploiting man, but also man exploiting woman. What is common in all such exploitations is the fact that the focus of value is recognized only in the subject and not in the object; whereas the uniqueness of the social environment is that its objects are all essentially subjects. *The recognition of the subject in a social object is ethical sense.* Once this recognition comes, exploitation gives place to service as the valid form of inter-human relationship.

This message of the ethical impulse is conveyed beautifully in the maxim of Kant (*Metaphysics of Morals*, London, 1909, p. 47):

> 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never only as a means.'

This at once eliminates all possibilities of exploitation of man by man. But this excellence is hard to achieve. To millions of men and women in any given society, it is only a possibility, but not an actuality; while, for millions more, it is not even a possibility; they have not even heard of this truth. In the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. 7):

Śravaṇāyāpi bahubhiryo na lobhyaḥ
śṛṇvanto'pi bahavo yaṁ na vidyuḥ—

'Even to hear of it, many do not get the opportunity; many, (on the other hand), even after hearing about it, do not understand.'

Spirituality : The Science of the Inner Life

What happens to a man when he understands this truth and begins to live it? It betokens, as I said earlier, the first stages of the manifestation of the essential spirituality of the human personality. What does this signify in the context of the search for the meaning of human life and destiny? It points to a profound focus of value within man, his essential divine nature, the manifestation of which constitutes the

goal of human life. This leads us to the recognition of a third environment in which his life is cast, namely, an inner spiritual environment, over and above the natural and the social ones already referred to. And there is constant interaction between this inner spiritual environment and the outer social environment. The handling of this interaction by man, individually and collectively, is the one determinant of all social health or ill-health, on the one hand, and all human well-being or unfulfilment, on the other.

When this truth is recognized, the work that a man does in society is seen in a new light. Every work, as I have said earlier, produces a change in the ratio of forces in its natural and social environments. To this, we have now to add that it produces such a change in a third environment as well, namely, the inner world of man. *The knowledge and discipline of the forces of this inner world constitute the scope of the science and technique of spirituality.* This is the true meaning of religion, according to Indian thought. Knowledge is power as much in this unfamiliar inner world as in the familiar world outside. All social feeling and awareness is the product of an expansion of the human personality. In the distinctively human phase of evolution, such expansion is not physical or biological, but spiritual.

Evolution and Ethics

Discussing, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution as 'greater fulfilment', Sir Julian Huxley says (*Evolution after Darwin,* The University of Chicago Centennial, Vol. I, *The Evolution of Life*, p. 20):

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

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

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

It is such a science, a science of human possibilities, that India understands by the term 'religion', the science of the inner life. She sought and found this science in her ancient Upanisads, and she integrated it with the sciences of matter and life to emerge as the rational and unifying philosophy of Vedānta.

There is such a thing as the spiritual growth of man; it is not so obvious; but it is more significant than his more obvious physical growth. For it is only through such spiritual growth that man is able to break through the crust of his biological limitations, which make him prone to self-centredness and exploitation, and send out tendrils of love and concern for his fellow men, to enter into, and be entered into by, brother man, to manufacture, in the words of Sorokin of Harvard University, increasing altruism in the human heart. Without this spiritual growth, the only possible relationship between man and man is, in the words of Bertrand Russell, that between two billiard balls, namely, collision.

Quantity versus Quality

It is when we tackle this inner world in ourselves, in the context of the work we do, or are called upon to do, in the outer world, that we become confronted with the problem of motivation. History reveals that social work done under the best of religious motivations exhibits greater qualitative excellence than that done under the best of secular motivations. *The capacity to give one's best to a cause is a spiritual capacity.* That capacity manifests itself when the motivations of profit, pleasure, and power, which proceed from the lower self of man, become weakened by spiritual knowledge and spiritual resolve proceeding from the awakening of his higher Self. The former is man, sense-bound, circumscribed, and finite; the latter is man, spiritually free, expansive, and unlimited. The liberation of this spiritual man in the context of the work that man does for the good of society is the one goal of all work and of all society, according to Indian spiritual thought. The criterion of social work, from the secular point of view, is quantity; from the religious point of view, it is quality. The philosophy of Vedānta accepts the importance of both the criteria and harmonizes them in the light of a comprehensive spirituality. This is the immortal contribution of the *Gītā* to the philosophy of social work, nay, of all work.

It is when we are confronted with the problem of quality that the subject of motivation becomes significant. And motivation involves moral choice and moral judgement. This brings up to the fore the reality of the inner man and his growth or atrophy. Up to a certain point, human life and action can stand the test of quantity; pushed beyond that, man becomes dehumanized. He shines in his truly human form when he stands the test of quality. Stressing the importance of this concept of quality in the assessment of evolution at the human

stage, Sir Julian Huxley says (Lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', *Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 252):

'Man is therefore of immense significance. ...He is a reminder of the existence, here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy equivalents, of a trend towards mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

Again (*ibid.*, p. 257):

'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity.'

Discussing the concept of utility in the light of this new evolutionary vision, Huxley says (*ibid.*, p. 259):

'Once we truly believe ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for more human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

And highlighting the importance of quality for the human evolution lying ahead, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 260-61):

'Thus the evolutionary vision ... illuminates our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way.... It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

The Problem of Motivation

Religious motivations for social service have ranged from the selfishly hedonistic to the utterly self-effacing. In the former, there is emphasis on a life of good works and worldly achievement, coupled with a concern for social esteem, while alive, and, after death, on a heaven, where it is all pleasure and no pain, unlike the earth, where there is a mixture of both, with pain often predominating. Today, we consider this childish, and prefer the secular hedonist who also loves profit and pleasure, but does not hanker after a heaven after death. But this childish motivation hides a profound truth about human nature and destiny, which a mere positivistic philosophy often fails to grasp. 'Heaven' stands for the truth of the 'Beyond'; it is a mythical presentation in sensual terms of what lies beyond the senses and the sensate mind. Hedonism, whether secular or religious, derives from a conception of the nature of man as entirely sense-bound and pleasure-seeking. It cannot get a glimpse of the spiritual dimension of the human personality, or of action motivated by purely ethical considerations. So far

as India is concerned, she attained these two heights in her ancient Upaniṣads.

India's Vision of Human Excellence

The Upaniṣads represent the high water-mark of Indian spiritual striving and realization. The sages of the Upaniṣads sought truth in experience freely and fearlessly, unhampered by the dogmas of religion, the compulsions of society and the political state, or the predilections of personality. Their greatest discovery was the truth of the divinity and infinitude of man and the spiritual unity of all existence. They called the divine in man the Ātman or Self, and discovered its essential nature to be ever pure, ever awakened, and ever free; and they proclaimed the unity of Ātman, the real Self of man, with Brahman, the Self of the universe. This glorious vision of the spiritual solidarity of all existence, which alone can become the basis of a rational ethics and of all progressive inter-human relationships, finds expression in the very opening verse of the very first of the Upaniṣads namely, the *Īśā Upaniṣad*:

Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat;
Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasvit dhanam—

'All this—whatever is ephemeral in this changeful universe—must be enveloped by the Lord. By this renunciation, nourish yourself. Do not covet the wealth of anyone.'

The Upaniṣads announce that the awakening to this eternal truth is the aim of human existence and the fullest fruition of the spiritual life. But it is hidden from man due to his finitude, arising from his thraldom to his body, his sense-organs, and his sensate mind. These constitute man, the known, beyond which is man, the unknown, in the language of Alexis Carrel. Man, the known, is essentially self-centred and the focus of all tension and sorrow. The highest he can achieve in the field of inter-human relationship is the ethics of enlightened self-interest, which often tends to less and less enlightenment and more and more selfishness. The vision of man as the Ātman provided the inspiration for Indian thought to develop a social ethics charged with a man-ward passion, and a religious discipline filled with a God-ward love and devotion.

The Gītā's Message of a Comprehensive Spirituality

These implications, and their significance for human life, conduct, and destiny were brought out by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his message of the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā*, at the very outset, rejects heaven and the hedonistic philosophy behind it as unworthy of man's true spiritual stature (II. 42-44). In its place, the *Gītā* offers the realization of the divinity already within man as the highest objective of life. It teaches that, by ethical and spiritual discipline, involving the practice of self-regarding and other-regarding virtues and inward meditation, man can overcome his biological and other limitations, and realize the truth of his inborn divine nature. This is *mukti* or spiritual freedom. Vedānta upholds that this freedom is as much the stimulus behind, as the goal in front, of every human action. It is that which every human being will realize sooner or later; none is barred, because it is the birthright of one and all, the saint or the sinner, the rich or the poor, the learned or the ignorant, man or woman. The method and means of this attainment is what Vedānta terms *dharma*, which, in its twin aspects of *abhyudaya*, ethics of social welfare, and *niḥśreyasa*, ethics of spiritual emancipation, constitutes the comprehensive spiritual education of man leading to his total fulfilment. These sum up the goal-seeking trends and fruits of all his activities and processes in the political, economic, intellectual, ethical, artistic, and religious fields. The one precondition of this total fulfilment is purity of the inner life, which involves man's conquest of his lower self.

It is in this context, against this unlimited background, against this qualitative enrichment of human life, that the *Gītā* views all human action. Action is inevitable, says the *Gītā;* none remains even for an instant without doing some work or other; nature compels (III. 5). But work done under the promptings of man's lower nature leads to more and more bondage and eventual unfulfilment. This is the tragedy of man, enacted everyday, everywhere, and vividly presented to us in the world's great literary heritage. Goethe has his Faust lamenting thus during his soliloquy in the wood:

> Oh! for the broken state of man: I know
> Our unfulfilment now! Thou gavest bliss
> Which brings me near and nearer to the gods
> And gavest, too, the dark companion whom
> I cannot rid me of; though with his scorn
> He breaks my pride, and in a single word,
> A breath, turns all thy gifts and makes them nothing.
> He builds a wild fire in my heart, a blaze,
> Till from desire I stumble to possession,
> And in possession languish from desire.

Yoga as Double Efficiency

But all actions, says the *Gītā,* can be converted into spiritual education of the whole man under the guidance of a rational ethics and philosophy. Work done in a spirit of non-attachment helps man to develop his unlimited spiritual personality. By being unattached to his limited, sensate, lower self, man receives 'intimations of immortality', as Wordsworth puts it; man begins to experience the infinite dimensions of his personality. His vision and sympathies broaden. He comes across a vast reservoir of spiritual energy within himself, which makes him achieve a double efficiency in his life, namely, outer social efficiency and inner spiritual efficiency. The *Gītā* calls this by the name of *yoga,* the science and art of the spiritual life, and gives two important definitions of this science: *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'yoga is efficiency in action' (II. 50) and *samatvaṁ yoga ucyate*—'yoga is called even-mindedness' (II. 48).

Work with attachment, work proceeding from the level of the ego, is characterized by much fuss and noise; that is the sign of its inefficiency proceeding from lack of inner discipline; it tends steadily to the inner impoverishment of the worker. The more efficient the machine, the more silent and smooth its functioning, and the greater its output of work. An inefficient machine, such as a worn-out car, is all fuss and noise with very little output in speed. Calm, silent, steady, and efficient work, sustained by deep social feeling, is the mark of true spirituality. Therefore, says the *Gītā* (II.49):

Dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhiyogāt dhanañjaya;
Buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ—

'Work (done with attachment) is verily far inferior to that performed from the stand-point of *buddhiyoga* (the *yoga* of equable reason); seek refuge, O Arjuna, in this *buddhi.* Small-minded are they who act motivated by selfish results.'

The Worker Behind The Work

India's philosophy of social work, deriving from the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā,* conceives every one in a society as a social worker. The simple housewife or the Prime Minister of the state, the specialized social worker or the college professor, the street sweeper or the administrator, the fisherman or the factory labourer, the farmer or the spiritual teacher —each and all are workers in the vineyard of society.

Viewed from the outside, they are all social workers; but viewed from the inside, if that were possible, they will reveal a wide range of

qualitative types, disclosing different degrees of spiritual integration and enrichment or disintegration and impoverishment. In the words of the Sanskrit dramatist, Bhāsa (*Avimāra*, 5.5):

Prājñasya mūrkhasya ca kāryayoge
Samatvam abhyeti tanur na buddhiḥ—

'When actions are performed by the wise man or the fool, there is equality of condition with respect to the body, but not with respect to the *buddhi* or reason.'

Each one of these types, therefore, needs training and discipline in order to achieve the double efficiency above referred to, namely, outward social efficiency and inward spiritual efficiency. A social worker must produce through his work tangible results in the outer world of society; this is the criterion of his efficiency. But is this the only criterion? Modern sociology tends to be content with this one criterion. But theoretical considerations arising from a deeper view of man and practical considerations disclosed by a vast array of field experiences in all parts of the world generally, and the advanced countries particularly, are forcing modern sociology to recognize a second criterion of efficiency in the inner world of the worker himself. Experience teaches us today that outer efficiency is often nullified by inner inefficiency; physical health is nullified by mental ill-health. A worker is not just a machine; an exclusive efficiency criterion of mere productivity can be applied to a machine, with certain reservations. But it fails in the case of man because of the presence of a significant second factor, namely, his inner life. *The nourishment of his inner life is an important efficiency factor, which modern man and modern sociology will neglect at the peril of his individual and collective welfare.*

In the light of the spiritual, no work is high or low in itself; it is the attitude of the worker that makes a work high or low. *The discipline and control of this attitude is the contribution of spiritual philosophy to human life and work.* The small man, in the light of this philosophy, is not the man who does what is, in the secular estimate of society, small work, but who does any work in a small way. Even small work becomes big when done by a great man; and conversely, big work becomes small when done by a small man. Kabīr weaving cloth on a loom or Gandhi spinning thread on a charka helped to raise the status of the humble loom and charka. On the other hand, a greedy priest or a corrupt politician lowers the status of the high calling of priesthood or politics. How much the inner man counts in all fields of outer work is evident from these and other instances. Life

without quality is life lived in vain; and quality is a value concept; and values are not mechanical, but spiritual. In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell (*The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

'The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism....

'Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

The Human Tragedy

Man is the focus of all values; but he needs an inner discipline, in the context of his outer life and work, to liberate these values lying in the deeper reaches of his personality. The small man is small only because of a lack of this discipline and the spiritual riches it yields; his ignorance, his spiritual blindness, his biologically-oriented will, make him self-centred and concerned only with his own profit and pleasure. The great man is great because of his spiritual awareness and social feeling. But behind the small and the big, says Vedānta, is the infinite Ātman, assuring the spiritual equality and solidarity of all beings. As proclaimed by the *Gītā* (V. 19):

Ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ;
Nirdosaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmāt brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ—

'Relative (finite) existence has been overcome by them, even in this life, whose minds rest in *sāmya* (sameness), since Brahman (the Self of all beings) is the same in all and without imperfection; therefore they indeed are established in Brahman.'

The physical body grows through physical nourishment; this is a palpable experience needing no proof to anybody. The mental personality of man similarly grows through mental food consisting of experience and knowledge, mostly of the external world and, to a slight extent, of the inner world as well. This growth is real, though less palpable than the physical. These two constitute the world-oriented man ever needing support and stimulus from the social environment. But the freedom of his spirit is constantly imperilled by the shifting nature of the response of that social environment to his craving for support and stimulus. This becomes a tragedy when he ceases to be a productive unit of society. For, under a secular ideology, his value for society is not for himself as a person, but for his productive capacity. If man had no greater heights of spiritual freedom to conquer within himself, he would be wise to make peace with his outer environment and live on, albeit grumbling and complaining all the way, and without cheer and hope.

This is a dismal picture of the destiny of so glorious and unique a phenomenon of evolution as man. This was the tragedy of man in some past epochs, as it is also in the present; it is writ large even over the best of man's secular achievements. Referring to the highly gifted ancient Greeks, whose official religion was but a handmaid of its political state, Lowes Dickinson says (*The Greek View of Life*, p. 68):

'The more completely the Greek felt himself to be at home in the world, the more happily and freely he abandoned himself to the exercise of his powers, the more intensely and vividly he lived in action and in passion, the more alien, bitter, and incomprehensible did he find the phenomena of age and death. On this problem, so far as we can judge, he received from his religion but little light and still less consolation. The music of his brief life closed with a discord unresolved; and even before reason had brought her criticism to bear upon his creed, its deficiency was forced upon him by his feeling.'

India's Message of Hope And Cheer

India's vision of human nature and destiny is deeply concerned with this human tragedy, and ever whispers into the ears of man a perennial message of hope and cheer. It tells him of his inalienable divine nature and the spiritual freedom which is his very birth-right. He is unaware of it; his spiritual blindness is the measure of his tragedy. He has to awaken himself to this truth. Through his personal life and social activities, his successes and defeats, his joys and sorrows, through all the ups and downs of his life, if he trains his *buddhi* or reason in the efficient handling of the chariot of his personality, he is sure to advance step by step towards spiritual enlightenment, freedom, and fulfilment. In the course of his speech at the historic Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda quoted the following Upaniṣadic verse, in which an ancient sage addresses the whole of humanity to convey an eternal gospel of human redemption:

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ;
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam
ādityavarṇaṁ tamasasparastāt;
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—

'Hear ye, children of immortal bliss! aye, even those that dwell in the celestial regions! I have *realized* this infinite dimension of personality, effulgent like the sun, beyond all darkness (of ignorance and delusion). Knowing Him alone can man transcend death; there is no other way to the supreme goal.'

Here we find a strange new light shedding its rays on human life and work. It is the light of spiritual knowledge. It is also the fire, says the *Gītā* (IV. 37), which consumes all that is dross in life and action. Action means, to our ordinary understanding, simply an expenditure of mechanical energy. Even sages are bewildered, says the *Gītā* (IV. 16), as to the nature of action and inaction, and adds (IV. 17) that the way of action is difficult to penetrate.

Action and inaction, labour and leisure, appear antithetical to ordinary understanding. But scientific inquiry reveals their basic identity. In the words of L. P. Jacks (*The Education of the Whole Man*, p. 102):

'If you begin with labour, it begins to turn into leisure from the moment when art is applied to it. If you begin with leisure, it will turn into labour when science traces it to its roots.'

In the words of *Aṣṭāvakra Saṁhitā* (XVIII. 61):

Nivṛttirapi mūḍhasya pravṛttirupajāyate;
Pravṛttirapi dhīrasya nivṛttiphalabhāginī—

'For the foolish man, even leisure becomes labour; for the wise man, even labour yields the fruit of leisure.'

When the flood of spiritual knowledge begins to set in, sharp distinctions between labour and leisure, between sacred and secular, between contemplation and action, become gradually obliterated and eventually abolished. Illumining this truth, the *Gītā* says (IV. 18):

Karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyet akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ;
Sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt—

'He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is intelligent among men; he is the *yogin;* he is the one who has accomplished all his action.'

India's Philosophy of Work

India's philosophy of work, including social work, took note of the double reference of all work emphasized in man's religious heritage, namely, this-worldly welfare and other-worldly excellence, but subjected it to a rational scrutiny and investigation in the light of the spiritual vision of man developed in the Upaniṣads. This philosophy surveyed the human and world scene from the point of view of that vision and, retaining the double reference of work above-mentioned, transformed them into spiritual and human motivations. Thus, post-mortem heaven beyond, and hedonistic pleasures here, yielded place to the inner growth of man in spiritual awareness, to the development of

a moral and spiritual character. In the theistic religions, these character traits were also accompanied by love and devotion to an all-holy and all-loving personal God, who is deeply concerned with the welfare of the world. This-worldly motivations of pleasure and worldly glory gradually evolved into the human values of social ethics through the widening of the Vedic concepts of *dharma* and *yajña*, until they reached their highest expression in the *Gītā* in the ethical motivation of *lokasaṅgraha*, universal human welfare (III. 25), and *sarvabhūtahita*, the welfare of all beings (XII. 4). This lofty ethical passion flavours the definition of *dharma* given by the merchant Tulādhāra to the ascetic Jājali in the *Mahābhārata* ('Śānti Parva', 254. 9, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Edition):

Sarveṣāṁ yaḥ suhṛt nityaṁ sarveṣāṁ ca hite rataḥ;
Karmaṇā manasā vācā sa dharmaṁ veda Jājale—

'He knows *dharma*, O Jājali, who is always the friend of all, and who, through his actions, thought, and speech, is absorbed in (ensuring) the welfare of all.'

Vedānta thus transforms the 'beyond', the 'other world', etc. of theology into the perfection of character and vision *here* and *now*.

By providing a cosmical reference to individual actions, philosophy imparts depth and efficiency to human life and work; accordingly, even an imperfect philosophy is preferable to no philosophy. Man's work *in* society and *for* society becomes more efficient when that work is backed by social awareness; but it becomes most efficient when this social awareness is suffused also with spiritual knowledge and awareness. This alone will ensure that our social work will enhance the dignity and stature of the men and women we serve; any social work that fails to ensure this becomes a force against the emergence of quality in human evolution, however quantitatively perfect it may have been. It is only by striving to be spiritual himself or herself that a social worker is able to rouse the dignity and worth of the person served, by treating that person, as Kant demanded, as an end in itself and not as a means.

Indian Thought And The Modern Challenge

This philosophy of work bequeathed by the Indian spiritual tradition has the power within it to spiritually equip modern man to meet the challenge of the modern age. It has received new accessions of strength in our time from spiritual teachers like Swami Vivekananda, whose 'life and teachings', in the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'have prepared us for the new age of freedom in which we live. They tell us

how best we can consolidate the freedom we have recently won'. (*Occasional Speeches and Writings,* First Series, p. 191).

Indian thought speaks of three types of work in the service of society, namely, physical help through the removal of physical wants, or through the saving of physical life; intellectual help through the gift of secular education and work efficiency; and spiritual help through the imparting of spiritual knowledge. It ranks the last as the highest in the scale of values.

Every philosophy of social work is confronted today with two contrasting challenges, namely, the challenge of man in the under-developed nations craving for the minimum of social welfare, and the challenge of man in the highly developed modern welfare states suffering from ennui and frustration, tension and sorrow. The former is understandable, while the latter makes man a tragic enigma to himself. What Schopenhauer said over a hundred years ago has become tragically true of man in this latter part of the twentieth century (*The World as Will and Idea,* Vol. I, p. 404):

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

All modern welfare state philosophies are faced with this challenge of modern man's inner impoverishment in the context of external enrichment, inner insecurity in the context of external security. This challenge, which has slowly developed into a critique of modern social security philosophies voiced by several modern thinkers, including Bertrand Russell, their erstwhile advocate, has not found a better formulation and a more convincing answer than in the following testament of Swami Vivekananda, voicing the Indian point of view (*Karma Yoga,* Chapter III: 'The Secret of Work', *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. I, p. 53):

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

ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

WE are meeting in this colloquium to discuss what today is the most important problem facing our nation, namely, the toning up of our individual and collective life. The general theme of the colloquium is 'Ethical and Spiritual Values as the Basis of National Integration'. This subject will be discussed in its several aspects by the sections of the colloquium. Our own section, which heads the list, is called upon to discuss what the organizers consider the most fundamental aspect of the theme, namely, 'Ethical and Spiritual Values'. I invite you to contribute your best to the discussion on this theme, so that our nation may benefit substantially from our deliberations. The responsibility we have accepted to shoulder is heavy; let us approach it in a spirit of prayerful humility and calm determination.

The subject we are called upon to discuss is of vital interest not only to us in India but also to people in all parts of the world. No society can exist and progress without fostering ethical and spiritual values in its population. They constitute the integrating principle in any society, primitive or advanced. Like the cement that holds together separate bricks so as to produce the integrated structure of a building, ethical and spiritual values help to hold together separate individuals in a social organism, which then ceases to become a mere collection of separate individuals, like the building which has ceased to be just a pile of separate bricks.

The problem of fostering ethical and spiritual values in a society raises the question of the source of these values. It is precisely in this field that sharp differences of opinion have developed in the modern age leading to utter confusion and bewilderment. Broadly speak-

ing, these differences reduce themselves to two viewpoints, one of which holds that matter or outer nature is the focus of all values and the other which affirms man as that focus. The first leads to undue emphasis on the creation, possession, and enjoyment of material wealth and the search for organic satisfactions, whereas the second, while putting due emphasis on the above, leads to the pursuit of values and satisfactions lying beyond the sensate level of life, and to the experience by man of spiritual freedom and integrity. Man, however, is both the creator and enjoyer, and if we may add, even the destroyer, of all values, material as well as what lies above and beyond it. This truth of the primacy of man is getting increasing recognition from contemporary world-thought. Indian thought has always upheld the view that all values proceed not from matter but from the spirit of man. This finds endorsement today from several modern thinkers who, while accepting 'matter' as a useful and convenient concept for the scientific investigation of the world of experience, consider 'materialism' an unscientific intruder, a crude dogma leading to the evil of the mechanization of man and the destruction of the beauty and worth of his personality.

In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell (*The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

'The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism.... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

In the still stronger words of Thomas Huxley a century earlier (*Methods and Results*, pp. 164-65):

'If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology, or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind that we are dealing merely with terms and symbols....

'But the man of science who, forgetting the limits of philosophical inquiry, slides from these formulae and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician who should mistake the x's and y's, with which he works his problems, for real entities, and with this further disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.'

Says astrophysicist R. A. Millikan in his *Autobiography* (last chapter):

'To me a philosophy of materialism is the height of unintelligence.'

Dealing with the purpose of evolution in the light of twentieth-century biology, Julian Huxley says (Essay on 'Emergence of Darwinism', *Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. I, University of Chicago Press, p. 21):

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

Referring to the emergence of quality as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, Huxley says in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' (*ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 251):

'Man's evolution is not biological but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by break-throughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization, of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Further (*ibid.*, pp. 260-61):

'Evolutionary truth ... shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

If values are not mechanical, and do not rise from the material environment, they must be spiritual and must be sought for in the depths of the human personality. *Indian spiritual thought holds that all values are created by man from out of the depths of his personality through the intelligent manipulation of his material and social environment.* Increasing liberation of values from the depths of his personality makes for his intellectual, artistic, and ethical growth and development. This is the line of human evolution in which quality becomes the criterion of progress, unlike in the prehuman stage in which quantity was dominant over quality.

Ethical values find manifestation in the context of interaction between human beings in a society. Ethics, therefore, is inseparable from the social context and *vice versa*. It is the cementing factor referred to earlier, uniting man with man in society. This is what Indian thought calls *dharma*, in one of its two aspects, namely, the aspect of *abhyudaya* or social welfare, the other aspect being its trans-social spiritual dimension, *niḥśreyasa* or spiritual liberation. The *Mahābhārata*, therefore, defines *dharma* in its aspect as *abhyudaya* as 'that which holds together, that which sustains all human beings' (VIII. 45.50): *dhāraṇāt dharmam ityāhuḥ, dharmo dhārayati prajāḥ.*

The moral impulse finds expression in an outward movement of love and concern for the other man. This is well expressed in the great utterance of Jesus: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Among the various facts of the universe, this moral impulse stands as a unique fact of great significance. 'Two things fill me with wonder', said Kant, 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within.' It discloses a more-than-physical-and-biological level to the human personality. At the physical and biological levels, man's concern for the other is conditioned and limited by the purely genetic element in human relationships. This concern dries up beyond that relationship. But it is beyond that limited relationship that the moral impulse finds its own specific expression. To the statement, 'love thy neighbour as thyself', the human heart responds with a question: Who is my neighbour? Facts of moral experience of all humanity reveal an amazing diversity in the answers given by the human heart to this question. From the raw worldly individual, who sees his neighbour only in those who are physically related to him and subserve his own interests, to a Buddha or Jesus or Ramakrishna, who take in all beings in their all-embracing, self-effacing love and concern, through any number of levels in between, we have an amazing variety and quality of moral experience which pose a challenge to human intelligence.

In seeking a meaning to this bewildering variety and quality of moral experience, ethics is slowly led to the recognition of the complex texture of the human personality and a spiritual dimension to it behind its obvious sensate one. The sensate man is essentially self-centred, and his love and concern for his neighbour is dictated by prudence and expediency. Ethics deriving sanction from this level of moral experience finds expression in various social contract theories. But such theories, it is obvious, do not cover all data of moral experience. Even within the limitation of social contract, the impulse which moves one *to stick to a contract* does not proceed from the sensate level of his personality but from a deeper source. This is his spiritual dimension, the one source of all his higher impulses—moral, ethical, aesthetic, and rational. The sensate man, left to himself, would rather *break a contract* when it suits him than *keep it.* But the moral man will rise, or at least struggle to rise, above that impulse to self-aggrandizing expediency, disclosing a higher dimension to his personality, long suppressed, but waiting to be expressed.

It was facts and considerations such as these that led Indian thought in its Vedānta to insist that all rational ethical theories should derive their sanction not from any external source but from human nature it-

self, from human nature which has been subjected to a thorough investigation from the surface to the depths; a rational theory of ethical values must be based on a total philosophy of man. Such an investigation will give different answers as to his nature at different levels; the answer from any one such level will be a true answer, but only of man at that level, and not man as a whole. Ethics of positivism such as hedonism, social contract, enlightened self-interest, utilitarianism, etc. belong to this category. All ethics of transcendentalism emphasize, on the other hand, renunciation and self-effacement, which imply the distinction between a lower self and a higher self. Both types of ethics are ethics of self-realization depending upon which self is meant.

A complete philosophy of man will embrace all these moral phenomena and explain them in the light of evolution, which, at the human stage, as pointed out by Julian Huxley in the passage quoted earlier, ceases to be organic or biological, but becomes psycho-social, enthroning quality over quantity. Progress in the case of man is, in the light of the above criterion, progress in unselfishness, social feeling, non-aggressiveness, and inner fulfilment. These ethical values are the products of the spiritual growth and development of man. *This is the specific field of human evolution according to Vedānta and also, as pointed out earlier, according to the higher reaches of modern thought.*

Vedānta proclaims that there is such a thing as the *spiritual growth* of man; this is more significant than his more obvious physical growth. The scope of the latter is severely limited by his genetic inheritance, which is the product of the first major break-through in evolution, namely, the appearance of the living cell, or as biologists term it, of self-duplicating matter. But evolution has achieved in man a second more significant break-through, namely, culture and tradition, involving accumulation and transmission of experience through his newly acquired powers of thought and speech communication. Culture, which biologists term self-duplicating mind, is specifically a human phenomenon, in virtue of which man becomes heir to a second inheritance, namely, cultural, over and above his genetic or physical inheritance. It is this second inheritance that makes for the uniqueness of man; through it, man becomes capable of rising above his physical limitations and achieving unlimited personality expansion through the expansion of his awareness and sympathy. This highlights the importance of this second inheritance for education, ethics, and religion. In the wake of this second break-through, 'the character of evolution', says Julian Huxley, 'now became cultural instead of genetic or biological'.

All ethical values are essentially spiritual values; they proceed from the trans-sensual dimension of the human personality. This dimension, which stimulates the *dhārmika* or ethical sense, is beyond the reach of animals and of such humans who, like animals, are content to live at the sensate level: *dharmeṇa hīnā paśubhiḥ samānāḥ,* as the *Hitopadeśa,* (Verse 25, Introduction) pointedly expresses it. In actual fact, however, no human being is entirely without this stimulus; everyone receives 'intimations of immortality', as Wordsworth expresses it, sometime or other in his life. But it is stifled by his sensate nature which is the venue of life-stagnation for individuals as well as societies; creative life lies just above this level. In order to achieve quality, the tyranny of this sensate nature has to be overcome. That is the work of spiritual education; part of this education is achieved in the social context through the ethics of mutuality and interdependence: *parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha,* as the *Gītā* puts it (III. 11). This is the economic, social, and political fields of human action and endeavour in which man trains himself in strength and steadiness of character and social efficiency. The rest of this education is the concern of religion, understood not as dogma or creed, not as socio-political discipline and conformity, but as spiritual experiment and experience by which man achieves spiritual efficiency. The technique of the former is a man-ward movement finding expression in intelligent work in co-operation with one's fellowmen, and of the latter in an inward penetration through concentration and meditation in loneliness and silence. A comprehensive spirituality embraces action and contemplation, man in society and man in solitude, man at work and man at worship. This is the unique contribution of the *Bhagavad Gītā.*

In a brief statement of Vedāntic faith, Swami Vivekananda expresses the central theme of such a comprehensive spirituality in which ethical values of the outer socio-political fields blend with the spiritual values of the inner field of religion (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external (by science, technology, and socio-political processes) and internal (by the technique of concentration and meditation). Do this ... and BE FREE.'

Our nation today presents a general picture of ethical and spiritual malnutrition. Vast sections of our men and women have all but lost touch with the strengthening and purifying spiritual tradition of our own hoary culture. This is sad enough. But what is sadder still is that we have also largely failed to get ethically nourished and strengthened by our experience of socio-political action as a free people these

two decades. These ethical opportunities have failed to develop in an adequate measure citizenship responsibilities and civic virtues and graces in our people, young and old, in spite of our advantage of the close association with, and the bright examples of, modern western nations which, without claiming to be saintly or spiritual, have achieved more spirituality of ethical values and character efficiency than we with all the backing of our undoubtedly rich spiritual inheritance of the past ages, reinforced, in the modern age, by the life and message of a galaxy of spiritual and ethical giants like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, Rammohun Roy and Mahatma Gandhi.

The delineation of ethical types in a society by poet-king Bhartṛhari over thirteen hundred years ago may help us to see the maladies of our own society today in clear perspective (*Nītiśataka*, 74):

Eke satpuruṣāḥ parārthaghaṭakāḥ
svārthān parityajya ye,
sāmānyāstu parārthamudyamabhṛtāḥ
svārthāvirodhena ye;
Te'mī mānavarākṣasāḥ parahitaṁ
svārthāya nighnanti ye,
ye tu ghnanti nirarthakaṁ parahitaṁ
te ke na jānīmahe—

'There are the *satpuruṣas*, good people, who bring about other people's welfare sacrificing their own interests; the generality of people are those who strive to ensure other people's welfare if it does not involve sacrificing their own self-interest. There are these others who are *mānavarākṣasās*, veritable human demons, who destroy other people's welfare to ensure their own self-interest; but alas! how am I to delineate those others who destroy other people's welfare without any gain (accruing to themselves or to any one else)?'

The first type, those who practise the ethics of self-effacement and universal love, of renunciation and service, constitutes a small minority in any society; they are those who seek death, and achieve resurrection thereby, so that others may live and thrive. They are *the salt of the earth*. The large majority of people, the *sāmānyāḥ*, the generality, however, belongs to the second type, namely, those who practise the ethics of what modern political philosophy calls *enlightened* self-interest. To the third type belongs all those who indulge in all kinds of anti-social practices, practices inherited from past ages and practices being newly invented in this age, such as bribery, corruption, food and drug adulteration, and so forth; these are well described by the poet as *māna-*

varākṣasās. The fourth and last category is the poet's despair! It is a class entirely unethical and, happily, a minority in any society, given to wanton anti-social violence and destruction.

The problem of our society today arises from the mass manufacture of the third and fourth types, especially since our attainment of political freedom after centuries of subjection. This is what poses a challenge to our education and religion, our politics and social life. And this challenge has to be met by mobilizing all the ethical and spiritual resources of the nation, inherited from our own past and acquired from our modern experience. We as a nation must resolutely take steps to preserve and nourish the ever-present small minority of the first type, the *Brāhmaṇa* type as described by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* and Bhagavān Buddha in the *Dhammapada;* we must ethically fortify and spiritually strengthen the second type—the type that pursues the way of enlightened self-interest—by injecting more *enlightenment* into its self-interest so as to prevent its members from sliding down and augmenting the third type; this third type—the *mānavarākṣasās*—must be severely thinned, if not eliminated; and, finally, the very appearance of the fourth must be prevented.

The need of our time cannot be more adequately conveyed than in the following utterance of Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on 'Vedānta and its Application to Indian Life' delivered in Madras in 1897 (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 247):

> 'Bring all light into the world.... Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous!'

Our nation has that light; it has enough spiritual resources within it to restore it to moral health and vigour. It is the duty and privilege of every citizen, and more especially of every educated citizen, of free India to lay hold of these resources and, strengthening himself or herself, pass on that strength to the nation at large. Let the words of Vivekananda be our clarion call: 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!'

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

I AM very thankful to the organizers of this function for inviting me to address this special meeting of the staff of the Lucknow Secretariat this afternoon. I am in Lucknow just on a week's visit during which I am glad to have the opportunity to meet the enlightened citizens of this capital city of Uttar Pradesh at various public gatherings, including the one here where hundreds of you have gathered. I have just finished a very stimulating lecture tour in the Raipur and Rewa divisions of your neighbouring state of Madhya Pradesh and in the town of Jhansi of your own state; everywhere I could feel the pulse of our people yearning for a better life, and for stimulating ideas helpful to the achievement of the same. In his speech introducing me, Sri Gopala Reddy, President of this meeting and Governor of this state, has just told you that I am shortly to proceed to the United States at the invitation of the Vivekananda Vedānta Society of Chicago to participate in a Symposium in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Chicago Parliament of Religions, at which Swami Vivekananda had represented the eternal soul of India. After the Symposium I hope to spend several months in the States as well as in the neighbouring countries addressing universities and cultural and religious societies and groups.

The Problem of Inter-human Relationships

Here I have been asked to speak to you on a very important topic, namely, 'The Philosophy of Service'. When I look around me in the India of today, the one theme that strikes me as of the greatest benefit to our nation is this subject of service. Our society bears the impress of all forms of exploitations, and that too for centuries, which man

has practised on man—intellectuals exploiting the common people, the rich exploiting the poor, rulers exploiting their subjects, and man exploiting woman, and, often, women also exploiting each other. Every form of exploitation we have indulged in here; that alone explains the low level of life, individual and collective, that we have had for the past few centuries. As a result we have had to pay a heavy price; centuries of political subjection and all forms of social humiliation have been heaped upon the people of India, rich and poor alike.

This should have opened our eyes. But today, after twenty years of political independence, we notice that we have not learnt the lessons of history. All the maladies that afflict our people today, all the troubles of our body-politic proceed from one single source; and it is that man in India has devalued himself. He has not realized his own dignity and worth as man; he has not recognized the dignity and worth of man in his fellowmen. This is the subject that should become the sheet-anchor of our education and public life today, so that we may achieve nation-building on the only foundation on which it can be raised, namely, what Vivekananda called 'man-making'. The building up of a great modern nation out of the diverse elements of our society, with millennia of history behind it, is not an easy task. It calls for a new type of manhood and womanhood with deep convictions within and a tremendous will power to translate visions and ideas into real forms outside. Swami Vivekananda, more than seventy years ago, referred to this need when he expounded his thesis of a man-making education and a man-making religion. He said that religions of the world had become lifeless mockeries and that what we needed was character. These religions, as lived and practised by millions, hide behind their exterior piety a good deal of selfishness, social callousness, and violence. This has distorted our history, retarded our national growth, and thwarted our national purposes. Religion in India had long become reduced to a form of *piety-fringed worldliness.* The above words of Vivekananda have become of topical significance for our nation today when, after twenty years of independence, we have begun to despair of our nation's future, when we have begun to be unsure about the stability of our infant democratic state which we instituted with such enthusiasm and fanfare in 1947 and 1950.

Renunciation and Service

Therefore, the one subject that should hold our attention today is the subject of man and the subject of inter-human relationships. What is the form of inter-human relationship that is conducive to general happiness and welfare? Man has exploited his fellow human beings

throughout history. We are generally familiar only with one type of exploitation, namely, the economic, which has been highlighted by Marx and his school of thought. But exploitation can be and has been of other types as well. Whatever surplus resources a man possesses, he can easily use them to *exploit* other people. The other alternative is to utilise one's surplus energy, intelligence, wealth, and power to *serve* other people, to enhance the life of other people. Why has our nation chosen the first instead of the second alternative since our independence? Swami Vivekananda had proclaimed about seventy years ago:

> 'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India. Intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

Renunciation of the little self with a view to manifesting the higher self and the spirit of service are the twin ideals of India. In the wake of our great national renaissance of the last century, the country did inspire itself with this spirit of renunciation and service and threw up bands and bands of dedicated workers in all parts of India for the cause of India's freedom and India's nation-building. As a result of their contributions the country became free and ended its centuries-long stagnation and slavery in 1947. Why we failed to continue in that great mood and temper thereafter is a mystery. It is amazing how our people, emerging from the darkness of their slavery of centuries to the light of freedom, could easily forget the lessons and warnings of their history and cease to be creative! History is replete with instances of nations bursting with creative energy on emerging from a spell of political slavery. The classical example of this is Athens. When it succeeded, by united and sustained struggle, in defeating its Persian invaders and freeing itself from their brief but deeply galling yoke, Athenian democracy experienced an ecstasy of freedom which issued forth during the next 50 years in an outburst of creative activity in every department of its national life—cultural, social, political, and artistic—which has brightened not only its own but all subsequent Western history as well. Why did we fail to experience a similar sustained ecstasy of delight on the attainment of freedom, not after a brief spell of slavery as in the case of Athens, but after centuries of bondage, and why did we allow our creative energies to dry up within a few brief years of independence? With the drying up of our creative spirit, we soon slipped back into our erstwhile stagnant ways, into moods of complacency and ways of selfishness and self-centredness. This is the tragedy of our brief post-independence history. And we have paid the price in shocks of military defeats, economic disasters, political disintegrations, and social upheavals. Where every one sought only his or her own happiness, no one is happy today.

The Need for Creative Thinking

This phenomenon is imparting a salutary lesson to us, the ethical lesson of mutuality and inter-dependence. The current maladies of our nation are inducing a mood of thinking and self-criticism among our people; and this is the brightest side of our national life today. Creative thinking is the sure sign of the onset of social health. All growth, development, and progress flow from thinking. Our nation has started to think after twenty years of what in the language of Vivekananda may be called 'not-thinking-carelessness'; we have become aware of the mess in which we are, and we have begun seriously to consider how we can get out of it. This is the surest sign of the onset of a trend towards health, towards national creativity. We have to sustain this trend, intensify it, and say good-bye to all complacency and its evil fruits of selfishness and self-centredness.

This is what brings me to you this afternoon, to think together with you as to how to restore our nation to health and vigour. Biology tells us that man is an inter-thinking species, the only such species in creation. He advances evolution through this inter-thinking process. And this is the work that we shall engage ourselves in during the quiet hour that we are together here. And this is the work that all patriotic citizens should engage themselves in when they meet together in groups. It is in this context, against this background, that I wish to discuss this great subject of the philosophy of service. We have been using the word 'service' mostly in a professional sense. We have the Union services, the State services, and a host of other services; I am not here to deal with them except as part of the wider field of inter-human relationships in general and the philosophy underlying the same.

The Search for a Rational Ethics

Service, as I said earlier, is the finest form of inter-human relationship. It involves a growth, a change for the better in the individual man. What is that change? What is that growth? Throughout these centuries, we have failed to discuss and comprehend this great subject, because for centuries together our forms of inter-human relationships were expressed in set forms and fixed moulds where growth of the human personality had no meaning. They were not rationally determined, but were determined by caste factors, by conventional religious dictations, and they yielded frozen patterns of conduct and behaviour, whose goodness or badness was derived from the authority of a text or of a caste mandate. We failed to develop a rational ethical code deriving sanction from human nature itself and capable of sustaining

human conduct and behaviour in turn. *What our nation needs today is a pervasive concern for man as man, and not as cut up into castes, sects, and communities, and the formulation of a sanction for the same from a rational ethics and spirituality.*

Every human being is faced with the challenge of the presence of other human beings in the society. He can react to the social *milieu* either in a friendly way or in a hostile way depending upon his concept and assessment of himself. He chooses the hostile way when his only concern is his own survival and his own organic satisfactions. When this is the predominant motive, his behaviour is not far removed from that of animals. No actual human being, however, is always motivated thus. Even the lowest of human beings does sometimes experience a genuine concern for one or more other human beings; in this he seems to outreach his own limited self. This betokens the emergence of moral awareness in man; *its culture, growth, and development represent the specifically human phase of evolution, according to twentieth-century biology.*

Evolution and Ethics

Nineteenth-century biology could find no place for ethical sense and moral behaviour in its theory of evolution. Ethics and evolution ran parallel to each other. As expressed by Thomas Huxley in his *Evolution and Ethics,* evolution meant struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, whereas ethics meant the making of as many as possible fit to survive. But the revolutionary advances in this science in the twentieth century have made ethics central to evolution at the human stage.

Speaking on 'The Evolutionary Vision', Sir Julian Huxley, a noted contemporary biologist and grandson of Thomas Huxley, gives a spiritual orientation to the evolutionary process (*Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 215):

'Man's evolution is not biological but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Discussing, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution, or evolution at the human stage, as 'greater fulfilment' Sir Julian Huxley says (*ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 20):

'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of

organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment —the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

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

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

It is this science, the science of human possibilities, that constitutes the spiritual core of the world's religions; and it is the central theme of our Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*.

Psycho-social Evolution

What is meant by psycho-social evolution? In a self-centred man, as in all animals, the psyche or mind or soul is limited and confined to the physical organism. In a moral man it expands, goes beyond the barriers of his physical organism, and enters, and is entered into by, other psyches of the social *milieu*. Men develop a capacity to dig their affections into each other as a matter of conscious choice, thus revealing a higher dimension to the human personality than what is revealed by this physical personality with its organic appetites and choices. This registers the beginnings of the manifestation of the spiritual man lying behind the physical man, of his higher self behind his lower self. All ethical theories presuppose this distinction between a higher self and a lower self in man; and the liberation of his higher self is what man achieves through ethical endeavour. It is renunciation of the lower self and manifestation of the higher self.

Unless he erects himself above himself
how poor a thing is man!,

sings Wordsworth. Accordingly, what we see in all moral and ethical phenomena is a growth of man in a non-physical dimension; this is his spiritual growth, a growth in his inner dimension in which, as pointed to by Sir Julian Huxley in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', quality emerges as the criterion of evolution for the first time, in place of quantity which dominated the organic or pre-human phase of evolution (*Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 257):

'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity.'

Discussing the subject of utility against this new belief-system, Huxley says (*ibid.*, p. 259):

'Once we truly believe...that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

And highlighting quality as the dynamics of human evolution, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 260-61):

'Thus the evolutionary vision ... illumines our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way. ... It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

This is what Vedānta recognizes as the spiritual evolution of man, as his inward journey to fulfilment in the context of his outward life and movement and action.

The Spiritual Growth of Man

This subject of the spiritual growth of man is a fascinating theme relevant to the contemporary world situation, and more so to man in the Indian context today. It will point out to him the way to rescue himself from the tyranny of the sensate and the quantitative, and from the prevailing stagnation of worldliness, and help him to continue his evolutionary march to qualitative richness and fulfilment.

Physical growth we understand; intellectual growth also, though less obvious, we can understand; but what is this other growth, the moral and spiritual growth of man? It is something subtle, yet real, and more significant than the other two, so far as man is concerned. Moral awareness, with its capacity for love and service, is the direct fruit of this spiritual growth. This growth registers itself as an expansion of man's interests and sympathies so as to embrace increasing numbers of fellow human beings, and in the consequent extension of the frontiers of his own self. Without this growth, man's body becomes the prison of his self; with this growth, it becomes the first instrument of human evolution, of man's journey to fulfilment.

With the evolution of the higher brain in man, organic or physical evolution has ceased to have any further relevance so far as man is concerned. With the inventive powers of his higher cerebral system, man can produce organs and tools far more efficient than what nature

may evolve within his organism at her slow pace through her trials and errors and enormous waste. Evolution has become self-conscious in man with his whole host of new capacities like reason, imagination, memory, and will. If organic evolution is thus irrelevant at the level of man, and if evolution still continues in him, it has to be sought beyond the organic or physical level. This is the meaning of what Julian Huxley refers to as psycho-social evolution. It is conscious social participation that makes an individual grow even into a personality, a value which no animal can realize.

Biology speaks of the principle of homeostasis, or homeorhesis, by which nature effected an automatic stabilization of internal conditions in the organism of the higher mammals. This helped in the slow evolution of the brain until, in man, she perfected the higher brain. The organism's need for physical survival and organic satisfactions, and her own need for numerical increase—all these have been relegated by nature to the care of man's lower brain, thus releasing his higher brain to function as the most wonderful instrument for carrying evolution to its specifically human fields, namely, the psycho-social, moral, and spiritual.

The capacity and fitness of the higher brain to undertake and fulfil this high function is directly proportional to its freedom from slavery to man's sensory apparatus and its appetites, to the pressures and pulls of his lower nature. The higher brain, with its powers of reason and imagination, may stultify itself by functioning as the tail-end of the sensory apparatus. It may, on the other hand, redeem itself and also man by becoming true to itself, by becoming truly higher. It is ethical discipline, what Vedānta calls *śama* and *dama*—discipline of the mind and the senses—that helps the higher brain to thus redeem itself and become the agent also of man's redemption. This is reason in its true form, what Vedānta calls *buddhi*. Referring to the evolutionary significance of this development of the higher brain, in his book *The Living Brain,* neurologist Grey Walter claims (p. 18):

> 'For mammals all, homeostasis meant survival; but for man, emancipation.'

This, the spiritual growth of man, is thus a fact; the more we know the science and technique of this growth, the better for us and for our nation. Physical and intellectual growth we know and recognize, the second less palpably than the first. A baby is born with about seven pounds of body weight. Every day it increases in weight. It drinks its mother's milk, to be followed by other types of food and drink; and it grows steadily until it becomes a full-grown healthy man or woman

of 150 or 200 pounds weight. This is the palpable physical growth of man; and we ensure it by appropriate means of physical nourishment. Equally important, though less obvious, is his mental growth. A village boy is timid and without confidence. He is sent to school. Within a few weeks, he gains in knowledge, in alertness, in self-confidence. He develops a sense of his individuality; and this continues until he becomes, may be, an intellectual giant, or a giant of will; this is the mental growth of man, which we ensure through appropriate mental nourishment, through education, institutional and non-institutional. These two types of growth are necessary, but not sufficient. There is a third growth, most vital and significant, but least recognised, without which the other two will prove his undoing; without which his search for fulfilment will result in unfulfilment and defeat. This is his spiritual growth, which finds expression in ethical awareness and social feeling to begin with, and finds its consummation in the experience by him of the infinite, universal, and divine dimension of his personality, the Ātman.

Intellectual Giants versus Moral Pigmies

An education that does not stress this spiritual growth may produce physical and intellectual giants who may as well be moral pigmies; this is what India calls the *rākṣasa* type of men, physically strong, intelligent, and of strong will, but all this held in thraldom to his finite, lower self, to his sensate nature; it is not oriented to his larger self through moral sense and social feeling. In fact this is the defeat also of our contemporary Western civilization. According to some modern thinkers, modern civilization creates intellectual giants and moral pigmies. So what is the difference? The difference is precisely here. The body has grown, the mind has grown, and yet the real man has remained a puny, tiny thing; it has failed to grow for want of the spiritual nourishment relevant to its growth. So the spiritual stature of man, his spiritual nourishment and growth is not a mere academic subject; it is a vital subject for man individually and collectively. Civilization cannot survive without this spiritual growth of man from out of himself. In India, our great philosophy of Vedānta emphasizes the spiritual quality of human life. It proclaims that man is essentially divine. He is not the body; he is not the mind; he is the Ātman, infinite and universal. The body and the mind are only the instruments of his spiritual growth, the means of his life purposes, which include sense pleasures and aesthetic delights, intellectual developments and ethical awareness, and the fullest realization by him of the freedom of his inborn divine nature.

The Nature of Ethical Awareness

This spiritual growth of man finds its first expression in ethical awareness, in social feeling, in a genuine concern for the other individual. The society of human beings constitutes the *milieu* of his spiritual education, of his spiritual growth and development. Man lives in two environments, the natural and the social, but most people recognise only the first and not the second, or, rather, treat the second as but an appendage of the first. But the second is something distinctive. Nature around us, with its starry heavens, with its rivers, mountains, trees, houses, tables and chairs, constitutes the first environment in which we conduct our lives; man exploits this environment for his purposes; and it is meant to be so exploited, for it has no purposes of its own. A table is meant to be used by man; so also the house, so also the earth and the air, the rivers and the mountains. But the second environment in which human life is cast, without which human life will become elementary in its proportions, is the social environment, constituted of other human beings. This is an essential environment for the growth of the human spirit. Take a man away from society, he will become like Ramu, the wolf-boy of your city; he will not grow into a human personality for want of conscious participation in the social environment. Therefore, the importance of the social *milieu* is recognized in all ethical philosophies, in all political and social thought. What does it involve to have a social *milieu*? I live in an environment constituted not only of natural objects and processes but also of other human beings. What are these other human beings? *It is this question and man's answer to it that constitutes the challenging problem of inter-human relationships.* Man's adequate response to this challenge raises his life from the organic or the physical, to the ethical and the spiritual levels.

Every human being treats himself as a subject, as an end-value, and treats everything else as an object, as a means to that end-value. That is human experience in the raw ethically unprocessed state. The table and other things are objects; and I am the subject. The objects are meant to serve the purposes of the subject; and I am that subject. This idea that objects serve no purposes of their own, but are meant to serve the purposes of a subject is recognized in the dictum of the Sāṅkhya philosophy quoted by Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*: *saṁhatānāṁ parārthatvāt puruṣasya*—'All *samhatās*, i.e. objects which are but combinations of elements, do not serve their own purposes, but are meant to serve the purposes of a subject, namely, man.'

Recognizing a Subject in a Social Object

Now when I apply this idea to myself, I recognize that I am that subject, and everything else belongs to the category of the object meant to serve my purposes. But *when man extends the application of this dictum from the natural to the social environment, he commits a serious ethical blunder; he becomes the exploiter of his fellow human beings.* He considers his wife to be an object, he treats his children as objects, so also his servants and all other human beings. Therefore *this tendency to exploit other human beings proceeds from the failure to recognize the distinctiveness of the social environment from the natural environment.* Wherein does this distinctiveness lie? It lies in the unique fact that other human beings constituting the social environment are not just objects, are not just extensions of his natural environment, but are subjects like oneself; *ethics therefore asks man to detach himself from his physical self and to view the social environment as it is in itself.* This detachment helps him to liberate his higher self and view his social environment objectively. He then discovers that that social environment consists not of objects but of subjects like himself. This is the discovery that led man to culture and civilization, to ethics and spiritual realization, that led him on the specifically human road of evolution. Therefore *ethical attitude can be defined as the recognition of a subject in a social object.* There are two types of objects, natural objects and social objects. Social objects consist of human beings, and when I recognize the subject in a social object I express my ethical sense, and I begin to treat that social object not as means to my ends, but as an end in itself. With the development of ethical sense, man also learns to treat all non-human living things more and more as ends in themselves. *This at once involves a revolutionary change in inter-human relationships.* Whereas, as an object, man *exploited* man just as he exploited his houses and furniture, rivers and mountains, as a subject, with ends of its own, man *serves* his fellow man and helps him to realize his own ends. Each man becomes, at the same time, the means and the end with respect to the social environment, revealing the truth of mutuality and interdependence underlying that environment. *This is the truth that humanity has failed to realize adequately from the very beginning of history.* Barring a small minority of ethically sensitive people, most human beings have treated and still treat other human beings more as mere objects to be exploited than as subjects to be served to realize their own ends.

Service: Its Mood and Temper

Therefore, ethics comes to us with a great message, the message of interdependence, the message of mutual service. It proclaims that

if one wants to achieve his own welfare, he must strive to ensure the welfare of other human beings also. As exhorted by the *Gītā* (III. 11): *Parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha*—'Cherishing and serving each other, may you achieve the highest general welfare'.

The German philosopher Kant defines ethical attitude in a beautiful sentence. Says he in his *Metaphysics of Morals* (London, 1909, p. 47):

> 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never only as a means.'

Each one is an end in himself; each one is also a means with respect to his fellowmen. In the light of this attitude, a study of inter-human relationships reveals the utterly unethical and low nature of all forms of exploitation of man by man. When man exploited woman in feudal societies, he treated her not as a person with ends of her own, not as a subject, but as an object meant to subserve his own ends. The same treatment was meted out by him to servants, labourers, and other sections of society. But today, in the context of our democracy, we are required to reverse this wrong attitude and practise and treat every human being as an end in itself. In this way inter-human relationships become transformed, revealing the growth of man in a new dimension, namely, his spiritual dimension. And *the fruit, the bye-product, of this growth is the temper and mood of service.* The spirituality of this mood and temper expresses itself as a sense of privilege with respect to work. It is my privilege to serve the ends of others through my work, proclaims this mood. The husband or the wife, parents or children, every member of a society, by being engaged in enhancing the happiness and welfare of others, enhances not only his or her own happiness and welfare, but ensures his or her own spiritual growth as well.

This also reveals a third environment in which man lives, namely, his inner environment, the world of his inner life, besides the other two, namely, the external natural and social environments. It is by taking due note of this third environment that man ensures his spiritual growth in the context of his external life and action. *Nourishment of his inner life is achieved through the spirit of dedication and service with which he inspires his outer life and action,* which then becomes transformed into *Yoga,* which achieves the double efficiency of social welfare, through productive labour outside, and spiritual welfare, through the inward spiritual attitude of dedication and service. This double efficiency—productive social efficiency outside and spiritual personality efficiency within—is the message of *Yoga,* according to the *Gītā* (II.50): *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'yoga is efficiency in action', and

not any cheap mysticism or magic. Service, therefore, is the only valid form of inter-human relationship in any society which aims, in the words of Julian Huxley quoted earlier, at 'the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

Worldliness Versus Spirituality

Whatever civilization and culture humanity has achieved so far, has been the result of the release of these spiritual forces in the hearts of men and women. Man is essentially spiritual, but this spirituality is lying hidden; it is lying unmanifest, and we have to manifest it in the context of our life and action, and develop a moral will. Any education which only quickens our intellect and sharpens our animal appetites, but does not help to develop a moral will, is harmful to man and society. Many civilizations have perished for this very reason. Our own history reveals to us many periods when man had decayed morally. Just before Buddha, conditions in the Indian society reveal a picture where the upper classes were steeped in luxury and self-aggrandisement and sterile philosophical speculations, and the lower classes were steeped in ignorance, superstition, and misery. It was then that India threw up a great teacher like Buddha. He saw that society had become stagnant, getting stuck up in the mire of worldliness; and he preached his message of spirituality, of renunciation and service, and it set the society on the road to progress and prosperity. His first discourse at Sārnāth after his enlightenment at Buddha Gaya bears a significant title, namely, *Dharmacakrapravartana Sūtra*—'The Discourse setting in motion the Wheel of *Dharma*.'

The wheel of *Dharma*, the wheel of society, the wheel of culture had got stuck up in the mire of worldliness, just like the wheels of a bullock cart getting stuck up in one of our muddy village roads. Then the cartman and others put their shoulders to the wheels and the cart starts moving. Similarly, Buddha came, put his shoulders to the wheel of society and made it move; the spirituality emanating from him and from his movement imparted dynamism to the society which had become stagnant due to worldliness and superstition, and for the next thousand years the dynamic energy of spirituality contained in Buddha's message made India march to prosperity and greatness, made her expand even outside India, and laid the whole of Asia in deep spiritual debt to our great country. This has happened several times in our history. And this alone accounts for the impressive continuity of our long history. Roman civilization developed this stagnation of

worldliness in its later phases; luxury and love of ease sapped the vitality of its otherwise gifted citizens, until a time came when Roman citizens were not prepared to work, to produce wealth, and to face any hardships, even in the defence of their glorious empire. They depended on mercenaries from neighbouring countries for the defence of their empire, and on the work of slaves and other people for agricultural and industrial production. And the result was that, when foreign invasions came, there was not the national will to defend the empire, and the whole civilization fell, never to rise again.

Character Centred in a Socially-oriented Will

These are all episodes from past human history from which we should take lessons and warnings. We are trying to build up a new state, a new society on our sacred soil deriving its strength not from a minority of the elite, but from the millions and millions of our people. If our Constitution has anything inspiring about it, it is this that, for the first time in our long history, we are building the political structure of our nation on the willing consent, and on the strength thereof, of the millions and millions of our people of all classes, races, and sects, and not of a minority at the top. The language of our Constitution is that we, the people of India, give ourselves this Constitution. The Constitution is but the repository of our national vision and urge and the promise of great things to come. But we have to work hard to make promises flow into performances, to make vision flow into action and achievement. How can we do it unless we learn to work honestly, to work efficiently, and to co-operate with each other? And all such ideas of working together, co-operating with each other involve team spirit, which is the first fruit of the psycho-social evolution referred to by Julian Huxley; it betokens the beginnings of human spirituality, of the manifestation of man's higher self. *This is character centred in a socially-oriented will.* With character comes mutual trust, cooperation, team spirit, and all-round efficiency. With character as his strength, a man is able to go beyond himself and dig his affections in the hearts of others and elicit a response from those hearts. With character-efficiency, therefore, a new man comes upon the scene. Character is the only basis of all enduring inter-human relationships. Take away character, the whole social structure tumbles down piecemeal. Vivekananda warned us more than seventy years ago against the tendency in India to mere imitation of Western institutions, Western ways of work, Western modes of life, without acquiring the character-efficiency which is the source of the strength behind those institutions. Addressing the

citizens of Lahore in 1897 on the subject of 'The Vedānta', he said (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 429-31):

'You may make thousands of societies, twenty thousand political assemblages, fifty thousand institutions. These will be of no use until there is that sympathy, that love, that heart that thinks for all; until Buddha's heart comes once more into India, until the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa are brought to their practical use, there is no hope for us. You may go on imitating the Europeans and their societies and their assemblages.... Where is the heart here to build upon? No sooner do we start a little joint-stock company than we try to cheat each other, and the whole thing comes down with a crash. You talk of imitating the English and building up as big a nation as they are. But where are the foundations? Ours are only sand, and the building comes down with a crash in no time.

'Therefore, young men of Lahore, raise once more that mighty banner of Advaita (vision of non-separateness), for on no other ground can you have that wonderful love until you see that the same Lord is present everywhere. Unfurl that banner of Love! Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, arise once more, for nothing can be done without renunciation. If you want to help others, your little self must go. In the words of the Christians—you cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. Have Vairāgya, renunciation. Your ancestors gave up the world for doing great things. At the present time there are men who give up the world to help their own salvation. Throw away everything, even your own salvation, and go and help others. Ay, you are always talking bold words, but here is practical Vedānta before you. Give up this little life of yours. What matters it if you die of starvation—you and I and thousands like us—so long as this nation lives? The nation is sinking; the curse of unnumbered millions is on our heads—those to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink when they have been dying of thirst and while the perennial river of water was flowing past; the unnumbered millions whom we have allowed to starve in sight of plenty; the unnumbered millions to whom we have talked of Advaita and whom we have hated with all our strength; the unnumbered millions for whom we have invented the doctrine of *lokācāra* (social usage), to whom we have talked theoretically that we are all the same and all are one with the same Lord, without even an ounce of practice. ... *Wipe off this blot.* Arise and awake. What matters it if this little life goes? Everyone has to die, the saint or the sinner, the rich or the poor. The body never remains for anyone. Arise and awake and be perfectly sincere. *Our insincerity in India is awful.* What we want is character, that steadiness and character that makes a man cling on to a thing like grim death.'

Imitation versus Assimilation

We have to capture that; we have to assimilate the very 'root' of Western greatness, instead of merely imitating the Western people and running after the 'fruits' of their greatness. Only then can we develop our institutions patterned on theirs and bend them to our national purposes. They built their institutions on the basis of character, on the basis of ethical sense and social awareness, and the character-efficiency flowing from them. This we have to develop first. Then only can co-operative societies, welfare organizations, and private and public

sector projects, and all other collective undertakings thrive and flourish. Whatever constructive work we have done in India during the last sixty or seventy years, is entirely due to a section of the Indian people becoming inspired by this modern spirit of progress, by their acquiring this modern spirit of social awareness and its concomitant fruit of character-efficiency. Today our nation needs to develop this character-efficiency in a big way through acquiring this capacity to go beyond one's little self and manifest one's higher self. This is the only way to raise the moral tone of our people, to raise the spiritual strength of our nation. And this is the primary source of strength for man, says Vedānta, because it is intrinsic to him and capable of taming and elevating all extrinsic sources of his strength, namely, wealth, pedigree, and power. *Ātmanā vindate vīryam*—'through (knowledge of) the Ātman, man achieves great energy', says the *Kena Upaniṣad* (II. 4). When life moves in this direction, service and dedication become increasingly spontaneous, outward, man-ward movements of that silent God-ward movement of the inner man.

India, A Mighty Anthropological Laboratory

Since our independence, our free state has instituted several services. We have over thirteen or fourteen central services and several ones at the states level. These are all specialized services meant for particular purposes. They have their relevance. But when we speak of service in the context of our society, we do not mean any one of these services. We mean the attitude to the work that one is called upon to do, the attitude to one's fellow citizens, the attitude to onself as a seeker of spiritual growth—the attitude which is blessed by spiritual awareness, ethical sense, and social feeling. *It is here that man reaches out to something beyond his limited truncated self;* it is here that evolution ceases to be merely organic and biological and rises to higher spiritual levels.

The whole of India today must be considered by each one of us as an anthropological laboratory, as a mighty sociological apparatus, for experimenting on the subject of man, his growth, development, and fulfilment. Our immortal spiritual tradition, Vedānta, aided by modern thought and modern techniques, provides us with the necessary guidance and stimulus in this great venture. We have to courageously face the task of nation-building through building up the manhood and womanhood of our five hundred and fifty million people. *This is the most exciting work for any intelligent heroic people.* We have to ask ourselves as to what type of society we want to evolve in India, what type of human excellence we shall aim for our people. Our people have

suffered enough; they have been neglected, except for being exploited; the whole nation bears the impress of arrested growth through continual thwarting of human purposes, first by invaders from without, and then by invaders and exploiters bred from within. The harshness of our hearts has been the bane of our nation for centuries. The weak and the backward had no place in our society; they were always pushed to the wall. This national sin, *this blot on our national honour,* in the words of Vivekananda quoted earlier, we have to wipe off today. That is the glorious opportunity and privilege for every educated citizen of free India. And *contemporary world conditions are extremely favourable and propitious for a successful assault, for the first time in our long history, on this ere long impregnable fortress of selfishness and exploitation, ignorance and superstition, slavery and its concomitant of jealousy, all buttressed by a smug and static piety-fringed worldliness.* This amalgam of dark forces has undone our history and retarded our national growth for over a thousand years. That history teaches us one bitter and salutary lesson, *that our nation, during this long period, ceased to be the creator of history, but remained at the backyard of history. Other nations created history; we became victims of that history.* Our follies and our prejudices, our pettiness and our meanness, our want of political vision and wisdom, our incapacity to combine for a national cause—all these have militated against India's developing a strong body-politic for herself.

Forging a Healthy Body for India's Eternal Soul

The soul of India is eternal; it is bright and pure and strong; the whole world feels the enlivening touch of that eternal India. I have myself seen, during my travels in various parts of the world, that eternal India is universal currency. Sensitive people in all parts of the world respect it and respond to it. It has been so throughout history. But there has been the other India, constituting the body-politic of that eternal soul, which has been an utterly inefficient conduit for the energy of that soul for hundreds of years. The world at large has been pitying us for the plight of our body-politic while admiring us for the strength and purity of our nation's undying soul. That body-politic has been getting weakened for want of suitable nourishment of body and mind. That weakness, and the period of stagnation that came in its wake, have left a legacy of mounting problems for the citizens of free India to tackle and to solve. An adequate response to this tremendous national challenge will alone make the youth of India progressive and dynamic, and the hope of their nation's future. They must consider it their responsibility and privilege to tackle them. That

will bring on the scene of India's national life a new type of men and women, with tremendous faith in themselves and in the people of India and in their past history and future destiny, with the will to work, and with the capacity to co-operate with each other, in place of the talking, shouting, selfish, cynical, and grumbling types that we have been turning out in thousands since our independence. This will mark the spiritual growth and expansion of India, matching its undoubted physical expansion, economic and demographic, *and make her once again the creator of history, both national and international.*

This is the expansive dynamic mind and mood that every educated citizen should capture today. For whatever we do now is going to shape the destiny of India, and much of the destiny of the world as well, for the next thousand years or more. This means that a tremendous responsibility is thrown on every one of us today. *With political independence gained after centuries of slavery and social immobilization, with a Constitution embodying the visions and urges of our nation for all-round human fulfilment to inspire us, with every type of freedom granted and guaranteed by that Constitution to nourish creativity and to stimulate the thought and action of every one of our citizens without any distinction, with an impressive rational spiritual tradition from the past embodied in our Vedānta, reinforced by spiritual giants like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the present, with a land richly endowed by nature with actual or potential wealth, with beautiful and impressive landscapes, and with a people richly endowed with diverse talents and capacities, our country today offers a most stimulating* milieu *for conducting, as referred to earlier, the fruitful laboratory experiment on human growth and development for a seventh of the human race, and for working out that 'science of human possibilities' referred to by Julian Huxley and quoted in an earlier part of this lecture.*

Meeting of East and West in India

In this great field of work we have two vital streams of blessings to help us, namely, our own immortal Vedāntic spiritual tradition and the modern Western tradition. From Vedānta we learn of the eternal truth of the divinity of man and the solidarity of all existence. From modern thought we gain the scientific and technological efficiency to make that Vedāntic vision practical. *For the fullest growth and development of man, there is need to effect a confluence of these two cultural streams in every citizen.* Man, his growth, development, and fulfilment, is the theme of all progressive thought today. It is the cen-

tral theme of both ancient Vedānta and modern socio-political thought. Indian society has the opportunity to be fertilized by both the streams in the modern age. In fact, as pointed out by Vivekananda, *this precisely is the significance of the modern age in Indian history.* The assimilation of Vedānta and modern thought will make India great not only spiritually, but also intellectually, economically, and socially. And from her great historic past she will march forward to a future, greater and more creative than all her past ages.

Behind all such greatness lie two great forces, namely, *the force of creative intelligence and the force of character.* We did not lack intelligence as a people; but its cultivation was confined to a minority by short-sighted socio-religious policy. But in the absence of social awareness we failed to achieve character-efficiency. And for the lack of character-orientation, our intelligence tended to be static, and failed to achieve creativity. During the past few centuries we did produce men of vast learning, sometimes encyclopaedic in range, but mostly uncreative, static, and sterile, which deprived it of the power to move society through the force of character and conviction. *Modern India offers the supreme opportunity to every one of her citizens to move in the direction of the achievement of these two energy resources of personality, namely, the force of creative intelligence and the force of character.* Man-oriented intelligence, feeling, and will is the source of character-efficiency in a man to whom the spirit of service comes as a natural bye-product of his own psycho-social evolution, as a spontaneous expression of his own spiritual growth.

Spirituality is Man's Birthright

Vivekananda had warned us that man could not be made moral by an act of parliament. But since our independence, we have been trying to improve man mostly through acts of our parliament and of our state legislatures. That has been our great misfortune. And we have naturally failed. We have to realize today that the only way to change man for the better is through education, which, as defined by Vivekananda, is 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. Such education is more than mere institutional schooling. *It is essentially what each man does to manifest his inborn spirituality and to evoke the same in others.* But our education today makes for mental stagnation and greater self-centredness. More or less that is true of contemporary education in all parts of the world. Self-centredness has become the central vice of modern civilization, says Toynbee. Sorokin, the eminent sociologist of the Harvard University, also warns us that

modern civilization can be saved only by manufacturing a little more of altruism in the human heart. Bertrand Russell speaks of the need to have a little more of love in the human heart, if civilization is to be rescued from its present mess.

How to manufacture this altruism, this love in the heart of man, how to develop this genuine human concern, is therefore, a subject of more than national significance today. Technology cannot help us here. We cannot make men good and kind and altruistic by developing a new serum and injecting it into them. Science can denature plutonium, but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man, says Einstein. Neither can it be achieved, as I have said before, by acts of parliament. Nor can socio-economic improvements brought about by political and administrative measures, by themselves, produce the good man or the happy man. They at best constitute the *conditions* for the production of the good man or the happy man. *It is only by taking due note of the third or the inner spiritual environment of his life and ensuring its nourishment, by directly tapping his inner energy resources, by penetrating to the infinite resources of the spiritual depths of his personality, that man develops his ethical sense and moral awareness.* Buddha was endowed with infinite compassion and the spirit of service; these were not the products of the food he ate, or of the socio-political circumstances of his external life. He just *grew* into an infinite personality; he just *manifested* the inborn perfection of his nature, which is also the birthright of every human nature. External circumstances have relevance in the early stages of this manifestation in the case of ordinary people. But at some stage, man has to tackle himself, tackle the forces of life, and not remain a play-thing of external circumstances. *The knowledge and discipline of the forces of this inner world constitute the scope of the science and technique of spirituality, according to Vedānta.* Man has to take from the hands of mother nature the responsibility for his own evolution, for which he has been provided with the necessary equipments by nature herself. The failure to do this is the tragedy of man under modern social security philosophies. As predicted by Schopenhauer about a hundred years ago (*The World As Will and Idea,* Vol. I, p. 404):

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

If there is one single teaching of Vedānta that needs always to be kept in view and that can redeem man from his inner emptiness, it is the teaching that man is essentially divine and perfect. Infinite energy is in the heart of every one. That is his birthright. He has not to

beg it or borrow it from some one else. As our great political leader Lokamanya Tilak, gave us the great political *mantra*, '*Swarāj* is my birthright', which galvanized our political life, so also this Vedāntic *mantra*, 'spirituality is my birthright', will galvanize the moral and spiritual life of every man and woman. Man's struggles in society for wealth and welfare, education and culture have also to become the venue for another silent struggle within him, namely, the struggle to manifest his inborn spirituality.

This is the most precious and urgent lesson India has to learn today. The utter worldliness into which many of our people have fallen in recent times following the policy of 'I and mine first, and the devil take the hindmost', has only resulted in dwarfing the Indian personality and thwarting collective human purposes. This is what has made for the widespread indulgence by our people in all sorts of corruption and malpractices; we have invented many new forms of social malpractices which other nations even do not know. Today we indulge in all sorts of indiscipline, revealing a mentality of long-experienced slavery; for only slaves resent discipline, but free men never. The external freedom that came to us in 1947 has yet to grow into inner freedom in most of us. These social maladies are the product of a view of man which reduces him to mere psycho-physical dimension, and in which the psycho-social man is muted. In that view the spiritual man is nowhere in evidence. Ethical sense and social concern and the spirit and mood of self-discipline are the fruits of spirituality; and if we are to build our nation on enduring foundations, we have to build it on spirituality, and not merely on economic amelioration measures. This is what Vivekananda described as man-making with a view to nation-building. All politics and economics, science and religion are meant to advance the cause of human growth and fulfilment. Unfortunately, since our independence, we neglected man in ourselves and in others, and concentrated on the external circumstances of his life. *We had thus devalued man long before we were forced by economic and other circumstances to devalue our rupee.* That is why we are in such a mess today.

Our Post-Independence Generation

A new India is coming up in the children of the present generation. They are unlike the children of the earlier generations; they are more intelligent, more vivacious, more alert, more fearless, and more straightforward; these are sterling character assets. But they are deficient in

social sense, in social responsibility, and in the concern for other individuals and groups; they exhibit more than the healthy level of intolerance and aggressiveness. The result is that they have become a problem to themselves and to the nation. The old, with their largely feudal mental make-up, can hardly become fit exemplars for our younger generation. From the lure of a dead past they have to be summoned to face the hardships of the living present and shoulder the responsible and creative roles of ushering in the delights of a glorious future. Their energies, now functioning like indisciplined elemental forces such as we experience in floods and earthquakes, need to be made creative by self-discipline through a nationally-oriented will. Our scientific technology is engaged in disciplining these elemental forces of nature to enhance human happiness and welfare. We need a similar spiritual technology to discipline the energies of our youths to enhance their own and the nation's welfare. *This is the ethical education of our children by which they are made to feel the weight of social responsibility for the rebuilding of their national body-politic, by which they learn to give a creative and constructive direction to their enormous energies now expressing largely in destructive and self-cancelling ways, and by which they not only cease to be the despair, but become the shining hope, of the nation.*

Vivekananda summoned our nation, long steeped in *tamas*, inertia, which it foolishly mistook for *sattva*, dynamic calmness, to the dynamism of *rajas*, energy, before rising to the equilibrium of *sattva*. The nation has attained this *rajas* in its young generation today. Vivekananda today whispers to every youth in India to move onward and raise his or her energies to the higher level of *sattva* through self-discipline and ethical sense. Energy at the *rajas* level is energy of the *rākṣasa* type, self-centred and self-cancelling. It is also often at the mercy of the lower *tāmasic* nature, when it becomes blind and purposeless and destructive. Much of youthful life-energy today suffers from this affliction of purposelessness and aimlessness. If continued too long, it will spell disaster to the individual and his society. The only way to make it creative is to make it grow to the next higher stage; it then comes under the discipline and control of the *sattva* level of human nature, *which then finds expression in a socially-oriented will with its mood and temper of renunciation and service.* This is the spiritual education of our youths which they must capture for themselves and by themselves, in the spirit of the heroic exhortation of Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (VI. 5-6) instead of complaining that the state or society does not do this or that for them.

The Timid versus the Heroic

Somewhere, some time, some groups or sections must become sensitive to the nation's problems, must respond to the nation's urge for survival, and reverse the prevailing downward trend and mood of despair, and start the nation on its onward march to confidence and hope. This signifies the igniting of the Promethean spark in some of our people, men and women endowed with firm convictions and the courage to live up to these convictions. Social problems often present themselves as vicious circles such as what are expressed in questions like: Does man create the social environment or does the social environment create man? The timid remain in them and just discuss them mutually, only to throw their hands up eventually in despair. They are bundles of opinions which, in the words of a scientist, are but the rattles of immature minds, and which have no power to move the world. *But men of the heroic mould transform opinions into convictions and develop the power of impact to break all vicious circles.* And they are the creators of history; they move onward and the nation marches behind them.

This is the force of character centred in a socially-oriented will. This was the blessing that man in India missed all these centuries. And this is the blessing that modern India received from its outstanding leaders like Vivekananda and Gandhi. This is the *vyavasāyātmakā buddhi* expounded by Kṛṣṇa in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, even a little bit of which can save a man or a nation from great fear: *Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayā*. Whatever may be our productive deficiency with regard to food for the body—and even this is now being energetically tackled and overcome—the nation is not deficient so far as food and nourishment for the mind or soul is concerned. The tragedy is that, in this latter field, we are starving in the sight of plenty.

Modern India has the great blessing not only of lofty ideas but also of great men and women who lived these ideas. Apart from the great spiritual personalities like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, we have had also in this age scores of outstanding men like Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi, who were men of high character and great courage of conviction, and who lived in and for others more than in and for themselves, whose greatness was intrinsic, and not extrinsic as derived from their power or position in society. They give us an experience of human excellence, of the true glory of the human spirit. They teach us that to be selfish, to be self-centred, to exploit others and die away one day does not constitute human

excellence, does not express the true glory of the human spirit. They preach to us in silence that to be manly and to stand on one's own feet, to extend the hand of fellowship to others, to use every ounce of surplus energy to bring happiness and cheer to millions of one's fellowmen—this is the true glory of man. As expressed by Vivekananda in a letter written from Chicago in 1894 to the then Maharaja of Mysore (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 1960 Edition, p. 141):

'This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.'

Instead of striving to acquire this glory of manliness, the people of India, during the past few centuries, put the cart before the horse by striving to achieve the glory of piety and saintliness; and they lost both saintliness and manliness in the bargain. We clean forgot that true saintliness is built on the foundation of manliness only; where that manliness is lacking, the saintliness achieved becomes cheap and a sham. The *Gītā* had warned us about this but we did not take it to heart (III. 4): *Na karmaṇām anārambhāt naiṣkarmyam puruṣośnute*—'Without the discipline of (life in the field of) action, man cannot reap the (spiritual) fruits of inaction (meditation).' Not only we failed to be saints, but, getting steeped in worldliness, we failed also to be men in the true sense of the term. Nothing else explains the centuries-long stagnation of our society and its accumulation of social maladies like poverty, social injustice, callousness, laziness, and the mood of resignation to evil. Vivekananda alone diagnosed in depth this malady of our national character; and he, therefore, exhorted the nation to develop manliness and strength and proclaimed manliness as the first phase of true spirituality. He became the preacher, for the first time since the *Gītā*, of 'a man-making education and a man-making religion'.

The Gṛhastha Growing into the Citizen

Service is the first fruit of such an education and such a religion, from which it issues spontaneously, naturally, without the feeling of being *forced* to sacrifice, and without expecting special external inducements to prop it up. *Herein we see palpably the spiritual growth of man and the dynamic march of evolution beyond the organic level.* Where this dynamic evolutionary movement is absent, human life gets stuck up in worldliness and becomes stagnant. Such stagnation is death, says Vedānta; and it is more to be feared than physical death. Sri Ramakrishna exhorts us to avoid this pitfall of spiritual death; says he:

'Live in *saṁsāra* or the world; but allow not *saṁsāra* or worldliness to get into you; that will make you stagnant. A boat will be on the water; that is its

natural place; but water should not be allowed to get into the boat; that will render it unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.'

In this illustrative teaching Sri Ramakrishna has compressed the entire message of social ethics and practical religion. It envisages the *gṛhastha* or the householder evolving into the citizen; it exhorts the biologically and physically conditioned man or woman to grow into the freedom and expansiveness of the spirituality of citizenship, which manifests itself as renunciation and service, *tyāga* and *seva*. *This is the type of men and women that we have to turn out in increasing numbers in our society today.* When we do so, we lay the foundations of the new democratic structure of our nation on rock. But today it has only sand for its base; and it is certain that, as remarked by Jesus in his parable, (Matthew. 7, 24-27) 'a building build on sand cannot stand.'

Today we have to ask this very question: On what base are we to build up the structure of our Indian national life? That structure is already rising here, there, everywhere, through our mighty developmental programmes in the fields of educational expansions, scientific research, industrial and agricultural development, defence, and social welfare. Within the next twenty or twenty-five years we shall have solved many of our social problems, the problems relating to the environment in which human life is set. But one problem will remain, and will become more intractable as we advance in the solution of our environmental problems. It relates to the great question as to what is the type of man that will come out of all this development? Is he going to be a clever, crooky person whose increased knowledge tends to the exploitation of other people? A worldly individual whose centre of gravity is always outside of himself and who has become stagnant in the world of sensate satisfactions? Or is he to be a dynamic person continuing his evolution in the psycho-social levels, who is thus sensitive to higher values and strives to realize them, and who has achieved, or is striving to achieve, the three-fold integrations referred to by Bertrand Russell, namely, integration between the self and nature outside, integration between the self and society, and integration between the diverse forces within the self itself? This central problem of society, namely, the problem of human excellence, must be tackled from now onwards, the type of men and women that we want to see in the India that is emerging. If that India is to continue her glorious past into a still more glorious future, she will have to achieve a synthesis of the enduring elements of her own tradition with the finest elements of the modern Western tradition. This meeting of East and West was achieved in a big way in Swami Vivekananda. Every Indian citizen must achieve it in a measure in himself or herself. Vivekananda exhorts every

Indian to strive in this direction (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, Eighth Edition, pp. 29-30):

> 'Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and *we will do it. You are all born to do it.* Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto.'

What a noble vision of human excellence has been presented here! Every Indian citizen must strive to incorporate that vision in himself or herself as much as it lies in his or her power. Some may achieve it more, some may achieve it less, but every one has a common ideal of human excellence towards which he or she will be moving. This will provide a healthy direction to national energies and purposes, which will then cease to be self-cancelling and destructive, but become dynamic and creative. *Then will begin the march of India with steady steps and with sure and clear vision*, unlike the wobbly steps of her blind movement today.

This is the privilege and opportunity of citizenship in the sovereign democratic republic of India today. That citizenship cuts across all divisions based on caste, community, profession, sex, or social position, and is the focal point of unity, lovalty, and service for all the five hundred and fifty millions of the Indian people. The fundamental and inalienable personality of man in India is his Indian citizenship; every other aspect of personality is secondary, but this is primary. One may be a cultivator, another a shoe-maker; one may be an administrator, another a simple housewife; one may be the prime minister, another an industrial labourer; one may be the *Rāṣtrapati*, another a simple schoolmaster; and all these can be alienated and changed. But every one of them is integrally united to each other in his or her citizenship of free India. These are but the varied functions that citizens choose or are called upon to perform in the discharge of their citizenship privilege and responsibilitv. In the light of this, all work, from the shoe-maker's to the prime minister's, becomes transformed into service, the service of the nation, which views each of them as of national importance. The simple housewife discharges her national responsibility as a citizen by efficiently running her household, taking part in national affairs according to her abilities and limitations, and training her children in citizenship virtues and graces. Citizenship involves a sense of social responsibilitv, a will to rise above the limited biological self in conscious participation in the burdens and delights of society around. This is the spiritual growth of man; and this modern concept of citizenship is essentially

a spiritual concept in the light of Vedānta, in so far as it takes him out of the limited ego into the experience of ethical awareness and social feeling. A mere physically-conditioned *individual* becomes transformed into a *personality* by such conscious social participation. A mere householder becomes a citizen, registering thereby an expansion of awareness, identification, and sympathy beyond the physical and the biological. This is the man or woman in whom the political and ethical constituents of citizenship fuse into the human experience of spirituality, the spirituality of practical Vedānta. This is the central message of the *Gītā*. It is only on the strength of this citizenship, and the character-excellence it ensures, that we can strengthen the edifice of our democratic state, and add flesh and blood to our noble Constitution.

The True Basis of Human Dignity

Every one of us, therefore, in whatever fields of action we may be engaged in, is essentially a citizen of India; and, as a citizen, the only form of inter-human relationship that we can have is that of service. Whether we are administrators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, ministers, legislators, teachers, housewives, industrialists, or labourers, we must always remember that our primary personality is our citizenship of free India and that these are the functions which we perform in discharge of that citizenship responsibility. Earning a living thus becomes an integral part of the discharge of national responsibility, and subordinate to it. This attitude at once converts all action into service, or, in the language of Vedānta, all work into worship, the worship of God in man, the worship of the *Virāt*. The simple shoe-maker on the roadside and the mighty administrator in the Secretariat, both are engaged in the service of society. Only, each has to be made conscious of this truth; that is possible only when each realizes his or her true dignity and worth. No work is high or low in itself; but our motivations make it high or low. Without the spirit of devotion behind it, the work of a temple-priest becomes low work; with the spirit of national service behind it, the work of the farmer or industrial labourer becomes high work; if motivated only by the three 'p's, namely, pay, prospect, and promotion, the work of the administrator becomes low work, static and humdrum. But when illumined by the spirit of national dedication and service, it becomes high and noble. *The spirit of service, therefore, raises all work, high or low in worldly estimation, into high work in the ethical and spiritual estimation, precisely because that spirit raises the worker behind all work to the high level of spirituality, to that level where man achieves a qualitative improvement in his life.*

The spirit of service, therefore, becomes a universal *milieu* in which all human life and action are spiritualized. *This is the transformation that life and work undergo in the light of philosophy.* We need to be inspired by this philosophy in India today. This is what will strengthen India, make for national integration, and all-round national efficiency. This philosophy will impart to India a vision of high human excellence and the urge to actualize it in life and character. The real source of strength for a nation lies in this type of men and women endowed with *prajñā* or creative intelligence, and not in its treasury, in its defence organization, or in its foreign alliances, says Vidura in the *Mahābhārata: Yat balānāṁ balaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ tat prajñā balam ucyate.*

The Ethics of National Integration

National integration is the fruit of ethical awareness. Mere aggregation of individuals does not constitute a nation, just as mere accumulation of bricks does not constitute a building. It is cement that joins brick to brick to make for the integrated structure of the building. The cement that joins man to man to result in the integrated structure of a nation is ethical sense, or what the *Mahābhārata* terms *dharma*, as defined by Kṛṣṇa in the *Karṇa Parva: Dhāraṇāt dharma ityāhuḥ dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ.* The five hundred and fifty million people thrown together in this blessed land of ours do not automatically constitute a nation; we need an integrating principle or value that will unite man to man. That principle is ethical sense which we have to manufacture from within each one of us; for it is a spiritual value that man liberates in the context of his spiritual growth. Ethical sense cannot be manufactured outside man; it cannot be produced by payment of material and other inducements, or by the injection of a serum. So long as man is content to live in the stagnation of *saṁsāra* or worldliness, he cannot manufacture this value even if offered all material and other inducements. For *this value is the product of man's spiritual growth, and that growth takes him beyond the tyranny of the physical and the sensate, beyond the tyranny of the delusion of worldliness which is 'I and mine'.* When this value is liberated in the hearts of increasing sections of our vast population, we shall witness a tremendous phenomenon of human integration in about a seventh of the human race. It will convert India into *a national grid of awakened humanity,* just as we are taking all steps to achieve a national electrical grid for the industrial unification and development of our country. *This is enduring nation-building through man-making.* And the clarion call that can inspire us today is what Vivekananda has given to us from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad:* 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.'

The Capacity for Impersonal Loyalty

This glowing picture of what India can be tomorrow is marred by our knowledge of what she is today. The present is undoubtedly unpropitious; but it is the product of a long tradition of political unwisdom and moral stagnation of our people. Every citizen should be aware of this national weakness and consciously work to end it. We had established in India many political states in the past; a study of why and how they failed and why we failed to establish an enduring national state will contain many salutary lessons for us today. Our states of the past were ruler-centred. The heart of the state was the person of the king or the emperor. As at the top, so at all the lower levels also, it was the person in authority that counted, whether it be the commander-in-chief, the viceroy in the province, and such other functionaries lower down. The people's loyalty was to the person of the ruler or of the other functionaries below. Our big country failed to develop either at the provincial or at the central level *an impersonal political loyalty* to an Indian state. Our loyalties became shaken with the death or removal of the person of the ruler, or the death or removal of the person of the commander-in-chief. Foreign invaders seem to have known this weakness of our people and of our state or states. It is not an isolated experience in Indian history of our national armies, fighting bravely against an invader, melting away when the king or the emperor or the commander-in-chief was killed during the battle. And foreign invaders would often aim their arrow or their shot at the king or the emperor or the commander-in-chief seated on the howdah. Such melting away of our armies has taken place even by the spread of false news to the same effect by the invaders. Not only the army and the people in general, but also the officers and the feudal lords failed to develop an impersonal awareness of, and an impersonal loyalty to, an Indian national state. Their loyalty was primarily to themselves and to their self-interest, and secondarily to the person of the ruler as a means to the former.

The lessons of the failures of our past efforts to build an enduring political state in India *should be burnt into the minds and hearts* of our people today. We must assimilate the truth that a strong and enduring political state cannot be built on the basis of mere personal loyalties. *We need to develop an impersonal loyalty to our new free national state and to the high principles embodied in its Constitution.* We need to develop a respect for our Constitution and an impersonal capacity to respond to the rule of law. With this impersonal backing, the sentiment of personal loyalty, which we have inherited in abundance, becomes an additional source of strength for national integration.

We are slowly and painfully learning this lesson of impersonal loyalty to our infant democratic state. Whatever strength it has shown during the last twenty years of its existence, whatever stress and strain it has faced and stood, is derived from this source. Whatever weaknesses have shown themselves up, similarly, reveal only the long distance the nation has yet to travel to acquire this basic virtue, which we need not only to strengthen our political state, but also to strengthen, purify, develop, and ensure the continuity of all collective and institutional activities within the state. It is not a rare thing in India to hear people say: 'I used to take keen interest in such and such an institution when so and so was its head, but now that he or she is gone, I have no further interest.' An institution represents a certain social vision and the effort at its realization. If our loyalty is to that vision, we would continue to bear witness to that vision by continuing to serve the cause of the institution even if circumstances have necessitated a change in the person at the head, involving, however, no departure in the ideals and programmes of the institution.

The Capacity for Imaginative Sympathy

The cultivation of this impersonal loyalty, however, involves a spiritual growth within man from the psycho-physical self to the psycho-social self. This proclaims the intimate relationship between ethics and all true politics.

By such impersonal growth, man becomes a richer personality, says ethics. It is this impersonal-personal man that constitutes the ethical content of citizenship, without which citizenship merely means that one has only to stand in the queue and wait until he or she attains the age of twenty-one. Unfortunately, this latter view of citizenship is what most people in India have understood and acted upon, and it has contributed not a little to the prevailing national weakness and despair. Nepotism, bribery, business malpractices, and other evils which are afflicting free India, have their source in the preponderance of blind *māya* over luminous *dayā*, and in the absence of that detachment from the worldly personality, in the absence of that spiritual growth into the impersonal, which alone endows one with mental clarity and moral strength to follow the path of justice when called upon to adjudge the claims between less qualified personal kith and kin and better qualified other persons. Attachment to oneself and to one's relatives is *māyā* and love for all is *dayā*, says Sri Ramakrishna.

This spiritual growth of the citizen will not only enhance the spirit of justice in society—and justice is one of the most stabilizing and integrating social forces which alone can make individuals and groups accept gracefully the shortages and privations of a developing economy —but it will also enhance greatly the citizen's capacity for sympathy and fellow-feeling. During the past centuries, our character had for its ingredients a bundle of negative virtues instead of positive ones. Our traditional capacity for sympathy was as much limited and warped by this and by the personal factor referred to earlier, as was our traditional loyalty to the state. Our religious and social codes did teach us to be kind and sympathetic; but our response to human suffering was neither imaginative nor sustained. As a people, we did not fail to respond to suffering and distress in front; but this response took the form of tossing a coin or two to the sufferer and then passing on; it looked as if we did this more to be relieved of the sight of suffering than out of a moral concern to see that the sufferer's suffering is relieved. We did not care to follow it up to see that social maladies are traced to their very roots and eradicated. Nothing but this static sympathy could have come out of the prevailing static, piety-fringed worldliness and self-centred socio-political attitudes.

When we substitute a dynamic spirituality for that piety-fringed worldliness, and a deep social concern in place of our bundle of negative virtues and self-centred socio-political attitudes, we develop the capacity for *impersonal sympathy,* the sympathy of a wide-ranging and sustained quality. This is *imaginative sympathy.* It is not tied down to a concrete suffering in front, nor does it end up by the tossing of a coin to the sufferer. Imaginative sympathy proceeds from a deeper source in the human personality; it proceeds from its spiritual dimension from which dynamic ethical and social values proceed.

This is the personality of the citizen. Such citizens alone are the guarantee of social health and social progress. And when administrators are recruited from a social *milieu* which consists of a general body of such citizens, the administration becomes responsive to social urges and needs. The difference between a police state and a state aiming to be a welfare state lies in this social responsiveness of the latter. And this is the product of that spiritual growth of the members of the administration, yielding the precious capacity for impersonal sympathy, for imaginative sympathy. The Secretariat and other institutional offices of the state are far away from the actual scenes of human life with its urges and privations. Yet the administrator, through his imaginative sympathy, recognizes, and responds to, that far away social situation.

With his imaginative sympathy, he sees the file in front of him stirring into life and whispering words of human urges and aspirations. Every citizen needs to develop this rare capacity, but the administrator and the politician need it more. Without it, they both, singly or in combination, can turn a nation into a mess of problems; with it, they can lift a nation from the mess of problems to the sun-lit heights of cheer and hope.

Dynamic Spirituality

It is this transformation of man in India that will fill our politics and administration with a sense of urgency, with a sense of purpose and direction. *With this imaginative sympathy, things will move faster and faster in the administration, and the nation will march faster and faster towards its destined goal of general welfare.* It is the greatest asset for the administration of a state such as ours where the most glaring fact is its centuries-long arrested development, and the mounting urge, since independence, for the minimum of human happiness and welfare gushing out of the hearts of millions and millions of its people, who have been, in the pungent words of Vivekananda, 'living the life of next-door neighbours to brutes'. The grasping of this fact and an adequate response to it by an administrator provides the finest, and the only, school for the development of his character and efficiency, and for the retention of his youthful zest and joy in his life and work.

This is the type of glory and greatness that should descend upon men and women in India in general, and the members of the administrative services of the centre and the states, in particular. It will make for the liberation of the spirit of service as a pervasive principle, lighting up the dark and dismal horizon of our nation today, and raising the spiritual quality of the life of its citizens. *To go here and there to be spiritual is like going here and there to breathe.* It is all *here* and *now*. We have to realize that spirituality is not magic or cheap mysticism, that it is not to be sought merely in caves and forests, but that it is the birthright of one and all, and is to be cultivated in the fields of one's life and work, in the midst of its ups and downs.

Our people need to be inspired by this practical and realizable ideal which Vivekananda has put before us in the modern age. He exhorts us that it is far better to live for an ideal for an instant than to lead for years the life of jelly-fish existence. As I quoted from the *Mahābhārata,* during my public lecture at the Ravīndrālaya last evening, the words uttered by queen Vidula for the benefit of her son, king Sañjaya, breathes a heroic message for all our youths (*Udyogaparva,* 120, 15):

Muhūrtaṁ jvalitaṁ śreyo na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for ages.'

Some of the great men of India like Śaṅkara and Vivekananda lived short but intense lives. Theirs was an intense dedication to God and man, to God *in* man; and it changed the course of human history. It is better to live intensely for an ideal and vision than to vegetate for long years in a humdrum existence. *This is a powerful sentiment that can drive away the clouds of cynicism and frustration from the sky of India.* Every educated citizen has to teach himself or herself that he or she not only is *in* India but is also *of* India, and is responsible for the nation's well-being. We have to inspire ourselves with the conviction that we have been called upon to be an instrument of our nation's purposes. What can be a greater glory for man in India today than this, that he is living in the most creative period of his nation's history and that he is privileged to contribute to it, big or small. When cynicism and frustration lay their cold hand of death on a person, he or she is unable to respond to any higher value, and becomes suspicious of all values except his own self-interest. Bernard Shaw refers to this type in a famous passage:

> 'This is the true joy of life, to be used for a purpose which you consider mighty; to be a force of nature, and not a mere clod of ailments and grievances ever complaining that the world does not devote itself to making *you* happy.'

These are the two alternatives before man in India today. Here is the great current of Indian national life; I am a part of it, shaping its course and being shaped by its current, losing my smallness and meanness in that great national participation. But if I cut myself away from that current, I become a stagnant pool, swampy and malarious, a clod of ailments and grievances ever complaining that the nation has not done this or that good to me. 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death', says Vivekananda. More people have taken the path of spiritual contraction, bringing the nation to the verge of despair and disintegration. From now on, let more and more people take the path of expansion, expansion of social awareness and sympathy, and the capacity for calm, silent, hard work, inspired by team-spirit, and we shall arrest this downward trend and turn the nation to progress and prosperity, unity and strength.

Bhartṛhari's Social Classification

We can better understand the anatomy of our society today by listening to what poet-king Bhartṛhari says about the human types in a society. Bhartṛhari hailed from the Malwa region of neighbouring

Madhya Pradesh and lived over thirteen hundred years ago. Says he in his *Nītiśataka* (Verse 64):

Eke satpuruṣāḥ parārthaghaṭakāḥ svārthān parityajya ye,
sāmānyāstu parārthamudyama'bhrtā svārthāvirodhena ye;
Te'mī mānavarākṣasāḥ parahitam svārthāya nighnanti ye,
ye tu ghnanti nirarthakaṁ parahitam te ke na jānīmahe—

'There are some *satpuruṣas,* good people, who engage themselves in the good of others sacrificing their own self-interest; the *sāmānyās,* the generality of people, on the other hand, are those who engage themselves in the good of others so long as it does not involve the sacrifice of their own self-interest. There are those others, the *mānavarākṣasās,* devilish men, who sacrifice the good of others to gain their own selfish ends; but alas, what am I to say of those who sacrifice the good of others without gaining thereby any good to themselves or to any one else!'

The first category is that of the *satpuruṣa,* the good man. What does his goodness consist in? It is an overflowing goodness uncontaminated by any selfish motive. Such people always work to ensure the welfare of other people without caring for their own self-interest. This is the most glorious type in any society; they form its spiritual elite; they are, as the New Testament puts it, the salt of the earth.

Apart from those whom the world looks upon as divine incarnations, the *satpuruṣa* category includes men like Gandhiji. He might have remained a barrister and could have led a comfortable life. But he discovered himself in others and, dying to himself, lived for others. He dedicated himself to the work of rescuing from slavery and fear millions of his fellowmen, and making them realize the dignity and worth of their manhood and womanhood.

The poet then speaks of the second category—the *sāmānyās,* the generality of people—the majority in every society. What is their mental make-up? They serve the interest of other people so long as it does not collide with their own self-interest. That is what British ethical and political philosophy calls 'enlightened self-interest'. And the majority in any society will be of this type. And what India needs today is an intelligent appreciation and application of this philosophy on the part, especially, of her industrialists and businessmen.

They have to realize that it is in their own self-interest to see that the nation prospers and grows. Industry and business have to realize that a flourishing economy demands the widest diffusion of purchasing power among the people. Foolish ways of getting wealth by which the

rich become richer and the poor poorer are destructive of the process of wealth-getting itself even in a *laissez faire* state. The difference lies precisely in this that whereas, in the latter, the motivation is *mere* self-interest, in the former, it is *enlightened* self-interest.

Ethics does not demand of this category of people that they sacrifice their self-interest to do good to others. It permits them to seek their self-interest; but it tells them to widen their concept of 'self' by fully grasping the truth of the interdependence of men and groups in society. If I keep my premises scrupulously clean, but do not care to see that the town or village in which I live is also kept clean, I cannot escape the consequence of an epidemic breaking out from that insanitation in my environment. It is therefore in my own interest to see that my environment is sanitary. As societies become larger in territories and population, the concept of 'self' in man's view of his self-interest needs to be correspondingly broadened. A narrow idea of self-interest is based on utter ignorance of the social mechanism, with its subtle interdepending processes. Hence it is *unenlightened* self-interest. This becomes more glaring as a society becomes more complex with not only national but also international inter-connections. Hence the need for raising self-interest to the level of the *enlightened* variety. This philosophy of enlightened self-interest is today inspiring international relations in such fields as the sharing of economic prosperity and technical know-how through trade and aid extended by advanced countries to developing countries. But it needs to be implemented much more within the national societies themselves, where all self-interest needs to be purified by the touch of *enlightenment.*

The poet then goes on to describe a third category which he characterizes as *mānava-rākṣasās,* devilish men. What is devilish about them? They destroy other people's welfare to gain more profit and pleasure for themselves. This is the *rākṣasa* type; and I am sorry to say that, since independence, we have been manufacturing this type in large numbers in our country. Every conceivable form of food and drug adulteration and corruption afflicts our nation today. What is the source of this affliction? Men and women out to gain profit and pleasure for themselves at the cost of misery and unhappiness to millions. Why do they do so? Because they have failed to grow beyond their physical, biological selves. They have sharpened their intelligence and will by education, but failed to give a moral orientation to them. Putting these great powers in the service of their lower selves, they have become efficient instruments of social evil and suffering; and this is what *mānava-rākṣasa* means. At this end, one of these people adulterates drugs to gain extra profit to himself; at the other end, the drug

is administered to hundreds of children with no effect; the children suffer and die. But what does he care about the social consequences of his action! He cares only for the profit from his business, and is callous about its consequences to his fellow-men.

This is the *rākṣasa* type, a low type of humanity; but many of them are capable of being corrected by social and state action, and transformed into the second type, the enlightened self-interest category.

The poet can understand the ways and motivations of these three types of people; but he is at a loss to deal with the next, or the fourth category, and exclaims: *te ke na jānīmahe*—'I am not able to understand them!' Why? Because they believe in wanton destruction; they destroy other people's welfare even though they do not gain any benefit to themselves thereby. Every society contains a few such morally demented people. Our nation has a more than healthy share of this type also today.

Conclusion

This is the picture of human society everywhere. These four types are there in Russia, America, Japan, China and in all the countries of the world, as we have them here in India. The only difference is in the ratio of the four types. And this difference in ratio makes the difference between society and society.

As for the first type, the *satpuruṣa*, every society does have a small minority of this group, unselfish, compassionate, morally alert, and spiritually sensitive. Every society must zealously create and nourish this small minority. Every society will have a majority of its population belonging to the second type—the *sāmānyās*, motivated by self-interest, but of the enlightened variety. But every society should take steps—educational and preventive—to see that the ranks of the third category are thinned, if not entirely eliminated. And the fourth should be completely eliminated, it should never be allowed to rise again. As to the second category, there is great need for vigilance that it does not slide down to swell the rank of the third category by too much preoccupation with self-interest and too little with enlightenment. This group has to be specially alert to see that its self-interest is illumined by its being subjected to the larger interest of society. The moral health of the nation entirely depends upon this immense group steadying itself by drawing inspiration from the small minority of the *satpuruṣa* group above it.

I do hope that, as remarked by me earlier, the self-criticism which is evident in our nation today, and which is a sure sign of the basic health of our society will slowly generate the necessary moral forces to cure the nation of its present ailments. *The ailment is a moral ailment and the remedy has to be a moral remedy.* We all desire that our nation should be healthy, physically as well as mentally. We have achieved some notable successes in tackling our physical diseases. We have practically conquered malaria which was such a scourge even two decades ago. We are on the way to conquer the scourge of tuberculosis, with leprosy next on the list. As a result of these measures we have considerably raised the nation's life expectancy from about 29 to about 50 since our independence, besides improving the general health of the nation. *But the greatest challenge to the nation today is the malady that afflicts its mind and heart.* Cynicism, self-centredness, and utter unconcern for others are more deadly than the most deadly physical diseases and the viruses that cause them; for they corrode the nation's resolve to be free, to be united, and to march onward to progress. We cannot be blind to the fact that this disease has already invaded our body-politic, including our youths. We have to take energetic measures to arrest the further progress of this disease and to eliminate it from the body-politic. And the nation has to be alert thereafter to see that these deadly mental viruses do not invade our society again. This is the responsibility of every patriotic citizen. We have no king or emperor ruling over us today as in the medieval and other periods. We live under a democratic set-up which derives its strength from its free, disciplined, responsible, and responsive citizens to whom service of the nation is politics and religion in one, and in whom the nation has its guarantee of unity, strength, and continued progress.

The subject of the philosophy of service, therefore, is not meant for academic discussion in the dull philosophy courses of our universities; it should stir the minds and hearts of every section of the population. It is thus that the nation will get the necessary strength to meet the recurring challenges that this age of revolutionary transition will throw at it. *If India succeeds in responding to these challenges adequately, she will become a beacon of hope not only to herself but also to the whole of humanity.* We have responded successfully to many a challenge to our national existence and integrity in our long history. And we shall face and overcome this challenge as well. With this faith in ourselves and in our national destiny, let us, from this day onwards, enter our respective fields of life and activity with hope and courage.

HUMAN EXCELLENCE

I AM glad to find in Bombay a group trying to encourage excellence in all spheres of life. When I was asked to come and speak here, I immediately wrote back from Calcutta saying that I loved this particular programme and I would be very glad to come and meet the members of this Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence and speak under its auspices. The subject suggested was the pursuit of excellence. For all these years I have been pondering over and talking on this subject in the context of our society and the transformation that is going on around us at an increasing pace ever since we attained our independence. But the trends visible on our national horizon today are such as to make us despair of the type of man or woman that is coming upon the Indian scene. And it is here that every lover of India must pause and consider where we are going.

Need for Positive Thinking

All over India we spend hours and hours together to discuss the foibles of our society; but side by side it is good to engage in some positive thinking also and ask ourselves how we can correct these foibles, how we can reverse this trend towards disintegration, and create a better type of man and woman in India. Any activity with this objective in view is highly desirable and urgent at this time. Every father and mother must be deeply concerned with the type of society in which his or her children will have to grow and develop. Unless we provide the necessary stimulus we shall find our younger generation developing twisted personalities. This is already taking place in a big way here as well as elsewhere and if we have no better ideas in India to offer we shall have to throw our hands up in despair. But don't we have

them? *The fact is we do have profound ideas to offer from our own heritage, as also from the heritage of the West.* If these ideas are presented to our people, a new pursuit will appear on our social horizon.

The Pursuit of Human Excellence

We indulge in so many kinds of pursuits in India to-day, of which the most important, and, to many people, the only one, is the pursuit of wealth. The pursuit of wealth, the pursuit of pleasure, and the pursuit of power, these three pursuits have frozen our hearts all these twenty years of our post-independence existence, and have almost destroyed the creative spirit of the people and taken the nation to the brink of disintegration. This evil tendency can be reversed only by a new pursuit which will help to purify all other pursuits and destroy whatever is evil in them; *and that new pursuit is the pursuit of excellence.*

It is because I found in you a group that is interested in this new pursuit that I immediately agreed to participate in your work and to think together with you on this important theme; for it is only in these small groups that we can do effective thinking and speaking. In fact, human society has been described by biologists as an 'inter-thinking' species, the only such species in nature. So when men meet together, when men think together, and think with a creative purpose and direction, they generate a certain type of energy which has wholesome impact on society. Our greatest misfortune has been that there has been of late so little of thinking. There have been passion, frenzy, and frenzied utterance and frenzied action. Calm, silent thinking has all but disappeared even from the highest quarters, including, alas!, from our centres of higher learning, namely, the universities, and that is the sure way to national degradation. No nation achieved greatness without a capacity to think calmly and to think far ahead as to the type of men and women its society would like to have. This degeneration arising from our refusal to think calmly has cost us dear, and several sensitive people in various parts of India have become conscious of the resulting dangers ahead. They have started to think individually and collectively and to ask the question: Where are we going? What is the corrective to the present-day negative trends? And it is in these small inter-thinking groups that we can profitably discuss social problems calmly and profitably and thus help to reverse this downward trend.

The first important consideration before us is the problem of man in Indian Society. What is the type of human excellence that we want to see in India? It is very necessary to ask these questions and find the answers. Thus only can social energies be helped to develop a

purpose and a direction, without which these energies function in self-cancelling ways. Much action, much movement, but with little progress, will be the result of not giving direction to social energies. At present most people live what we may call *ad hoc* lives, day to day, hour to hour, without any distant horizon appearing before them, without the lever of a great ideal or purpose; and that is dangerous to any civilization. Whenever a civilization has developed this *ad hoc,* day-to-day mentality, it has destroyed itself. The powerful Roman civilization got destroyed when the people of Rome started living day-to-day, hour-to-hour lives, without any distant horizon coming into view, without far-sight and fore-sight, though in earlier centuries, the Roman society and state had a tremendous sense of purpose and direction.

This lack of direction is affecting several nations today such as Britain, Germany, Japan etc. In Britain, for example, there is this want of purpose and direction after the Second World War. The tremendous purpose that the British boy or girl had 200 or 300 years ago has exhausted itself and no new one has replaced it. 'How can Britain find a new place for itself in this altered post-war world?', was the general theme of a recent series of talks over the B.B.C. under the title 'Britain Today'. Until Britain finds it, the British child will be living an *ad hoc* life and the British people will be plagued with problems which are inherent in this *ad hoc* life.

Human Excellence in Vivekananda

In our case, the situation is somewhat different. We have a long and impressive history, a very rich cultural tradition; and our great thinkers have plunged into life and into the heart of experience and given us visions of human excellence which can inspire any culture or civilization. But for centuries together we failed to live up to these visions and we became stagnant; and from that stagnation we were rescued by our contact with the modern Western culture. As a result, for over a hundred years now, our society has been passing through the tremendous experience of a renaissance, a real renaissance, in the course of which we have been reassessing our own inherited values and comparing them with the values which we have received from the West. A few great minds in India have been able to get a grip on our great national tradition and assimilate into it the tested elements of the Western tradition; and they stand as the great path-finders for the rest of the Indian society; for they synthesized in themselves the finest excellences of character of both the East and the West and demonstrated to the nation that this modern transition in India can be made purposive and fruitful if the Indian child is given the guidance to under-

stand the dynamic nature of the modern transition in India and to assimilate the two elements in its character.

Among these thinkers, the first is Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who really pursued excellence all his life; he was the finest product of the early phase of the modern renaissance in India; his life touched our emerging national life at several angles and he brightened everything he touched. He can be said to be the morning star of this modern Indian renaissance. He came to us in the beginning of the last century; and towards its end came another remarkable figure, Swami Vivekananda, *in whom was seen the East and the West in such perfect blend that his excellence of character bore the mark of universality.* The West and the East could feel at home in his presence. That was a lofty achievement; though we all may not achieve that fullness, it is essential that every child in India is initiated into this new struggle to achieve a measure of that synthesis of excellence in his or her character.

Education for Human Excellence

That is, or ought to be, the purpose of our national education—to turn out citizens who are citizens of this age, not of a bygone age, who breathe the spirit of this age, an age which has so much to contribute to human fulfilment; we live in an age where no nation can live in isolation, no man can remain tribal and provincial. We need to open up our hearts and minds to the best that the world has to give us; and the world has much to give us. This age, therefore, is the age to achieve a new type of excellence, an excellence where men and women are developed and nourished with the best the world has to give. This is available to us in India today both in our ancient traditions and in their modern interpretations by outstanding personalities. No other nation has this great privilege today, the privilege to have had outstanding guides and teachers who stand forth as representatives not of this nation or that nation but of the entire mankind.

Human excellence is the constant theme of Swami Vivekananda. We may speak of Indian excellence, Western excellence, or any other excellence. It had a reference and relevance up to the last century. Today we want to see *human excellence* in our children. *'Are you a man?'*, Vivekananda asked again and again. 'I do not care to know to what religion you belong, I do not care to know to what race or to what community or what nation you belong. But are you a man?' That is a very basic question. What better inspiration can we give to our children than to initiate them, when they are in their formative years, into this great *mantra* of manhood and womanhood? Vivekananda

repeatedly said: 'We want a man-making education, we want a man-making religion.' These are his great words: *Man-making education, man-making religion.* What did he mean thereby? 'Stand on your feet and be men and extend the hand of help and strength to your fellow-men', said he. These great ideas have come to us as a fresh breeze because, for centuries, we had lost this concept of excellence of character.

The Lure of the Three 'p's

And now you have newly started this movement for encouraging excellence. I said earlier that during the last twenty years we had said goodbye to all concepts of human excellence except the pursuit of three 'p's, namely, the pursuit of pleasure, of profit, and of power. Why is it that we are lacking in the heroic spirit of adventure to develop excellences of character, of efficiency, and of social concern? Why have we become like fresh blotting-papers trying to absorb as much of the ink of power, the ink of pleasure, and the ink of profit as possible, after independence? There is a social history behind it.

By and large, the object of human life presented to the Indian people during the last few centuries was so high, so transcendental, that it left millions of our people, all except a small minority, ill-nourished, and often wrongly nourished, because it had no message for them and was indigestible to them. Religion, understood as a means to *mukti or mokṣha,* spiritual liberation, is a subject that concerns only a small minority of the human population; but there is another concept of religion understood as character-efficiency, of social concern and social service, all that we call *ethical* excellence; this was not stressed. We stressed the other-worldly excellence, but not those positive virtues and graces that constitute an activist ethics and that make for a fuller realization of human possibilities, individual and collective, and a decent life for all. The result was that we failed to achieve not only that high ideal of *mukti* or spiritual liberation, but failed also to strive for the more attainable ideals of character, efficiency, and general well-being. To climb the Mount Everest of *Mukti,* one must first conquer the several foot-hills of lesser and more easily attainable ideals. Those who fail to do so, fail in their worldly as well as spiritual lives. The *Gītā* had warned us:

Na karmaṇām anāraṁbhāt naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣośnute—
'Without the prior discipline of work, man cannot profit from the discipline of meditation.'

Our education did not aim to produce in us the virtues and graces of a citizen. That is a new concept of human excellence to us, or a

new understanding of an ancient concept of human excellence as expounded in the *Gītā*. The citizen is a person, and not a mere individual. A person, as defined by biologist Sir Julian Huxley, is an individual who transcends his mere organic individuality in conscious social participation. He lives in a society of other human beings; he responds to them and seeks responses from them; and in this process he develops a type of character and excellence which has a tremendous spiritual appeal in it.

The Gṛhastha Growing into the Citizen

That was something worth aspiring for. But we failed in raising this kind of citizen because, as I said, the inability to grasp the high spirituality of the *mukti* ideal bent men's energies towards the pursuit of an other-worldly salvation in the shape of a *post-mortem* excellence; whatever we shall gain we shall gain after death; this world we let go. That became our generally-practised philosophy. But by letting the world go, it does not go; it is there and I am also there. Man and his fortunes here below were forgotten and neglected and the challenge of the excellence that would initiate the process of man-making to result in nation-building, by the *gṛhastha* or householder spiritually growing into the citizen, was largely ignored.

What must be realised is that the techniques that are relevant in the direct pursuit of *mokṣha,* in the pursuit of what we may call higher spirituality, cannot help us in the particular field of inter-human relations which is the field of ethics and the first stages of spirituality. The technique of the former is the way of meditation and inwardness. The technique of the latter is the training of the body, the senses, and the mind in the context of our natural and social environments through the technique of work, the technique of social action. By pursuing the first, exclusively, for centuries together we did produce a few great saints and a certain measure of inwardnesss in our people; but by neglecting the second, we destroyed the real basis of human character, of efficiency, of that pursuit of excellence in the social context, which treats society as an interacting body of men and women and the field for the training of a socially-oriented will and for the enjoyment of the delights of social existence.

We failed to develop social virtues and graces; we became highly individualistic and ultimately self-seeking, placing 'I and mine' in the forefront and letting the devil take the hindmost. That became the ruling motto of our day-to-day action. This is writ large in the character-deficiency of our people in all parts of India and in our political and

social history of the past few centuries. Our sad incapacity to concede to the other man is the outcome of this. 'My views must prevail', 'I have no need to respond to the other man'—these became the ruling sentiments. A second failure was the incapacity to respond to the other man in a mood of 'what can I do for you?' 'How can I serve you?' A society which turns out such people in abundance must also expect troubles in abundance, because when it is a question of each man unto himself and the devil take the hindmost, the devil does not need much temptation. He will readily come in. As a Turkish proverb says: 'The devil tempts the good man, but the bad man tempts the devil.' We tempted the devil to come and destroy us. And he all but destroyed us. Until we change this philosophy, this outlook, which holds 'What I say alone counts, I don't care for anybody', there is no hope for us at all. Merely asking people to do this and that or flinging a copy-book maxim at them, cannot save us today. It is the real understanding of human growth, a new understanding of basic human excellence, and the struggle to achieve it in the context of interhuman relationships—these alone can help us to change our evil tendencies into good ones. And here I want to lay the utmost emphasis on two things: One, the social context of human excellence; and two, the importance of work, of work done in a team spirit.

These are two important values which we need to stress if we desire to reverse the contemporary trends towards national weakness and disintegration, if we hope for the evolution of a better type of human being in our Indian society.

Meditation versus Social Action

As I said earlier, in higher spiritual life and in other-worldly religious pursuits, we follow the technique of social withdrawal and meditation. Meditation is a lofty spiritual experience, so lofty that anyone who pursues it will be able to show the finest excellence, provided he has the capacity to digest that technique. But most people have not got the capacity to digest the technique of social withdrawal and meditation and achieve spiritual excellence, without the aid of a prior social discipline. Failure to acknowledge this was a great fault of our society; and we have persisted in it.

A Buddha could sit in meditation and a few others like him could also do so and reap the highest fruit. But to millions of human beings, meditation became merely an excuse either for laziness or for sleep or for both, and much of the religion as practised in India is laziness and sleepiness. The average man or worker in India does not exhibit a

sense of energy and alertness; not that he has not got the intelligence, but his psychic energy is immobilised by a wrong understanding of religion. He asks himself, 'why enter into this mess, why not stay out and save oneself from it all?' So there is that constant pull-back as it were. When one sees some of our people working in our offices and farms and factories, one gets the impression that most of them are half asleep all the time. One does not notice a sense of energy, a sense of direction, of self-confidence, because all this has been blighted by the continuous impact of a philosophy which is instilled into them that all activity, even physical life itself, is meaningless. The popular belief that tasks can somehow be achieved by closing one's eyes, by looking inward and not outward, by even some magical intervention, militates against the development of character-excellence. When you close your eyes, you close your eyes to the world around you—to wife, husband, father, mother, and neighbour—they all cease to exist then, you are alone to yourself. It is a lofty idea and experience if one can digest true inwardness; but millions could not digest it; it became toxic to them; and it debilitated society and also debased a great ideal and technique, a true religious impulse has been brought to the low level of self-centredness, pettiness, meanness, and also selfishness and laziness. Much harm has been done to our understanding of the true scope and meaning of religion. A German poet has a verse which best expresses the resulting weakness which has afflicted the Indian mind during the last few centuries. It says: 'Sweet is sleep, death is better, but it is best never to have been born.'

'Face the Brute'

An Indian would rather avoid a problem than confront it boldly. His weakness lies in his refusal and incapacity to face it, though his philosophy as taught in the *Gītā* tells him that that is wrong (II. 3):

Klaibyaṁ māsma gamaḥ pārtha naitattvayyupapadyate;
Kṣudraṁ hṛdaya daurbalyaṁ tyaktvā uttiṣṭha parantapa—

'Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha; it does not befit you; forsaking this mean faintheartedness, stand up, O hero!'

'Face the brute' is the message of Vivekananda, exhorting man to manfully face his problems and overcome them instead of running away from them. By running away from them, they do not cease to exist nor do we become freed from their pressure and challenges.

But that is a new philosophy of human excellence; but not new in the sense that it was not there. It is there fully in our literature,

especially in the *Gītā*, and today, in the literature of Vivekananda. It is reinforced by a powerful philosophy that has come to us in modern times, namely, the Western philosophy of human excellence, where any problem is a challenge to human intelligence and to the human spirit. It does not make man run away; it makes man face life's challenges. If there is an unclimbed peak, it challenges man to climb it. If there is an ocean depth untouched, he must go and touch it. This is the spirit of man, ever striving, ever struggling, overcoming obstacles, establishing the domain of man over everything else.

This is the new type of human excellence, new for us at least since a few hundred years. We had it earlier. The greatest message of that heroic human excellence, of manliness, of strength, was given to this nation nearly 4000 years ago and it has never been bettered since then even by Western ideas. That is the message of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. If there is one literature that speaks of man as the conqueror of obstacles, of the human spirit that can overcome every difficulty, it is the *Gītā*, where manliness and strength are the two cardinal values which are integrated with the other value of meditation and transcendental experience. But the *Gītā* remained for us merely a book of piety, though an inspired one, and we did not tap it to develop human excellence in society. But that is precisely what we in India should have been engaged in in a big way, at least ever since we entered the modern age and saw this spirit of man struggling and overcoming obstacles in Western culture. It is this philosophy of manliness, of strength, not exclusively of closing the eyes, but of opening them, of recognizing the other human beings, of developing social virtues and civic graces, and working in a team spirit, that we should have assimilated so as to create cultural and social excellence in our nation.

The Spark of Prometheus and Bhagīratha

This is the philosophy and message of modern Western thought; that message is as ancient as Greco-Roman thought. There is one symbol of that excellence in Western culture, namely, the spirit of Prometheus of ancient Greek culture. If every child is helped to ignite its *promethean* spark, you will see a new India rising again. Prometheus is a remarkable symbol of manliness becoming the sheet-anchor of human thought and action. We have a *promethean* symbol in India, namely, Bhagīratha, to whom every obstacle was a challenge. He had to overcome a series of obstacles for the good he wanted to do—to bring Gaṅga water to nourish the people of his country, to bring Gaṅga from heaven to earth so that our nation could flourish. It was only after heroic struggles lasting years and years that he had the satisfaction of seeing

the Gaṅga flowing down from the Himalayas through the plains of Hindustan. Since then that river has been the river of plenty and prosperity to the people of India, the river of holiness and the river of dedication; and the man who brought her to earth has become the symbol of all that is manly and noble, in our cultural history.

When will our children catch in themselves that *bhagīratha* spark, that *promethean* spark, by which alone we can put them on the new road of human excellence where a deep human concern forms the motivation? Life's primary motivation cannot be selfishness, be it worldly, be it other-worldly. Even salvation is a selfish pursuit. When millions are in distress, how can I enjoy a pleasure, even of salvation, for myself? That is the new ideal which we have to capture in our outlook and work-a-day philosophy. When Buddha saw a monk in meditation, oblivious of the suffering of another monk in the next room, a brother monk suffering from dysentery, he went and served that monk, and when the first monk came up after his meditation, Buddha said to him: 'Go away; you have not understood my teaching. You should have given up your meditation when you knew that another man was in distress.' Here is a new concern. If even a man like Buddha, whose central message was an exclusive concern with a life of meditation, could express such a profound human concern, how much more should we, social individuals?

If the vast majority of us take it as our philosophy of life and action, this genuine concern for the other individual, then out of that will come true meditation, true transcendental experience also. This is what the *Gītā* taught. The *Gītā* did not make any distinction between the path of work and the path of meditation; says the *Gītā*:

Ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyag ubhayorvindate phalam—

'If you are well established in one (action or meditation), you reap the fruit of both.'

That is the teaching of the *Gītā*, so that here is a path which, if only our people can understand both in its theory and in its technique, can immediately set the nation on the road of adventure in man-making and nation-building, out of which will come every other type of human excellence. There is the root and there are the fruits. Let us not vainly search for the fruits; let us primarily search out the root itself; for out of the root will come all the fruits that there are. That root of all human greatness, as Vivekananda said, is a tremendous confidence in oneself. Infinite powers are lying within us; for we are the Ātman, the pure and divine Self. Faith in this Self is known as

śraddhā, ātma-śraddhā, without which, Vedānta holds, no man, no nation, can scale the heights of greatness. Education and religion help man to manifest the powers sleeping within him. What is the field of this manifestation? Life itself. It is the *Kurukṣhetra,* the great battlefield, in which we are to manifest these great virtues and graces. Accept life as a challenge and convert it into a battlefield where these great virtues and graces—character, efficiency, compassion, and the spirit of dedication flourish, all these that go to make a citizen into a noble individual in society.

Freedom and Responsibility

Today the citizenship concept has to be instilled into our youth in all its wide bearings, and not only in its political bearing, which is what we generally understand by it in India. Boys and girls stand in a queue and they grow up year by year; and when they come to be 21, they become citizens automatically. It may even be 18 soon. That is all we know about citizenship in India. But there are educational principles, practices, and techniques, by which a child is made fit for the citizenship ideal, by which he or she becomes a mature person with large hearts and broad shoulders capable of bearing responsibly the burdens of society whether at 21 or at 18. That concept of human excellence as a citizen who is *a responsible* and *a free* member of *a free community* is not emphasized in our education. The sense of responsibility immediately increases the spiritual stature of man and makes him or her mature in a socio-political sense; and if there is one thing which we have lost in India ever since we attained independence it is this maturity and its fruit, the sense of responsibility.

Social responsibility has largely been banished from, or rather has not arisen yet, in large segments of our society, among whom are teachers, students, industrialists, administrators, ministers, MLAs, and MPs. Whatever contacts, whatever behaviour man engages himself in, bear a new look as soon as he endows them with this sense of responsibility. Take away that sense of responsibility and I become, what one may call, a man 'running amuck'; and most people today are 'running amuck' in society, individually or in groups, with plenty of energy to spare but not knowing what to do with it creatively.

Human Vitality and Its Man-ward Direction

Fortunately, for the last few years, we have gained one thing which we have not had for centuries together; and this is a sense of tremendous vitality. Our young people today are full of vitality; this was not so even fifty years ago. They were all jaded, timid, with no confidence;

we were under the spell of *tamas*. Today there is confidence, there is energy, there is vitality. We have risen to *rajas*. But there is no creative purpose and direction; because that *rajas* is still under the control of *tamas*. Energy without direction is self-cancelling energy. The only direction that human energy should take today is the man-ward direction; this is when *rajas* comes under the control of *sattwa*. The good of man lies in a recognition of man as the main focus of values and of society as the field for the culture of these values. This is the beginning of man's spiritual growth and the steady emergence of the elements of the spectrum of character-excellence. From now on life comes under the guidance of a lofty philosophy. A shoemaker ceases to be a mere shoe-maker, a mere bread-winner, a mere social functionary, but manifests a new personality-excellence when his life is lit up by this new philosophy. He is touched with the blessing of a new social outlook arising out of a new sense of *personal worth* and *social responsibility*. He is using his energies for the good of society and the manifestation of his own spiritual dimension of personality. He does not any more consider himself a mean individual nor his job a mean job. A sense of personal dignity immediately transforms the whole work-situation. Similarly, a teacher or an administrator, an industrialist or a legislator, all find new meaning and significance in what they are called upon to do; and when this happens, what a change sets in in the whole aspect of man and his life and his work! It is this philosophy, this vision of human possibilities, that should inspire us today; out of it will come all the shining spectra of human excellence.

The Tyranny of Excess Politics

India produces one type of people today, included in the type pursuing the three 'p's already mentioned, namely, the politician. Millions of them are coming from every nook and corner. But if history teaches us any lesson, it is that if a nation has too much politics it is bound to wither and die. To modify Oliver Goldsmith a little: ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey, where politicians abound but *men* become few. That is what India is getting to be every day. Even little children want to play politics all the time. What a ruinous state! When there is a glut of one commodity in the market, it becomes cheap, too cheap. Too much of politics destroys the quality of politics as much as the moral tone of man; shatters the fabric of human society and tends to kill the patriotic impulse. The development of political consciousness in the people is healthy and necessary. But the sheer pursuit of power and nothing but power and the gains from that power by a section of the people from whom much is expected, is a tragedy. When we speak of defection, of floor-crossing, and all that, they are nothing but the symptoms

of a serious disease that is eating into the body-politic, the disease of cynicism which is more harmful than plague or leprosy, the disease of misdirected political energies, the disease of unconcern for the nation. Therein one finds the lowest ebb of social life where human nature expresses only 'I and mine'; no touch of any excellence here at all!

The scope of Sri Ramakrishna's famous dictum: 'Religion is not for empty bellies', needs to be expanded to cover also: 'Politics is not for empty bellies, for under-developed societies'. For them the health-giving motto is: Silent acquisition of knowledge and intelligent, hard, cooperative application of the same in productive work.

When I was in Karachi before partition, politicians in Karachi were often criticized by the local newspapers for a certain unique trait in them, not much evident elsewhere in India then, namely, a capacity for ever-shifting loyalties. The papers used to compare them to the Indus river which is full of vagaries; it changes its course during every flooding season. Politics in Sind was like the Indus, unpredictable. No ministry outlived more than three or four months. I remember reading a Karachi editor summing up the Sind political situation in two lines of English verse:

A merciful Providence made us all hollow,
that we our principles might swallow!

How true it is with respect to man today in our own post-independence society! After independence, a merciful providence made many of us hollow, so that we our principles might swallow. If we have principles we can swallow them; suppose there are none? For even the supply of that commodity is becoming scarce. What then will be our fate?

Wanted a New National Urge

So I say, a new concept of human excellence must inspire our youths so that, on entering a college or a university, they will learn the need and the technique of seeking excellence in different fields according to their capacity. And how many are the varieties of excellence—intellectual, social, political, artistic and religious—which wait to be developed in India! It is these multi-faced excellences indeed that go to make a nation great.

Excellence is the correct prescription for India today. Develop character-excellence; then your behaviour and work will express that excellence that is within you. Hitch your wagon to some high star; let mothers and fathers inspire their children to do so. But I am sorry

to say that most educated mothers and fathers in India, specially among the middle class and the upper middle class, play up only one pursuit before their children: passing examinations, getting degrees, and securing a lucrative job; absolutely nothing else. They seem to forget that there is such a thing as human excellence, that there is something like being intrinsically great as a man. Whether one is getting Rs. 12,000 or Rs. 10,000 or only Rs. 3,000 a year, there is such a thing as an intrinsic excellence in man which is of primary significance; and that excellence cannot be sold or purchased with money. Other things are secondary to this human excellence. If this idea is not inculcated in our youth early, we shall only deepen the tragedy through which we are passing today. A man holds a job, a position; his only value is his position. Take it away from him and he is a zero. Naturally he will struggle hard to stick to that position. He will never allow himself to get out of it, because outside of it he is nothing. Whereas if, in our national education, we help a child to build an intrinsic greatness into himself, when later he occupies a job or a position, *it will be he who will adorn it* and not *vice versa.*

Intrinsic Excellence versus 'Cālāki'

What a beautiful concept of human excellence that is! This is a new lesson to us in India. I say it is a new lesson, because during the last few centuries, we had taught our children not to strive for greatness in themselves but to shine in the borrowed greatness of a father or a grandfather, of the status of a caste or a social hierarchy. Human excellence as such we failed to stress in our society nor did we prepare our children to admire and seek this value-sense. The zero has no value by itself; but place it after a digit and it is endowed with value. Similarly, we are zeroes trying to be on the right side of some one or something to assume value. This must change. Every child must be told that he should seek to achieve for himself or herself an integral value and not a mere positional value. He must be taught to develop an intrinsic human excellence. In this way, from childhood onwards a new philosophy, a new vision of human greatness, must be instilled in our children, a new concept of confidence in oneself, a capacity to face and overcome any obstacle on the way to this intrinsic greatness; this again, children must be told, comes only by hard work. If there is one single lesson that our Indian children must be taught again and again, it is this great lesson which Swami Vivekananda expressed in one of his poems in Bengali that no great work can be done, no greatness can be achieved, through *cālāki* or *cleverness* but only through hard work:

Cālāki dwāra koṇo mahat kārya hoy na—
'Through *cālāki* no great work, no true greatness, can be accomplished.'

One has to pay the price for it. Students want to pass examinations by *cālāki,* by any *cālāki* possible; people want to make money by *cālāki,* to get jobs or arrange jobs and promotions by *cālāki.* Here is a tendency which, if not reversed, can destroy the whole fabric of society. It takes alertness to protect the health and strength of a nation and preserve its freedom and liberty; and therefore, those who are sensitive, those who can catch the finer vibrations, those who feel responsive to the great aspirations of the Indian heart today, must be awake and alert and constantly struggle against this tendency to seek quick results by subterfuge and *cālāki.* Even God today is made to come to us through *cālāki.* There is all the desire in many of us and all the effort by many of us to make religion cheap. God is so great a value that, unless one pays the price, one cannot attain Him; but because one is unwilling to pay the price, one brings God down to one's own level. What we have done to religion therefore is to bring it down to our level, by cheapening it as much as possible. People, more so our educated section, seek cheap religion. This cheapening of religion and the cheapening of every other kind of human excellence is writ large in the last two centuries of our history; and recently there has been much more of it. In three months one can realize God, says a pedlar of religion; and thousands of the educated run after him. All this cheap stuff comes to us, or we go to it, in thousands. We do not know what religion is. We think it is something we can purchase in the market. We forget what the great Upaniṣads tell us that it is like 'walking on the edge of a razor'. How hard is the road to spiritual greatness, nay, to any greatness! None but a heroic soul can ever succeed here.

True 'cleverness', *cāturi* or *cālāki,* is to realize God present in the heart of all, says God to man in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI. XXIX. 22):

Eṣā buddhimatāṁ buddhiḥ manīṣā ca manīṣiṇām;
Yat satyam anṛteneha martyenāpnoti mā amṛtam—

'This is the intelligence of the intelligent and the wisdom of the wise, namely, to realize, in this very life, Me, the true and the immortal, with the help of the ephemeral and the mortal (*i.e.* the body).'

Now this concept of the heroic mould, of heroic struggle and endeavour and achievement, must be instilled in our children. To children we have to say: Whatever be your field of life, at whatever level of life you live, be *a man* by striving to bring out the infinite possibilities lying within you, and we wish you godspeed. A short line in the *Mahābhārata,* conveying the exhortation of a mother to her son about a high concept of human excellence, comes to my mind. It is

thrilling to realise that so much philosophy and inspiration can be compressed in so few words, as in that line:

Muhūrtaṁ jvalitaṁ śreyo na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—

'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for ages.'

Man versus Money

Let our children today get this inspiration from their parents that was given by one of our mothers to her son over four thousand years ago. For instance, Śaṅkarācārya lived only 32 years, but what excellent years! He lived for a purpose and left the stamp of his personality on the mind and face of India. Vivekananda lived only for 39 years and what an intense life it was! Some of the greatest men were they who lived short but intense lives. Let children get these great examples before them when they are young. There is a beautiful episode about Vivekananda when he was the little boy Naren, which I wish to mention in this connection, because it is central to the subject of pursuit of excellence and this great theme: encouraging human excellence. His father was an attorney in the Calcutta High Court earning plenty of money which he used to spend freely. He spent more than he earned; he was so very generous. Naren's mother was anxious; father was saving nothing for their children who were growing up; what security did they have for their future? So one day she called young Naren and told him: Go to your father and ask him what he is going to leave behind for you. The boy was bold and he straightaway went up to his father and asked: Father, what are you going to leave for me? Forthwith the father answered, and I wish every father answers like this to the queries of his children today: Go and look into the mirror and then you will know what I am leaving for you. The boy looked into the mirror and immediately understood what his father meant. A bright face, shining eyes, full of self-confidence, a picture of manliness and strength, that was the boy. What more does one want? With these, you can achieve anything in this world. Without these, but with only a fat bank account left by the parents, you can achieve nothing. That is basic human excellence.

We give money to our children; we set up bank accounts for them; we often indulge in all sorts of malpractices so that we may leave something to our children; but by these measures we only ruin our children and sap the manhood and womanhood of our nation. Money is meant to be spent; it is good as a servant but bad as a master; let it circulate; let it bring happiness everywhere, of which only one part is our children. But to the children we should say: we will give you education;

we will give you manliness; we will give you strength and courage; we will give you training in swimming, then we shall leave you on the sea of life. Sink or swim, it depends on you.

Need to Overcome the Drag of Our Feudal Legacy

This kind of training will bring the best out of our children; it will help to manifest in them real human excellence. The pampering of children by the Indian parents, and their blind attachment to them to the exclusion of other children, has been long with us as a feudal trait and legacy, and many of the character-deficiencies of our people have been the products of this pampering, this blind biological attachment, which cannot bring out the heroic fibre out of them. Love can do it; but attachment cannot. But love cannot end up with one's own biological offspring. There are some who try to secure more marks for their children in examinations, for which they bribe the teacher; some bribe the educational authority to get a promotion for their children; their children thus get things done for them at the cost of others, and by hook or crook. Why don't they ask their children to stand on their own feet? Why cannot parents say to them in the words of Swami Vivekananda: Stand on your own feet and be man. But no, many of our parents cannot say that; their feudal upbringing and outlook make them want their children to depend upon them all the time; they feel a *māyā* about it. Sri Ramakrishna says that *māyā* is bondage and *dayā* is liberation. *Māyā* is I and mine and *dayā* means you *and* I. Until we are able to get beyond this *māyā* and get into this *dayā* mood, until we get freed from the thraldom to the organic and the biological and rise to the level of the spiritual, we cannot rise to the level of citizenship of a free nation. This *māyā*, this worldliness, has been too much with us and we have long consoled ourselves by saying that we are, after all, worldly people, not saints.

We clean forgot that 'living in the world' is not, need not be, the same as 'being worldly'. As Sri Ramakrishna says: Live in the world; but allow not worldliness to get into you. That makes for stagnation. He adds: a boat will be *on* the water; that is the proper place for the boat. But water should not be *in* the boat; that will make the boat unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.

The Anatomy of Nepotism

Our administration in every department and at every level is ridden with what they call nepotism. Many of us cannot be objective in judging between two candidates, one of whom is more talented than the other; for if the other is slightly related to the person concerned, his

judgement is automatically swayed in his favour; and the more talented goes to the wall. This is obviously wrong, for it is the negation of justice and fair play; and an accumulation of such negations destroys the fabric of society. This type of bias is the product of blind attachments arising from one's biological limitations which confines one's outlook and sympathies to one's biological kinships, caste kinships, etc. All these limitations of outlook and sympathy have militated against our nation building stable political structures and progressive social institutions for centuries. Today we need citizens who can look at national problems from broad perspectives; a citizen is not the mere father or mother of a small household; his sympathies and interests are nationwide. Historically we have been good as *gṛhasthas*, householders. Within the limited family circle, we have a fine record of mutual love and service. But that is not enough today. *The gṛhastha must grow into the citizen.* And that is essentially a *spiritual growth.* This will result in the blossoming of a new type of dynamic human excellence in our country, making for all-round progress.

Need for Spiritual Growth

This is necessarily a slow process; for it means unlearning many old ways and habits and learning many new ones. It is a very difficult process, especially for an old society such as ours. But let us not become entirely averse to start to learn some new things and forget some old things. If a society does not learn new values in response to new situations, it writes its own epitaph. The French Bourmons, as historians tell us, 'never learnt anything new and never forgot anything old'; that was how the French Revolution of 1789 came about. Let it not be said of our people also later that we learnt nothing new and forgot nothing old. There are many things to forget, many things to completely forsake, and there are wonderful things to learn, of which the central core is a social concern, a response to the other individual, a real concern for the other man, which is the essence of ethics and the spring of character and all other excellences. *That is the basic nourishment the Indian soul needs today.* The higher reaches of religion like *samādhi* etc. will remain far far away until we lay this foundation, until we ascend these first stages of spiritual growth, character-efficiency, and ethical awareness. Saintliness is very difficult to attain. But we strove for that. So fake saints we have plenty in India; real saints are always few. But it would have been wiser for us if we had first laid the foundation of saintliness in manliness. *Saintliness is to be built on manliness.* Be men first; then try to be saints, was the constant exhortation of Vivekananda to us. Be citizens first; then try to develop into saints. Have concern for the other person; this is where a new character-

excellence will come to all of us; and we need it very badly. If the problems are there, the remedies are there too; put the chemicals together; crystallization will take place according to God's laws, says Swami Vivekananda.

Opinions versus Convictions

We are not in search of any new ideology or ideas; they are all there at hand, close at hand; but clear thinking and a measure of willpower to express ideas in life and action—this is all what we need. A measure of courage of conviction must come to our people. We have bundles of *opinions,* we have very few *convictions;* it is convictions in the heart, not opinions in the head, that make for character, that make for real human excellence, that make for the impact of man on his environment.

These transformations must come over India; and they must begin to come over this generation so that it can pass them on to the emerging younger generation. An increasing number of our people must become aware of our national background, social and historical, of the great opportunities available today to wipe out the centuries-old stains on our society and create a new society, humane and progressive. What immense human energy resources and what revolutionary social transformations can we not expect then in India, if only we become aware of this and start moving in that direction! Let it take time, *but we must make sure that the caravan has started moving in the right direction.* In every city, in every village, sensitive people who love the nation must get together and think together and project this concept of human excellence everywhere so that the nation can be put on the road to all-round growth. We need industrial growth, economic growth, and many other types of growth. But they are not the last word. *They are subordinate to one single growth, namely, the growth of the human spirit, the increase of quality in human life.* What is this quality in human life? We ask this question again and again. Quality is the criterion of evolution at the human stage, says Sir Julian Huxley, the great biologist. We shall today ask this question in India—are we evolving, are we progressing? If so, the quality of human life must get enriched; and that quality is the sign of an enhanced awareness, a developed human concern, and a capacity for dedication and service.

The Quest of Excellence : The Pole Star of One's Life

The highest concepts of religion will be fulfilled when we fulfil this primary demand. That is why, as I said in the beginning, this

pursuit of human excellence is the most pervasive education that the nation should get today. Instead of that, we have adopted the shallow policy of turning out every year so many engineers, so many doctors, so many lawyers, and so many such other *social functionaries* from the mill of our educational system, and that too, an inefficient system, since independence. A free nation that hopes to protect and enhance its freedom does not produce *mere social functionaries* but *citizens trained to perform diverse social functions.* The functions of such alone are creative. Wherever we be, in whatever nook and corner, one query must come from the very atmosphere of our nation to all our children, to all our men and women—are you a citizen performing creative social functions, a man pursuing excellence in your life and action? Is the work that you do, the thought that you think, your social relationships, the very life that you live—are they imbued with the touch of excellence? Are you striving for it? It is the thought of doing better and still better, and keeping in mind the welfare of society in the context of which one develops one's own life, that must always be one's Pole-star.

This interaction of man in society, this inter-nourishment, as the *Gītā* puts it in its third chapter: *parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha,* will alone help to raise the whole tone of the life of man in society. Let us just introduce this notion, this concept, this value into the heart of India today through all available media—through schools and colleges, through meetings and assemblies, through radio and television, through newspapers and journals—and we have done our work, because, as I quoted Vivekananda earlier, when we put the chemicals together, crystallization will take place according to nature's laws. Let healthy ideas and values be radiated all round; the rest can be left to the inherent goodness and educability of man, to the divinity ever present in the human heart.

Conclusion : Synthesis of Science and Spirituality

All over the world, there is a ferment and questioning today. Modern science and technology and their offshoot of industrial revolution have made nations in the West, as also Japan in the East, achieve a high measure of material advancement which other nations also are striving to achieve through similar means. Since the post-war years, the nations of the world have become divided accordingly into the two broad categories of the developed or the advanced and the underdeveloped or backward. And there is much healthy international cooperation in bringing up the standard of living of the under-developed nations. The standard to measure that development is entirely material and economic. The usual criterion of such development is *the per*

capita production and consumption of electricity. By this criterion, the United States of America is the most advanced, followed by USSR, West Germany, Japan and so on. India's place may be tenth or twelfth in the line.

But this criterion of development is being questioned today; and such questioning is most evident in the advanced nations themselves; it is the result of a dispassionate consideration by their thinkers of the realities of the total social situation in their countries. The contemporary tragedy of material affluence coexisting with general human unfulfilment, resulting in crime, sex, and drug explosions and increase of suicide rates in these countries compel a reconsideration, in the light of a more comprehensive understanding of human nature and human fulfilment, of the very concept of 'national development' or 'national advancement' and its erstwhile economic criterion. That criterion is found to be *necessary* but *not sufficient.* It is increasingly being realized that the nations categorized as 'under-developed' by that criterion are 'developed' by some other criterion and that this other criterion is often more significant in assessing total human fulfilment.

This second criterion of 'national advancement' or 'development' is, as expressed by the philosophy of Vedānta, *the per capita production and consumption of spiritual energy.* This is an energy resource as palpable as electric or other forms of physical energy and its source is the divine depths of the human personality itself and not in external nature like other energy resources. The science and technique of the production and utilization of this unique energy is religion, as understood in Vedānta. This is the energy that can digest all other energy resources and their products and thus restore man to his dignity, health, and all-round well-being. India will do well to keep her historically acquired hold on the science and technical know-how of this spiritual energy resource while trying to catch up with that erstwhile material criterion of development. *This synthesis of physical science and the science of spirituality will alone ensure perfect all-round human excellence.*

THE VALUE OF SANSKRIT

ACCORDING to twentieth-century biology, culture is cumulative experience, experience stored and transmitted from generation to generation; and language is the instrument, the tool which a culture fashions for the communication of thought and experience. The deeper the range of thought and experience to be communicated, the richer becomes the tool of its communication.

As a tool of cultural communication, Sanskrit holds a unique place among the languages of the world. Firstly, it is the only language which has come down to us from pre-historic times with an uninterrupted history. Secondly, it is the only language which has mothered and nourished a large family of languages both national and international. Thirdly, it is the only language which developed a scientifically phonetic alphabet and initiated the science of philology very early in its career. And fourthly, *it specialized in being the nursery and communication medium of an immense field of experience and knowledge, namely, that of the inner world, the world of Reality that lies above the sensate level of experience,* giving birth to the science of *adhyātma-vidyā,* the science of man in depth, as developed by the Upaniṣads and re-verified by an unbroken tradition of experimenters down to our own time.

Sanskrit today is not a spoken language; it is not the language medium of the positive sciences, nor of politics and economics, war and statecraft. It has so little to do with the day-to-day life of man; it has little to contribute to him in his field of 'making a living'. This is the mission of English and other world languages so far, and for which, we are also progressively developing all our other national langu-

ages. But to consider Sanskrit irrelevant because of this factor will, however, be a great folly. Making a living, with respect to so high a being in the scale of evolution as man, is an aim necessary *but not sufficient.* It is essentially a *quantitative* concept. There is a vast field left over after he has made a living, the cultivation of which is essential to impart *qualitative* enrichment to his life. *In this vital field of the spiritual enrichment of human life and to the leading him on to a sense of true fulfilment, Sanskrit offers an educational opportunity to all modern humanity which few languages of the world are equipped or historically conditioned to contribute.* And this great world language has been developed and shaped as a tool for this very purpose by the Indian people *as a whole,* unlike our other national languages which have been developed and shaped by particular segments of our national populations and particular regions of our vast country.

Sanskrit is not a window to the world of matter; but it is, and will ever remain, a window to the soul of man and to the soul of nature. When the centuries-long economic pressures have been lifted from the life of our people by a few decades of scientific, industrial, and sociopolitical techniques of the modern age, man in the Indian context will begin to experience in a pervasive way the hunger and thirst of the spiritually-seeking heart, the craving of the mature mind and soul, and will then long for the spiritual food and drink to which he has been historically conditioned. *He will then rediscover the rich feast of spirituality which his culture has left for him and also rediscover, in the process, his great Sanskrit language as the unique doorway to that spiritual nourishment.*

Sanskrit will not die so long as man in India experiences the hunger of the spiritual heart. Sanskrit is the window to all that is fascinating, elevating, and enriching in human experience. It is the sacred body of *vāk-devī,* goddess of speech, which ever points out to man the Truth that lies above all speech and thought, above all space and time.

Part Five

RELIGION AND THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY

THE study of the impact of modern thought on religion forms a part of the wider study of the impact of that thought on life and mind in general. That impact has been pervasive in its significance and revolutionary in its effects. Originating in a few centres of western Europe, and gathering force and momentum in its onward march, its vibrations have reached the four corners of the civilized world in the short space of about three centuries, transforming profoundly man and his environment—the temper of his thought as much as the pattern of his living. The forging ahead of rational thought during these centuries has produced results liberative and illuminating, devastating and destructive, creative and constructive.

What is the nature of that movement of thought which has produced these remarkable results? What do we mean by the term modern as applied to thought and what is the special feature of modern thought which has rendered thought so explosive and revolutionary? An answer to these questions will help us to reassess the role of religion, politics, and education in the service of man in the modern world.

The architect of the modern world is science, and by modern thought is meant scientific thought. The aim of science is to study nature and experience objectively. To quote Karl Pearson (*Grammar of Science*, 1900, p. 6):

> 'The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance, is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgement upon these facts unbiased by personal feeling is characteristic of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind.'

This quality of the scientific mind and the mood and temper of its approach have enabled it to wrest from nature its secrets, first from one field, then from another, and transform nature's forces into agencies for the service of man. The sum total of achievements in the theoretical and practical fields in the various departments of scientific study in physics and chemistry, mathematics and astronomy, biology and psychology, as also in their various subsidiary branches, constitutes an impressive record of human development, by the side of which long ages of past achievements pale into insignificance. That is modern thought in its methods and results.

The driving force behind this unique achievement is the spirit of free inquiry characteristic of science. The mind that questions, and questions with a serious intent and purpose, and tests and verifies the answers it gets, has a dynamic quality about it which enables it to forge ahead in the world of thought and things. In so forging ahead, it disturbs the wayside calm of untested dogmas and comfortable beliefs. Science is verified knowledge. The explosive character of modern scientific thought is the product of the impact of a rapid succession of verified knowledge against an intractable fund of dogmas, assumptions, and untested beliefs. The organized opposition of the latter sought to stifle scientific inquiry, first, at its birth and, later, at every stage of its progress; but the walls of the bastille of ignorance and prejudice fell one by one before the onrushing waves of inquiry and illumination, illustrating the great saying of the Upaniṣads (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III. 1.6): *Satyameva jayate, nānṛtam*—'Truth alone triumphs, not untruth.'

The history of science in recent centuries is thus the history of the triumph of the spirit of free inquiry over mere opinion, prejudice, and dogma. It is a remarkable adventure of the human spirit which has borne abundant fruits, not only mental but also material. Science as *lucifera* has flown into science as *fructifera*, giving a bumper crop of discoveries and inventions which has transformed beyond recognition the world in which we live.

The success of science has meant the defeat of its opponent. It is one of the unfortunate episodes of history, especially of modern European history, that the organization of the forces of prejudice and blind acceptance against science and its spirit of inquiry came from the side of religion. By the end of the last century, science had acquired high prestige and authority, while religion had been discredited, first, as a dangerous error and, later, as a harmless illusion.

The nineteenth century thus saw the eclipse of religion in Europe. But there was an uneasy feeling in the hearts of many thinkers that something of deep value to man and his civilization had been overthrown; and they attempted a reassessment of the meaning and scope of religion with a view to making it accord with the spirit and temper of science. *To this great task of reconstructing the mental life of modern man by bridging the gulf between faith and reason on the basis of a unified view of man and a truer conception of the spiritual life, the contribution of Indian thought is unique and lasting.*

Ever since the time of the Upaniṣads, India has tenaciously held to a view of religion which makes it a high adventure of the spirit, a converging life-endeavour to realize and grasp the hidden meaning of existence. Faith, in India, did not mean a cosy belief to rest by, but a torch to set the soul on fire with a longing for spiritual realization. In the absence of this longing and struggle, the belief of the faithful does not differ from the unbelief of the faithless. Belief with most people, says Swami Vivekananda, is simply another name for 'not-thinking-carelessness'. Religious earnestness with people of this class means, especially when organized under a church or a theocratic state, either the pursuit of aggressive religious proselytism or of jehads and crusades. They cannot understand the meaning of that earnestness which proceeds from an inner spiritual hunger. No dogma or creed or frenzied acts can satisfy this hunger of a religious heart; its bread is spiritual realization. Religion is a matter of inner experience, a coming in touch with spiritual facts, and not a matter of belief or dogma or conformity. No all-powerful church therefore rose in India to organize the faithful on the basis of dogma and creed, and claiming divine authority for its opinions and judgements. No such authority can thrive where religion means a quest and not a conformity. A spiritual view of religion, as different from a credal or dogmatic view, makes religion not only cultivate a spirit of toleration, questioning, and inquiry in its own sphere, but also foster it in every other department of life. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (VI. 44) declares that a spirit of inquiry into the *meaning* of religion takes an aspirant beyond the authority of the words of scripture and mandate of tradition. He becomes an experimenter himself, instead of remaining a mere believer. Indian religious thought has recourse to *jijñāsā* or inquiry for the formulation of its views, be it *brahma-jijñāsā* or *dharma-jijñāsā*.

This sublime attitude to religion and thought is the fruit of the unified view of the mental life of man which India learned from her Upaniṣads and which she assimilated into her mind and mood by a universal acceptance of all forms of faith and by showing due regard to all know-

ledge, whether sacred or secular. 'There are two types of knowledge to be cultivated,' declares the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. 1.4), 'the *parā* or the supreme and the *aparā* or the ordinary'. To the category of the *aparā* or the ordinary belong the Vedas, the sciences, and the arts which deal with the perishable and the changing. But that is supreme knowledge by which the Imperishable is known. And the latter, the Upaniṣad (ibid., I. 1.1) significantly adds, is the basis of the former—*brahma-vidyā* is *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhā*.

Modern science has lengthened man's intellectual tether, but this has only helped to bring into sharper focus the mystery of the unknown and the significance of the *parā vidyā* (supreme knowledge) of which the Upaniṣads speak. In the words of J. Arthur Thomson (*Introduction to Science*, Home University Library Edition, 1934, p. 206):

'At the end of his intellectual tether, man has never ceased to become religious.'

It is no wonder, therefore, that several scientists, during the last few decades, have been forced to overstep the limits of their sciences and tackle the problem of the unknown at closer quarters in a mood of humility and reverence, illustrating the saying of Coleridge quoted by J. A. Thomson (*ibid.*, p. 208):

'All knowledge begins and ends with wonder; but the first wonder is the child of ignorance; the second wonder is the parent of adoration.'

Dogmatism and cocksureness which stifle the spirit of free inquiry are as much enemies of true science as of true religion. There are not wanting scientists today who would, taking a narrow view of the scope and function of science, prefer to go the dogmatic way and cry halt to advancing knowledge and unified experience. That way spells danger to science now, as it has spelt danger to religion before. A greater devotion to the spirit of free inquiry and a broader conception of the aim and temper of science is our only safeguard against such a pitfall.

If the nineteenth century was the century of conflict and division, the twentieth century bids fair to become the century of reconciliation and union as a result of a sincere effort on the part of both science and religion to reassess itself and to understand the other. The humility of twentieth-century science presents a sharp and welcome contrast to the cocksureness of its nineteenth-century counterpart. It has realized that the spirit of inquiry on which it has thrived may find expression in fields beyond its own narrow departments and that it is this spirit, unbiased by personal feeling, that makes a study scientific and not the mere subject-matter of that study. To quote J. A. Thomson again (*ibid.*, p. 58):

'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterised as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. We may get a good lesson in scientific method from a business man meeting some new practical problem, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.'

This wider view of science as a discipline and a temper enables us to class as scientific the study of the facts of the inner world which religion has set to itself.

And this has been the Indian approach to religion. It was the absence of this approach that made religion in Europe less and less equipped to meet the challenge of advancing knowledge. In a lecture on 'Reason and Religion', delivered in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda sums up the results of this neglect on modern man in the following words (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 367):

'The foundations have all been undermined; and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him.'

And pleading for a rational approach to religion, with a view to easing the prevailing conflict between science and religion, he continues (*ibid.*):

'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to science and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better.... All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation.'

The spirit of inquiry finds expression in any department of scientific study in the gathering of relevant facts and their rational interpretation. The practice of religion is nothing but a ceaseless quest after the facts of the inner life; a dispassionate study of these facts constitutes the science of religion which seeks to unravel the mystery of our inner being—the lights that guide us and the laws that mould us. If 'man the known', constituted of his body and its environing world, is the subject of study of the natural sciences, 'man the unknown' is the subject of the science of religion. *The synthesis of both these sciences is the high function of philosophy as understood in India.* It is this function which Vedānta has performed in this country, ever since the

time of Upaniṣads. Exercising a pervasive and effective influence on *our national thought* and culture, Vedānta has spared us not only the fruitless opposition of reason to faith and *vice versa,* but also the more dangerous manifestation of this opposition in the form of intolerance, persecution, and suppression of opinion. The need for a Vedāntic approach to science and religion is insistent today when both have shed their respective prejudices and come closer to each other, imbued with the passion to serve man and save his civilization. It is only such a synthetic philosophy which blends in itself the flavour of the faith of religion and the reason of science that can reconstruct modern man, by restoring to him the integrity of his being and the unity of that being with its environing world.

VEDĀNTA AND SCIENCE

SCIENCE is a vast subject. Vedānta also is a vast subject. The close relationship between the two was expounded by Swami Vivekananda more than seventy years ago. This idea that there is a kinship between science and Vedānta requires to be propagated throughout the world, and particularly in India. Vivekananda said that education in this country should be based on the close relationship between science and Vedānta. And with the passage of time, day by day, India's leaders —political and administrative—are finding it more and more necessary to introduce the Vedāntic content into education. Very recently, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made the remark that what this country needed was science and spirituality. This he made with reference to a remark by Acharya Vinoba Bhave who said that politics and religion had done much harm to the world, and that what was needed was science and spirituality.

This is exactly another way of saying that what we need is science and Vedānta. The Prime Minister has recently been emphasizing this point quite often. In all educational training, we need to grasp the fundamentals of science and Vedānta. This will make the student modern and progressive in the true sense of the term, and through it he will enter a stream of thought which is destined to fertilize every section of Indian life in the course of time. The people in the Indian villages, whom educated youths will be called upon to serve in some field or other, need to be taught the essentials and the utility of both science and Vedānta. If, in the course of their education, these youths are able to get a clear understanding of this vital subject, it will make them more efficient in life and work, and will also enrich their per-

sonalities. Thus they will be a source of strength to all with whom they may come into contact in the course of their life and career.

At the very foundation of our national culture, we have the eternal insights of Vedānta, which the sages of the Upaniṣads achieved and left as a legacy for humanity. The voice that gives expression to this insight has a rare fascination and power. That Vedānta has stood the test of time and is quite fresh and strong even today, in this most enlightened age of human history, shows that it has captured the music of truth.

Satyameva jayate—'Truth alone triumphs.' This is the motto of the Indian Republic; it is taken from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. Untruth comes and goes, but truth remains. That Vedānta has captured the highest truth within its insights is evidenced by its permanence, its perenniality.

The 'Within' and the 'Without' of Things

Truth is the aim of Vedānta; truth is the aim of science. The great scientists define science as a sincere pursuit of truth—a pursuit free from the attachments and aversions of personality. Sincere, critical pursuit of truth is what is known as science. Scientists tell us that science means clear thinking. When we discipline the mind in concentration, objectivity, detachment, and penetration, we are able to get at the truth of nature. Vedānta also discusses its own method of arriving at the truth hidden in experience; and there we find the same characteristics coming up: clarity, objectivity, penetration. The subject of study either in science or in Vedānta is experience—whatever is experienced by man—the universe of man's experience. As both science and Vedānta have successfully studied the universe of experience calmly, objectively, dispassionately, they have given us a body of insights which are akin to each other.

Therefore a relevant question arises: Why should there be two different studies, *two* approaches, *two* disciplines? Why not have *only* science? Why bring in Vedānta at all?

Yes, there is need for *both*. Experience, that is the subject of study, is so varied that one discipline cannot exhaust the whole of it. Even in one and the same discipline of positive science, there are different fields of investigation: physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, astronomy, and so on. Each department takes a certain segment of experience and studies it. Behind all these studies there is a common

understanding that the world that is studied is one. So far as the world of space and time is concerned, so far as the world revealed by the senses is concerned, we have the various departments of modern science giving us a body of insights after a penetrating study—insights which give us knowledge of and control over external nature. This is the achievement of science ever since man appeared on the scene, and more especially during the last few centuries. Its theoretical and practical achievements are evident everywhere today.

What more is there to know? Vedānta also asked this question long ago. It is the eternal glory of Vedānta that the great thinkers of the Upaniṣads grappled with these questions: What is this universe? What is man? What is his destiny? Long ago they discovered that the universe of experience consists of two broad categories, the subjective and the objective. *It is important to remember that this idea is basic to an understanding of Vedānta and to an understanding of whither science is going today.* Now, when we apply this classification to the whole universe, we get the corollary that modern science is the study of only one of the two categories, namely, the objective field. But modern science is also trying to understand the subjective field. Psychology is one such science. But Western psychology has suffered from too great dominance by physiology. By resorting to time and space methodology, we get a knowledge of the 'without' of things, but not of their 'within'. Much of psychology in the West is behaviouristic psychology; it is a study of the human mind through the study of human behaviour. But Western psychologists have also tried to break from this kind of limitation and have developed, through psycho-analysis, the beginning of what is called depth psychology. Why not carry our study of the mind deeper than its surface waves of behaviour? Let us see by introspection into its depths. Here we have the beginnings of depth psychology. *This is just the beginning of a great movement in modern psychology which, if continued steadily and penetratingly, will bring it to the truth of the real nature of man which Vedānta reached ages ago in India—the eternal, undying Self of man, the Ātman.*

The Study of Experience as a Whole

So far as the Upaniṣads are concerned, as far as Vedānta is concerned, they directly entered into this study of the 'within' of things. Very early they discovered that the world revealed to us by the study of the data brought by the five senses is only a small fraction of total existence. It gives us knowledge only of the 'without' of things, which is but a thin layer of total reality. This conclusion is justified and validated by modern scientific investigation as well. Thus the entire

scope of science becomes limited, according to the conclusion of modern science itself. And yet science itself cannot be limited. The *departments* of science such as physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy can be limited, but not science itself. For, a sincere critical study of experience as a whole is the function of science, and we have already seen that the universe of experience is one whether studied by the sciences or by any other discipline; Reality is one whether approached from without or within. This was exactly the objective that was kept before human knowledge by the thinkers of the ancient Upaniṣads, the knowledge of the totality of Reality, the unification of the knowledge of the not-Self, which is science, with that of the Self, which is religion. *Kṣetrakṣetrajñayor jñānaṁ yat tat jñānaṁ mataṁ mama*— 'the knowledge of the *kṣetra* (not-Self) and *kṣetrajña* (Self) is true knowledge in my opinion', says Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII. 2).

We find this spirit of universality coming out of the very word 'Vedānta'. Veda means 'knowledge', sincere critical knowledge, relating to truth, and not any man's opinion. Vedānta means the entire process of knowledge carried to its ultimate conclusion, the *anta,* the 'end', of knowledge, the consummation of knowledge. And the Upaniṣads discovered the truth that knowledge belonged to two categories, *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā.* Knowledge of the world of experience that is revealed through the senses is called *aparā vidyā*—ordinary knowledge. This is science, which 'gives us only knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content', in the language of Eddington. Great thinkers of science tell us today that what science gives us is only a conceptual, shorthand report of what is in the universe; but we are still far away from reality, from the stuff of the universe, they say. The world revealed by twentieth-century science, says Sir James Jean, is an abstract world far far removed from the world of familiar experience. In Einstein's theory of relativity, we combine space and time which gives us the space-time continuum, of which all the events and entities of the world are only various configurations. In this way, the world revealed by twentieth-century science is a strange unfamiliar world which lies below the surface of the familiar world of sense experience. The physical sciences may not be able to penetrate to the depth; but science as knowledge can go deeper and deeper until it reaches the very depth of Being.

For the word 'science', too, means knowledge, verified knowledge, derived from a sincere, critical study of experience, experience at all levels. The word 'Veda', however, carries deeper significance. It also means verified knowledge derived from a sincere, critical study of ex-

perience, but in the Veda concept such study has continued beyond the universe of space and time into the field of the *within* of things. This knowledge of the *within* of things is what makes this study the 'Veda-*anta*', the *anta* or end of Veda or knowledge; it thus rises to the level of *parā vidyā*, supreme knowledge or most excellent knowledge, wisdom. All the sciences and arts, including sacred books like the Vedas, belong to *aparā vidyā*, says the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.15), because they give us only knowledge of structural form, knowledge of words, and not knowledge of the content and meaning of things. *Parā vidyā*, on the other hand, is that knowledge by which we understand that imperishable reality behind this world of change, the imperishable content of this perishable structural form that we see as the universe. *Atha parā yayā tat akṣaram adhigamyate*, as the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I.15) has put it. This is what enabled Vedānta to have a grip on the totality of experience; it is strong and firm because it is deep and comprehensive. *Vedānta accepts science but goes beyond it as well.* It challenges science today to be more scientific, to penetrate deeper and deeper into experience and reach out to the Truth that lies hidden in the depth. This is what Vedānta did through Swami Vivekananda in the modern age. Very often, some modern scientists just brush aside inconvenient facts revealed from man's inner life. But bolder scientists have arisen in this twentieth century who are prepared to face these facts and endeavour to understand their meaning. And their conclusions find a strong effect of endorsement in the insights of ancient Vedānta.

A Self-Evolving Cause

Vedānta and modern science are thus close to each other in spirit and temper; both are spiritual disciplines; they are also close to each other in their objectives and in very many of their conclusions as well. Even in the cosmology of the physical universe, we find so many points of contact. The fundamental position in the cosmology of both science and Vedānta is what Swami Vivekananda calls the postulate of a self-evolving cause. Vedānta says that there is one self-evolving cause, Brahman, behind the universe. Science says that behind this universe there is one self-evolving cause, the background material, in the words of Fred Hoyle. Both believe in the theory of a cosmic evolution. There are a number of such similarities. The truths expounded in the Upaniṣads are impersonal, *apauruṣeya*, not deriving sanction from any person. Scientific truths are similarly impersonal, objective, not deriving sanction from any person. Because they are impersonal, they are universal, and provide a clear insight into the nature of the world. That is science.

The Indian sages also studied experience. In the beginning they studied the world of outer experience, the world of the *without* of things. And they found that that world—the earth and the celestial bodies, and everything on earth, including the human body and mind —is a world of change, a world in constant flux. They asked one fundamental question: What is it that is changeless in this world of change? Where shall we seek for the eternal, changeless Reality which seems to be hidden somewhere in experience? Not outside certainly, they concluded. Let us search inside, let us study the wonderful thing called 'man', and that wonderful part of him known as awareness, consciousness. In the Upaniṣads we trace this study as it advances step by step, in the most dispassionate and objective spirit. It did not stop till it wrested the answer from nature and arrived at the tremendous conclusion as to what exactly is the nature of man, the finest product of nature's evolution. Man in his true nature is the Ātman, the Self, birthless and deathless, pure and perfect. The universe also is this Ātman. It is spiritual through and through. This insight and the method behind it is Vedānta.

The great teachers did not, however, say: Simply depend upon us; believe what we say. That would have made them dogmatic and their approach unscientific, like the teachers of dogmatic religions. On the contrary, they constantly exhorted: Try to experiment, try to realize and validate for yourself what we have seen as to the infinite dimension of the human personality. The profound vision of the glory of human nature is open to realization by everyone; for it is the birthright of one and all.

'Hear ye, children of immortal bliss; even ye that dwell in the celestial regions! ....I have *realized* this Infinite dimension of the human personality, of the brilliance of the sun and beyond all darkness. Realizing Him alone you shall be saved from death again and again. There is no other way to emancipation', thus sang the sage of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (II. 5, III. 8).

The language, therefore, of Vedānta is the language of verification, experiment, and realization. This is, of course, the true language of science. Come and see, is what the Buddha said. What did Sri Ramakrishna say to Swami Vivekananda? 'I have seen God and you can also see Him. Experiment for yourself.' The language of religion, therefore, is the very language which is so familiar to us in modern science, the language of verification. And Vedānta tells us that if we realize the truth of the Ātman, our inner Self, our whole life will be changed. We shall realize our infinite nature; we shall be filled with

bliss. Vedānta throws this challenge before man—the challenge to realize the truth for himself. The Upaniṣads were fired with the passion to discover truth and to show the truth in life. Truth and more truth, that is the way to happiness and welfare. The advancement of the knowledge of truth and the alleviation of human suffering—these are the two objectives of both modern science and Vedānta. Says Eddington (*Science and the Unseen World*, p. 54):

'You can understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront.'

The Evolutionary Vision

When we study the development of science during the last hundred years, we can trace the higher reaches of science slowly appearing on the horizon, and trace also the slow emergence of a non-materialistic outlook in science. In concluding this talk, I would like to refer to this and its implications.

Nature, which is the subject-matter of scientific investigation, is mortal. But, within nature, science is already sensing something immortal, and some scientists are trying to discover what that immortal content is. In 1959 was held the celebration of the centenary of Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species*. Under the auspices of the Chicago University, eminent scientists held a symposium on 'Evolution after Darwin.' The address given by Sir Julian Huxley as the General President of the symposium is very remarkable in that it shows that in the picture of the physical universe which science upheld till now, and even in the picture of the inner universe which we experience within each one of us, and which was studied by nineteenth-century science entirely from the viewpoint of that physical universe—in that picture is appearing a rent, a crack, through which we are able to see, as a result of the last hundred years' developments in the evolutionary theory, the glimmering of the mystery that lies in the depth of the universe. The special address given by Huxley bears a very picturesque and meaningful title, 'The Evolutionary Vision'. He said that nature, blind and wasteful in her long evolutionary experience, had become self-aware in her latest product, man. This nature, starting as mere cosmic dust, and passing through various stages of cosmic evolution, entered the biological stage by becoming a living cell, and continued to evolve and develop, first a nerve fibre, then the nervous system, and lastly the cerebral system which, at the stage of man, had assumed a new dimension through the development of a new field of awareness, namely self-awareness.

All animals have awareness of the outer world, but only man has awareness of the inner world. This has exposed a wonderful dimension in the heart of nature which it is the duty of science to explore. The scientific need for this exploration is backed by the entire development of biology during the last hundred years. In the language of the late paleontologist, Teilhard de Chardin, we do realize today that 'the universe has not merely a *without* but also a *within*'. In man, nature has disclosed a 'within' view of itself by itself. This recognition was lacking in science till now; and its recognition now is bound to put modern science on the track of that deepest mystery of all existence—the true Self of man. Man appears as a miniature edition of nature; and in man, with his mysterious properties of thought, ego, self-awareness, and moral awareness, the scientific mind has got scent of the deep mystery of nature thus revealed.

And this was what Vedānta succeeded in discovering ages ago in India—the 'within' of the universe, the *pratyak rūpa* or inner form of the universe, through the *pratyak rūpa* of man. The other *rūpas* we all know, our senses reveal them to us. But true knowledge of the *pratyak rūpa* comes to us only when we undertake the necessary intellectual training and undergo the requisite moral disciplines, such as controlling the senses and the mind, and concentration on that inner *sva-rūpa*. This is what the great sages of ancient India did, and a few descriptions of their experiments, very simple condensed descriptions, occur in the Upaniṣads. There is one in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (IV.1): A certain bold spirit said to himself: 'Let me try to understand what is inside.' The mind and the senses have the natural tendency to turn outwards. It is a mighty task to turn them inwards. But this man was a *dhīra*—a hero, courageous and intelligent. And he did it. And when he did it, great was his joy and amazement; for he realized the infinite dimension of his personality, of all human personality, namely, the supremely divine, eternal, deathless, changless Reality as his own Self. He found the *pratyag-ātman*, the inner Self, which is also the Self of the universe, by the tremendous technology of turning the mind and senses within. By training the mind, and turning its energy inwards, step by step, in a scientific, detached manner—it is a stern discipline, like walking on the razor's edge (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, III. 14)—we find a new world opening up, a new dimension of the human personality, the birthless and deathless Ātman, the Self, of the nature of pure awareness. That was the work that the Upaniṣads did, that was the work that Vedānta did, and that is the work that India has continued to do even to our time; and the latest of such explorers of the inner world were Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

The Educational Goal and Method

Though common in objective, spirit, and temper, science and Vedānta have different fields. Vedānta does not interfere in the actual day to day life of the individual, what we are to do about our food, shelter, and clothing. There science is our best guide and mentor, because it is dedicated to the pursuit of truth in that field of human awareness—the not-Self, and dedicated also to creating, through its technology, conditions necessary for man's life fulfilment. But after building a house and doing everything to ensure our welfare, what shall we do next? These are certainly not ends in themselves. So Vedānta tells us that we should utilize these outer advantages to press forward and continue our search for eternal values, for the meaning and significance of existence, by striving to realize our true Self. This is the goal of evolution; and man can hasten it and need not depend on nature's slow and wasteful ways, say modern biology and ancient Vedānta. But this is the special contribution of Vedānta to man's happiness and welfare—his spiritual education. Hence *a combination of science and spirituality must be the basis of education.* As Swami Vivekananda defines the educational goal and method ('Conversations and Dialogues', *Complete Works,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 366):

'What we want are Western science coupled with Vedānta, *brahmacarya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's own self.'

The great sages who discovered the truths of the inner world were great scientists in their own way, and the result of their labours on behalf of truth and human welfare is the body of Vedāntic insights which are impersonal, objective, and universal. The modern thinkers of the West have similarly given us in modern science a body of truths, relating to the external world, which are also impersonal, objective, and universal; and these two have come close to each other today. In Vivekananda we have the blending of the spirit of science with the spirit of religion. With the assimilation of science and spirituality, millions and millions of young people will become richer personalities; they will experience in themselves, as Swami Vivekananda did, the harmony of all human energy, where no two energies conflict with each other, but blend with the rest to create a pattern of all-round perfection.

About the perfection of character in Vivekananda, Romain Rolland writes (*Life of Vivekananda,* Third Impression, p. 310):

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four *Yogas* in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and

action from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards Unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'

This is the objective of true education and of true religion, according to Swami Vivekananda who sums up the scope of man's total education, secular and spiritual, in a brief testament of Vedāntic faith, in which secular science and spiritual science become absorbed in a comprehensive philosophy of life, understood in the light of the Indian idea of *Dharma* (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal.

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.

'This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO RELIGION

THE study of the scientific approach to religion forms an integral part of the wider study of the scientific approach to all human knowledge and experience. This is a modern phenomenon arising from what has come to be known as modern science. The impact of this modern scientific approach has been revolutionary in its scope and pervasive in its results. Originating as a passion for truth and a spirit of free inquiry and critical investigation in a few centres of Western Europe just over four centuries ago, and gathering force and momentum in its onward march, the modern scientific spirit and approach has, within the brief span of four centuries, not only advanced human knowledge and enlightenment enormously but has also transformed profoundly man and his environment, the temper of his thought and outlook as much as the pattern of his life and action.

Modern Science and the Spirit of Free Inquiry

What is that in this scientific spirit and approach which has produced such revolutionary results? I have said earlier that at the root of these revolutionary achievements lie two values, namely, a passion for truth and a spirit of free inquiry and critical investigation. Today we take these things for granted. But the situation was completely different four centuries ago. The ancient Greeks had cultivated this passion and this spirit assiduously and had advanced contemporary human knowledge, particularly in the field of the social sciences. After the eclipse of the short-lived but glorious Greek culture and civilization, Rome carried on the tradition in the same field in a small way in thought and in a big way in practice. But with the destruction of the Roman civilization at the hands of barbarian invaders at the beginning of the fifth

century A.D., the light of scientific quest and knowledge went out in the Western world; darkness set in and continued for over eight hundred years.

But one light flickered during this dreary period, namely, the light of religion, which was lit up and tended with rare devotion by a succession of great Christian mystics whose scientific approach to religion was, however, more often thwarted than aided by the prevailing church organization which became increasingly entangled, as centuries rolled on, in vested interests in the form of finished and final dogmas in the intellectual field and wealth and power in the physical field. To religious or political power so organized and entrenched, reason with its doubt and questioning cannot but be anathema, not only in the field of religion but also in the field of physical science and all positive knowledge. Love of truth and its search has its enemy in all forms of finished and final dogma. Man's love of truth and search for knowledge lay under a heavy weight of unquestioning acceptance of authority and tradition not only of the contemporary church and state but also of ancient writers and their books. Those bright spirits who dared to try to lift this weight paid the penalty in torture and death. From the point of veiw of human cultural history, nothing could be more dismal and dark.

The Dawn of Modern Science

But soon the signs of a new dawn appeared on the horizon; this proceeded from two sources: firstly, European students returning from the Moorish centres of higher learning in Spain fostered by that Arab culture and civilization which had assimilated ancient Greek and ancient Indian learning and held the torch of reason bright during the period covered by the dark ages in Europe; and secondly, Greek scholars coming to Western Europe with the treasures of their ancient learning in the wake of the capture of Constantinople by the advancing Turks, and helping Western Europe to effect a revival of Greek culture and knowledge.

By about the end of the fifteenth century, Western Europe had begun to experience, in a perceptible way, what in history is called a renaissance. A wind of change began to blow through the mental life of Western Europeans whose youthful vitality and bubbling energies soon converted the gentle initial upsurge into a powerful force of all-round human transformation everywhere through the slow and steady perfecting of the scientific spirit and method in its pure and applied forms.

The history of modern science records a typical episode which well illustrates the impact of this wind of change then blowing gently over Western Europe during the latter half of the fifteenth century. A group of scholars of the Oxford University was assembled in its library hall and engaged in solving what to the participants was a momentous problem in zoology, namely, how many teeth a horse has. They followed the method of the centuries-old tradition for solving such problems, namely, reference to ancient authorities. The scholars vied with each other in taking ancient books out of the library and consulting their authors. The author most consulted was Aristotle whose authority, already binding, but still more reinforced by the patronage of the Medieval Church, was unquestioned and supreme. When the scholars were warmly engaged in the debate, quoting authorities to uphold one's position or refute that of one's opponent, one young scholar quietly left the hall and, in a few minutes, came back, to the horror of all those present, leading a live horse; and stationing it in the centre of the hall, he calmly addressed his fellow-scholars: gentlemen, you want to know how many teeth a horse has. Here is a live horse; please open its mouth and count its teeth, and thus ascertain the truth for yourself. The rest of the scholars were thoroughly shocked by the foolhardy audacity of the young scholar and condemned him for believing, and asking them to believe, that a horse could have more or less teeth than what Aristotle and other authorities had provided for it in their books.

But that young scholar, who had been affected by the prevailing scientific wind, was like the stone, in the words of the Bible, that the builders rejected but became the coping stone of the new edifice.

The Scientific Method

This is the new magnificent edifice of modern science whose bricks are facts and not opinions and whose blueprint was provided in the newly defined inductive method, what Bacon termed the *novum organon*. It summoned man to study the book of nature ever held out before him and, to this end, to discipline his mind in attitudes and methods which will enable it to read that book effectively. This is the scientific spirit, method, and approach which has succeeded in wringing secrets after secrets from nature with amazing rapidity and profusion; it has converted his knowledge into power, creating in the process, an entirely new culture and civilization of world-wide dimensions.

It is necessary to understand the driving force behind these extraordinary achievements. That driving force is the human mind disciplined in the spirit and methods of science. What is the nature of this disci-

pline? To quote the scientist Karl Pearson (*Grammar of Science,* 1900 Edition, p. 6):

> 'The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgment upon these facts unbiased by personal feeling is characteristic of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind.'

The mind that seeks facts, that questions facts, and questions with a serious intent and purpose, that tests and verifies the answers it gets, has a dynamic quality about it which enables it to forge ahead in any field of inquiry or endeavour.

Science and Religion: The Western Approach

Modern Western history is fascinating precisely because it reveals the human mind forging ahead under this scientific discipline in the diverse fields of the physical sciences. It was assumed in the last century, in the wake of the revolutionary advances of the physical sciences, that any knowledge outside the fields of the physical sciences could not be called scientific. It might be termed private belief or faith but could not be given the status of verified truth which is science. The official approach of the West to religion was of the former type; religion was the product of a final revelation to be accepted in faith and not to be questioned by human reason; it dealt with the supernatural whereas science dealt with the natural, with reason as its instrument. The approach of the West to both science and religion gave rise to a whole host of dichotomies and irreconcilable contradictions such as natural versus supernatural, science versus religion, reason versus faith, and secular versus sacred. Western religion, on its part, carried these contradictions further into the field of inter-Christian and Christian-non-Christian relations as well.

This parallel running of religion and science can at best be a short-term tactical device based on social expediency. This was the position at the end of the nineteenth century which saw the failure of religion to suppress emerging science during the previous three centuries, the final triumph of modern science, and the relegation of religion itself to the position of being a dangerous error, to begin with, and a harmless illusion, in the end.

It was unfortunate that the organization of ignorance and prejudice against science came from the side of religion. But let it not be missed that this was only a Western experience; it was, as I said earlier, a product of the official Western approach to both science and religion. The

approach of the great mystics of the West to religion, however, as of all mystics anywhere, was scientific in being experimental and experiential. But their approach and their voice were stifled by that dogmatic spirit and approach upheld by the organized churches, with the result that the West could not and did not develop a scientific tradition in the field of religion. That explains its recurring experiences of intolerance, hostility, and conflict not only between religion and science but also between Christian and non-Christian faiths and between the various denominations of Christianity itself.

Western approach to science in the last century, on the other hand, tended to equate science with physical science and set up a permanent wall of separation between the world of facts and the world of values, denigrating the latter and impoverishing human life in a fundamental way in the process.

Even though twentieth-century science, in spite of its revolutionary advances, has found, officially speaking, no valid basis for religion, several individual scientists, some of them eminent, acknowledge the limitations of their science to comprehend Reality and accept as valid the approach of religion, as also of art, to Reality in their own special ways.

Science and Religion: The Indian Approach

It is in this context, against this background, that the Indian approach to religion becomes significant. From the time of the Upaniṣads to our own times, India has sought in religion, not a finished dogma to believe in, but a method and a means to pierce the veil that hides the ever-present meaning and mystery of existence. The Upaniṣads glowingly register this passion of the Indian mind to seek and find truth through a penetrating study of experience. In the appreciative words of Robert Ernest Hume (*The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, p. 30, footnote):

> 'The earnestness of the search for truth is one of the delightful and commendable features of the Upaniṣads.'

In the Upaniṣads we get an intelligible body of verified and verifiable spiritual insights which have stood the test of time. Subsequent advances in the field of the physical sciences, including the revolutionary advances of the modern age, have not only not affected their truth-value but have, on the contrary, only helped to reveal their rational basis and enhance their spiritual appeal. This is no wonder for those who know the Indian approach to religion, because these insights are the products

of an equally scientific investigation into a different field of experience, namely, the non-physical world, the world of man's inner life.

In the words of Eddington (*Science and the Unseen World,* p. 54):

'You will understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed in the front.'

Dogmatism and cocksureness which stifle the spirit of free inquiry are as much enemies of true science as of true religion. There are not wanting scientists even in this century who would, taking a narrow view of the scope and function of science, prefer to go the dogmatic way and cry halt to advancing knowledge and the unifying of experience. That way spells danger to science now as it has spelt danger to religion before. A greater devotion to the spirit of free inquiry and a broader conception of the aim and temper of science is our only safeguard against such a pitfall.

Pointing out the existence of a science of religion which is overlaid with the weight of dogmatic religion, Vivekananda says in his lecture on 'Religion and Science' (*Complete Works,* Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 81):

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law.'

Explaining the close inter-relation between physical sciences and the science of religion, Vivekananda says (*ibid.,* Vol. II, Ninth Edition, p. 432):

'There are two worlds: the microcosm and the macrocosm, the internal and the external. We get truth from both these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics, and religion; from external experience, the physical sciences. Now a perfect truth should be in harmony with experience in both these worlds. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm and the macrocosm to the microcosm; physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and internal world must have its verification outside.'

The 'Within' and the 'Without' of Nature

This inner aspect of man, and, through him, of the universe, is slowly dawning on the horizon of modern scientific thought. Highlighting

some of the revolutionary trends in twentieth-century biology, the eminent paleontologist, the late Pierre Teilhard de Chardin asks (*The Phenomenon of Man*, 1959, p. 52):

'Up to now has science ever troubled to look at the world other than from without?'

And he proceeds (*ibid.*, p. 55):

'In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least up to now, except the *without* of things. The same intellectual attitude is still permissible in the bacteriologist, whose cultures (apart from substantial difficulties) are treated as laboratory reagents. But it is still more difficult in the realm of plants. It tends to become a gamble in the case of a biologist studying the behaviour of insects or coelenterates. It seems merely futile with regard to the vertebrates. Finally, it breaks down completely with man, in whom the existence of a *within* can no longer be evaded, because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge.'

And Chardin concludes (*ibid.*, p. 56):

'It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an "interior" appears at the heart of beings, as it were seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this "interior" should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily a *double aspect to its structure*, that is to say, in every region of space and time—in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: *coextensive with their Without, there is a Within to things.*'

Vedānta : the Synthesis of the 'Within' and the 'Without'

The study of this 'within' of nature through an inquiry into the 'within' of man, who is the unique product of nature's evolution, is religion according to Indian thought. The synthesis of the knowledge of the 'without' which the physical sciences give and of the 'within' which religion gives, is what India achieved in her Vedānta. This she calls *brahmavidyā* or philosophy, Brahman standing for the totality of Reality, physical and non-physical. *Brahmavidyā* is *sarvavidyāpratiṣṭhā* —'philosophy is the basis and support of all knowledge', says the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.i.1). *Kṣetrakṣetrajñayor jñānaṁ yat tat jñānaṁ mataṁ mama*—'the knowledge of the *kṣetra*, the object (the 'known' or the 'without' of things), and of the *kṣetrajnā*, the subject (the 'knower' or the 'within' of things), is *jñāna*, wisdom (or philosophy), according to Me', says Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII. 2).

The Scientific Approach to Religion

What is the scientific validity of religion so defined? Nineteenth-century science, just emerged victorious from its conflict with dogmatic religion, and tying itself down to its own dogma of materialism, render-

ed itself incapable of assessing or appreciating scientifically the subject of religion. That century was the century of conflict and division, as the present century bids fair to become the century of reconciliation and union, as a result of the revolutionary advances in science and a sincere effort on the part of both science and religion to reassess itself and to understand the other. The humility of twentieth-century science presents a sharp and welcome contrast to the cocksureness of its nineteenth-century counterpart. It has realized that the spirit of rational inquiry, with its passion for facts and testing and verification of conclusions, on which it has thrived, may find expression in fields beyond its own narrow departments, and that it is this spirit, unbiased by personal likes and dislikes, that makes a study scientific and not the mere subject-matter of that study. To quote the great biologist, J.A. Thomson (*Introduction to Science*, Home University Library Edition, p. 58):

'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterized as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. We may get a good lesson in scientific method from a business man meeting some new practical problem, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.'

This has been the Indian approach to religion. It was the neglect of this approach that made religion in the West, down the centuries, less and less equipped to meet the challenge of advancing knowledge. Referring to this unique characteristic of the Indian approach as enshrined in its Vedānta, Romain Rolland says (*The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel,* Third Impression, 1947, p. 196):

'The true Vedāntic spirit does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It possesses absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their co-ordination. Never having been hampered by a priestly order, each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe."

Speaking on the subject of 'Reason and Religion' in a lecture in England in 1896, Swami Vivekananda sums up the results of this neglect of the scientific approach to religion on modern man (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 366):

'The foundations have all been undermined; and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows it to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their

idea of belief may be better translated as "not-thinking-carelesness". This fight cannot last much longer without breaking to pieces all the buildings of religion'.

And pleading for a rational approach to religion with a view to easing the contemporary conflict between the two great disciplines of science and religion which need each other to lead man to total fulfilment, he continues (*ibid.*):

'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigation, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has not internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has'.

The Fruit of the Scientific Approach to Religion

The scientific spirit and approach find expression in any department of scientific study in the gathering of relevant facts, their rational interpretation, and facing the final challenge of verification. And this has been the Indian approach to religion from the time of the Upaniṣads; according to this approach the *practice* of religion is a ceaseless quest after the facts of man's inner life, at the innermost depth of which it finds the truth of God, which it defines as infinite existence, infinite knowledge, and infinite bliss, the *sat-cit-ānanda* Brahman; it comes across, at the intermediate depths, all higher values which find expression in man's ethical, moral, and aesthetic experiences. A dispassionate study of these facts constitutes the science of religion, the science and art of the spiritual life.

Explaining this Indian approach to religion and the cause of the misunderstanding between science and religion, Swami Vivekananda says (*Complete Works*, Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 81):

'Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truth of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of (external) nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion because he, too, reads the wrong book—the book without.'

Modern Science and the Mystery of Man

In modern science external nature has yielded her jealously-kept secrets, one after another, to the disciplined mind of one of her own evo-

lutionary products, namely, man. But that disciplined mind today admits its utter incapacity to pierce the heart of nature's mystery. For, that mystery is overshadowed by a profounder mystery, namely, man himself. In the words of Lincoln Barnett (*The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Mentor Edition, pp. 126-27):

'In the evolution of scientific thought, one fact has become impressively clear; there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. All highroads of the intellect, all byways of theory and conjecture, lead ultimately to an abyss that human ingenuity can never span. For man is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature. The farther he extends his horizons, the more vividly he recognizes the fact that, as the physicist Niels Bohr puts it, "We are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence. *Man is thus his own greatest mystery.*" (italics not author's). He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. He comprehends but little of his organic processes and even less of his unique capacity to perceive the world around him, to reason and to dream. Least of all does he understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty: *the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception.*' (italics not author's).

Vedānta and the Mystery of Man

Here is the meeting-point of science and religion as revealed in Indian thought. For, religion, as expounded in Vedānta, takes up the investigation of the mystery of existence where the physical sciences, the study of the 'without' of things, leave off. And it is the object of the science of religion to unravel that mystery of man's 'noblest and most mysterious faculty' to which Lincoln Barnett refers, and to confer spiritual freedom on man who, in the words of Barnett, 'is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature', by discovering the infinite dimension of his finite personality. God *enchained* is man and man *unchained* is God, says Sri Ramakrishna. The technique of this inquiry into the 'within' and its unique fruits of freedom from finitude and fear are expounded in a brief but profound utterance of one of the Upaniṣads (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, IV. I.):

Parāñci khāni vyaṭṛṇat svayaṁbhūḥ
tasmāt parāṅpaśyati nāntarātman;
Kaścit dhīraḥ pratyagātmānam aikṣat
āvṛttacakṣuḥ amṛtatvamicchan—

'The self-existent One created the sense-organs (including the mind) with the defect of an outgoing disposition; therefore, beings perceive (perishable things) outside but not the (immortal) Ātman (Self) within. A certain wise and heroic seeker, desiring to achieve immortality, realized the inner Self by turning his senses (including the mind) inward.'

The fruit of this technique, followed with scientific thoroughness and detachment by the sages of the Upaniṣads, and revalidated by a succession of spiritual experimenters from Buddha to Sri Ramakrishna, is glowingly revealed in one of the immortal verses of all the Upaniṣads which Vivekananda quoted with telling effect in his address at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in September 1893 (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 11):

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ;
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam ādityavarṇam tamasaḥ parastāt;
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—

'Hear ye all, children of immortal bliss! aye, even those who reside in the celestial regions! I have *realized* the infinite dimension of the human personality, luminous as the sun, beyond all darkness.

'By knowing Him alone shall man transcend (finitude and) perpetual death; there is no other way to the goal (of fulfilment)'.

The Synthesis of Science and Religion

In ancient Vedānta, internal nature has yielded its secrets to the spiritually disciplined mind of man, enabling him to unravel the mystery of even that external nature which baffles all modern physical science, and to proclaim the unity of the external and the internal, of the 'without' and the 'within' of things, in the spiritual unity of Brahman or Ātman.

Vedānta has provided the science of religion with an international and intelligible framework of terms and concepts which help the various religions of the world to understand themselves, to understand each other, and to understand the physical sciences. This is precisely the service that modern science has rendered to all physical or positivistic knowledge.

The combination of these two—Vedānta or the scientific approach to the 'within' of nature, and modern Science, the scientific approach to the 'without' of nature—constitutes the complete education for fulfilment for all humanity today. Echoing this conviction in the concluding portion of his *Autobiography,* astro-physicist R. A. Millikan says:

'It seems to me that the two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest are first, the spirit of religion, and second, the spirit of science—or knowledge. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without support from the other. To promote the latter, we have universities and research institutions. *But the supreme opportunity for everyone with no exception lies in the first.*' (italics not Millikan's).

SCIENCE, DEMOCRACY, AND RELIGION

THE subject before me is a vast one, and each of the three components—science, democracy, and religion—is a vast topic in itself and can keep us absorbed for hours; but I have proposed to tie them together and treat them as a single theme, in order to focus your attention on these great forces that are working in our country today to reshape it in a fundamental way.

The Forces of Science and Democracy

In the modern world, the forces generated by science and democracy have been operating in a variety of ways to transform human life. Already a vast amount of transformation has taken place in some parts, and the impact is being felt in other parts as well. Our country has been feeling the effect of these forces in a general way for the past half a century; but since our attainment of independence, we are being thrown, with increasing momentum, year by year, into the very vortex of these forces. The country today has to reckon with them. The age demands of our citizens an understanding of these forces, an acceptance of them, and an intelligent assimilation of their values, so that India may forge a new character and a new destiny for herself. A discussion of a subject such as this cannot therefore be of mere academic interest to us, but is fruitful of lasting individual and collective welfare.

Compared to other countries, there is something special and, if I may say so, significant in the inter-action and outcome of these two forces in the Indian context. For that context is constituted by a deep and abiding religious consciousness which derives its strength from a

rational and comprehensive philosophy. Since historic times, religion has been the most vital force moulding our individual and collective life; it is so even today. It has given us strength and vitality to stand the vicissitudes of our long history, resilience and adaptability to adjust to changing times, and an assimilative power to synthesize the new with the old, making for continuity in the context of progress. The problem of India in the modern age is the *assimilation* of the forces of science and democracy which are being grafted on to her spiritual tree. The success of this experiment depends upon two factors: the vitality of the spiritual sap running in the tree and its hospitality to the new forces contained in the grafts.

These new forces took their birth in Europe and America. The development of science and technology revolutionized the lives of people of those countries, releasing powerful social forces of which the idea of democracy is the most outstanding and pervasive. The intellectual force of science and the social force of democracy have had devastating effects on the thought and life of the Western man. These new forces could not be assimilated to the Western religious consciousness and tradition which did not prove a hospitable soil to them. The result is a schism in the mind of the Western man, indicated by ever recurrent conflicts—faith in conflict with reason, the spirit at loggerheads with matter, and man in opposition to the universe.

India Faces A New Challenge

India's handling of these forces, the method and manner of her approach as much as the success of her endeavours, is therefore of more than national significance.

Whether we like it or not, science and its fruits are disturbing our slumber of ages; the 'good old days' are going out fast, never to return. The pattern of our economy, the web of our social and family relationships, the mood of our millions, and even the values of our lives are all being thrown into the melting pot of the modern transition. With the intensification of the pace of industrialization, the centuries-old staticity of our feudal society is being profoundly disturbed; social mobility is fast breaking down caste and other old forms of social relationships, and, faster still, the social sanctions behind them. Virtues that sustained a static age are found to be utterly inadequate to the demands of a dynamic society. Everywhere, we witness the crumbling down of old values, old edifices, and old social and economic groupings. And this is just the beginning of our industrialization; we can well envisage, from the example of the experience of Western countries in the last

century, what disturbing effects it is going to have on the mind and face of our old society. It is good for us to visualize the consequences of the root-and-branch revolution that is in prospect in all aspects of our national life, and mobilize our national wisdom to meet its challenge intelligently and effectively.

A period of profound transition is not the time for complacency. India has experienced stormy periods in her long history. She had responded successfully to all such challenges on the strength of her tenacious loyalty to fundamental spiritual values, which she consequently placed at the foundation of her national culture. *It is this faith in spiritual values, which has been tested in good and evil fortune, that is being challenged and menaced by the most powerful storm of the modern transition.* All the previous challenges were mild in comparison, being only fractional, whereas this one is total. Is there not something in our age-old heritage which has the vitality to welcome these new forces—the intellectual force of science and the social force of democracy—and assimilate their values into the national heritage, so that it may emerge stronger and richer than before?

Science as Knowledge and Power

Science is characterized by a keen spirit of inquiry and a deep passion for truth. Under this supreme stimulus, and disciplined in its rigorous method, science has enabled the human mind in recent centuries to unravel secret after secret from nature and increase enormously man's knowledge of the world in which he lives. In its onward march, science as knowledge has disturbed the wayside calm of untested beliefs and comfortable dogmas. Therein lies its primary explosive character for the mental life of mankind. A secondary explosive character appeared when science as knowledge flowed into science as power.

Two hundred years of technological advance has ushered in a new era and a new civilization in human history. Technology has placed a vast amount of power in the hands of man, power derived from the control of the forces of nature. Part of this power has found beneficial expression in effecting the material well-being of man and the external solidarity of the world. The rest of it has functioned without large aims and purposes to thwart human evolution and even imperil the human race. In the modern world, to quote Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 123): 'we are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends,' resulting in strife, insecurity, and sorrow. And to quote him again (*ibid.*): 'Unless

men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow'.

Science: Its Use And Abuse

Technological advance has also disturbed the comparative static human situation of centuries; and out of the intensified social mobility generated by it has evolved a new ratio of social forces, which has given birth to the theory and practice of democracy. Democracy is a powerful social force in the modern world. The common people, the world over, who were creatures of socio-political circumstances created by the will-to-power of a few, are becoming transformed, through democracy, into individuals and ends in themselves and into repositories of socio-political power. The co-ordination, adjustment, and chastening of this will-to-power, originating in millions of ego centres, is the problem posed by democracy today.

The world is being reshaped by science and democracy. This reshaping is throwing up a new serious problem before the world—the problem of man himself; he is unhappy, unstable, and insecure. Vast knowledge and power given by science and democracy have inflated his ego and increased his power for evil more than for good. Efficiency as to means and folly as to ends have made him the only possible destroyer of his new civilization. The two world wars have tended to substitute a large question mark in the path of his destiny, in place of the melioristic hopes raised by scientific humanism and naturalistic ethics of the earlier decades. The great fruits of science are being used for purposes constructive and destructive. They are running parallel to each other, and the fear that the destructive may overreach the constructive has become a constant spectre to the modern man. Two significant questions, therefore, remain to be adequately answered by every right-thinking person. They are: (1) Has science given anything of fundamental value to humanity? (2) So far as the individual is concerned, can it produce the right climate of peace and happiness for his total welfare? We say, 'adequately', because vague and incomplete answers to these questions are already in the field. The apparently unquestionable fact that science is never to blame—because it is neutral so far as its application or utilization is concerned—does not bring the problem nearer solution. There is seen to be more insecurity in a scientific world than in a pre-scientific one. Yet man needs the services of science very much, but not without safeguards against its possible abuses.

Democracy Enhances Human Dignity

Closely allied to, and dependent on, science and technology is that other great force of the modern world, democracy. Democracy—political, economic, and social—has been developing haltingly in the West since the nineteenth century; it has been developing and spreading all over the world since the twentieth century. The aspiration of every modern social or national unit is to evolve itself into a democracy of the most desirable excellence. It is a magic word in modern society. It expresses and includes in a special way the highest aspirations of freedom-loving citizens in the colonial and dependent territories of our plundered planet. True democracy consists in enhancing the dignity of the individual and ennobling the aspirations of the group. The persistent demand of the common man for being recognized and valued as a full and free citizen of his motherland finds its strongest endorsement in the ideal and practice of democracy. Political democracy, with universal adult franchise as its chief source of power, serves to give back in large measure to each of the toiling millions his or her share of individuality and dignity.

In India we have, in our own small but effective way, accepted and brought into practice this all-round value of democracy by declaring our state a sovereign democratic republic. The idea of the democratic citizen stirs in the hearts of our downtrodden millions much confidence and hope, and, putting faith in their sound political sense and social wisdom, we have extended franchise to millions on a scale unprecedented in world history. Yet, much remains to be done in order to rouse the millions to self-conscious activity. A vast and varied programme of national education is under way, endorsing Jefferson's dictum that education holds the key to the stability of a democratic order. The nation is getting galvanized through the community projects and national extension services, the Bhūdān and Śramadān, and diverse other movements.

Thus, in an initial and experimental manner, we have accepted and dealt with this great world-moving force of man-on-the-march, which is democracy. And democracy in India means vast millions on the move. We are fully aware that such experiment in democracy is sure to bring about revolutionary changes in our individual and social life. In fact, we know well that great changes are taking place even now. Yet, unafraid of the future, India nurses democracy as a thing of supreme value to man not only in the national, but also in the international context. Accordingly, her new constitution lays stress on the

individual's essential humanity, irrespective of racial, communal, or caste affiliations.

Democracy in India

Democracy has come to stay. How does India propose to assimilate this value to her hoary cultural heritage—a value which she has largely adopted following Western modes of experience? Will democracy get a new creative expression in the Indian context? Or, will she express only a pale imitation of its Western edition and eventually make a mess of it? These are questions of profound import.

What do people generally understand by the term 'democracy'? May be, the ballot box, adult franchise, government by an elected majority party, a cabinet responsible to an elected parliament, etc. Apart from these accepted implications of democratic theory and practice, it is necessary that democracy should have a content of universal value which is something more than the merely political, social, or national. *It is obvious that that value is the ethical and spiritual content.* Without that content, our democracy will be nothing more than a mere carbon copy of what obtains in the democratic countries of the West. In several of these countries, the pendulum of state set-up has oscillated between its two extremes of democracy and totalitarianism. And in all of them, it has oscillated between the tensions of peace and the tensions of war. Social forces, developed and released by technology and democracy, have got to be chastened and guided, if they are not to oscillate between cold war and hot war. How are we going to avoid such a situation in India? Can we in India tame these turbulent forces and use them for national and international human welfare?

Man starts rebuilding himself and his society with the forces available to him at the time. Thus have grown and developed human culture and civilization in the various parts of the world. What is happening today? There is an inordinate amount of force and power, scientific and political, in the hands of man—hands often itching for a fight or for mischief. The problem of nations is how best to handle this force and this power in such a way as not to result in corruption in the wielders, and in confusion or harm to the people at large.

India thus is facing today, with other nations, this problem of handling wisely the forces of science and democracy. Some of the questions that arise in this context are: Who are the persons that are fitted to handle this power? What shall be the method of handling

this power? And how shall the original and essential aim of ensuring the happiness of humanity at large be steadily kept in view?

India's Spirit not Opposed to Science

In the background of these agitating questions lies the great spiritual heritage of India. Those who are acquainted with its vitality hold the hope that India can yet show the world how to understand, assimilate, and express human values which form the theme of democracy everywhere. India's spirituality can enable Indians and the peoples of the world to *digest* the formidable forces that are being generated and placed in man's hands today. The spiritual meaning of democratic living and fulfilment, as taught by India's ancient and modern seers —in other words, the religion of the spiritual oneness of humanity— has to be revived and reactivated in men's thinking and day to day living, and its powerful influence brought to bear on these new and ever newer forms of scientific and social power, thereby giving them a higher direction and a loftier spiritual and human purpose.

This is the central message of religion. It is a message which requires to be specially emphasized in the world in which we are living today. The word 'religion' carries to some at least of the modern world a bit of bad odour. It is unfortunate. It is due to the fact that religion became identified with untested beliefs and dogmas. And these got shattered in the progress of scientific inquiry. In the history of Europe, religion has often functioned as an 'enemy' of science. But that experience is not universal or invariable; it is a story with its background in the West only and not in India. Our entire mental make-up proceeding from our long cultural experience is not only not hostile, but is very sympathetic and hospitable to, the scientific spirit. In his book, *The Discovery of India*, our Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, has expressed the view that science, which has much leeway to make in India compared to Western countries, is bound to make increasing advances here in the future because of the hospitality of the Indian national heritage to science. Says he (pp. 626-27):

'Science has dominated the Western world and everyone there pays tribute to it, and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony. In India in many obvious ways we have a greater distance to travel. And yet there may be fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not its later manifestations, fits in with the scientific temper and approach, as well as with internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative development of the individual, and the species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth.'

Science will have no opposition from philosophy or religion in India, as it had in the West. Our national thought is quite helpful and conducive to the growth of science. This is absolutely true, because we have a temper that always honours and welcomes knowledge of any kind.

Knowledge Versus Wisdom

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. 1.4-5), it is proclaimed that there are two types of knowledge: one the supreme, *parā*, and the other the ordinary, relative, *aparā*. All the knowledge of the time—science, literature, and arts, including the knowledge contained in the sacred Vedas —was relegated by the Upaniṣad to the category of the ordinary or *aparā* knowledge. That alone is *parā* or supreme knowledge which helps to destroy spiritual blindness and reveal the ever-present spiritual reality behind man and nature. And this is the theme and passion of religion as understood in India.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. 1.1-3), there is the arresting story of Nārada going to a great philosopher by name Sanatkumāra for thorough instruction in the knowledge of Truth. 'Please teach me, O Master', solicits Nārada. The teacher replies: 'Tell me what you already know; then I shall teach you further.' Nārada replies: 'I know what is in the sacred books, the Vedas; I know also many sciences like astronomy etc.', and he gives quite a long list of subjects. Then he concludes: 'And yet I am unhappy; there is gnawing sorrow; I am not able to get peace of mind', and adds: 'I have heard from great teachers like you that only the *ātmavit*, the knower of the Self, can get rid of sorrow. So take me across the ocean of sorrow.' To this earnest question of a great seeker, who had much knowledge but little peace and who was in search of that higher knowledge which puts an end to all doubts and sorrows, the great teacher, Sanatkumāra, replies: 'You have learned all the Vedas, the sciences, and the arts; but they are merely strings of names, words, mere transformations of sound; you must seek for the *meaning* behind all sounds, behind even all thought, the supreme truth of Being.' And the whole chapter is an exposition of this great idea, the search for not merely the meaning of words, but the *meaning* of meaning itself.

This is philosophy, *parā vidyā*, the basis of all forms of knowledge, *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhā*, the knowledge of That by which all else is known, and as such synthetic and comprehensive. The Upaniṣads contain an impressive record of great minds wrestling with the problems of life and existence and arriving at the truth of the unity of Being through

perfect self-control, concentration, and meditation. Nārada as well as modern man illustrate Bertrand Russell's statement that if there is increase in knowledge without a corresponding increase in wisdom, such increase of knowledge is only an increase of sorrow. Nārada had the urge to go beyond knowledge to wisdom, and he pursued that urge with courage and determination. Many others like him had done the same, both men and women. Indian philosophy and culture bear the impress of their passion for truth, comprehensive understanding, and unifying and pacifying love for all mankind. Modern man is just beginning to feel the need to go beyond knowledge to wisdom.

The Way of Wisdom

But what is this wisdom? In our country, we have been taught that the nature of wisdom consists in the synthesis of all knowledge, in the awareness of That 'by knowing which all else becomes known' (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I. 1.3). It is that total *Weltanschauung* which includes and transcends all relative knowledge contained in science, art, and religion, leading to universality of outlook and unfettered sympathy. The attainment of wisdom is no quick process; because it involves a struggle to change human nature itself through the practice of self-control and self-transcendence—*indriya-saṁyama and tyāga*. As an unanchored boat driven by the wind and tossed by the waves gets lost in the turbulent waters, even so, this human personality, when allowed to be carried away by the turbulent senses, and by the mind that follows in their wake, comes face to face with grief and sorrow and spiritual disaster (*Gītā*, II. 67). The whole of modern civilization is but a palpable reminder to man of this warning that life suffers shipwreck if there is nothing to check the outward tendencies of the mind and the senses, if it is not anchored in the inner Self, the fountain of all strength, resource, and joy. This is the great idea that the *Bhagavad-Gītā* expounds with force and lucidity.

Swami Vivekananda taught that the purpose of religion is *to transform man the brute into man the God*. This is not the sphere of science and politics. These do not constitute wisdom and the good life, but only provide the conditions thereof. Says Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, Eighth Edition, pp. 192-93):

> 'The basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of men. No nation is great or good because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good. ... Religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right.... One must admit that law, government, politics are phases not final in any way. There is a goal beyond them where law is not needed.... All great Masters teach the same thing. Christ saw that the basis is not law, that morality and purity are the only strength.'

If this message is properly understood, man will be able to grasp the meaning of science and democracy, make the forces they generate his servants, and utilize them to enhance life and build a steady character. And because our country has held on to this message of religion in good and evil fortune, and borne witness to the undying reality in man and nature, she is able to rebuild herself repeatedly whenever there is a sagging of her spirits and a lowering of her ideals.

Schism in the Mind of the West

Europe and America have for religion Christianity, which has been a great spiritual force in the history of the world. But in recent centuries, it has not been exercising very high influence on the Western mind, because most people in the West find themselves subject to the vagaries of a divided personality. Their loyalty is largely to science; but their religious beliefs do not find support from modern science which grew to stature at the cost of religion. *Unwilling to disbelieve, but also unable to believe, many in the West have become just nominally religious, but essentially this-worldly, dazzled by the logic and visible achievements of science and technology.* There is, unlike in India, no unifying philosophy to mediate between faith and reason, faith and faith, and faith and life. Bereft of the sustenance of such a philosophy, religion in the West more and more tended to be removed from lived experience, to get confounded with dogmas and conformities, and reduced itself to an intellectual and spiritual sterility. This alone explains its failure to welcome, chasten, and transform the intellectual force of science and the social force of democracy.

The Vedāntic Synthesis

That science is a fundamental force and that it does have a great message for all men is understood in India, no less than elsewhere. Human welfare partly depends upon the knowledge and control of the human environment, natural and social. Vedānta has always given an honoured place to science, as also to politics, in this sphere of human welfare. But Vedānta has also taught India that these two do not constitute the whole scope of human welfare. Man is more than a political animal; he is also more than an intellectual being. He has depths and heights which cannot be compassed in a purely materialistic or positivistic philosophy. Indian thought recognizes no compartments or divisions in the human personality leading to mutual exclusion and hostility in human aspirations and values, such as pleasure and profit, science and art, morality and religion.

The unity of man emphasizes the synthesis of his interest. While accepting the great importance of science and politics for man, Vedānta evaluates them in terms of his total needs and aspirations. *Man seeks things of utility for the sake of things without utility.* Science through technology can give and has given man things of utility in abundance; politics can give him things of utility of another order, a stable social order, the venue of his life's experiments. But neither science nor politics can give man peace or happiness, joy or a sense of fulfilment. These non-utilitarian values proceed from religion and morality. Science and politics can create only *conditions* for their emergence, but cannot *create* them directly. Without this spiritual direction, the forces generated by science and politics nourish the lower self of man and become sources of sorrow and discord, division and instability for man and society. A knowledge which leads to the increase of sorrow is not knowledge but ignorance, the offspring of spiritual blindness. *It is spiritual awareness alone that transforms all knowledge into wisdom, and into forms of peace and happiness, love and service.*

Spirituality Ensures Stability

The transformation of the world which science and politics seek is powerless to ensure human welfare without the transformation of human nature itself, which religion seeks through a discipline of the whole personality. It is only such spiritually disciplined individuals and groups that can ensure for humanity at large the values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, of liberty, fraternity, and equality. The peace and happiness of man and the stability and ordered progress of civilizations depend entirely upon the intensification of the spiritual awareness of humanity. With this spiritual awareness for foundation, the structure of civilization raised by science and democracy becomes strong and steady; without it, it sways in periodic crises to topple down eventually. *Without the inspiration of religion, civilization shall ever remain an unstable structure.*

That is the verdict of history. And India has held on to this faith in the primacy of the spiritual over every other value from the hoary past of her history. Science or politics, art or social graces are but means to advance the spiritual life of man. Guided by the synthetic philosophy of Vedānta, the culture of India has not rejected or excluded any tested human value, but has synthesized them all under the hegemony of the spiritual. Other social structures, tall and powerful, have decayed and fallen, being built on sand—on materialism and worldliness; but this structure, vast and lofty, has endured, being built on rock—on spirituality and unworldliness. India has more truly

heeded the warning of Jesus, of gaining the world and losing the soul, than any other nation; and she has proved in her history that the world belongs to the unworldly, and the meek shall inherit the earth.

The dictum of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI. 19), that not through technological advances, but through the knowledge of God alone shall mankind attain peace and happiness, has great relevance for the modern world: *yadā carmavad ākāśaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ; tadā devam aviṭñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati.* That idea has been the leaven in Indian culture; a little of that leaven can leaven the whole bread of civilization today. The way India transformed her knowledge and experience into wisdom with the help of this leaven of spirituality has a deep meaning for modern India herself, now in the grip of a revolutionary transition, and also for the modern world, which is in the grip of fear and sorrow and despair. In prosperity and adversity, in joy and sorrow, India has clung to God. She has acquired a spirituality which has stood the test of time and circumstance. Religion is not an opinion with her, but a deep national conviction. That is the sanction behind her voice, which is gentle, yet unmistakable in its utterance, and hope-inspiring.

Vedānta Seeks Universal Welfare

Besides the integral unity of man and his interests, Vedānta also proclaims the unity and solidarity of all existence. The objective of Vedānta is the happiness and welfare of man; not man as divided into sects, creeds, castes, and classes, but man as man wherever he may be found. Based on this unitary and universal view of man upheld in her philosophy, religion in India taught that man, in the course of his development, in the course of his self-expression, generates various forces, physical or mental, social or political, and that the development of these forces needs to be matched by a corresponding development of his inner spiritual resources, which alone can provide the factors of stability to an evolving personality or social system. If science and politics make for progress and development in the natural and social environments, there must be spirituality to make man adequate to this development. When vast powers are placed in the hands of man, there must be ampler powers generated in his heart through moral and spiritual discipline of the whole personality. Man loses life's battle when he fails to find the centre of gravity of his personality within himself, but seeks for it in everything outside of himself. *This enrichment of the inner life, this deepening of the roots to match the widening of the branches, this strengthening of the stakes of a tent along with the lengthening of its ropes, is the unique contribution of religion to civili-*

zation. Steady wisdom and stable character are its watchwords. Hence its message is eternal and perennial.

This wisdom or this spirituality is embedded in the great Vedānta, the philosophy which breathes the spirit of fearlessness, harmony, and universality. The advance of science or the development of socio-political thought holds no fear for a religion deriving its strength from Vedānta. Under its hegemony, science, politics, and religion will function in harmony and co-operation to ensure total human welfare everywhere. Its proclaimed objective is this universal human welfare, not national or racial, nor segmentary or fractional. Freedom, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, is the watchword of Vedānta, says Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 238). It seeks not only other-worldly, but also this-worldly welfare, not only *niḥśreyasa*, but also *abhyudaya*, sings Gauḍapāda, a Vedāntic teacher of the eighth century A.D. (*Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad Kārikā*, IV, 2):

'I salute this great philosophy of unity, which proclaims the solidarity of all existence, which seeks the happiness and welfare of all beings, and which is free from all strife and contradiction.'

Vivekananda's Practical Vedānta

It is in the light of this Vedānta, which sees the unity of the Self and the non-Self, that Swami Vivekananda approached our pressing national and international problems. The freshness and vigour of his approach are derived from his comprehensive vision of unity and synthesis. In this context alone can we understand his passionate exhortation to the nation to concentrate its energies for some decades on the material and social advancement of the people. He pleaded for a 'toned down' materialism to suit our immediate requirements, for effecting the uplift of India's sunken millions. Says he (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, Eighth Edition, p. 50):

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

He taught that the only way God can come to a hungry man is in the form of a morsel of bread. He pleaded for materialism in the service of spirituality; material improvement, he held, is the condition precedent for India's spiritual and moral advancement; one is the means and the other the end, and he found no conflict between them. *With convincing logic and charm, he taught India and the West that spirituality suffers as much from lack of wealth as from too much of it.* And he found the spirituality of Afro-Asian countries suffering from the former and that of the Western countries from the latter. It is not to religion, in the limited sense of the word, that he asked the nation to

turn to seek ways and means to work out its material and social welfare, but to science and democracy. Yet, he proclaimed that religion will ever remain the national passion in India; the search for the meaning of life lies beyond the horizon of man's material desires and struggles. The urge to know the soul, to know God, to pierce the mystery that veils nature, constitutes the religious impulse in man. Indian culture bears the deep impress of this impulse in its multitudinous manifestations. There need be no fear that material and political advancement may choke up this distinctive national theme; on the contrary, the energy of this impulse, according to Swami Vivekananda, will only find higher and higher expressions in the life of our people, when our centuries-old economic and social maladies become progressively cured through the applications of science and democracy. Religion in the limited sense of *mukti* (liberation) or *niḥśreyasa* has a direct message for only a limited number of people in any given civilization; it involves a capacity to gaze into far distant horizons of *being*. The immense majority can see only a limited range of the horizon, the horizon of material and social welfare, *abhyudaya,* the horizon of *becoming.* It is Swami Vivekananda's supreme glory that he re-enunciated the all-embracing spirituality of Vedānta and demonstrated the end and aim of all life's endeavours and struggles to consist in freedom—freedom from all bondages, actual and possible, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. This all-embracing touch comes out prominently in his definition of religion (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 257):

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this...and be free. This is the whole of religion....'

The conquest of external nature leading to liberation from the physical, social, and intellectual bondages of the soul is the contribution of science and politics to the growth of the soul. They thus become transformed into forms of spirituality; they become departments of his 'Practical Vedānta'. Says the Swami (Sister Nivedita, 'Introduction' to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, p. xiv):

'Art, science, and religion are but three different ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand this, we must have the theory of Advaita (philosophy of non-duality).'

India's Opportunity and Privilege

Says Romain Rolland in his book *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel* (Fourth Impression, p. 283):

'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four

Yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action, from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards Unity among them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'

In the strength of this equilibrium and synthesis taught and exemplified by Swami Vivekananda, India is in a unique position to demonstrate to herself and to the world the complementary character of the forces of science, democracy, and religion in the service of total human welfare. The world needs this synthesis very badly today. Never before in the history of humanity has there been such a spectacle of a plethora of material and social advantages outside and fear and instability within.

Says Sorokin in *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (Prologue):

'Bleeding from war wounds, and frightened by the atomic Frankensteins of destruction, humanity is desperately looking for a way out of the death-trap. It craves for life instead of inglorious death. It wants peace in place of war. It is hungry for love in lieu of hate. It aspires for order to replace disorder. It dreams of a better humanity, of greater wisdom, of a finer cultural mantle for its body than the bloody rags of its robot civilisation. Having foolishly manoeuvred itself into a death-trap, and facing the inexorable problem, "to be or not to be", it is forced to pursue, more desperately than ever before, its eternal quest for survival and immortality.'

Swami Vivekananda wanted that India should not repeat the mistakes of the West, but learn valuable lessons from the experiences of those nations. After our independence, we have seriously taken in hand the economic and social advancement of the country through the Five-Year Plans. We have chosen to industrialize the country undeterred by fears generated by the experience of the West. We have set in motion a country-wide enthusiasm for science and built and equipped a chain of national laboratories. And we have set our society in the direction of democracy—political, economic, and social. These are bold steps for an old nation to take—this pouring of strong new wine into this old bottle; but it has been done without the least tremor or fear, because of the discovery of the youthful vitality of India and the release of her undying spiritual energies by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Freedom and Equality: A Spiritual Urge

The message of democracy is the message of freedom and equality. It is essentially a spiritual message, though it finds expression in political or social garbs. As such, the establishment of freedom and equality

can never be done on the basis of a mere political or economic view of man, or by mere political or economic methods. The urge for freedom and equality is a spiritual urge; equality is never a physical, intellectual, economic, or social fact; inequality in all these fields is the glaring fact. An appeal to equality cannot proceed or get a response from the economic man or the political man. Self-aggrandizement and exploitation are the impulses of man at those levels. If man had no deeper levels than these, all talk of equality would have been a cry of despair.

Western democracy is suffering from this surface view of man and the despair it engenders, owing to its shifting sandy foundation. That is why, in spite of centuries of democracy and the abundance of formal freedom and equality, the West is still far away from real freedom and equality. Undue emphasis on material values leads to breakneck competition and struggle, and causes the evaporation of the content of freedom and equality. These two values can be derived only from the spiritual nature of man, the spark of the Divine in him, which is the inalienable and invariable part of him, and which constitutes his real Self. This is the Ātman of Vedānta, the unchanging reality behind man's personality, unaffected by all changing social evaluations of high and low, rich and poor, man and woman, learned and ignorant. *Here we reach the rock-bottom of experience which provides the only secure foundation for raising the edifice of equality and freedom.* Freedom of man derives from this his spiritual nature; equality is the recognition of this divine thread of unity behind all apparent differences of personality.

The Divine in Man : The Basis for Democracy

Thus the Vedāntic ideal of the divinity and solidarity of man provides the only stable foundation for the theory and practice of democracy. Swami Vivekananda exhorted us to build our democracy on this solid foundation. The parable of Jesus about the wise man who built his house on rock and the foolish man who built his house on sand is significant here. Western democratic structure is built on the concept of the sense-bound man; it has its seasonal disturbances, each succeeding one more serious than the preceding. To quote the words of Jesus (Matthew, vii. 27):

> 'And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.'

For it was founded on sand. And if we but copy the same, what profit are we or the world going to derive? If, on the contrary, we infuse our democracy with the spiritual idealism of our country and

treat every man, *in the words of Kant,* not as a means but as an end in itself, we shall be creating a social order where man will become the focus and source of all value, and which will breathe the spirit of harmony and universality. Swami Vivekananda found the highest exposition of this sentiment in the following two verses of the *Gītā* (V. 19; XIII. 28):

'Relative existence has been conquered by them, in this very life, whose mind rests in sameness, since God is same in all and without imperfection; therefore such are said to be living in God.'

'Seeing the same God equally present in every being, one does not injure the Self by the Self, and so goes to the highest goal.'

True democracy is inconsistent with a narrow self-sufficient nationalism or sectarianism; it must tend to reach out to the universal. Breaking the barriers of caste and creed, race and sex, high and low, the democratic idea, deriving its sustenance from the divinity in man, marches on, without obstruction, to the realization of the universal. Swami Vivekananda desired India to uphold this ideal of the universal in her religion and politics, science, and literature. He desired India to strive for the evolution of a Vedāntic civilization where science and politics would be utilized to lead man to higher and higher levels of self-expression; not merely desired it, but *he also demonstrated that India, among all the nations, had the requisite historically acquired capacity to make that contribution to world civilization.*

Conclusion

Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on this subject are of invaluable help for our nation today. It imparts courage and clarity, hope and enthusiasm. And we shall need these qualities in ever-increasing measure as years go by and as the nation becomes fully self-aware and mobile.

Long before we embarked on an independent career of nation-building, we were fortunate to get, at the close of the nineteenth century, the guidance of a Vivekananda, the like of which no other nation has or had. In him has religion shaken hands with science in a common adventure for the deliverance of the human race in India and elsewhere. And whatever we may do today in India in this field will carry a vital significance for all humanity. Our problems are vast and varied. But we have an abundance of spiritual wealth, hardly utilized. It is true to say that *in the world of ideals we are starving in the sight of plenty.* We have need to develop practical efficiency to translate

visions into realities. This will be the gift to us of true scientific discipline and social vision. Both are derivable from our national heritage and genius. Our democracy must become a live social awareness and discipline, instead of remaining a mere political technique of state. *The aim of all the three—religion, science, and democracy—is the creation of a pattern of human excellence and general welfare.* Their synthesis alone can ensure for man everywhere that inner enrichment and poise in the context of external prosperity and progress, which makes for a sense of creative living and fulfilment. While science and democracy deal with 'man the known', religion deals with 'man the unknown'. *A complete integral civilization cannot afford to sacrifice either in the interests of the other.* And India is called upon to show the way of achieving this synthesis for the good of herself and the world.

CULTURE, SCIENCE AND RELIGION

I AM thankful to the Iran Society of Calcutta for inviting me to address its Twenty-third Foundation Day as Chief Guest this evening. When I read through the report of the Society kindly sent to me by its General Secretary, Dr. M. Ishaque, along with his letter of invitation, I was impressed by the noble aims and objects of the Society and the solid work it has done these twenty-three years, in furtherance of the same. The idea that stands at the centre of these aims and objects is the promotion of cordial relations between Iran and India. This is something that finds responsive echoes from my heart; and I am sure it will find responsive echoes from the heart of every Indian citizen when he or she becomes enlightened as to what Iran and India mean to each other through the millennia of their intertwined history and culture.

The ancient Indo-Aryans and the ancient Iranians belonged, according to available evidence, to a common racial, cultural, and religious inheritance. But later on they separated; and the cause of this separation seems to have largely been religious differences, often acute and bitter, as revealed in the earliest literature of both. After the separation, the two peoples developed two distinctive cultures, rich and variegated, based on their respective philosophies and religions, and influenced by their varied natural and human environments. And from that ancient age down to the beginning of the modern age, these two cultures and peoples have exerted powerful influences on each other, whether in co-operation or in conflict; and both have also influenced the history of Asia and Europe.

I have often wondered how religion and culture could become divisive factors in inter-human relationships. They have functioned

as unifying forces in society up to a certain stage, after which they have become rigid and exclusive. Such rigid and exclusive religions and cultures have often engaged in mutual conflicts, often fierce, resulting in much destruction of both natural and human resources, and leaving a trail of bitterness and hatred for centuries.

In the light of the scientific enlightenment and broad humanism of the modern age, all such inter-religious and inter-cultural conflicts, whether of the past or of the present, appear utterly meaningless. They proceed from a waning interest in truth and human well-being and a waxing interest in prejudices and narrow group interests. Conflicts of thought do occur in science and are indispensable to its progress. But they are kept at low emotional temperatures under the constant pressure of a love of truth and a passion for its search and discovery; and this search and discovery involve rational scrutiny of facts and verification of hypotheses. Something of this scientific approach is slowly penetrating the fields of religion and culture also today, bringing into these fields the light of rational and critical inquiry and mutual dialogue, and an atmosphere of sanity. The modern development of the comparative study of religions and cultures does not aim at, or result in, the amalgamation of cultures and religions or their destruction, but the introduction of sanity in inter-cultural and inter-religious relations, and the evolution of a mankind-awareness through creative cross-fertilization of cultures and religions.

Culture betokens, according to twentieth-century biology, the emergence and dominance of the value of *quality* in evolution in place of *quantity;* and this is the special characteristic of evolution at the human stage; for culture is exclusively a human phenomenon. The term 'culture', suggesting qualitative improvement and enrichment, is essentially associated with refinement and good manners. It loses both these values when it becomes rigid, exclusive, and intolerant by functioning as the handmaiden of political aggressiveness and racial superiority. This rigidity and exclusiveness and intolerance of cultures arise as they become dominated less and less by their mental and spiritual components and more and more by their genetic and biological constituents.

The genetic or biological inheritance of man represents something fixed and largely unalterable; biologists treat it as the force for conservatism in man. His cultural inheritance, on the other hand, is resilient and creative. This is what makes education the most important activity for man and his culture. It ensures the expansion of his awareness and sympathy. Where this expansion has not taken place, there education has failed in its evolutionary purpose; there the cultural in-

heritance has become conditioned and controlled by the genetic inheritance. Rigidity and stagnation of cultures, accordingly, proceed from their dominance by racial and other biological factors which are rigid and exclusive. Creativity and expansiveness of cultures, on the other hand, is the product of the spiritual dominating the physical. Culture, according to Sir Julian Huxley, is self-duplicating mind, just as the living cell is self-duplicating matter. The emergence of the latter was the first major breakthrough in evolution, initiating its biological or organic phase; the emergence of the former registered, through the agency of man's capacity for thought and speech communication, the second major breakthrough in evolution, initiating its spiritual or psycho-social phase. Referring to the significance of this second phase, Sir Julian Huxley says in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' (*Evolution After Darwin,* Vol. III, p. 251):

> 'Man's evolution is not biological but psychological; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Inter-cultural contacts provide educational opportunities for the expansion and enrichment of human awareness and sympathy, for the furtherance of that psycho-social evolution referred to by Huxley in the above passage. Cultures rose and developed in isolated areas nurtured in attitudes of self-sufficiency and self-importance. But man is a wanderer; and he came across cultures other than his own. Such contacts led to more fruitful relations such as trade and commerce. Through these media, ideas and values travelled from one culture to another, resulting in much healthy cross-fertilization and cultural evolution. These normal processes of inter-cultural relations become thwarted by forces proceeding from the dominance of the genetic inheritances of the group or groups concerned, expressing itself as racial superiority, or urge for political or economic domination, and intolerance, violence, and war following in their wake.

Two false identifications have done immense harm to human society and to the spiritual growth of man. The first is the identification of race and culture and the second is the identification of creed and culture. By falsely crediting cultural superiority to certain inherent racial traits, or by claiming cultural pre-eminence to certain exclusive though passionately held creeds, culture has tended to be narrow and exclusive, intolerant and violent, not only in the past ages but also in the present. But twentieth-century science has finally exposed the un-

scientific character of this twofold identification and its basis in human ignorance and prejudice as to the true meaning and scope of culture and religion. The conference of ethnologists and anthropologists from seventeen countries which met in Moscow in 1964 under the auspices of the UNESCO to study the biological aspects of race, issued a unanimous 13-point declaration of which points 1, 2, and 13 read as follows (*vide The UNESCO Courier*, April 1965):

'1. All men living today belong to a single species, *homo-sapiens*, and are derived from a common stock. There are differences of opinion regarding how and when different human groups diverged from this common stock.

'2. There is great genetic diversity within all human populations. Pure races —in the sense of genetically homogeneous populations—do not exist.

'13. The peoples of the world today appear to possess equal biological potentialities for attaining any civilization level. Differences in the achievements of different peoples must be attributed solely to their cultural history.

'Certain psychological traits are at times attributed to particular peoples. Whether or not such assertions are valid, we do not find any basis for ascribing such traits to hereditary factors, until proof to the contrary is given.

'Neither in the field of hereditary potentialities concerning the overall intelligence and the capacity for cultural development, nor in that of physical traits, is there any justification for the concept of "inferior" and "superior" races.'

Cultural evolution is more significant at the human stage than biological evolution. The former is the product of learning which is acquired from the social environment. The richer and more diverse and freer and less regimented the social environment, the quicker the cultural evolution. Culture is not inherited through the genes but acquired from the psycho-social environment. This truth finds striking emphasis in twentieth-century biology (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. 3, p. 208):

'The unique ability of human beings to produce culture is due to their special ability of symbolization, which produces both language and the probably related ability to abstract, to superadd concepts to precepts. These faculties allow knowledge and ideas to be communicated, stored, and accumulated. The consequence is that culture, like speech, is always acquired by learning. It is not congenital. This is a great advantage, allowing much more rapid adaptation to environment and more rapid evolutionary advance.

'In man, biological evolution through gene shuffling, selection, and mutation can go on simultaneously with cultural evolution, and they are both operative. But cultural evolution has become much the more effective and dominant....

'Cultural evolution is different from biological evolution, in that aspects of culture—ideas, techniques, institutions—can be almost indefinitely combined and hybridized, regardless of the dissimilarities between the cultures that produced them.'

The untold possibilities of cultural evolution stand in contrast to the severe limitations of organic evolution. The latter, which is termed old evolution, is restricted by physical continguity whereas the former, which is called new evolution, is free from this limitation. In the words of the eminent biologist, George Gaylord Simpson (*The Meaning of Evolution,* p. 288, Yale University Press, 1964):

'With the structure of the species, including, of course, the human species, organic evolution operates in habitually interbreeding groups, which are always defined in part by geographic proximity, although other ecological factors also normally play a part, and which, among themselves, have varying degrees of interchange of heredity. Within the structure of society as a whole, the new evolution operates in what may be called habitually inter-thinking groups. These also are defined in part by geographic proximity and by geographic concomitants in the social organization, notably nationality and language. *Such definition is not, however, required by the nature of the new heredity* (italics, not author's). Geographic restrictions on inter-thinking are still very evident, but they could be eliminated, and in the meantime other defining factors are more prominent and more complex than in the case of interbreeding. Science, the principal mechanism for producing new hereditary materials transmitted by inter-thinking, has made some progress (not nearly enough) in eliminating the geographic factors. Political, religious, economic, and (in interaction with organic heredity) racial factors loom large in delimitation of inter-thinking groups and often override geographic delimination, although the geographic social organization of nationality has some tendency to maintain a relationship.'

Factors that have helped to broaden modern man's understanding of his cultural heritage, have also helped to broaden modern man's comprehension of his religious heritage. Religion is one of the noblest, if not *the* noblest, products of culture; and like culture, it has also exhibited throughout history benevolent as well as malevolent aspects; and for the same reasons. Religion, as the science and art of man's spiritual growth and development, has done more to advance human culture and give man a sense of fulfilment than any other discipline. But when it has become dominated by non-religious motives, it has destroyed human happiness and stunted the human personality. Functioning as closed systems, religions in the past have met each other mostly in collisions. This is in for a radical change in the modern age. Thanks to the pervasive influence of modern science with its enlightenment and the broad humanism it has engendered, the great world religions are slowly releasing themselves from their exclusive and intolerant attitudes and entering into fruitful dialogues with each other and with modern science.

This orientation is pregnant with great possibilities for man and his civilization. It helps religions to become creative and dynamic forces by the liberation of that great science and art of the spiritual life which

lie at their core but which has been encrusted with much irrational stuff and stagnant socio-political attitudes in their dogmas and creeds and programmes.

I had said earlier that culture betokens the emergence of quality in evolution. Quantity was the criterion of evolution at the pre-human stage. Highlighting the significance of this fact in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', Sir Julian Huxley says (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 252):

'Man is therefore of immense significance.... He is a reminder of the existence, here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy equivalents, of a trend toward mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

Quality is a value concept and values are not physical but spiritual. In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

'The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan and its worship is the modern diabolism...Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

Increase of quality is the way to advance human evolution; and human evolution must lead to human fulfilment. Stressing the importance of this concept of fulfilment for human evolution, Julian Huxley says (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. I, p. 20):

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

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

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

Religion, correctly understood, is this 'science of human possibilities' referred to by Huxley. Religion is essentially a spiritual discipline and realization leading to the qualitative improvement of human life. This has been its central theme and function throughout history except when it had been dominated by non-religious forces. It has been the nursery of man's moral life and the inspirer of much of his artistic heritage. It has tamed his animal impulses, raised him to heights

of self-effacing altruism and service, and made him reach out to the human and universal. The true mystics and saints of all religions, barring those on whom such honour had been thrust for political and other extraneous considerations, are a lovable and adorable group representing the advance of human evolution to the summit of what Julian Huxley calls fulfilment. They also blazon by their lives and realizations the science of human possibilities referred to by Huxley.

Culture and religion are two values which move the emotions of man powerfully. Science, similarly, affects his intellect and thought. The harmonious co-operation of these three disciplines, which has already commenced in a small way in recent times, is the most hopeful sign which this second half of the twentieth century offers to modern man beset with the successes and failures of his highly technological civilization.

The positive sciences deal with the world revealed by the senses or by instruments helpful to the senses. And the science of religion deals with the super-sensual world. The claim of dogmatic religions to unravel the mystery of what they called the 'super-natural' brought them into conflict with advancing science which sought to unravel the mystery of the 'natural'. Scientific religion, especially as developed in India, never upheld such an irreconcilable opposition as between a natural and a super-natural order and hence never gave rise to any conflict between science and religion. Reality is one; what the senses reveal of its nature is studied by the positive sciences; and what lies beyond the sense level may be termed super-sensual but not super-natural, and may form a valid field of study by a science equipped with methods and techniques relevant to that special field. This latter is the scope of the science of religion, according to Indian thought. In the words of Swami Vivekananda (*The Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 253):

'Beyond (waking) consciousness is where the bold search; (waking) consciousness is bound by the senses. Beyond that, beyond the senses, men must go, in order to arrive at truths of the spiritual world, and there are even now persons who succeed in going beyond the bounds of the senses. These are called *ṛṣis* (sages), because they come face to face with spiritual truths.'

Pleading for a scientific approach to this great subject of religion, Vivekananda says (*ibid.*, Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 81):

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth.'

'This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law.'

And pointing out the difference in the fields of investigation between positive sciences and the science of religion, Vivekananda says (*ibid.*):

'Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.'

Twentieth-century science is becoming increasingly confronted with the challenge of this 'book within' at the farthest limit of its impressive study of the 'book without'.

'Up to now has science ever troubled to look at the world other than from without?' asks paleo-ontologist the late Père Teilhard de Chardin (*The Phenomenon of Man,* p. 52) and proceeds to say (*ibid.*, p. 55):

'In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least up to now, except the *without* of things. The same intellectual attitude is still permissible in the bacteriologist, whose cultures (apart from substantial difficulties) are treated as laboratory reagents. But it is still more difficult in the realm of plants. It tends to become a gamble in the case of a biologist studying the behaviour of insects and coelenterates. It seems merely futile with regard to the vertebrates. Finally, it breaks down completely with man, in whom the existence of a *within* can no longer be evaded, because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge.'

Religion as the study of the *within* of nature is a continuation of, and complement to, the study of the *without* of nature which is positive science. The ancient world of Asia represents a group of cultures which were nourished and sustained by pioneering contributions in the field of religion, in the field of the science of the *within* of nature. The modern West represents a culture nourished and sustained by its pioneering contributions in the field of the positive sciences, in the field of the science of the *without* of nature.

Each of these two types of cultures, great in its own respective field, is yet, as is being increasingly recognized today, partial and imperfect. As remarked by Aldous Huxley, modern civilization produces the intelligent fool while ancient civilizations produced the wise fool; but what the world needs is the production of intelligent wise men and

women. The modern world is reaching out to the achievement of a culture capable of leading man, individually and collectively, to total fulfilment. Such a culture needs the ministrations of both positive science and the science of religion. And if increase of quality is the touchstone of human evolution, the role of the latter is going to be of more fundamental importance than that of the former. Quality in human life is the product of the free discipline and control and sublimation of the energies of the emotions and will; this is the province of religion, the science of the inner life. In the words of Einstein, science can denature plutonium but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man. It is becoming increasingly recognized that positive science can create only conditions for human happiness and fulfilment but cannot ensure that he is happy or fulfilled. Excess of such conditions may actually result in greater unfulfilment. This obviously is the tragedy of man in the modern age. Speaking on the subject of 'The Evolutionary Vision', Julian Huxley says (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 259):

'Once we truly believe...that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for more human beings and fuller achievements by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T.V. sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

And highlighting, in the light of the evolutionary vision, the importance of quality for the advance of human evolution, he concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 260-61):

'Thus the evolutionary vision ... illuminates our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way.... It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

This vision and hope find eloquent expression in the testament of Robert A. Millikan, the noted astrophysicist, in the concluding chapter of his autobiography:

'It seems to me that the two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest, are, first, the spirit of religion, and second, the spirit of science—or knowledge. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without support from the other. To promote the latter, we have universities and research institutions. But the supreme opportunity for everyone with no exception lies in the first.'

India and Iran, as also Pakistan and Afghanistan, constitute a complex of contiguous cultures and peoples whose hoary history reveals common origins, much cultural inter-penetrations, and substantial spiritual give and take. These are fundamental affinities between any

groups of peoples; but these are obscured and thwarted by differences which, in the light of the scientific enlightenment and humanism of the modern age, are but peripheral and not central. That these peripheral differences, becoming magnified, are militating against mutual understanding and co-operation reveals only the long distance the otherwise gifted peoples of this regional complex have to travel to absorb enough of that modern enlightenment, in place of medieval obscurantism, to enable them to release the fundamental forces of their mutual affinities.

Scientifically approached, culture and religion, as we have seen, can never foster exclusiveness and intolerance. The great mystics of this regional complex, Hindu, Zoroastrian, and Islamic, were intensely universal and human in their attitudes and teachings. To them religion was a science based on experience. They and their message often came into conflict with those to whom religion was a bundle of creed and dogma, finished and final. In the *milieu* of the murky intellectual atmosphere of those ages, many of these scientists of religion had to face persecution and death just like the pioneers of the physical sciences in the medieval West. Creeds and dogmas are good servants but bad masters. Religions, when reduced to their dimension and inspired not by love of truth and resort to experiment and experience but buttressed by political and state power, have always been reactionary forces and have always stunted and distorted the personality of man. The modern age offers the supreme opportunity for man everywhere to liberate himself from all obscurantism and its reactionary forces in the fields of culture and religion and advance human evolution individually and collectively. Heart-whole regional understanding and co-operation is the necessary step to world-wide understanding and co-operation.

So far as the peoples of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran are concerned, their coming together in co-operation and harmony as a constructive force for their own good and for the rest of the world is only possible if their sense of the historical can be illumined by the rational and the sane in their approach to religion and culture, as upheld in modern science.

This is the type of education that the peoples of these four nations need today to usher them truly into the modern age. It is heartening to know that sensitive individuals and groups in these nations are working to this end. The way is long and arduous; but we shall be sustained by the faith that truth shall triumph and that light shall overcome darkness. And I am glad to find that the Iran Society of Calcutta is devotedly engaged precisely in this noble field with respect to two of the nations of the region. May its work prosper.

ROLE OF RELIGION IN POLITICS

PRIMARILY, religion is a value which is trans-social and inward. It takes hold of an individual when he or she has finished with values which are sensual and relative, and craves for a value which is transcendental and absolute. In this sense, it transcends even the sphere of *dharma,* the sphere of social ethics. Spirituality or godliness is an end in itself. Indian thought refers to it as the highest excellence (*niḥśreyasa*), the consummation of freedom through the realization of Truth, and declares it to be the *parama-puruṣārtha,* the supreme end to be sought after by man. All other ends and values—*dharma, artha,* and *kāma*—are collectively known as *abhyudaya;* they are values which man achieves in the social context in response to his deeply-felt craving for gross or refined joys and satisfactions. *Abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa* together constitute the sum total of human cravings, values, and ends. We cannot achieve *abhyudaya* except in the context of a society or group; and we cannot achieve *niḥśreyasa* except outside the context of all social relations. At the *abhyudaya* stage we walk arm in arm to progress and welfare; but at the *niḥśreyasa* level we march alone to the Alone. As well expressed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, we move in single file at the last stages of life's journey to the heights of Truth.

Though religion, in its essential nature, is thus trans-social and individual in its appeal and function, it has a secondary yet significant role in the important sphere of social relations. Much of this latter role has not been without grave defects in its actual functioning. History contains plenty of instances of religion acting as a bar sinister to human progress and welfare. To deal with the subject of the role of religion in politics is therefore a delicate task, especially in the context

of present-day India where there has been an abuse and misuse of religion to the detriment of a correct assessment of the role of religion, on the one hand, and of the happiness and welfare of millions, on the other. Yet, it is worthwhile to face the task, for the stakes involved are high; there is urgent need to state the precise scope of religion both in relation to the individual and as a social force, and the contribution it can make to the health and stability of the social order. Both politics and religion stand to gain immeasurably from an approach to each other under the guidance of a philosophy such as Vedānta, which dares to view life in its totality and wholeness, and which has for its declared objective *sarva-sattva-sukho-hitaḥ* (*Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, IV. 2) or the happiness and welfare of humanity as a whole.

In the modern world, various kinds of forces, loyalties, and allegiances are trying to shape human destiny. In the midst of these conflicting forces and divergent loyalties, religion has to play a vital, progressive, and dynamic role. The aim of religion is to raise humanity to a higher ethical plane. Religion played its part in the past. But it has a much bigger part to play in the present. In the past our problems were few and comparatively simple. We had to deal with men organized into small clans and tribes. But the problems of today have become colossal because we are to deal not with small sectional groups, but with large national societies and with the whole of humanity itself. Whether we shall sink in or swim across the storming sea of the modern world will depend on our ability to organize the world into a single family on the basis of the spiritual oneness and equality of humanity.

Every religion worth the name contains certain universal elements along with others that are particular and parochial. The message of these universal elements in all religions to humanity is exactly identical. Nevertheless, religions, as practised by their followers, have been more regional, local, and parochial in outlook and action, to the detriment of the universal. Religious organizations have developed and stressed sectarian trends and loyalties. But in the present-day world, anything that is parochial will not satisfy the situation. Today we are to deal with innumerable forces, ideas, and aspirations of man which transcend the barriers of sect and creed. Hence the problem of negotiation and adjustment is colossal and tremendous. No narrow and selfish view will answer the demands of the modern age. We are to look at things in the larger context, from the wider viewpoint. Only if the universal elements in all religions be released from their parochial and regional setting, can religion be made a progressive force in the world today. The present world has witnessed mighty advances in science

and technology. But in spite of all these revolutions in the domain of scientific thought and technique, modern man has not been able to discard religion altogether. Religion has not been allowed by the rational man of today to enter his life by the front door. Yet it enters his life surreptitiously by the backdoor. That shows that religion is still a vital force. But the religion that enters thus is, in the absence of the purifying aid of rational thought, mostly passionate, communal, and reactionary. Religion which regards all humanity as one and indivisible is a product of dispassionate thinking and, hence, progressive in outlook and action. The true purpose and function of religion is writ large in the history of human civilization. Its purpose is to make man truly civilized, cultured, and refined. Real civilization will come only when men and women become truly cultured, when they have learnt to refine their thoughts and chasten their feelings and sentiments. The function of religion is to *actualize* the spiritual oneness of humanity in ever-widening spheres, and develop human fellowship by reducing and obliterating the distance between man and man.

It is sometimes said that religion has become a spent-up force, that it cannot answer the demand of the modern scientific world and hence is not required now, and that in these days of scientific and technological development, religion has outlived its utility. This is the essence of the Marxist and much of the rationalist criticism of religion. According to Marx and other critics of religion, it is today nothing but a bar sinister to social, political, economic, and intellectual progress. Religion, therefore, is the misfortune of man today; it is not a help that sustains, but a hindrance that impedes. What we now need is social improvement, and to do this we should discard religion.

To what extent is this criticism of religion a valid one? It is, indeed, true that we have made rapid advances in scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions, and material progress. But in spite of all our boasted achievements and progress in these lines, have we not moved backward as men? How backward we are is evident from our dealings with our neighbours and fellows. Have we moved forward in social feeling and sympathy? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. There still lies the savage in every one of us. Civilization is largely nothing but the external trappings on the old savage. The discovery by modern psychology of the savage in man has set a serious problem for the civilized man of today to face and to solve. Our rationality and enlightenment are but skin-deep. The savage lies just below reason; it is mostly anti-reason. And it occasionally erupts to the surface sweeping aside all rationality and humanity. The problem before us is to tame

this savage within us and to evolve an integrated personality and a dynamic character which will retain the precious vigour of the savage but chastened under the guidance of an enlightened *buddhi* or reason. Untamed passions create the temper in the individual and society tending to disrupt the even course of life. The world will have to come to religion to get the answer as to how to bring about harmony and adjustment in a world which is so ill-adjusted. Religion is called upon to play its part on a vaster plane today, in the collective life of millions as expressed in societies and states. Religion is not thus outmoded. If after years of civilization and democracy and progress men could wage two savage wars in the course of thirty years to destroy each other, can we call man civilized? Or that he has outgrown the sustenance of religion? No, our passions are not tamed. The animal within us reigns supreme. Men are to live in harmony among themselves and also with their environment. Integrity within and integrity without are the real measure of a civilization; that is the vital function of religion; and civilization has to invite religion to its aid today.

There are two types of men who do not seek the help of religion. First, those men and women who are content to live in the world of their native impulses. Second, those rare ones who have controlled their passions and emotions and have raised themselves above the ordinary human level. Between these two levels at the extremes, all men need the sustenance and ministrations of religion. This role of religion has been emphasized in all the great world religions. Every one of them has tried to evolve harmony out of chaos in man and society. If they have not attained the measure of success they ought to have, the fault lies not in religion nor in its teachings or teachers, but in us. We have failed the teachers and their teachings. We have invested their teachings with a dogmatic rigidity which the founders had not intended; for they believed in growth and development. It is our want of knowledge of the true meaning and purpose of religion that is at fault, not religion itself. Politicians and statesmen, democrats and dictators, presidents and kings, all come and go, but the great prophets of religion remain and endure. Religion has played its noble part in guiding humanity upward in the misty past of history; and it is still functioning similarly in spite of handicaps from within and without. The function of religion is to make possible for men and women a heightened and enlarged life, and a life in harmony among themselves and with their environment.

Today religion is called upon to perform this function to humanity taken as a unit and not merely to exclusive sections thereof. This

makes the task of religion responsible and heavy. The function is to be performed on a vastly wider scale; religion is to compose the distractions of the world in which we are. Before doing this, and in order to enable it to do this, it has to compose its own distractions proceeding out of sectarian narrowness and undue emphasis on non-essentials.

Materialism has its due place in the evolution and progress of human society. But when it dominates over the minds and hearts of men, it betokens danger. Divorced from ethical and spiritual foundations, it has become a source of danger everywhere today. It is the animal in man that prevails over the God in him. Violence and hatred are the dominant forces of the present-day world. The purpose and task of religion is to tame and subdue these forces of hatred and violence in man and thus make for a higher expression of his psychic energies and impulses. Impulses by themselves are neither good nor bad. They become one or the other in the way we use them. We can take hold of all our raw impulses and energies and convert them into creative forces by means of an inner technology. By means of this inner technology taught by the science of religion we are to control and tame the 'libido' and raise it to the highest level of inspiration. Only a man who has controlled his passions and impulses is truly religious; he becomes pure and holy. He has attained real education at its highest and best. Such a man not only raises himself to a higher ethical and spiritual plane, but raises others as well.

If this is religion in purpose and intent what role does it play in the narrow field of politics? In countries of totalitarian ideology, politics is everything. There no aspect of human life is left out of politics. All types of totalitarianism tend to dwarf the human personality. There are vast spaces of our being which transcend the sphere of politics. Nevertheless, politics is a legitimate field of collective human activity as it helps man to strive for and realize certain essential values of life. In our own country particularly, politics today is fundamental, for the nation cries out for the realization of these very values—values comprehensively described by our ancient sages as *abhyudaya*. We cannot, therefore, neglect it, but must give due weight to politics as well as to other aspects and activities of human life.

Man is not an isolated individual living remote from society; he is a social unit. As members and component parts of society, we are to regulate our conduct, behaviour, and activity keeping in view the welfare of society as a whole. When we enter the realm of regulating inter-personal and inter-group human relationships, we step into the realm of politics.

Politics may be defined as a social science which seeks to ensure collective human welfare. To promote and ensure human welfare, we require knowledge and dispassionate thinking. If we study the evolution of society and the state in their historical aspect, we notice a slow but perceptible process of organization of men into wider and wider groups. The modern world has evolved the highest political entity in the form of the national and multi-national state. The world has not as yet advanced beyond this collective entity. We have not yet reached beyond the boundaries of the sovereign state.

The problem before us is how to enlarge the bounds of the political state and ultimately evolve a world state, a political organization of mankind as a whole; to utilize politics in order initially to ensure the welfare of man collectively organized within the state and ultimately that of man in the context of the world community. Politics is coeval with collective human welfare. The aim and trend of modern development is the building up of a world state. All the forces of the world today, both positive and negative, are driving humanity towards that consummation. The League of Nations was formed after the cessation of hostilities in 1919. The ideals and aspirations of the people of the world then for peace and international collaboration found embodiment in the ideals and objectives of the League.

The League failed; but such failures are only apparent, not real. Success evolves out of failure. We have now formed the UN (United Nations) after the second World War. Failures attending collective efforts should not be taken too seriously. When we look at history, we notice the continuous march of mankind from small groupings and structures to higher and higher integrations and organizations. Families, clans, and tribes of the prehistoric times gave place to the nation-states and empires of a later day. And vaster aggregations are in the offing today. The history of the world, the history of humanity, is an arresting story of greater and greater integrations. The UN is undoubtedly more broadbased than the League of Nations. It is the best fruit of world political thought. It is the finest and noblest machinery that humanity has yet produced for its own collective welfare. It has its limitations; but these limitations proceed from the immaturity of contemporary political wisdom. Leaving the affairs of national concern to be decided by the national states, the UN functions as the world's platform to discuss inter-state affairs, to discuss subjects which are neither local nor national but international, and which affect the welfare of all the nations of the world. We should not think that the

United Nations is a perfect organization. But out of the very failures of the UN something better will emerge.

Our next experiment with a world organization will undoubtedly be a better one. The future organization of mankind which will be erected on the debris of the present one will more approximate towards the ideal of human unity which religion has set before us. And religion has to guide politics to that consummation.

If politics is to be subservient to human welfare, what is needed is the proper handling of power. In fact, the problem of politics is the problem of holding and using power.

Politics and power are convertible terms. Hence the problem reduces itself to the proper utilization and handling of power so that politics may really serve the purpose it aims at. It is a well-known dictum that 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. The problem before us is how to utilize power so that it does not corrupt others as well as those who wield it. Power, therefore, has to be purified and put under proper checks and balances. When unchecked power is exercised either by a majority upon a minority or by a minority upon a majority, there is danger to both the majority and the minority. Power is a source of danger to those who cannot digest it. The citizen is made the seat of ultimate power in a democracy. He or she is the locus of sovereignty, of all authority and power. This power is transferred from the multitude of citizens to a chosen few with due checks and limitations. This is the least harmful, because the chosen few who are entrusted with the task of handling power are made accountable to the people below.

Democracy is the finest fruit of political thought. It is the best device yet produced by man for checking and guarding against the abuse of power. Theoretically, in democracy sovereignty or supreme power is vested in the people as a whole. In actual practice, however, it is the few that rule and exercise power. It is possible for a state to be democratic in constitution and plutocratic in government. Certain modern democracies belong to this category. Democracy in those countries is therefore nominal, not factual.

The great subject of democracy requires to be studied by us in the context of India's background and needs. Indian democracy is to be freed from the evils and shortcomings of European or American democracy. If by democracy we merely mean the forms and structure of government, with adult suffrage and cabinet system and all that, de-

mocracy will fail in the future as it has failed in the past. Votes can be purchased, and inefficiency, corruption, and nepotism may rule everywhere. This does not mean that we are to bid good-bye to these dressings of democracy. Democracy has come to stay. Adult suffrage and the ballot-box bring a great message of hope to our people, especially the common man. Our task is to purify democracy of its age-old ills and defects. Can we institute something for the purification of democracy? This is the question which is posed before us. India alone can answer this question, because the answer is to be provided by spirituality which thrives most in this country. It is only in India that spirituality forms the central theme of national life. It is only here that spirituality commands the highest prestige and honour. It is the politicians and statesmen who attract the loyalty and allegiance of people in other countries. In India, on the contrary, even in this century, a spiritual personality alone, namely, Mahatma Gandhi, has been able to command the deepest and widest loyalty and affection of the people even in the political field. We can purify democracy of its traditional shortcomings if we can infuse spirituality and a moral tone into its workings. Spirituality is the core of religion. It is the universal in religion, and its realization takes one beyond the local and parochial aspects of religion. It is a struggle to realize life's deeper values, leading to the deepest value which religions name God or perfection.

When we apply religion to our collective life, we purify not only politics and democracy but religion as well. There cannot be any divorce between true religion and genuine politics. Religion, understood in its wider implication, is not a set of dogmas or practices, but a continual inspiration to take man to a higher ethical and spiritual level. We all know how the passions of the heart upset the balance of the mind and the even course of the world. Ideals and ideas in the heart of men are more powerful than even the atom bomb. The root of every happening in this world can be traced to the mind of man. Passions and bad temper ultimately lead to world-wide conflagrations. Wars begin, says the UNESCO manifesto, in the minds of men, and it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed. Unless we handle the problem at its root, it will be impossible for us to solve it satisfactorily. Everything may be lost by bad temper. It is said that the treaty of Versailles—a treaty of peace—was drafted by men of bad temper who were naturally ill fitted to bring about peace; and that treaty became the source of greater distemper leading to the second World War.

The problem of peace is ultimately a problem of the education of the citizen in the democratic values of self-abnegation, tolerance, fel-

lowship, and service. To produce democratic citizens is the problem of education in a democracy. Men and women who have not learnt to restrain their passions of greed, intolerance, hatred, and violence form shaky foundations for a structure of democracy. The late Dr. Josiah Oldfield, speaking on the subject of 'Peace and Internationalism' some years ago in London, observed:

> 'No man should be sent to take part in the deliberations at Geneva who has not learnt to establish peace in his own home. More wars are caused by bad-tempered people sitting to discuss peace propositions than by good-tempered people sitting to discuss war measures.'

All religions consistently emphasize the need for self-control, self-restraint, and self-denial. All religions teach us to practise love and abjure hate and to restrain the waywardness of the senses and the whims of the heart. We have to seek for the stability of civilization in this vital lesson of religion. Civilizations and states have tumbled down when they had lost their spiritual and ethical moorings. The past history of the world is a warning to us. Modern civilization, if it is to survive, must derive sustenance from religion, which, in its cocksure enlightenment, it has discarded as a primitive superstition.

Today our so-called reason and enlightenment are at the mercy of our passions. We are not allowed to think dispassionately and rationally. It is a great service that modern psychology did to civilization when it discovered the irrational behind the thin veil of rationality. Only one-tenth of a man consists of rationality, the remaining nine-tenths of him consists of irrationality. The discovery of the twentieth-century psychology that man is an irrational being is a far greater discovery than the one that proclaimed that he is a rational being. Neglect of this irrational nine-tenths and concentration on the rational one-tenth explains the shallowness of much of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century 'enlightenment' and 'rationalism'. We, being irrational, our civilization too is irrational, and hence unstable. There is a tendency to interpret this discovery of modern psychology as a call to submerge our fugitive rationality in the all-powerful irrational. Some schools of literature and art and even politics have taken this road; but it is a perversion and a snare, and betokens poor understanding of the course of human development and progress. Progress and civilization consist in reason conquering unreason by enlarging its bounds, so as eventually to become co-extensive with mind and being. This is enlightened reason, the *buddhi* of the Vedānta. The value and worth of democracy is that, of all political forms and methods, it is the one road that helps to lead man to this consummation. But to be able to do so, democracy needs the flavour of ethics and the sustenance of religion.

Our task, thus, is to make man and his civilization stand on the foundation of enlightened reason or *buddhi*. To do so, man will have to be taught to restrain himself. 'Unless man erects himself above himself, how poor a thing is man!', sang Wordsworth the poet. Humanity has to be raised to a higher pedestal of existence and expression. If politics is really to serve human welfare, man will have to be taught to restrain himself, and more especially the few who handle power. We have to socialize everything. We may socialize our trade, business, commerce, transport, land, and industry. But this is not enough. Nationalization of many of the important means of production and distribution is not merely unavoidable in the modern context, but also legitimate as steps to the all-round uplift of man, to the raising of the living standard of the people. But above all these nationalizations, there is urgency for another type of nationalization which is the most important of all. This is the socialization of mind, the collectivization of sympathy and interest, the nationalization of the powers, especially, of the gifted individuals of a community. We have to socialize our minds, ourselves first of all. It is only by doing this that we can ensure collective, all-round human welfare. In Soviet Russia, which has successfully established economic socialism, the collective life of the people and wealth of the country are managed by a small group of people. What is the impulse behind this group? Are they inspired by a spirit of service to society? Have they socialized their interests and sympathies? What guarantee is there in their philosophy of life against present or eventual misuse of the trust reposed by society in them? Man must regard himself as a fraction struggling to become an integer through selfless service of society; society is thus a wider school for him through which he attains self-realization, and the experience of a largeness and a fullness.

Without this idealistic temper and approach, power is sure to degenerate, sooner or later, into a snare for the wielder and a curse for the people. Shakespeare refers to this type of degenerate man in these memorable lines (*Measure for Measure*, I. ii. 117-22):

> ...but man, proud man,
> Drest in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd
> His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As make the angels weep....

The history of the world teaches us that such power, unrefined by moral and human feelings, is built on shaky foundations. The whole of Europe trembled at the touch of Hitler and Mussolini; but none could

resist their downfall. They fell, and great was their fall. Pride of wealth, power, and pedigree is pride in the non-Self which is the false Self. Such pride is the source of meanness and pettiness. It also demeans others on whom it is exercised. There is another pride which humbles oneself and elevates the others. This pride proceeds from the depth of our being, our 'glassy essence' as Shakespeare calls it, or our 'inalienable spiritual nature' as religions put it. It is the source of that sense of human dignity which is the greatest value in us, greater than our wealth, our bodies, and our brief dresses of power.

The protection and enhancement of this value is the great mission of democracy. *Śama* and *dama* (self-restraint and sense-control) are the two means which Indian thought prescribes for the creative taming of power. The truly great, says the *Mahābhārata*, are only those who achieve this (V. 34.42, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Edition):

Vidyāmado dhanamadaḥ tritīyobhijano madaḥ;
Ete Madā avaliptānāṁ eta eva satāṁ damāḥ—

'All types of *mada*, inebriation or pride, such as inebriation arising from knowledge, wealth, or pedigree, afflict only the *avaliptas*, the unregenerate ones, but these *madāḥ*, inebriations, become *damāḥ*, self-control, in the case of the *mahatām*, the truly great ones.'

Political and other greatness, bereft of the touch of ethics and humanism, is a greatness which tends to humiliate all else around. It is the greatness of 'exploitation' as opposed to the other, which is the greatness of 'elevation'. Much of the world's greatness is attained by riding stealthily on the backs of others. But the greatness of a Ramakrishna or a Jesus, of a Mohammed or a Gandhi, of a Buddha or a Śaṅkara belongs to a different order; it does not lower and humble others. It, on the contrary, elevates all who come in touch with it. By coming in touch with these personalities, everybody, however low and humble he or she may be, feels ennobled and uplifted. Their greatness and elevation also enhances the dignity of men and women around. Slaves become masters, fractions become integers, and the already great become greater still. Power in this instance is only another name for humility. It is this type of power that can purify politics.

Every society calls for a band of gifted young men and women who are imbued with the humility of power and the power of selfless love. It is not difficult merely to administer a country. A handful of bureaucrats can do it. But to infuse life into the dead bones and muscles of humanity and raise men and women to stature and dignity

require the ministrations of enthusiastic young men and women who are inspired with the passion to serve, the capacity to minister, and the inner purity to stick to the straight and narrow path of self-denial. It is the purpose of an ordinary politician to raise himself, if necessary, even by humiliating others. To exploit others for one's own selfish interests is the task of career politics as it is commonly understood. Politics will have to be raised to a level where it will not exploit humanity for itself but will exploit itself for humanity. We need such politics that elevates and ennobles the subjects and objects of power. Our society needs the ministrations of such power, the services of such politics. A society which is steeped in misery, poverty, illiteracy, and superstition—a society where the rich exploit the poor, and the educated exploit the less educated and the uneducated, offers the most fruitful field for the experiment of democracy on these lines. All other politics will reduce millions to further poverty and degradation. In India and Pakistan, we require such leaders of the people, leaders who function as servants truly and not euphemistically. Mahatma Gandhi was a man who had built the edifice of his politics on the mighty bedrock of character and who regarded the whole world as his own. Small in stature, frail in body, but towering over everybody else in everything great and lofty, he has left an ineffaceable legacy for us all which we will do well to cherish and utilize. We are called upon to redeem the sunken humanity in India and Pakistan. If we fail to follow this blazing trail, we shall be restricting the scope of the freedom we have achieved and may even move towards anarchy. We are called upon to chasten ourselves at the altar of humanity. The masses understand this kind of politics, the aim and operations of which tend to raise them up from their present sunken condition. All other politics—power politics, career politics, etc.—compounded of slogans and catchwords, fair faces and foul hearts, are not only useless but pernicious. Democracy, if it is to play its role in the drama of human evolution in India and elsewhere, must be infused with the spirit and temper of religion, with renunciation and service as its guiding principles.

In the course of the next twenty or thirty years, we shall have undoubtedly reached a measure of economic stability and prosperity in our country. Our vast industrialization programmes will guarantee that. But can we say with equal certainty whether our stature as men and women will be raised *pari passu*? Will the accumulation of wealth and power lead to the decay of man? Should we not take steps to see that development of the capacity to digest wealth and power goes hand in hand with development of our natural resources? Along with the generation of power through the harnessing of rivers and water-

falls, we should also generate a far more vital power—the national character—by harnessing, through a sound system of education inspired by religion, the psychic energies of our impulses and passions, so that the future Indian citizen may become adequate to Indian prosperity and power. Thus alone shall we build up the greatness of India on the greatness and stature of the Indian character, and not merely on her economic and military strength.

This should become the most vital element in our national reconstruction programme. Politics can help in the evolution of that citizen by striving to establish a social order which will be just and equalitarian. If the modern states can evolve social, political, and economic structures based on the recognition of the dignity of man and leading to the full development of his personality, they will be responding to the demands of the age. This is a stupendous task. And it is good for us to recognize that it is a stupendous task. Then we shall not be carried away by cheap political slogans and catch-phrases. It is comparatively easy to frame a democratic constitution for India or Pakistan; but to work the constitution in its true spirit is extremely difficult. It will keep us busy for days and months and years. We are to build up the future edifice of our free state on stable foundations. These stable foundations can be supplied by religion and religion alone. Citizens inspired by spiritual and ethical ideals, who find joy in giving of their best for the strength and sustenance of society and the state, and who enjoy the delights which a free and equalitarian society offers, are the fruits and flowers of a healthy society.

A democratic state derives its strength and stability from its citizens. The terms society, state, constitution, and government are sometimes used without discrimination, leading to much confused thinking and action in our country today. Government is the machinery through which the collective will of society finds executive expression. It is an instrument of the constitution. In its very nature, therefore, it is temporary and short-lived. Compared to government, the constitution is more stable. It represents the political, economic, and moral aspirations and objectives of the people. When these objectives and aspirations change, the constitution also changes along with them. The American Constitution was drawn up in 1776, but it has undergone many subsequent modifications to meet the demands of changed situations. In India, too, legislators are busy framing the set-up of a stable constitution. But here, too, provisions have been made for future amendments and modifications in response to changing social needs. In spite of this, constitutions are fairly permanent, comparatively speak-

ing. It is only when it ceases to respond to, and reflect the ratio of, forces in a society, when it becomes a rigid coat of an elastic and dynamic social body, that a constitution cracks and explodes through social upheavals and revolutions. Then a new constitution takes its place, reflecting the new aspirations and forces. The test of a healthy constitution lies in a proper blending of rigidity and elasticity, ensuring continuity along with a constant adjustment to social changes through new provisions, amendments, or conventions. Nothing can disturb the continuity and permanence of such a constitution except a foreign invasion. The state represents the collective will of the society, its will to be and to become. In the state, the multiple centres of the will to be and to do, as also the will to be free, become focussed into a unity; it also organizes and expresses the sense of distinctness of a community from other communities. The sovereignty of a state derives from this sense of distinctness. This sovereignty, which in a monarchy was focussed in the person of the king, becomes diffused in a democracy in a multitude of citizen centres, making the citizens sovereigns and subjects in one. Sovereignty in a democracy is thus a unity in diversity, reflecting in this the plan of life and nature around. Therein lies the strength of democracy compared to all other political systems.

The state thus is the entity of which the constitution is the expression in thought and intention, and of which the government is the expression in action. The state endures through all changes in governments and modifications of constitutions. Ordinary social upheavals and revolutions may not affect the integrity of the state while they affect the nature and form of the constitution and government. The state gets its mortal blow externally from a foreign invasion and internally from only one type of social upheaval known to modern experience, a communist revolution, whose declared objective is the total destruction of the old state and its structure and forms, whether democratic or even socialistic.

Behind the government, the constitution, and the state lies society, the matrix of all forces, the womb of constitutions and revolutions, placid like a calm lake at one period, erupting like a volcano at another —a moving, changing, struggling mass, constituted of a multitude of ego-centres belonging to varying levels of intellectual, moral, and spiritual evolution. Political revolutions and even social revolutions engineered by politico-economic forces, such as a socialist or communist revolution, rarely affect but a fringe of this vast ocean. Violent revolutions of these types may upturn states and shake up societies, but only for a time. After a few years, the impulse loses its dynamism and

societies resume their even course as before, with only slight modifications and changes. This is the lesson of the French Revolution, as is also the lesson, now becoming slowly evident, of the mighty Russian Revolution. The price we pay is out of all proportion to the commodity we actually get. It is this consideration that leads us to view a violent revolution as the product of social despair and bankruptcy of social wisdom, and not as a product of historical necessity or as a factor of social progress. The only revolution that affects the very depths of society is the peaceful revolution initiated by a great spiritual teacher and the ideology and movement proceeding from him. Gently but steadily, this revolution shapes human desires and emotions and judgements in terms of certain lofty and spiritual values realized and taught by the teacher. It alters the ratio of social forces through a profound transformation in individual men and women, and effects an all-round refinement in human morals and manners.

Thus, society is the supreme field for all enduring types of welfare activity. And such activity is mostly silent and calm. To politics belongs all noise, the healthier the politics the lesser the noise and *vice versa*. A democratic state offers the best opportunity for this mighty work of social transformation. Here is national work of a magnitude and importance compared to which the purely political work is of small scope and consequence. Politics which was paramount before freedom thus takes second place after the achievement of that freedom. The edifice of political freedom needs to be founded on the bed-rock of social health and well-being. That work calls for youth endued not with political passion and personal ambition, but with spiritual enthusiasm and moral fervour, and a grasp of the science of man and society. Only an edifice so built can stand the stress and strain of the modern world. To do so, we shall have to think and act dispassionately. Today when we are called to this task after centuries of national immobilization, let us proceed calmly and patiently to build the structure and edifice of our free society on enduring foundations. This can be done only if we tap the resources of inspiration proceeding from religion and join to it the other inspiration proceeding from science. This has been the way of India; and let us follow that way today.

SPIRITUAL LIFE IN AN INDUSTRIAL AGE

AT no time in the history of humanity has the need to define the goal of human existence been felt so keenly as today. It is not a mere academic question; it wells up in the hearts of men and women of the modern age, common or uncommon, eastern or western.

That spirituality is the goal of human life was accepted by humanity all these thousands of years under the guidance of its religious heritage. But the force of that religious heritage has waned in recent centuries due to an intellectual and social revolution initiated by the West European peoples. It has become necessary, therefore, to evaluate critically the nature of that revolution and to restate the goal of human existence in that light.

Humanity the world over has felt the impact of the powerful technological civilization originating in Western Europe in the seventeenth century through the observational and experimental methods of modern science. This impact has been pervasive in thought and belief as much as in life and practice. The methods and results of rational investigation of nature and human experience came inevitably and increasingly into conflict with the untested dogmas and assumptions of the western man which had filled a large part of the thought-background of his religion for over a thousand years. With the discrediting of that old thought—background by modern thought, religion itself became discredited; and the nineteenth century saw modern western man shifting his loyalties from religion to mundane values. The technological revolution initiated by modern science in the seventeenth century helped to accentuate these mundane values and to sharpen man's worldly appetites during the next two and a half centuries. These

impacts were felt with greater or lesser severity in the rest of the world as well, through the world-wide political, commercial, and cultural penetration of the modern West. Today the whole world is in the grip of forces—physical, mental, and social—initiated by the scientific revolution of the seventeenth-century Europe.

These forces consist of both benevolent and malevolent elements. The former constitute an impressive feature of modern civilization; annihilation of distance and the physical unification of the world, the theory and practice of democracy based on the dignity and worth of the individual, the plans and measures for all-round social welfare on a world-wide scale, the increase of religious tolerance, and the gradual emergence of an international outlook. All these are the products of the conquest of external nature by science, and are achievements unparalleled in human history.

The malevolent elements had begun to obtrude themselves from the end of nineteenth century: an increasing tempo of selfishness, violence, and war. Seventeenth-century Europe had banished religion as the centre of human loyalty as a reaction against the Thirty Years' Religious Wars of that century and substituted sensate values in its place. But in thus banishing religion, western man had a keen feeling that he was banishing a thing of deep value from life, but he could not help it, as that value had been presented to him enclosed in elements irrational and anti-social, and alien to his new-found scientific and national temper, aims, and methods.

Writes Professor A.J. Toynbee, a contemporary authority on the subject of world history (*An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 169):

'The outburst of moral indignation at the iniquity of the wars of Religion was the explosion that blew the irreparable breach in the massive fortifications of the Medieval Western Christian *Weltanschauung*. One practical expression of this moral revolt was a deliberate transference of Seventeenth Century Western Man's spiritual treasure from an incurably polemical Theology to an apparently non-controversial Natural Science; and the consequent progressive demolition of the intellectual structure of Medieval Western Christianity was thus an after-effect of a previous revolt against its moral pretensions.'

The scientific revolution of the seventeenth and succeeding centuries, though it involved the banishment of religion and the secularization of life, yet gave to modern man a large measure of control over external nature; but it also led to a diminishing control over his internal nature, resulting in an impoverishment of his inner life and the emergence of those malevolent elements of modern civilization. Religion had held before man a discipline leading to freedom *from* the senses; modern

civilization, on the other hand, invited him to a path leading to freedom of the senses. Being the easier of the two, man everywhere was attracted by the latter path, as it allowed a free rein to his native impulses and inclinations. The philosophy of modern civilization thus stimulates the native appetites of man, while the ever-improving technology strives to satisfy those appetites. This process of mutual chasing of appetites and satisfactions, unrelieved by the checks and restraints which religion imposes, merrily proceeded from the beginning of the seventeenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, throwing up philosophies and ideologies aglow with melioristic hopes, and articulated in the slogans of *enlightenment*, *rationalism*, *humanism*, and *progress*.

In the words of Toynbee (*ibid.*, p. 184, 186):

'In the eyes of Western Man in the later decades of the seventeenth century, to try to create an Earthly Paradise looked like a more practicable objective than to try to bring a Kingdom of Heaven down to Earth. Recent Western experience had shown that the specifications for a Kingdom of Heaven on Earth were a subject of acrimonious and interminable dispute between rival schools of theologians. On the other hand, the differences of opinion between practical technicians or between experimental scientists would be likely to remain at a low emotional temperature and would be certain to be cleared up, before long, by the findings of observation, and of reasoning about the results of observation, on which there would be no disagreement....

'There was no realization of the truth that by their non-controversial inventions, these apparently harmless technicians were creating power of a new kind which would be used eventually by other hands, if not by theirs, to upset the existing balance.'

After two and a half centuries of revolutionary scientific, technological, and social achievements, the nineteenth century closed with the western man's undimmed hope that a perfect world was just round the corner. 'God is in His Heaven, All is right with the World', sang Browning, reflecting this mood of 'The Century of Progress'.

This naive optimism received its first shock from the devastating World War of 1914-18. The malevolent elements of greed, violence, and war, engendered in the heart of a sensate civilization, had begun to assert themselves. The War initiated a movement of self-criticism and heart-searching among modern western thinkers; the subject 'What is wrong with our civilization?' became a theme of much serious criticism and comment; historians like Spengler wrote about the 'Decline of the 'West'; other thinkers defended its fundamental secular features, advocating only minor adjustments through international co-operative endeavours. But the crisis of the first World War did not clear up at

the end of that war; it continued in a chain of crises, through the Bolshevik Revolution and the grim Fascist and Nazi interludes, in a mounting tempo of greed, intolerance, and violence, to burst out eventually into the unprecedented crisis of the second World War of 1939-45, which saw the birth of the Frankenstein monster of the atom bomb towards its end. The close of this war saw humanity shattered in hope and faith in the promise of an 'Earthly Paradise' held out by the modern technological civilization; it also saw humanity ushered into the nuclear age of human history in which hope in a glorious future for man, if wisdom were to guide his thought and steps, alternated with fear in a final world catastrophe, if folly were to continue to be his guide.

Says Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society*, pp. 120-21):

'We are in the middle of race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends.... Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'

Indian thought had long ago proclaimed that the sensate man is the focus of tension, strife, and sorrow. Secular knowledge only sharpens his animal appetites and deepens his inner tensions. A civilization that knows man only as a sensate individual, that sharpens his animal appetites, and panders to their satisfactions is an unstable structure built on sand; it is bound to topple over sooner or later from its own inner tensions and contradictions. The West had ignored the warning of Jesus contrasting the wise man who built his house on rock with the foolish man who built his house on sand. Discerning and sympathetic modern thinkers were aware of this disturbing feature of the modern civilization.

Swami Vivekananda had warned in the last decade of the nineteenth century (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 159):

'The whole of western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. You will find that the very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang up are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground, and make spirituality the basis of her life.'

India has consistently upheld the idea that spirituality is the bedrock on which alone a stable character or civilization can be raised. It judged a society or a civilization by the amount of spirituality acquired by its citizens. It proclaimed human excellence to consist in the manifestation of the Divine within man. And the discipline that makes this

possible is religion, not physical science, technology, or politics by *themselves*. The latter are secondary, but religion is primary. By bringing order and brightness to the external life of man, they help religion to enrich and deepen his inner life. In the context of human life, there never is or can be any conflict between these two values and disciplines. It was unfortunate that religion in the West was intolerant and anti-science. It was still more unfortunate that religion and science appeared as two conflicting disciplines and values also to the seventeenth-century Western scientist and technician and their successors for these three centuries. Western religious intolerance does not prove that there is essential intolerance in religion. Indian experience has been otherwise. In the light of its philosophy of all-comprehending unity, India finds and upholds harmony not only between science and religion, but also between religion and religion as between people wending their way to the same goal. For the goal is one, but the paths are many.

Writes Toynbee (*An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 294):

'Pharisaism has been the besetting sin of the religions of the Judaic family, and this sin has brought retribution on itself in a tragic series of atrocities and catastrophies. The fruit of Pharisaism is intolerance; the fruit of intolerance is violence; and the wages of sin is death.'

And referring to the Indian religious spirit, he says (*ibid.*, pp. 282-83):

'It seems to be a matter of historical fact that, hitherto, the Judaic religions have been more exclusive-minded than the Indian religions have. In a chapter of the world's history in which the adherents of the living higher religions seem likely to enter into much more intimate relations with one another than ever before, the spirit of the Indian religions, blowing where it listeth, may perhaps help to winnow a traditional Pharisaism out of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish hearts.'

Both science and religion have the avowed aim of the enrichment and enhancement of human life. Religion without science is helpless, while science without religion is risky. While both are thus complementary, religion goes deeper into the human problem and sets the direction for all human activity and striving. And this direction is the spiritual direction, the liberation of the spiritual value lying embedded in every man and woman. Religion not only sets the goal, but also defines the path. The goal is spiritual freedom—freedom from all bonds, physical or mental, external or internal, so that the human soul may shine in its essential pure and divine nature. And the path is education, through the understanding and control of nature—external na-

ture through science and internal nature through ethics and religion. Thus life and experience become a continuous school of intelligent self-discipline for man by which knowledge of the external and the internal become synthesized and fused into wisdom. This is the *buddhi-yoga* of the Gītā which exhorts man to rise above the sensate level and take refuge in *buddhi*, wisdom (*Gītā*, II. 49):

Dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhiyogāt dhanañjaya;
Buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ—

'Work (with selfish desire) is verily far inferior to that performed with the mind undisturbed by thoughts of (selfish) results. O Dhanañjaya, seek refuge in this *buddhi*, evenness of mind. Wretched are they who act for (selfish) results.'

This teaching of the Religion Eternal of India is expressed in a compressed and comprehensive statement by Swami Vivekananda (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.

'This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

In the dissatisfactions and tensions experienced by modern man in spite of the immense knowledge and power placed in his hands by modern science and technology, and in his search today for saving wisdom, we get an echo of the story of much-learned Nārada seeking wisdom at the feet of sage Sanatkumāra as narrated in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. 1. 1-3): 'Please teach me, sir', said Nārada, and after recounting all the vast array of knowledge that he had already gained, and confessing that he was still in the grip of sorrow and tension, he added:

Soham bhagavo mantravidevāsmi, na ātmavit; śrutaṁ hyeva me bhagavad-dṛśebhyaḥ tarati śokam ātmavit iti; soham bhagavaḥ śocāmi; taṁ mā bhagavan śokasya pāraṁ tārayatu—

'I am only a knower of words and their meanings, but not of the Ātman (the true Self of man); and I have heard from great teachers like you that only the knower of the Ātman overcomes sorrow; help me, therefore, O Master, to cross this ocean of sorrow.'

And the teacher expounds the nature of wisdom and the way thereof, and concludes in a majestic utterance of spiritual hope for man (*ibid.*, VII. 26.2):

Āhāraśuddhau sattvaśuddhiḥ; sattvaśuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ; smṛtilambhe sarvagranthīnāṁ vipramokṣaḥ—

'When the sense impressions are pure, the mind becomes pure. When the mind is pure, the memory of one's divine nature becomes steady. When this memory becomes steady, all the knots and bondages of the heart become destroyed and man becomes free in this very life.'

And the *Upaniṣad* adds (*ibid.*, VII. 26.2):

Tasmai mṛditakaṣāyāya tamasaḥ pāraṁ darśayati bhagavān sanatkumāraḥ—

'To him (Nārada) who had disciplined himself into utter purity of heart, sage Sanatkumāra reveals the Light (of God) beyond all darkness of ignorance.'

Indian thought holds that freedom is of the very essence of the spirit of man; man, however, finds that in actual life he is not free; nature without and within thwarts him at every step. The presence of this freedom in the core of his being and the consciousness of bondage in actual life makes man the only restless pilgrim among God's creatures, and converts his life into a battlefield for the possession of freedom and peace. This is the meaning of history with its ceaseless record of strivings and struggles for material sustenance, social delights, political liberty, intellectual knowledge, moral elevation, and spiritual emancipation.

This striving for freedom has been the most persistent and the most impressive search of man throughout history. The Spirit of man refuses to be thwarted by the forces of its environment; when it succeeds in overcoming these forces in the external world, man achieves civilization; this is achieved through the help of science and technology which have progressed from the primitive to the atomic stage in the course of human history. When the Spirit overcomes these forces in the inner world of mind and heart, man achieves culture and spirituality; this is achieved through ethics and religion which also progressed stage by stage to reach their highest formulations in the great world religions.

A study of history reveals that this value of freedom, and with it peace and fulfilment, is achieved in its purest and fullest form only in

the inner life of man. It can find only a limited expression in his external life, in the fields of his economic, political, social, and intellectual endeavour, even at their highest and best. A measure of external restraint in these fields is inevitable; no romantic philosophy can spirit it away. It will be at its minimum in a civilization where spiritual values predominate, and maximum, to the point of being oppressive and galling, in a civilization where sensate values predominate. With all the contemporary talk about freedom, true freedom seems to be a vanishing quantity in the modern world. Even if a world state were to emerge tomorrow through wisdom and peace or folly and war, there is no prospect of freedom becoming less illusory and more real if the present secular *Weltanschauung* were to continue to inspire world civilization.

Remarks Toynbee (*An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 244):

'In these circumstances it might be forecast that, in the next chapter of the World's History, mankind would seek compensation for the loss of much of its political, economic, and perhaps even domestic freedom by putting more of its treasures into spiritual freedom....'

And (*ibid.*, p. 249):

'In a regimented world, the realm of the spirit may be freedom's citadel.'

And pleading for a spiritual re-orientation of our atomic civilization, Toynbee writes (*ibid.*, pp. 284-85):

'The time has come for us, in our turn, to wrench ourselves out of the seventeenth-century mathematico-physical line of approach which we are still following, and make a fresh start from the spiritual side. This is now, once again, the more promising approach of the two, if we are right in expecting that, in the atomic age which opened in A.D. 1945, the spiritual field of activity, not the physical one, is going to be the domain of freedom.'

Indian philosophy proclaims that the universe is spiritual through and through. In the heart of its finite and ephemeral manifestations is a reality which is infinite Existence and infinite Consciousness and infinite Bliss. The end and aim of finite man is the achievement of fullness through the realization of this Infinite Being (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II. 1):

Brahmavit āpnoti paraṁ; tadeṣā abhyuktā; satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma; yo veda nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ parame vyoman; so'śnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipaścitā iti—

'He who realizes Brahman attains the Supreme. With reference to that very fact it has been declared: "Brahman is Existence, Intel-

ligence, Infinitude; he who realizes Him treasured in the supreme space in the cave (of the heart), fulfils all wants together with Brahman the omniscient".'

That spirituality is the goal of human life is an eternal truth for Indian philosophy; it is as relevant in this technically advanced atomic age as in the age of the Upaniṣads in which it was expounded in India thousands of years ago. This eternal truth finds a beautiful expression in a memorable verse of one of the Upaniṣads (*Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad,* VI. 20):

Yadā carmavat ākāśaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ;
Tadā devam avijñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati—

'Man may try through his technical advances to roll up the sky itself as if it were a piece of leather; but with all that, he will never succeed in achieving peace and the end of his sorrows without realizing the luminous Divine within Him.'

LAW, SOCIETY AND THE CITIZEN

LAW is one of those remarkable products of the human mind which has inspired and impelled human activity from the first dawn of self-conscious endeavour. As such, it is coeval with human society. Law has been the guardian angel of human evolution. The majesty of law is reflected in every step of the long road which man has taken from savagery to civilization. Law, therefore, has come to assume a sovereign and absolute aspect in the eye of civilized man instilling in his mind not merely respect, but also fear, with the result that he has begun to crouch before law, making of it a fetish. A partial view of the philosophy of law and of man is responsible for this unhappy situation. It took only the view of man as *subject* of law. But, to law, man is not only subject, but also *sovereign*. The sovereignty and majesty of law is relative to the concept of man as subject.

But man is also the sovereign of law. He is the law-giver. The majesty and sovereignty of mind as law-giver is absolute unlike the majesty and sovereignty of law which is its product. If man as the subject of law (which is what civilized society means) is lofty and sublime, how much more grand should be the conception of man as the centre from which law emanates, revealing a being of vaster proportions than what the concept of a merely civilized man unfolds? But is man, then, an individual or a double? A complete philosophy reveals him as a complex entity, subject at one pole and sovereign at the other and any number of strands in between. 'In my father's house there are many mansions', says Jesus. I shall not here enter into the deep waters of metaphysics (though we are perilously near it), difficult though to avoid in the discussion of a serious problem like man.

Law has various aspects. First, there is law as embodied in the codes and regulations of civilized society, its civil and criminal law; next, there is natural law, the regularities, uniformities, and sequences observed in nature by science. Lastly, and belonging to a different category, there is the moral law within. The first gives civilization. The second gives science, and the third culture. In world history, broadly speaking, the first is represented by Rome, the second by Greece, and the third by India. These races have been the representatives of these three aspects of law, due to a concentration of attention by each on one of them. Of these, Rome and Greece have ceased to be after passing on the torch to others. But India survives, demonstrating the primacy of the moral law over the other two. But the India that has survived is moribund, demonstrating also the inefficiency of the moral law in the absence of the context provided by the other two. True progress of man can be ensured only by a synthesis and co-ordination of the three elements. Restraint of conduct by means of external codes and regulations—what is meant by respect for law and law-abidingness —ensures the joys of civilized existence; knowledge of nature's laws through science ensures power for the further pursuit of the same joys, and of purer delights. But it is the deliverance of the moral law within, under the guidance and inspiration of a complete philosophy of man, that ensures true progress—the progress of man not only from savagery to civilization, but also from man as subject to man as sovereign.

This transition takes man through three well-defined stages of moral and ethical behaviour. The first stage is reached when impulsive man is restrained by codes and regulations and made to behave according to injunctions and prohibitions. In spite of our boasted civilization of modern times, the vast majority of mankind today—probably also in all ages—are still only at this stage of development. It is this fact that evoked the famous remark of Schopenhauer that our morality is only the product of our fear of the policemen and public opinion. It is this that makes the field of operation of civil and criminal law so vast and so varied. Man has not yet climbed the first rung of the ladder to self-realization. But the checks and restraints of law provide him with a steady base which, besides preventing him from going backward—reversion to the animal—provides him also with an external environment of progress.

The second stage is reached when man learns to find inner sanctions, and depends less and less on sanctions provided by external codes and regulations. The awakening of the categorical imperative transforms the externally restrained animal into the self-restrained man.

True morality begins at this stage with the awakening of the moral law within—a law which is one of the rare wonders of the universe. 'Two things fill me with wonder,' says Kant, 'the starry heavens above, and the moral law within'. This is the line of human evolution which transforms the merely civilized man into the cultured and refined citizen. Evolution, which, as an organic process, transformed the amoeba into the man, becomes now a mental and moral process transforming man into, first, the civilized and, then, the cultured, refined, and moral individual. It is only at this stage that man realizes the full meaning and joy of the beautiful conception of democratic citizenship and all that it implies.

The citizen is sovereign and subject in one. He is the highest product of social evolution. He makes laws and obeys them. Now for the first time, through the long travail of evolution, nature yields to one of her cherished products the true joy of living and functioning. Freed from the thraldom of animal impulses, restraining himself in response to the categorical imperative, guided and sustained by his pure and detached reason, shouldering cheerfully the burdens of social existence and enjoying freely the pure delights that it offers and, above all, giving more to society than he takes from it, the citizen stands before the world as the best ornament of society and the finest fruit of social evolution.

The citizen is the finest fruit of social evolution. But his evolution is not complete. He has some way to go yet. He has achieved self-realization in the social context only. The fullness of his self-realization lies just beyond this level. Social fulfilment takes him also to social transcendence. The citizen is still at the stage of moral tension. Complete self-realization marks the resolution of this moral tension.

This is perfection according to Indian philosophy. The citizen is moral; but the perfect man is morality personified; he is its fulfilment and expression. He is as far removed from the citizen as the citizen is from the vegetative man. The perfect man is the truly free man. The vegetative man is purely a subject; the citizen is sovereign and subject; but the perfect man is sovereign and free. He is the free, the equal, and the full. He stands head and shoulders above society and its laws, transcending them, yet fulfilling them. He is the completely self-realized man, the one of steady wisdom, not subject to social or any laws but obeying them cheerfully, purely for the purpose of social welfare. In short, the perfect man is the *divine outlaw*, and also the source and sustenance of all law.

Students of law today will become interpreters of law tomorrow; the young law student will evolve into the full-fledged lawyer. Interpretation of law is a social function; as such, the lawyer is one who fulfils an essential social need. Here arise certain questions: Does a mere knowledge of law entitle one to be an interpreter and expounder thereof? Does the social function of interpretation of law which a lawyer performs exhaust the possibilities of his personality? Is the concept of a 'pure lawyer' tenable or worthy?

These questions assume an ever-increasing importance in the context of India today as also in the world context, a context provided by the modern transition with its ever-changing values in every sphere of life. Against this background, the concept of a 'pure lawyer' or 'pure anything' suggests a pure staticity, an entity neither touching nor being touched by the flow of life around it. If this entity had some sanction behind it in a placid age, it has become, in the dynamic environment of today, a mere anachronism. When every value is being questioned and new values are being adopted in place of the old, the mere interpretation of law becomes a function not only devoid of serious social value, but often detrimental to true social progress. Progressive values and laws proceed not from man as lawyer, but from man as citizen.

Self-realization in terms of the concept of citizenship as outlined above is the privilege of every social functionary—of the lawyer and of the lay worker, of the administrator and of everyone else. It is only through this realization, which provides a wider context for his function, that every social activity becomes invested with meaning and significance. The lawyer is called upon to interpret the law which, as citizen, he along with others has helped to formulate. Through this he and his function become truly socialized. He becomes a dynamic centre of social change and progress as much as of social interpretation.

This consummation involves profound changes in the lawyer himself. The lawyer who seeks to interpret the law must himself fulfil the law first. In his own person he must have developed inner sanctions in place of external sanctions, self-restraint in place of external restraint. A master of the law is not one who has merely mastered the tenets of the law but also fulfilled the law in his own being. Any lesser qualification in the maker or interpreter of law is fraught with nothing but evil consequences for society and the individual. The prevailing social chaos in all parts of the world is not a little due to the above deficiency. The individual as citizen realizes a largeness and a fullness which flows into and uplifts his various social functions and activities.

It is clear that citizenship of the above description is not something that can be conferred by any of the usual trappings of democracy like the franchise. These are certainly valuable; they provide the outer environment for the functioning of the citizen. A free democratic society involves not only freedom to vote and to legislate, which is usually what is meant by citizenship, but also the capacity to utilize that freedom—a capacity which is purely a product of mental and moral evolution, but not something that can be conferred from outside. Thus a citizen as understood in political philosophy is only a candidate to citizenship and not a full citizen who has been described above as the best ornament of society and the finest fruit of social evolution.

Man, in the colonial context, has yet to realize the meaning of citizenship as understood in political philosophy. He is subject, but not sovereign. For a vast number of people, this is a serious handicap acting as a bar sinister to their realization of that full citizenship. But it is no bar to the gifted and the great. These achieve citizenship even in the context of political subjection by the sheer weight of their moral elevation. But such are necessarily few. But their emergence and functioning even under such auspices serve to reveal not only their own inherent strength and greatness, but also of the greater worth and value of the moral as compared to the political constituent of citizenship.

If the immediate and urgent need of man in the Indian context today is the attainment of citizenship as understood in political philosophy, it is but as a means to that fuller realization of the same ideal. Many nations have long enjoyed the blessings of the first without making any appreciable progress towards the second. Citizenship in a true democracy involves more than what these nations have valued; they have valued the non-essentials as opposed to the essentials of democracy; the prevailing stagnation is the result. A democratic society centres round the democratic citizen—the man or woman who has achieved or strives to achieve the fullness of self-realization. This ideal of citizenship is something worth striving for, and its call will be insistent as days pass, demanding of every Indian, whatever be the particular social function he or she fulfils, an enduring effort and struggle—mental as well as moral—for the creation of a stable and strong society peopled by citizens equal and free. In our struggle to realize the full meaning of the concept of citizenship in the social context and of perfection which is social transcendence—in this glorious struggle shall lie the meaning and significance of the Indian Renaissance not only to the Indian people, but also to the peoples of the world at large.

THE ADMINISTRATOR IN A WELFARE STATE

ALL men and women in a society have to carry the burdens of their individual lives, light or heavy, as best as they may. Education seeks to fit them to carry these burdens intelligently and cheerfully, besides training them to enjoy the delights of social existence zestfully and in peace. These burdens and delights, in the case of any actual individual, involve also the destiny of one or more individuals of that society. The conduct of an individual citizen, therefore, is part self-regarding and part other-regarding in its scope and consequence, the ratio of self and other content depending upon the intelligence and strength of social awareness of the individual. Citizenship of a democratic society implies the presence of a high ratio of these two virtues in all its members. This is achieved through a sound system of education designed to bring out the native talents and evoke the moral sense of all its citizens.

The state in a democratic society derives its strength from the co-ordinated wills of all its free and equal citizens. In the absence of this strength, the state becomes an imposition on the people. States have always been looked upon as irksome burdens by the people at large in our country, who have tolerated their existence for the little benefits of order and security derived from them. Throughout history, amazingly enough, people the world over have carried heavy burdens for small benefits. Occasionally, however, they have dared to pull down the structures through revolutions when they became too heavy. For the first time in history, there emerges the possibility in India of building up the edifice of a state, not superposed on the heads of a tolerating and long-suffering people, but emerging out of the wills and urges

of a free people, and deriving its strength entirely from that base. This is the concept of the welfare state whose socio-economic content has been concisely expressed in Kāḷidāsa's classic comment in his *Raghuvaṁśam* (I.18):

Prajānāmeva bhūtyarthaṁ sa tābhyobalimagrahīt;
Sahasraguṇamutsraṣṭum ādatte hi rasaṁ raviḥ—

'The state took taxes from the people only to ensure their own prosperity in return, like the sun taking up moisture from the earth only to give it back in thousandfold measure.'

Our sovereign democratic republic derives its authority from 'we, the people of India'. It has kept before itself the high objective of the all-round development of all the people of our country, and is framing policies and measures for effecting national welfare. Today, it is true to say that the Indian state has behind it the will of the Indian people who accept it cheerfully, and not just tolerate it as an irksome necessary burden. But this cheerful acceptance, let us not miss to note, consists mostly of hope—hope that intentions and promises will soon flow into performances and achievements, hope that these will not get stranded in the upper social strata leaving only a few trickles to reach the lower levels, but will reach these levels in sufficient force to fertilize the national life at the roots.

This is what proclaims the importance of administration in the sphere of social functions. It is against this background of social hopes and expectations that we have to view the personality of the Indian administrator and his work. In these surging hopes and expectations, enthusiasms and efforts, we experience, to adapt Wordsworth's arresting phrases, the light of heaven lying about us in the infancy of our democratic experiment; we have to ensure that our infant state as it grows through the years does not feel the shades of the prison-house closing upon it, does not feel the glow of national enthusiasm of the early years dying away to become career politics and dull bureaucratic routine, but will continue in its infant freshness to be attended by the splendid vision of the happiness and welfare of millions of men and women.

This is the challenge to politics and administration in our country today. When we seriously set our hearts to meet this challenge, we are led to the important sphere of spiritual and moral values in human life and work.

Education in a democracy is intended to give its citizens a twofold efficiency—moral efficiency proceeding from training in social awareness and sympathy, and physical and mental efficiency proceeding from training in productive talents and capacities and leading to material enrichment of society. This also is the basic training of the administrator in a democracy, which, through its educational processes, bridges the gulf between the ruler and the ruled. The administrator is first and foremost a man among men, a citizen among citizens; if he is anything more, it is as the efficient servant of his fellow citizens. What a refreshing idea is this for us in India and how different from the old notions of a demigod and know-all! The citizen specially trained to discharge an important social responsibility is the administrator. That special training seeks to equip him with high executive ability to serve society efficiently. This is achieved through the training of his intellect and will; it gives him a character strong and disciplined, and a keen intelligence; but it cannot inspire him with a deep sense of social awareness indispensable for the proper discharge of his social responsibility. The training of intellect and will alone is not sufficient for the purposes of a democracy; it may be adequate to run an empire of subject peoples, and that, too, for a time; but in a democratic welfare state, it is imperative for the administrator to develop fully the *affective* side of his personality too, his capacity for sympathy and imagination; his social awareness needs to be developed in scope and intensity more than that of the average citizen.

This second training is not such as can be imparted in any training institution, which can at best provide a stimulus to quicken and develop whatever social feeling has been implanted in the candidate by his earlier family training and social experience. In the absence of this important personality value, the administrator will increasingly tend to become un-imaginative, egocentric, and wooden, and his administration will fail to respond to human situations in a human way. Even in dealings with a subject people, this type will spell failure, as our country learnt during its later phase of British subjection when, barring a few exceptions, this type of administrator predominated. But this type will spell disaster in the new India of free and equal citizens. The best safeguard against it is a fund of patriotism, a real, and not merely academic, love of our land and our people.

This integrated training of intellect, will, and emotion is what makes for richness of personality and strength of character. Such a training helps to evolve within the individual a new personality value, a new focus of strength and resource. This is *buddhi* in the language

of the *Gītā;* it may be translated as enlightened intelligence. At the level of the ego and *manas* or sensate mind, intelligence is narrow, self-centred, and unsteady, being at the mercy of instincts and impulses. In the service of this intelligence, human knowledge and power express themselves as unsocial and sometimes anti-social forces, in manifest and subtle forms, bringing sorrow in its train to the individual and his world.

Says Bertrand Russell in his *Impact of Science on Society* (p. 121):

'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'

Buddhi connotes this ripening of knowledge into wisdom. Intelligence at the *buddhi* level creates a pattern of what Sorokin calls altruism in human character. It cannot function except in a creative and constructive way. Detachment and stability, resourcefulness and sympathy, are the hallmarks of such a character, at once efficient and human.

Herein is realized the much-needed combination of executive efficiency and social efficiency, the transformation of brute efficiency into humanized efficiency. This is the type of efficiency that a democratic welfare state expects from its administrators. To those who care to pursue further, this synthesis of character will lead to a third efficiency in the life of an individual, the spiritual one, whereby he or she will realize the meaning of existence in spiritual illumination.

It is heartening to note that the Indian Administrative Service Training School has kept this twofold efficiency as its objective, and has adopted for its motto the pregnant message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, verse 50: *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'*Yoga* is efficiency in action.'

A world of ethical and spiritual thought has been compressed in that brief message.

The term *yoga* has, since the last few centuries, conjured up visions of magic and psychic tricks, of lean people gazing down at their navels, or austere people looking straight at the tips of their noses. It must be a refreshing experience, and a bit intriguing too, for our bright young men and women of the Administrative Service, and others in other fields, to be now told that they are called upon to tread the path of *yoga*. But this *yoga* that they are called upon to practise has no kinship with that magical and misty variety; it is the royal, arduous road

of all-round excellence, calling upon the young, vigorous and hopeful men and women of a society to dare to tread it, so that they may achieve the fullness of personality development in the context of the work for social welfare and happiness. The author of the *Gītā* must be deeply gratified at the prospect of the resuscitation of his long-neglected message by getting vigorous young minds of our country for its experimentation. Has not the great Śaṅkarācārya interpreted the *Gītā* statement about the decline of *yoga* and Kṛṣṇa's anxiety to resuscitate it through his vigorous disciple, Arjuna, in verse two of the fourth chapter, to mean that the decline is due to its falling into the hands of weak and unrestrained people, resulting in the thwarting of social welfare?

Our politics and administration will have to breathe the spirit of this *yoga* if we are to realize the objectives of a welfare state, if we are to establish a polity based on social justice and social peace, a polity free from all forms of exploitation, not merely economic, but also political and mental. This *yoga,* however, is not a teaching to compose the distractions of a mere nation and people, but is universal in its scope. That it has in it the power to bring about peace and justice in the world at large was recently voiced by no less a person than the present Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Hammarskjöld, while commending the sentiments contained in verse forty-nine of its second chapter: 'Work (with selfish desire) is verily far inferior, O Dhanañjaya, to that performed with the mind undisturbed by thoughts of results. Seek refuge in this *buddhi* or evenness of mind. Wretched are they who work for (selfish) results.'

'Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh', says the Bible, 'and the hand worketh too', adds Swami Vivekananda. *Yoga* aims to impart this sense of fullness to man and, through him, to the functions he performs in society.

THE TRAINING OF OUR ADMINISTRATORS

I ADDRESSED this Training Centre some time in April 1961, just before I left for Europe on a four months' lecture tour. When I was invited to come and address you again, I was not at first willing to comply, due to heavy pressure of work and a bad throat. So I told your representative who came to invite me that I did not intend to become 'a permanent lecturer' on the staff of the Secretariat Training School! But still I accepted the engagement, and I am here before you due to my love for our country and my keen desire to meet and exchange thoughts with members of the Central Secretariat staff who have the responsibility to ensure the tempo of our development programmes for the welfare of our people.

Vivekananda and Our Youths

You may be interested to know how men like me look upon these national problems. When I was a young boy, a student of a high school in a little village, I read Swami Vivekananda. Before that I had heard of Mahatma Gandhi's activities for the mass awakening of our nation. Those were the days of the Non-co-operation movement and the great national upsurge which had helped to generate in the hearts of thousands of our youths a wave of feeling of love for the country and for our common people. I chanced to read Swami Vivekananda then; I was hardly fourteen. What a revelation, what an inspiration for a life of service to the country and to the people, was this study of Vivekananda! It opened up the vision of a life meaningful and purposive. Thousands of our youths had similar experiences. Swami Vivekananda's literature is available today in eight volumes of *The Complete Works* in English, as well as in innumerable books, large and small, in several of our

regional languages; their study gives an education which no school books or college books can ever provide. That study will help to relate our school and college education to the urges and struggles, hopes and aspirations, of our dynamic social *milieu*. He was the first to point out to the nation this dynamic social *milieu* and to teach us to shape our life, individual and collective, against that background. Thanks to this dynamic background, I was able, even while young, to give myself an education which has made life purposive and worthwhile; and all these thirty-five years since I joined the Ramakrishna Order, it has ever been growing in meaning and purpose. I have always been seeking the company of people who are alive, alert, and sensitive to higher values; and when I come across people who are not self-centred and selfish, but who love their country and their people, I feel great happiness in their company. Wherever I go in India, this is the one blessing that I have always got, the company of people who are alert, who are aware of the great national upsurge around them, of people who feel the great joy of working for the country's development. Their association has given me great strength and fortitude. If that spirit is not there in any section, I feel somewhat suffocated in its atmosphere. A group of people who only talk about their own little things, trivial things, selfish things, that group will not be able to inspire persons like me. Swami Vivekananda has given us that great passion, the passion to work for the happiness and welfare of man. And he has told us that this life is trivial in itself. A little man lives his little life of eating and drinking, amasses wealth, perhaps by cheating a dozen people, leads a selfish life of pleasure or power for a few years, and one day dies away. Whether he lived or not does not make any difference to the world; but he himself thinks too much of himself, that he is the centre of the world and that the world is meant to subserve his ends. Such people will learn the great lesson, after some knocks from life perhaps, that to be alive is not merely to be alive biologically. Man's life is much more in the mind than in the body. We often forget this great truth that to be alive biologically is no life at all, that as far as man is concerned, the special arena of his activity is his mind, his thoughts, his awareness.

The Inner Meaning of the Term Mānuṣ (Man)

Sri Ramakrishna used to give a beautiful interpretation of the word 'man'. In English we use the word 'man'. In Sanskrit and in our Indian languages, we use the word *manuṣya* or *mānuṣ*. *Mānus* is the word in Bengali also for 'man'. Sri Ramakrishna used to play a pun on the word *mānuṣ*. *Mānuṣ kon hai? Mānuṣ manhuś hai. Jiske huś man* (mind) *me hai, vah mānuṣ hai.* If his *huś* is only in the body, he is not

a *mānuṣ*. *Huś* is life, awareness. So he who lives in the mind and has the capacity to deal with the world from the point of view of the mind and not merely from the physical point of view, who is not a bundle of ailments and grievances, knowing only the instinctive impulses and the mere stimulus-and-response mechanism of the nervous system, he who puts all nervous impulses to the scrutiny of mind, and functions in a mental way, that man is truly man.

Meaningful Existence

In this particular field, during the last sixty-five years or more, thanks to the national movement, our country has been gaining new strength as new segments of our population were steadily becoming aware of the nation's heritage, becoming sensitive about their responsibility to their society and capturing for themselves a meaningful and purposeful life. The cumulative result of decades of this type of experience was the attainment, in 1947, of political freedom by the country. If we had not produced such people in large numbers, we would have continued to be in bondage even now. 'Each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost' was not the philosophy that our country followed for the last sixty-five years. Each one of us should bear this fact in mind today; each one of us should strive to realize this larger dimension of the human personality; and when we do so, certain consequences are bound to follow. An utterly self-centred and selfish individual, who seeks to exploit the world for his own profit and pleasure, will reduce himself or herself to a zero; he is spiritually dead. When an individual overcomes that temptation towards narrowness, towards triviality of personality, he or she will begin to experience the pulsations of a larger and fuller life through his feeling of oneness with humanity around. When we achieve this, we evolve into beings of larger awareness and enter into a world of ever-widening opportunity and hope, and experience real greatness of personality. The little self goes, and a larger and fuller self comes into being within us. It is this birth of a new individual, a new man or a new woman, that we need in our country today—an individual who is keenly aware of and feels his oneness with the vast surging mass of humanity around hungering for food, shelter, knowledge, and the good life; struggling to overcome age-old backwardness and become progressive. When we become aware of it, we become entirely renewed and revitalized.

True Education

If we can achieve this, we can become satisfied that we have had the best of education. And that is what we are unfortunately lacking

in a large measure at the present time. An education that will make us get out of the little prison of the ego, that will make us get into the vast hub of life around and make us function as dynamic individuals in that dynamic context—such an education, unfortunately, is not still the nation's privilege to have. The usual textbooks of schools and colleges do not give us much by way of such an education; but when we read the writings of men like Gandhiji and Swami Vivekananda, we get educated in the true sense, an education which makes for growth and expansion of personality. Says Swami Vivekananda (*Education* by Swami Vivekananda, Chapter I):

> 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man....
>
> 'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-building, assimilation of ideas.... The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?... We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.... The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.... The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control, and become fruitful, is called education.'

Joy in Work

This is the type of the educated man and woman that our nation needs today; the nation calls for the services of such people in every department of its life, not only in the Secretariat and the vast public services, but also in the ministries and among members of Parliament, among teachers, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and the general citizens. Every one needs this type of an education which imparts a certain joy to life and work. We often forget that to earn money and just to maintain life somehow is not a big thing. If you work in an office and get your monthly salary, that salary can maintain yourself and your family; that salary cannot contribute joy or richness to your life beyond this physical maintenance. These other values have to be found from some other source, from within yourself. The joy in the work you do is a product of your own disciplined inner life; it cannot be the product of your salary. The money that you get from your work does not automatically give you joy in your work; because its only function is to maintain your body in minimum comfort. But joy in work is something that you capture from the depths of your own being. If I have not learnt to do my work with joy, I will be no better than the animal which is tied to the *cakkī* (oil mill); the animal goes round and round, gets some work done for somebody else, gets its daily ration of food,

but does not experience any joy in its life or work. This joy is the special quality and prerogative of a disciplined and trained mind. It experiences joy in the course of work as much as at the end of it; to such a mind, the salary and the physical maintenance that is achieved from it are only the by-products of his disciplined mind; its joy and satisfaction is a commodity which cannot be purchased by any salary. Life-fulfilment cannot be the direct product of material wealth, however large it be. The mother's joy in serving her baby cannot be assessed or paid for in terms of money. You may employ a maid on a certain salary to do it; but the mother's touch or the mother's joy will not be found there. Similarly, in daily life, very often we nurse this feeling: I shall enjoy life when I finish work and go home, or when I retire and settle down. That is an utterly short-sighted and foolish idea of living life. We have to enjoy life in the process of living itself. That is the correct Vedāntic outlook, the true philosophical outlook. Our theology speaks of people who used to work hard in this life, perform meritorious actions in this world, with a view to enjoying peace and happiness in heaven. Even today, there are people who adopt that view; they uphold a life of work as drudgery *here* with a view to enjoying *ārām* (relaxation) *hereafter*. All the trouble that they take here is only to get a little happiness in heaven. But in the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, there is severe condemnation of this attitude; the *Gītā* refers to it as a foolish notion that one should live a joyless life of drudgery here and seek joy in a future heaven. Why wait for a future joy which is not sure and certain, and spoil the chance of joy which is already in your hands? 'Why not be happy *here*, why not have heaven *here*?'—this is what the *Gītā* and the Upaniṣads ask. Our people have yet to realize the meaning of the deep spiritual message of these Upaniṣads. Many people whom I have seen work just like animals; animals carry loads, and if they get a little food in the evening, that is enough for them, that is their comfort and satisfaction. But during the course of work itself, in the process of work itself, they have not learnt to find comfort and satisfaction; this is the hallmark of a slave mind; they have not discovered the great truth that life itself is the field of joy. This is the spiritual message of all religions; this is the legacy of Vedānta to our people. The Vedāntic outlook, and also the modern outlook, is: 'Find joy in work.'

The Way to Find Joy in Work

How can we find joy in work? By working for oneself? No; it is not possible to find that continuous joy in work through selfish motivations. Frustration and ennui are the end of all selfish motivations. Frustrations and nervous breakdowns are the end of a self-centred life.

The first advice of modern psychiatry to such people is to get out of this prison of self-centredness and to find a genuine interest in other people. Everyone has to learn the lesson some day that the best way to be happy is to strive to make others happy. So wherever you find frustration, you will always discover that the person concerned had been too self-centred and the only hope for him is through learning to take interest in other people, to find joy in the joy of other people. This is the royal path that makes for health, for strength, for efficiency. This great truth—universal and human—we should apply to the world and to our life in it. What can be a greater source of joy for a young man or woman in this country today than to participate in the work for the country's development and progress?

From Subjection to Independence

An educated citizen is expected to think in these lines and to live on these terms. This broader, deeper vision of life is the fruit of true education. All narrowing down of life's scope is the fruit of no-education or ill-education. A child, before going to school, knows very little of its nation's or world's history. Some education in this line it gets from its parents, if they are themselves enlightened and responsible. The child's mind thinks in narrow terms to begin with; then comes his education in his country's history. This widens his mental horizon by opening up to him the past experiences of his people to begin with, of men everywhere later on, and he becomes a richer person by emotional identification with, and living through, these historic experiences. History opens up to the mind of the Indian student the long procession of his country's history marked by periods of glory, of tiredness and decay, of invasions, subjections, and humiliations; and of re-awakenings and reconstructions, depending on the nation's strength and alertness or the nation's weakness and lassitude. The nation has paid heavily for its weakness, lassitude, and disunity. During foreign invasions, thousands of our men and women have been kidnapped and taken away to foreign countries. We have been humiliated on a thousand occasions. Why? Because we became foolish and short-sighted, narrow and self-centred. We did not think of India as a whole, but only of the region in which we lived, the caste or creed to which we belonged. We did not have a vision of our national destiny, and so did not develop a sense of national responsibility and a spirit of national service. These things did not strike us for centuries and we had to pay heavy penalties. A few centuries of slavery and oppression sat heavily on our life until we emerged into the modern period and the Western connexion, and began to get a glimpse of these ideas and values. Then we fought for the country's freedom. A new national awareness came to some of

our people who taught the nation to straighten its back, to shed its mood of weakness and disunity, defeatism and slavery. After a hundred years of education in these values, the nation woke up; the old darkness began to vanish. And political freedom came in 1947, bringing with it the opportunity to work to make India really united and strong and the people enlightened and happy.

The Challenge of Independence

Freedom has brought us the challenge to build on this soil of ours an enduring civilization and culture based on the values of human freedom and dignity and equality. This is the privilege and responsibility which education must confer on our citizens in our democracy today. Education which does not instil this responsibility is no education at all. When you get education on these lines, you find life meaningful and purposive. Otherwise, it is just meaningless. Foreign rule ended and we became free in 1947. Does this freedom mean only job-hunting, the brown filling the vacancies created by the departure of the white? Can that be the main meaning and significance of freedom? How can man experience joy and elevation of spirit and life-fulfilment from such a narrow interpretation of the scope of national freedom? If the individual, out of short-sightedness, isolates himself or herself from the nation, it is death for that individual and, if such individuals multiply, death to that nation as well.

Freedom and Responsibility

So, our national freedom cannot be divorced from our national responsibility. The growth and development of India is the responsibility of her citizens alone and of no one else; if everything goes well with India, we, her citizens, are responsible for it; but if something goes wrong with her, the responsibility will again rest on us, her citizens. Before India became independent, Britain was responsible for all rights and wrongs in India. The Secretary of State in the Parliament in London was responsible for everything which went wrong here; and Indian nationalism used to criticize the British Government for all the injustices and wrongs suffered by the people of India. The people of India were like children then, without the burden of responsibility and the freedom of action as its prerequisite. But as soon as the British left and India gained freedom, the people of India also became burdened with that responsibility which is involved in all freedom.

But if the people do not rise to the occasion by neglecting to achieve the citizenship virtues of freedom and responsibility, they will

continue in their mood of slavery, dependence, and 'childish irresponsibility', and transfer to the Government of free India their erstwhile attitude to the British Government and continue in the relationship of 'they', the rulers, and 'we', the ruled.

In a free society, the term 'we' must be used more often than the words 'you' and 'I'; people often forget this corollary of freedom. In the Constitution of India we have the Preamble which reads:

'We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:

Justice, social, economic, and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship;

Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation;

In our Constituent Assembly this twenty-sixth day of November 1949, do Hereby Adopt, Enact, and Give to Ourselves This Constitution.'

Citizenship in a Democracy

It was not the Constituent Assembly members who gave us the Constitution, nor Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. It was done by the people of India through these, their elected representatives. And the people have the power to change it, to amend it, or to frame an entirely new Constitution. This is the substance of political freedom. Therefore, every citizen raises his stature by developing a sense of belonging to the nation, by continuing in the mood of the sentiment 'We' of the Preamble, and by developing responsible attitudes and forms of behaviour. This is the political education of the individual by which he raises himself in status and stature. Achievement of this sense of inward freedom and responsibility is the essence of education in a democracy. A democracy which gives education without imparting this sense of responsibility to its citizens will be a poor democracy, continually sapping its own foundations. When we have educated ourselves in this sense of responsibility, the work that we do and the jobs that we accomplish, as well as our entire conduct and behaviour, will bear the impress of maturity, earnestness, and social dedication.

Nation-building through Calm, Silent Work

The citizen is responsible for the happiness and well-being of his nation. This happiness and well-being is the product of the work of millions of such citizens imbued with a spirit of efficiency, co-operation, and dedication, like the coral-islands which are built up from the bottom of the ocean by millions of tiny organisms depositing their shells, to

emerge eventually out of the ocean as an island. Millions and millions of microscopic shells have gone into the make-up of a coral-island; similarly, little actions of millions of citizens go to the building up of a nation, the silent work of millions of housewives, artisans, peasants, teachers, civil servants, and others. History is made, not by striking events or flashy personalities, but by the silent forces released by the life and work of millions of the common people. Swami Vivekananda gave us a new outlook when he asked each one of us to consider that everybody else had done his work and only my work remained to be done; and on that work depended the welfare of the nation. Not the other way, as we are inclined to do nowadays: 'After others have done their part, I shall attempt mine.' This mood bespeaks of an inner poverty. The other mood is characterized by robustness and high-mindedness. It expresses itself as a sense of duty and responsibility and proceeds from a sense of personal worth and dignity.

The Meaning of Citizenship

It is this mood and attitude that enables the individual to give of his highest and best. Otherwise, he becomes weak in resolve, inefficient, and static. No educated citizen should allow that to happen to him or to her; whether we are employed in the Secretariat or elsewhere, or living private lives, whether we are men or women, every one of us has a basic common personality, and that is our citizenship of free India; each one of us is primarily a citizen, and only secondarily a Secretariat staff, a minister, an administrator, a doctor, an engineer, a lawyer, an industrial worker, or a farm labourer. These are merely the social functions performed by individuals; his individuality is only partially expressed through any one or all of these functions; but he or she discovers his or her fullest social personality only in being a citizen. If we define any social functionary in terms of logic, say a Joint Secretary of one of the Ministries, this distinction between the total being of man and the partial nature of his functional personality will become evident. Now, when we define an entity in logic, we give two references of it—its denotation and its connotation; the first gives its comprehending generality, and the second gives its individual particularity. We define a thing by telling to what class it belongs and what it is or does in itself; and so, in the case of the officer in question, we will define him as a citizen who is chosen to perform the function of a joint secretary; similarly, a clerk is a citizen who is called to do a clerical function; and so also, a minister or a teacher, a sweeper or a housewife, and so on; these are all to be defined as citizens who discharge or are called to perform these respective functions. That word citizen is the most comprehensive concept, comprehending in a central unity not only

all the various functions and relations of one and the same individual, but also the millions of individuals and their functions in a total national unity.

So, when we define each of the four hundred and thirty million people of India, we mention two things about each of them—one common and the other special, one his or her denotation and the other his or her connotation. The common reference is citizenship. Each one is a citizen first; secondly comes the particular social function he or she does, through which he or she seeks to give expression to his or her citizenship. Thus, in being a citizen we express our total national unity. The joint secretary, the minister, and the humble, simple sweeper are one in being citizens of free India. Their functions are different, but their essential being is one. This is the concept of human excellence in a democracy; its liberation in every individual is the high objective of education in a democracy.

A Twofold Integration

The citizen achieves a twofold integration—firstly, within his own personality, by the achievement of true manhood, and secondly, with the multitudes of his fellow-beings, by the achievement of a democratic personality. And this citizenship is primarily a state of the inner being of man, a value achieved within and seeking expression in outlook, action, and behaviour outside. What exactly does it mean? It means the suffusing of man's inner being with the values of freedom and equality. A citizen can neither be a slave nor a master of others. As he values his own freedom and dignity, he values these in others as well. He has learnt the secret of work, the art of co-operation and team-work. Freedom with him is not a mere external trapping, not a mere social *milieu,* but the very constitution of his mind and heart. The work he does becomes the expression of his personality, spontaneous, joyous, and efficient. 'Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh and the hand worketh too', says Swami Vivekananda. His work is not the grudging product of external rewards or punishments, bespeaking of a grievous poverty within. In him has opened some inner reservoir of enthusiasm and power, making for more efficient work and more happy social relationships—the product of the double integration referred to above. This is the type of human excellence that emerges from the political and ethical constituents of the citizenship concept. Man grows in stature by breathing the invigorating air of freedom and responsibility; without it, he remains immature and short-statured. This sense of responsibility is the most important constituent of the citizenship concept which we in India have to assimilate.

We achieved external freedom when India became politically free. We shall achieve inner freedom when we learn to wed this external freedom with the value of responsibility. That alone will raise the stature and status of men and women in India.

The Problem of Mental Immaturity

Take, for example, any one of our youths; he is termed a free individual because he is a citizen of free India; but can freedom be thus taken for granted? Is it not also something that he has to struggle for and achieve? Suppose he goes about the streets throwing stones at the lamp-posts and breaking the glasses; can he then be called a citizen? The answer is yes and no. In one sense he is, because he lives in the free society of India; but in another sense, and that in a more vital sense, he is not, because he has not developed his sense of responsibility towards his society. To destroy wantonly national property is the height of boyish irresponsibility; a child which breaks family crockery wantonly is irresponsible because he is immature physically and mentally. But a youth who wantonly destroys national property or does other things destructive of national wealth, honour, and well-being is physically mature, but mentally and morally immature. The nation can take it easy if such immaturity affects only a small number of its youths or its citizens; but it becomes a matter of serious national concern if they constitute a sizable majority, with only a minority constituting the mature responsible section. I am afraid our country is in that state just now. This sense of responsibility begins and ends with a small minority, but has not invaded the minds and hearts of our vast majority, not only of our youths but even of our elders. Many of the misfortunes from which free India is suffering today can be traced to this lack of that mature outlook of the free individual in the educated section of our nation.

Education in a democracy is the primary means of inculcating this sense of responsibility in its citizens. If education fails to do this, democracy becomes endangered, and I personally feel that if our democracy is facing any danger today, it is from this deficiency in our educational ideals and processes; free societies have more often succumbed to character deficiencies from within than to assaults from without. The maintenance and advancement of a free society depends upon the widest diffusion of the spirit of freedom and responsibility among its members. A society can ignore a certain measure of irresponsibility in its children; it is natural for children to be irresponsible; though, even here, a free society does not neglect to initiate methods and processes to educate even its children in the larger aspects of res-

ponsible thinking and behaviour, virtues which proceed from an education in good manners. But no society can tolerate irresponsibility in its youths and grown-ups and hope to survive. To carry over the irresponsibility of childhood to the adult stage, when one becomes invested with the privileges of the franchise, is a serious matter for the individual and for the community; it bespeaks of the inadequacy of the educational process of a society. No society, however, has a perfect educational system; its imperfection is reflected in the criminals and anti-social elements present in every society; but its success in every free society is reflected in the character, efficiency, and social awareness of the vast majority of its citizens. It is here that the weakness of *our* free society and the imperfections in its educational system become most pronounced. The criminal is only a small segment of those anti-social elements of any free society which, however, find wide diffusion in the Indian society today. It is a sign of a wide-spread psychological immaturity in the people in post-freedom India.

The words that Swami Vivekananda uttered sixty-five years ago ring true even today. In his famous speech in Madras on 'My Plan of Campaign' delivered in 1897 on his return from the West, the great Swami used the term '*moustached babies*' to characterize all such mental immaturity. In India today, our education is producing many *moustached babies* who fill high positions and low positions, men whose mental age and development of social awareness have not kept pace with their physical age. Real maturity of thinking and maturity of action must come to us; only then will our democracy become rock-based and poised for all-round progress. We cannot afford to make a failure of our democratic experiment. We have suffered enough for centuries from want of a stable state functioning with the support of the people and for the welfare of the people. In the absence of such a state, continuous tyranny—Hindu tyranny, Muslim tyranny, European Christian tyranny, one after the other, had sat heavily on the people for these many centuries. Today, however, we have for the first time established a state in India deriving its strength and sanction from the broad masses of the Indian people, irrespective of creed, caste, social position, and sex. This state provides us with a long-sought opportunity to work for the happiness and welfare of the people as a whole. A modern state, the burden of which the people will joyously carry on their shoulders—that possibility is there before us today; but, in spite of our republican constitution, such a state is only a possibility, but not an actuality yet. Its actualization depends on the people's education in the privileges and responsibilities of democratic citizenship. This is exactly the greatest desideratum of the times in which we are living.

The nation has more or less successfully completed its two Five Year Plans. In spite of our weaknesses and foibles, we have marched on steadily and achieved a measure of success. The third Five Year Plan has commenced, and the nation must bend its energies to make it a resounding success. And how can this be done except by bringing to bear upon our tasks *a new sense of social urgency and national responsibility, a new sense of personal dignity, a new spirit of joy in work?* On these depends the steady march of India on the road to economic, social, cultural, and spiritual greatness. I stress these three values because a man works at his highest and best only when he is inspired by them. My work is best done when I become emotionally aware of the wider human reference of the work, a reference that takes me beyond my own pleasure and profit; it also reflects the spirit of personal dignity and worth which I feel for myself; it is also a joyous outpouring of myself. These three values are spiritual in nature; and a character which has captured them has achieved spirituality of a high order. The tragedy of our social situation lies in our undoubtedly high and rich spiritual heritage finding very little expression in the character of our people and in their inter-personal behaviour.

Light from the Example of Other Nations

This becomes highlighted when we compare our society with some other free societies. During my recent tour of seventeen European countries, including the U.S.S.R., Poland, and Czechoslovakia, I was impressed by the general level of practical efficiency and social awareness attained by the people of these countries. The same picture had greeted me in Japan also in 1958. In these advanced countries, there is a high level of general education, sense of social responsibility, and character efficiency. In fact, they are advanced countries not because they have a high level of material prosperity, but because they have achieved a high level of character and efficiency which are the bases of all advancement, including the material. The officials, ministers, teachers, students, and workers with whom I conversed in the Soviet Union impressed me with their devotion to work and pride in their country's achievements. That attitude helped to bring the best out of them. Love of country and the vision of its glorious destiny have a galvanic effect on the mind; they generate energy and enthusiasm; they make the citizen a dynamic centre for social progress and development. They also infuse into man a sense of personal worth and dignity and make him work with a feeling of privilege and joy. This is the general attitude to work which I saw in the people of those countries. You have not to coax a worker to do his work. He has enough self-respect to make him do the job allotted to him to the best of his ability.

This is true not only of officers at the higher levels, but also of workers at the humbler levels. In India, on the contrary, an average worker has the tendency to be lazy and neglectful of his duties, and needs a good deal of prodding and much supervision; if left to himself, there is no certainty that he will give his best to his work. If a contract for a piece of work is entered into and the cost settled, the worker or the firm concerned, if inspired with the spirit of dignity and self-respect, will consider it a matter of honour to discharge the contract to the best of his or its ability. Mutual trust is possible only in the context of such virtues. And without mutual trust, social life becomes coarsened and weakened. On the virtues of personal integrity and mutual trust and co-operation, the advanced nations have raised their social edifices. Can we claim the same in our country? Are we raising the material advancement of our society on those solid virtues? Since independence, our national morality has suffered an eclipse. There is a sad lack of personal integrity and mutual trust. Adulteration of foodstuffs and drugs, ticketless travelling, bribery and corruption, cheating each other and the state in a wide variety of forms—all these have assumed proportions so as to bring social morals to a low ebb; the most sinister aspect of the situation is the wide prevalence of the mood of cynicism and the scoffing at moral values and moral individuals. Cleverness has become life's ideal and not moral integrity. The continuance of such a situation will spell social disintegration. Fortunately, of late, our society has become aware of these sores in our body politic and the need to take remedial measures. There is evident everywhere a keenly felt longing to raise the tone of the nation's morals and manners and to recapture the vital spirituality of India's hoary culture, which had morality for its base and vision for its crest.

Love of Wealth versus Love of Virtue

The Western societies have achieved this moral base and are aspiring for the crest of vision. To a visitor from India every one of these countries provides many striking contrasts to his own country in social morals. In Moscow I saw trolleys without conductors and inspectors to sell and check tickets. Within the trolley there is a box and a ticket roll attached to it; a passenger enters the trolley, drops the cost of the ticket into the box, and tears off a ticket from the roll. Except the driver, who in most cases is a woman, there is no other employee such as a conductor or a ticket-checking inspector. Nobody inquires whether you have put all the money or not, because nobody need inquire. Each man has a sense of personal dignity, worth, and honour. Nobody will do any mischief there. Millions and millions of people can be trusted to carry on with only these simple arrangements. Can we say

the same thing here? Can even the Secretariat staff be trusted? You arrange tomorrow for a Secretariat bus without a conductor. It is certain that the bus service will be a failure on the very first day! Why? We have not enough of that sense of honour. We do not ask enough why a policeman should be necessary to make us behave in a moral way. Can I not be moral by myself? Is it not my personal honour and national responsibility? But no; we rather prefer to be coerced into moral or lawful behaviour by outside compulsions. We need constant watching to ensure whether we are behaving correctly or not; the result is that one group of citizens must have another group of citizens to control and regulate them all the time. How can a nation go on with such poor character equipments? It must make us ashamed; this sense of shame and sorrow descends upon one when one sees a different picture in other countries. Adulteration of milk and other foodstuffs is not a practice prevalent in any other country except our own, not even in the comparatively more backward South-East Asian countries. We have yet to experience the glory and excellence of man *as man* and not what money, power, or pedigree invests him with. Love of easy money has destroyed our love of virtue. No nation achieves greatness that way. For all free men, personal honour is of greater worth than money and other possessions; in this respect, we were more free when we were politically unfree; after independence, we have given a higher status to money than to man.

The Remaking of Man in India

That is a tragic irony. Excessive love of wealth is the worst form of idolatry. Wealth is the product of human intelligence and labour; by surrendering himself to it, man is but falling down and worshipping an idol carved by his own hands. Man the worker, man the creator of culture and civilization, of wealth and power, of science and art, is, in our society, getting submerged in wealth, which is the least of his products. He has to be redeemed. He has to be resuscitated. That exactly is the work of true education. If man in India does not get this education, whatever may be her economic and other advancements, she will be building her national edifice on sand. The Western nations became advanced only by redeeming man and putting him on the pedestal of glory. Behind their scientific, material, and social advancement is the advancement of their men and women educated in self-respect, co-operation, and practical efficiency. We in India often copy institutions and methods of the West; but we hardly care to educate ourselves in that character of theirs which sustains their institutions and methods; and so we fail. The essential thing in their heritage is their character, their efficiency, their social spirit, their sense of per-

sonal honour and dignity. When these character traits are taken into our system, all other advancements will follow as a matter of course. Our nation is not progressive simply because we are having radios, and are going to have television sets, too. India can have television tomorrow. The All India Radio can easily institute a television programme in India and, after ten years, every home can have a television set. But is this a true index of national progress? The answer is a yes and a no. Yes, if behind it is an assimilation of the spirit of the West, its scientific outlook and character-efficiency, its human and social awareness; otherwise, an emphatic no.

Man-making Religion and Man-making Education

Man's sense of honour and dignity and his sense of social responsibility, I saw these in abundance in Japan and the Western countries; that is their national morality. They may not claim to be religious or aspire to be saints; they may not be enthused in the name of God; but they have a sense of social responsibility, a respect for man as man and a respect for the dignity of man in their own persons. The greatest achievement of the Western people is their character-efficiency and humanism, this respect for man in their own person as well as in others. They have grasped the spirit of manliness, which, according to India's own philosophy, the Vedānta, is the first step to true godliness. We in India have yet to grasp even the importance of this first step, in spite of our boasted religious culture. It is this man-making education and man-making religion that our nation can achieve through the guidance of Swami Vivekananda today.

What higher objective can an educated citizen of India place before himself today, asks Swami Vivekananda, than the development of character through the service of his fellow men, the utilization of his talents for ensuring the happiness and welfare of the millions of his less fortunate fellow citizens?

In a letter to an Indian disciple written from America in 1894, the Swami writes (*Letters*, Fourth Edition, p. 175):

'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

What can be a greater treason than this against our state today, a state mobilizing all its resources of men and money for a war on national poverty and backwardness? Political treason is bad; but it is not an everyday phenomenon; a more frequent and more serious treason is the neglect of Indian humanity by the educated Indian citizen,

according to Swami Vivekananda. How much money does a modern state have to spend so that you and I can become educated? The educated section in India hardly cares to ponder over these facts. But it is wholesome to remember it. A student's mere fees do not suffice to educate him today. No educational institution today can be run on the mere fees of its students. The state has to pay heavily for buildings, for equipment, for the maintenance of teachers even in an ordinary arts or science college; what to speak of engineering, medical, and other technical institutions? The education of an engineering graduate may cost anything up to fifteen thousand rupees; a medical student may cost almost as much. Their fees will hardly cover a fourth of the total cost. So who pays for your education? The state, that means the millions of tax-payers. Are you not thus indebted to the society for your education? Is it honourable or manly on the part of any citizen to take all this service from society and then forget society and live a self-centred life? That may be a sign of ignorance or low cleverness, but not of intelligence. Intelligence demands that I dedicate my talents to the service of the society which, in the stirring words of Swami Vivekananda, 'is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, and the sacred heaven, the Vārāṇasi, of my old age' ('Modern India', *Complete Works*, Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, p. 480).

The Anatomy of Efficiency

When we conduct our life in the light of this philosophy, when we acquire this social awareness, we begin to view our life and work in a new perspective; we begin to experience new sources of energies within us; we acquire a new efficiency. It is only through a larger social awareness that full efficiency is achieved by a worker. Efficiency is the product of intelligence yoked to great social causes consciously and deliberately; such an awareness brings out the best out of the worker. And without the stimulus of this wider reference, without the consciousness of national purposes, no worker can achieve true efficiency or life satisfaction. In the Secretariat or other spheres of activity, therefore, there is this constant summons to socialize and humanize our outlooks and actions, to feel constantly the pulsations of the dynamic national development programmes. Behind every process and method of administration, we have to visualize the faces of the millions of the common men and women of India, hungry for a better life; behind every file of the Secretariat is that humanity whose recognition alone makes for a faster movement of the files. This idea of a suffering humanity behind the file is an abstract concept; most people cannot be moved by abstract ideas; most people cannot be moved by such an abstract idea of humanity; most people are moved only by the sight

of a concrete situation, by the sight of a suffering man in front; but education and culture are designed to endow man with this capacity for abstract sympathy, an imaginative sympathy, for man not present in front, but imaginatively visualized as existing in society and calling forth the energies of his head and heart and hands.

Capacity for Imaginative Sympathy

Take, for example, the most ordinary item of work in the Secretariat processes, the pension papers of an individual. A man is about to retire from Government service; his pension papers are not yet ready; the time comes and he retires. He has been an honest officer. He has not accumulated any money. He depends upon his monthly pension to make his life go on; but months after retirement, his pension papers are not ready. How is he to go on? One year gone; two years gone; years of stress and strain after years of honest service. He moves heaven and earth, using all his influence, and after three years, he obtains an interim sanction of just a part of his hard-earned pension; he is told that the remaining part is still under consideration. Why should this man be subjected to all this avoidable anxiety and suffering? There is only one answer to this question; it is that the officer or officers dealing with his file are more dead than the file itself; can such avoidable suffering exist in a society where the officers have developed a capacity for abstract sympathy, for visualizing the man beyond the file, a capacity for suffusing intelligence with imagination and social feeling? Such callousness in the machinery of Government results in a gradual sapping of moral earnestness in the citizens. Even an honest officer in such a situation will question his wisdom in being honest and would tell himself that he would have been wiser if he had accumulated enough money through dishonest means and provided himself against this contingency. There are thousands of such instances where a little abstract sympathy, a little capacity for human imagination on the part of the Government, would have saved many from avoidable suffering and the nation from moral frustration.

Man versus Machine

Today one of the most important subjects discussed in Secretariat procedures is how to expedite work, how to make the Government machinery move faster. A file moves only because there is a human being behind it. After all, the file is a lifeless object; but behind the file is a living man. And if that man is also dead, how can anything move? So the problem before the Government is how to ensure that living, vital, throbbing men and women are there behind its machinery of administration from top to bottom. Are the Central and State

Government Services filled with live people, people responsive to the great life urges around them? Are they pulsing with the pulse of the nation? That is the only way to make India move. The Third Plan will become a tremendous success if only 50 per cent of the staff in the various departments become live individuals in this sense. That is the true anatomy of efficiency. National efficiency is nothing but individual efficiency multiplied—millions of people becoming dynamic centres of social awareness and social change. The Third Plan calls for a little more of social impulse, a little more social motive power, to make it achieve its targets of production and social development. The world is in the grip of tension; it may explode into a catastrophic war; our development programmes will be seriously affected in the event of such a war. This imparts urgency to our plans of social and economic development. India must be made strong and self-reliant before the world situation deteriorates further, so that she can achieve internal stability and exert more and more to contribute her quota towards the achievement of international stability.

Administrative Training and National Vision

The training programmes in this school as well as in institutions like the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, are intended to streamline the Indian administrative machinery so as to make it a fit instrument of all-round national development. This training is largely training in methods and techniques, but it needs also to be enlivened by national vision and identification.

The capturing of this national vision is what we need very much today. The achievements of Western countries make us realize that we have to travel a long, long way to catch up with these socially advanced countries. The primary responsibility for this falls on ourselves. Other nations are helping us, and helping generously; but unless we become efficient and honest, and help ourselves, we cannot even utilize effectively the help offered by others; the third Five Year Plan has allocated ten thousand crores to be spent within the next five years. Whether we spend it wisely or otherwise depends upon us alone. But intelligence, patriotism, co-operation, and dedication can make these ten thousand crores yield ten times their value. One rupee will yield ten rupees worth of benefits in the hands of an efficient person, whereas ten rupees will appear as one rupee in the hands of a foolish person. So it is not enough that we have allocated ten thousand crores, but we should see to it that the allocation is spent intelligently and fruitfully so as to produce the maximum results. That is the real test of national and governmental efficiency. Scientific efficiency is teaching

the nation how to double and treble agricultural and industrial output; character-efficiency will similarly help the nation to increase the tempo of all-round national development. With the achievement of such a character-efficiency, the whole apparatus of government and administration will become suffused with this scientific efficiency so as to ensure the production of maximum results from minimum investments at minimum costs; that is the responsibility of all citizens in a free society; and when government and administration become manned by such citizens, efficiency becomes the hallmark of all state processes.

Kālidāsa's Concept of the Welfare State

In one of our ancient books, the *Raghuvaṁśa* of Kālidāsa, the great national poet has given the criterion of a welfare state. We can well apply that criterion to our national welfare programmes today. We are engaged in bringing happiness and welfare to millions and millions of people who have been living the life of next-door neighbours to brutes for the last one thousand years due to the callousness and inefficiency of our rulers and of our upper classes. The image of India even today is not what is provided by the rich and well-to-do, but is what is provided by the half-starved and half-naked, unemployed and underemployed millions; we should never forget this image of real India; a handful of rich or well-off people do not constitute the nation. Millions of children are born in squalor and poverty every day, and grow and die in the same conditions. We have to keep this real image of India constantly before our minds; we will then become alive and vibrant with the touch of humanity; all our work will then become a worship and a dedication. We often forget that picture of real India while living and working in the midst of New Delhi and other cities, in the midst of our imposing and well-furnished office rooms. What are we doing for that India? Have we not conceived the welfare state idea and programme in terms of these millions who are our brothers and sisters? All our politics and science and religion shine best when dedicated to their happiness and welfare. Practical religion received a wonderfully refreshing orientation in our time at the hands of Swami Vivekananda. Quoting the words of his master, Sri Ramakrishna, 'Religion is not for empty bellies', the Swami said (*Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western Disciples, Seventh Impression, p. 644):

> 'So long as even a dog of my country remains without food, to feed and take care of him is my religion.'

He exhorted us not to identify religion with laziness or magic, but with character imbued with the spirit of renunciation and service. Spirituality is the core of religion; and spirituality is character; it is *being*

and becoming and not some cheap mystical trick. True spirituality makes us aware of the divine in our hearts and in the hearts of all others, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, or sex. The God of India is the God seated in the hearts of all beings, as taught by India's eternal philosophy, the *sanātana dharma*, the Vedānta. In the light of this philosophy, service of man becomes worship of God in man, making for the realization of human excellence as much by the one who is served as by the one who serves. It is the increase of such a spirituality in our citizens that will make for the realization of true social welfare in India. It is such a welfare state that is pictured in Kālidāsa's classic statement in *Raghuvaṁśa* (I. 18):

Prajānām eva bhūtyarthaṁ sa tābhyo balim agrahīt;
Sahasraguṇam utsraṣṭum ādatte hi rasaṁ raviḥ—

'It was only for the welfare of the people that the state (under the Raghu line of kings in which was born Śrī Rāma in a later age) took taxes from the people; as is the case with the sun which draws moisture from the earth only to shower it back thousandfold (in the form of beneficent rain).'

Free India's Concept of the Welfare State

The state under Raghu and his successors took taxes from the people not to squander them, not to enjoy themselves at the cost of the people, but to return them back to the people, amplified a thousandfold through governmental and administrative vision and efficiency, in the form of a welfare programme for the whole people. Today we are proposing to do precisely the same. By utilizing the taxes and savings and foreign aids and loans for productive investments, we are increasing the national income every year; we have at least to treble the per capita income if we are to achieve a modicum of general welfare in our country; and this must be attained within the next few years. This is an inspiring concept. But how does it become realized? Our concepts and plans are grand and beautiful. Modern India, in her plans and programmes for the economic and social amelioration of her vast population, has made a great contribution to contemporary world thought. We have, however, to see that our concepts and plans are fully implemented; we have to capture a new will, a fresh determination and a dedication; this is what the nation expects of all its citizens today—a tremendous will and determination that in our lifetime we shall see India truly free, not merely externally which we achieved in 1947, but also internally, the freedom from poverty, ignorance, and social injustice. Every school child in India must be taught to understand

this idea and make this resolve. Every child born in India should have all the opportunities to rise to its full stature; then only will our society achieve health and vigour. That is the ideal and aim for the realization of which you and I and millions of others are summoned to participate. It is a life's dedication; and it was this dedication that Swami Vivekananda expected from the educated youths of our country.

Nation-building through Man-making

When you read Swami Vivekananda's lectures and writings, gathered in eight volumes, you get an experience of a new dimension of existence, meaningful and purposive, a new spiritual awareness, where religion, socio-political action, and daily life become blended in a character at once energetic and compassionate, visionary and practical. Man's concern for God and man, for God *in* man, is the central theme of this literature. The Swami would have each one of you realize the glory of being a man. He is essentially a teacher of man-making. Says he in 'My Plan of Campaign' (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 224):

'It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want. And here is the test of truth—anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually, and spiritually, reject as poison; there is no life in it; it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge.'

I hope you will have occasion to acquaint yourself with the inspiring and noble literature of Swami Vivekananda, who was in every sense of the term a nation-builder, the foremost architect of our national destiny. What wonderful ideas and visions he has bequeathed to us! What energy and power he has breathed into our age-old society! In his first lecture in India on his return from his four years' glorious work in the West, he communicated his vision of an awakened India in a language and style at once inspiring and convincing. The nation was largely asleep at the time when he spoke, in January 1897, at Ramnad, at the southern extremity of India. Says he in his 'Reply to the Address at Ramnad' (*ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 145-46):

'The longest night seems to be passing away; the sorest troubles seem to be coming to an end at last; the seeming corpse appears to be awaking and a voice is coming to us—away back where history and even tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, reflected as it were from peak to peak of the infinite Himalaya of knowledge, and of love, and of work, India, this motherland of ours—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only

the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outside powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.'

Vivekananda Literature : A Mine of Strength

What beautiful language and sentiments! And this in 1897, when the country was lying under abject slavery. Even then, this prophet had the vision of the sure awakening of this leviathan of our great country. Ever since he uttered those words, our nation has been experiencing a steady accession of awareness and strength, which culminated in its emancipation from centuries-old political subjection in 1947, in the political integration of the country, the framing of its republican constitution, and the inauguration of its economic and social development programmes. The Five Year Plans embody this national purpose and resolve. Swami Vivekananda spoke of nation-building in its most comprehensive terms; but he based it on man-making.

Discussing the effect of this and other speeches delivered by the Swami from Colombo through Madras and Calcutta and Lahore to Almora, Romain Rolland writes in his *Life of Vivekananda* (pp. 124-25):

'Did the dead arise? Did India, thrilling to the sound of his words, reply to the hope of her herald? Was her noisy enthusiasm translated into deeds?... The Master's rough scourge made her turn for the first time in her sleep, and for the first time the heroic trumpet sounded in the midst of her dream the Forward March of India, conscious of her God. She never forgot it. From that day the awakening of the torpid colossus began. If the generation that followed saw, three years after Vivekananda's death, the revolt of Bengal, the prelude to the great movement of Tilak and Gandhi, if India today has definitely taken part in the collective action of organized masses, it is due to the initial shock, to the mighty

"Lazarus, come forth!"

of the Message from Madras.'

If you read two of his important books, *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and *Letters*, you will experience for yourself the power and charm of this man-making and nation-building message, and your next day's life and work will appear to you in an entirely new light. About his books in general and his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* in particular, Romain Rolland writes in his *Life of Vivekananda* (p. 162):

'His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!'

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking about Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda at the celebrations of the 114th Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna at the Delhi Ramakrishna Mission in March 1949, said (Jawaharlal Nehru, *Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14, pp. 4-6):

'I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda. But I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him and I think that it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches and they would learn much from them....

'If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will find is that they are not old. It was told 56 years ago, and they are fresh today, because what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems. Therefore they do not become old. They are fresh even though you read them now....

'So what Swamiji has written and said is of interest and must interest us and is likely to influence us for a long time to come. He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly, he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of spirit and fire, that flows through Swami Vivekananda.'

In his *The Discovery of India* (p. 400), Jawaharlal Nehru writes:

'Rooted in the past, and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

I very much wish that every member constituting the government and administration of the Indian Union and the States experiences this impact of Vivekananda's literature on his or her personality. He has left us a rich legacy of thought and inspiration which will enable us to capture energy and joy and zest in and through our life and work.

Vivekananda's message has both national and international significance. He himself was intensely Indian and yet international in outlook and sympathy. His birth centenary falls in January 1963. It is a great event for India and for the rest of the world. So far as the world is concerned, he was the first bridge-builder between India and the modern West. America will ever cherish him as the greatest messenger from eternal India. The message of India's hoary culture, its rational philosophy of Vedānta with its comprehensive and practical spirituality reached America in a powerful way through him. Eng-

land and the rest of Europe also bear the impress of his thought and message in various degrees of intensity. That impact is a continuing impact and is effected gently and silently, in tune with India's historic experience. And as far as we, the people of India, are concerned, irrespective of creed or caste, he belongs to us and we belong to him; every breath he took pulsed with the thought of the good of India, the happiness of India.

Writes Sister Nivedita on this subject in her great study of the Swami, *The Master As I Saw Him* (pp. 49-50):

'There was one thing, however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was his love of his country and his resentment of her suffering. Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundation. He never used the word "nationality", nor proclaimed an era of "nation-making". "Man-making", he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his motherland. Like some delicately-poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. There was no cry of fear, no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification, that he had not known and understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness.'

Vivekananda Birth Centenary

The centenary of such a teacher and leader has a special meaning and significance for our people. Already, the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs is extending financial help to the Ramakrishna Mission to bring out the eight volumes of the *Complete Works* of the Swami in the various languages of India, in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Malayalam, and of a volume of selections each in Assamese, Oriya, and Punjabi. Steps are being taken to organize the centenary celebrations on a nation-wide scale and also in various countries outside India. A volume of selections from Swami Vivekananda is expected to be published each in Russian, Polish, and Czech languages by the respective governments. The various ministries and departments of the Government of India like the Posts and Telegraphs, All India Radio, Community Projects, and Social Welfare are also planning their respective contributions to the centenary celebrations, which will be spread over a year, January 1963 to January 1964. It will provide an occasion for the nation to refresh itself, to deepen its faith, and brighten its hopes and resolves.

Conclusion

I am glad to be with you this morning in this Training School. You are trained here in the techniques and methods of administrative work so that there may be a better and quicker disposal of government work. This training is very necessary, but it is not enough. There is need also to capture a mood of earnestness and dedication, a new philosophy of work, and a keen awareness of its social and human objectives. It is this that helps to galvanize all Secretariat procedures, in fact, all our life and work. The Indian man and woman must utilize the new *milieu* of political freedom and social opportunities to initiate a sustained inner struggle to achieve true human excellence and realize the glory and worth of human existence. My best wishes to you all! I hope that each of you will constantly bear in mind that character-efficiency and technical efficiency are inseparable and that on your honest, efficient, and dedicated work will depend the future of your beloved motherland as much as your own life-fulfilment.

Let me conclude with an illuminating passage which conveys to us the answers given by Swami Vivekananda over sixty years ago to questions put by a journalist bearing on the subject of national efficiency ('Interviews', *Complete Works*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, pp. 226-27):

'Then what you really desire is national efficiency?'

'Certainly. Can you adduce any reason why India should lie in the ebb-tide of the Aryan nations? Is she inferior in intellect? Is she inferior in dexterity? Can you look at her art, at her mathematics, at her philosophy, and answer "yes"? All that is needed is that she should de-hypnotize herself and wake up from her age-long sleep to take her true rank in the hierarchy of nations.'

'But India has always had her deep inner life. Are you not afraid, Swamiji, that, in attempting to make her active, you may take from her her one great treasure?'

'Not at all. The history of the past has gone to develop the inner life of India and the activity, i.e. the outer life, of the West. Hitherto these have been divergent. The time has now come for them to unite. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was alive to the depths of being, yet on the outer plane who was more active? This is the secret. Let your life be as deep as the ocean; but let it also be as wide as the sky.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND OUR POLICE FORCE

THIS year India is celebrating, with the rest of the world, the first birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda. This great teacher of modern India spanned East and West with his lofty character and spiritual vision. His has also been the most important single contribution to the making of a new India. He awakened her from her deep long sleep and made her strive to achieve a healthy body-politic for herself based on the democratic values of freedom, equality, and the sacredness of the human personality. As expressed by our Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru (*Ramakrishna and Vivekananda*, pp. 6-7):

'Vivekananda was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national movement in India, and the great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly, he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom and of fire that flows through Swami Vivekananda.'

Referring to the contemporary relevance of Vivekananda's ideas, he says (*ibid.*, p. 5):

'If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will find is that they are not old. It was told 56 years ago and they are fresh today because what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems.'

India today is a sovereign democratic republic. After centuries of foreign subjection, her people have become citizens of a free state with the responsibility and privilege of building up the manhood and woman-

hood of her vast population. This freedom involves the need for a thorough change in the attitude and function of every section of our people—political leaders and administrators, men of the professions, industrialists and businessmen, peasants and workers, students and teachers, the police and the defence forces. This orientation in attitude and function has a special reference to the Indian police because of the intimate connexion of the personnel of the police forces with the day-to-day life of the common people.

The work of the police in a country under foreign subjection is quite different from that in a free state. Under foreign subjection, the policeman is as much a slave of the foreign master as the rest of the population. But in a free state he functions as a citizen among citizens, as a free man among free men and women. His being a policeman is secondary to his being a citizen. This is also true with every other social functionary, the administrator, the teacher, the engineer, etc., in every one of which it is the citizen, free and responsible, that shines through these various functions, which then assumes the spirit and temper of a dedicated service. This service becomes richer and more efficient when it has behind it the awareness of a free citizen.

Swami Vivekananda, therefore, taught the people of India to inspire themselves with the national ideals of renunciation and service. Says he (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, Eighth Edition, p. 228):

'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.'

The duties of the policeman, as the duties of the soldier, of the nurse, and of similar other functionaries, involve a good deal of renunciation of personal comfort and pleasure. He is the watch-dog of law and order. He is awake when others go to sleep. He is the symbol of law—*dharma*—which is ever awake, and which helps in the promotion of the happiness and welfare of society.

The Indian policeman today has the responsibility to rise to the full awareness of being the citizen of a free state and to educate the people also in this awareness and in the healthy behaviour patterns flowing therefrom. Man-making is the message of Swami Vivekananda. '"Be and make" shall be our motto', says he. He would like us to strive to be ourselves men first and then help others to be men similarly.

Swami Vivekananda would like to see the Indian policeman rise to the stature and awareness of a true Kṣatriya, with the energy and

the capacity to protect and to foster his fellowmen. As in medicine the emphasis today has shifted to prevention of disease from cure of disease, so in social control the emphasis has shifted from mere punishment to education. In our dynamic democratic context, the policeman cannot remain a mere negative instrument of law and order preservation. India today is not a police state, but planning to be a welfare state. In this changed context, the policeman, like others, has to become a dynamic instrument of social education. He has to educate the people in the democratic virtues and graces of a law-abiding citizenship. He will be able to discharge this national responsibility only when he achieves for himself true education and culture and an incorruptible moral character.

Vivekananda would like to see in the Indian policeman that nobility and self-discipline by which even the suspected criminal will receive from him the grace of the human touch worthy of the dignity of man. For 'each soul is potentially divine', says Swami Vivekananda. 'Every man has an inalienable focus of dignity within himself', says the modern democratic theory. On this concept is founded Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of religion and education. He defines religion 'as the manifestation of the divinity already in man'; and he defines education 'as the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. The study of Swami Vivekananda will help the Indian policeman to realize this divinity in himself and evoke the same in others as well.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND OUR NATIONAL PROBLEMS

I AM very thankful to the Rotary Conference, especially to Rotary Governor H. K. Das of Ambala, who is a very close and dear friend of mine, for inviting me to come and address this conference this morning. I have come all the way from Calcutta in response to his invitation. I have addressed several Rotary meetings before, and what induces me to do so is the presence of a small group of people in all these Rotary Clubs who are closely known to me and whose character I respect.

Our Post-Independence Human Situation

On an occasion like this when you are holding your District Rotary Conference and our nation is confronted with various problems, I can do no better than utilize the brief time that is allotted to me to discuss with you these problems and suggest solutions for them as best as I can. None can live in India today without being conscious that our nation is passing through hard times. But it is our responsibility and privilege as citizens of India to face the challenge of these problems, understand the forces that are acting upon our society, and tackle them in the most consummate manner possible. If problems thwart us and frighten us, it will be a very poor expression of the freedom for which we struggled and which has come to us. Fifty or sixty years ago, the country was entirely different; the people of India then were entirely different in their mental make-up, aspirations, and ideas. But today you find a thorough change, and this change is particularly evident in our youths; there is in them a greater sense of self-confidence, energy, vitality, and intelligence than in those of the pre-independence genera-

tion. People were generally 'manageable' by themselves and by others up to about two decades ago. But since independence there has been a release of vast energies in our youths which, when expressed in organized movements, appear like the elemental forces of earthquakes and floods. This new human energy is spilling over and creating confusion and destruction all round; and the nation is baffled to witness this phenomenon. I would invite you to place this phenomenon in a certain historical context and view it in the light of the refreshing and strengthening philosophy that was given to us by one of our greatest architects of modern India, namely, Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda's Diagnosis of Indian Humanity

When Swami Vivekananda was returning to India after his successful work of four years in the West, a foreign lady who was his fellow-traveller in the same ship told him: 'Swamiji, your country is very moral'. Swamiji asked her why she felt so. She replied: 'We don't hear much of crime in India; whereas in countries like America and England, we read of so much of crime in the newspapers.' Swamiji heaved a little at this and said: *'I wish it were otherwise!* I wish there was a little more crime in India. There is no life in the people so that they cannot even commit a crime!'

This was the reaction of this great teacher to the India of his time. But if he were to visit his India today, he would be happy to see the energy and vitality of our younger generation. The people of India today, both young and old, are showing their vitality by violent agitations and committing of crimes. In the eyes of Vivekananda, the troubles that we experience in India today will appear quite different from what they appear to many of us. He saw India as a nation that had been immobilized for centuries, whose people had become stagnant, with stereotyped conduct and behaviour, and without a sense of freedom and the sense of the dignity of man; and he strove to awaken that India to the realities and opportunities of the modern age. What appeared to many of his countrymen as morality and goodness appeared to him as fixed and static grooves of life and conduct and mental weakness; originality, creativity, and inventiveness had all but been crushed; much of our religion appeared to him as *piety-fringed worldliness.* Characterizing the centuries-long stagnation of the nation in the terminology of the Sanskrit language, he said that it was the sign of *tamas,* inertia, and not of *sattwa,* equilibrium and calmness. Whereas the calmness of *tamas* is the product of laziness and sheer sleepiness of the soul, the calmness of *sattwa* is the product of high energy resources held in

dynamic balance. And none can rise from *tamas* to *sattwa* except through *rajas,* wakeful energy. *Tamas,* therefore, needs to be changed into *rajas* first before raising it to the high level of *sattwa.* That is the way of character development for a man or for a nation, said Swami Vivekananda. He wanted to see the sleeping people of his country rousing themselves from their *tamas* of inertia and laziness and, achieving the energy of *rajas,* the energy of action and movement, then raise the same increasingly, through self-discipline, to a higher level where it comes under the control of *sattwa,* so that that tremendous mass of energy resources may express itself as character-efficiency, as the capacity for calm, silent, creative work in cooperation with one's fellowmen. This is the real manliness of man and womanliness of woman. But what can discipline do where there is no energy to discipline? What can a dam achieve when there is no flow in the river?

Therefore the first step for the nation is to acquire energy. And the nation is achieving it in its post-independence generation. The nation was getting trained in it during its decades of struggle for political freedom and social justice. This brought us political independence. In its wake has come a measure of self-confidence and hope. These are releasing vast energies in increasing numbers and sections and groups of our people who were for long passive witnesses of the national life and not its active participants. India today is a free state; it allows perfect freedom of thought and expression to every one of its citizens. It provides opportunities for our people to express their inborn talents. None is barred from rising to any position in life, the only limitation being the available resources of the nation and its character-efficiency. So, this enormous freedom that environs us today gives our people—long enslaved and suppressed and stagnant—the opportunity to express themselves. And at the level of *rajas,* such expression becomes unbridled exuberance; and if still under the control of *tamas,* violent and destructive as well; this represents human energy before it achieves self-discipline and comes under the control of *sattwa.* When human energy rises to the level of *rajas* from *tamas,* it becomes as much a problem as an achievement, it becomes as much a challenge as a victory. And if the challenge is not met, the victory achieved may turn into defeat. But the victory itself is a real victory. If Vivekananda were to come to India and see this phenomenon that we have around us, he would be immensely happy. He would say: The first stage of the education of my people is taking place now. It has advanced far. But he would point out to us that this first stage must be followed by the subsequent stages of that education for man-making which he had proclaimed as the very basis of nation-building.

Our Post-Independence Generation

When we see thousands of our youths in one of their processions in our streets, the impression that we get is that of some elemental force in action like the force that we witnessed recently in the Koyna earthquake or that finds expression in the devastating floods or other natural catastrophes that we have often experienced in our country. Similarly, some elemental force is moving the hearts of our men and women today. Never again shall we see the timid, submissive type of humanity that we had all these centuries. This is the greatest asset for a nation such as ours which has been long suppressed, which had been like wax to be moulded by other forces, which had consequently lost the sense of human dignity and worth all these centuries. Today we see in our new generation of the post-independence period a spirit of freedom, a sense of energy and vitality, keen intelligence, and a measure of fearlessness which even grown-ups could not experience fifty years ago. *This is a sure sign of national growth and development.* No nation can rise to high moral stature from a state of sleepy inertia and tame submissiveness without passing through this experience of exuberant self-expression, often accompanied, may be, by undesirable exaggerations. We cannot escape or skip over this accompaniment of the growing adolescence of a people.

But, as I said before, this first step must be followed by further steps; adolescence should only be a stage on the way to the maturity of adult manhood; it should not be treated as the final goal to be settled in. *And this is the challenge before our nation today.* We should not expect that our children will be quiet, submissive, and manageable as before. That was the prayer from the hearts of many a parent in India throughout these centuries. How many of our parents have been desiring that their children should be tame, that they should render unquestioned obedience, and that they should not strive to be anything more than the replica of their parents! Our people sought for this type of tame, submissive, manageable humanity not only in their children, but also in their workers and assistants. That was the way of the feudal world and the medieval age with their sets of values. The nation is being forced to leave that behind and enter the modern world and the modern age with its dynamic forces and democratic urges, where man is on the march to an inarticulate and indistinct goal, the goal of self-expression and self-fulfilment. Today our people can learn the lesson that it is a privilege to have free-minded, energetic, vital children. Similarly, it is a privilege and opportunity to have free-minded, fearless, and intelligent colleagues in offices, and intelligent, self-respecting.

and energetic workers in our fields and factories. And we shall feel the joy of living with them and working with them only when we develop in ourselves new energy resources and the technique of managing them. This is intellectual and ethical discipline resulting in character-efficiency centred in a socially oriented will which, in turn, will enable us to manage the new energies flowing through the people around us—young and old—and turn them in the direction of the good of all, the welfare of all. *This is the line of growth and development of man in India, as visualized by Vivekananda.* And freedom is the only environment in which this kind of growth and development can be achieved. This is the purpose of the freedom of thought and action granted and guaranteed by our constitution and zealously upheld by our state.

Vivekananda's Call to March On

Thus, the next stage of development for our people is to catch hold of this enormous elemental energy that is manifesting in our youth and give it a creative direction. The only problem today is this problem of *direction.* Energy has come; but it has found no direction. Energy without direction becomes largely self-cancelling and self-destructive. And human energy gets direction from human thought—dispassionate, critical, and creative. And it is this guidance from thought that we have been missing in India these two decades. The result is what we see around us—vast energies spilling over and exhausting themselves in self-destructive ways in our youths, in our grown-ups, in our press, in our legislatures, in our industrial undertakings, and in our schools and colleges. While we admire the energy manifested, we cannot but deplore the utter waste of that energy in self-cancelling ways through our incapacity to discipline it and give it a healthy direction. This is the great challenge before us today: the harnessing and disciplining of this enormous fund of human energy resources which is coursing through every section of our people, and directing it to man-making and nation-building channels. *And this will be the test of our nation's wisdom.* That calls for a type of leadership which is not afraid of problems, which has tapped new energy resources within itself through patriotic involvement, and which has established a measure of discipline and integrity within itself. Such leadership is needed not only in politics and administration, but also in education, industry, and other vital departments of national life. It is such enlightened and disciplined leadership that can lead the nation from the valley of despair and frustration to the summit of hope and achievement. With such energy resources in our people, and guided by such leader-

ship, our nation can achieve a greatness and strength unparalleled in its five-thousand-year history.

The Message of Manliness

Vivekananda therefore spoke only about man-making education and man-making religion. He was not concerned with the credal religions which more often have disrupted than united the nation. He did not care whether one belonged to the Hindu religion or the Muslim religion or the Christian religion. He was in search of men endowed with strength of character, the spirit of freedom, and social feeling. He wanted our people to learn to stand on their own feet and to help others to stand on their own feet. Writing to Sister Nivedita on 7 June 1896, from London, he said (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* 1960 Edition, p. 352):

'Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.'

When I was in Indonesia in 1963 in connection with the Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations in that country, a book on Vivekananda in Indonesian and English, entitled *Suara Vivekananda* or Voice of Vivekananda, was released by President Soekarno; he had contributed an introduction to the book in which he had quoted the following words of Vivekananda who, he wrote, had inspired him to dedicate himself to the service of his nation:

'Swami Vivekananda! What a name! ... He it was who said: "We have wept long enough. No more weeping now; but stand on your feet and be men."'

These words of Vivekananda will inspire us today with a new courage and resolve. We have certainly wept long; but this is not the time to weep, but to gird up our loins and manfully face the problems released by the political independence of our long-submerged nation. He gave us a robust philosophy of faith and hope—faith in man, in oneself and in others—by which we can transform ourselves into efficient agencies for tackling these enormous energies that are finding manifestation in our otherwise mild and submissive people; these energies, left to themselves, can destroy a society; if properly tackled and directed, on the other hand, they can lift that society to all-round happiness and welfare within, and to a wholesome impact on the rest of the world outside. That is the challenge and opportunity before us. We need numbers of educated and disciplined men and women with this

faith and courage and resolve, and with this national vision; they will provide intelligent and effective leadership capable of tackling the national problems. And when I speak of leadership in this context, I do not mean just politicians or administrators; every department of national endeavour, from the Union Government down to the village level, calls for the services of such leaders of energy and vision. They are needed in the fields of production and distribution, education and social welfare, journalism and the arts, politics and administration. The production of such leadership is the test of a dynamic democratic social order. In fact, every citizen, including the simple housewife, is called upon to play this part in small or large community situations.

Such leadership is not something thrust upon a person; nor is it something grabbed by one by clever manipulations. It is the product of the growth of personality through correct education which, as Vivekananda defined it, is the *assimilation of ideas*: it is the *training of the mind* and not the *stuffing of the brain*. We then learn to view our little personal aspirations and urges in the context of the larger national aspirations and urges and the mounting national problems. When one does this, he ceases to be a mere *individual;* he becomes a *person* through this conscious social participation. He becomes a part of the national current of life. This is the transformation which education achieves in the citizen; a static individual seeking his own little satisfactions, working out his own little problems, grows into a socially sensitive person, sometimes of gigantic personality proportions, whose life and destiny become intertwined with the life and destiny of his people. This was the make-up of the personality of one like Mahatma Gandhi. *This is the spiritual growth of man;* and *this growth must come to us today in small or large measures.*

The Problem of Human Growth

I have used the word growth. That is the correct word to use in this context. In India, we have been taught by our Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* to approach the subject of religion, the subject of ethics, the subject of morality, in the context of human growth. But we have failed in recent centuries to view human life and destiny in this context of growth; we increasingly sank into a static complaisance; we preferred quantity to quality as the criterion of human existence. The result has been a large and ever-increasing population physically and mentally of dwarfish proportions, who were incapable of visualizing or anticipating national problems or solving them. That is the way not of life but of death for a man or for a nation. 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death',

says Swami Vivekananda. Today when we seek life and more life for us as individuals and as a nation, we need to understand once again this perennial message of human growth and development, of the growth and expansion of the human personality.

We grow physically; we also grow mentally; and there is a third growth, namely, the *spiritual growth of man.* Physical growth is obvious to us; a baby at birth is 6 or 7 lbs. in weight. Every day it increases in weight through the physical nourishment it gets from its mother's milk to begin with, and from other heavier foods later. And by the time it is 25 or 30 years old, he or she is 150 or 200 lbs. in weight; a tremendous growth has taken place, visible and palpable, the laws and techniques of which we have slowly mastered through the millennia of human history; it centres round three words: *food, digestion,* and *assimilation.*

The second type of growth is what we know as mental growth; this is less obvious, but not less true. A village child, ignorant and timid, and without any confidence in himself or herself, is sent to school; and within a few months he or she gathers some knowledge and develops a sense of self-confidence; the child has grown in a new dimension; it has commenced its mental growth which, in a few years, may transform it into an intellectual giant.

These are two types of growth which we know and which we try to ensure in ourselves and in our children. We had neglected both for centuries, the second more than the first, and we are now engaged in a mighty effort to provide increasing facilities for human growth in these two fields, namely, physical and mental, through stress on scientific nutrition and education. *These two measures are basic for our democracy, for its health and strength.* It is impossible for a democratic nation to be ignorant and free, as remarked by Jefferson. The strength of a nation lies in its citizens, physically healthy and mentally well-instructed, alert, and confident. Our nation today is energetically engaged in ensuring this twofold growth of man in India by providing appropriate physical and mental nourishments.

Evolution: Organic versus Spiritual

But our great teachers have always told us that man's growth should be total and not piecemeal. If any aspect is neglected, there is imbalance in the personality. It is like a person who has a brilliant intellect, but whose body is weak through neglect of diet and exercise. What we want is the total development of personality. If we seek this

all-round development of man, something more is necessary than the two growths above mentioned, namely physical and intellectual. *There is need for growth in a third dimension, less obvious than the other two, but more vital, and this is the growth in the spiritual dimension.* Ethical sense, moral awareness, artistic sensibilities, and every type of striving after perfection, all proceed from this growth of man in the spiritual dimension. *All true character-efficiency is the product of this spiritual growth.* This marks the distinctively human phase of evolution, says twentieth-century biology. In the words of Julian Huxley uttered in the course of his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' (*Evolution After Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 251):

'Man's evolution is not biological but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Presenting, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution as 'greater fulfilment', Huxley says (*ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 20):

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

And pointing out, in that lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', the emergence of *quality* as the criterion of evolution at the human stage in place of *quantity* which dominated the organic or pre-human phase of evolution, Huxley proclaims (*ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 257-59):

'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity...

'Once we truly believe...that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, and not an end in itself.'

Ultimately it is this psycho-social growth of man, in which his psyche or self breaks the prison of his physical and organic urges and limitations and reaches out to its oneness with other psyches in society,

that constitutes evolution at the human stage. This is the achievement of morality and ethical sense and social feeling *which registers the beginnings of man's spiritual growth.* That growth takes the form of renunciation of the limited, organic, lower self and manifestation of the infinite, higher, spiritual self of man through identification with, and service of, other selves in society. 'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India; intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself', says Swami Vivekananda. *They constitute the nourishment for the spiritual growth of man.*

Morality: Static versus Dynamic

The subject of morality has been long misunderstood by many of our people as consisting merely of a few do's and don'ts, mostly don'ts. Our character became a bundle of don'ts relating to food, drink, and social behaviour. Morality was identified with punctilious observance of a few don'ts such as I don't eat this or that, I don't drink this or that, I don't tell lies, I don't harm any one; character became a bundle of such negations. We failed to realize that character-development is measured more by what we do and the attitude behind such doing than by what we do not do. That you don't hate any one is not so important as that you love some one. Tables and walls and chairs also do not hate; they do no wrong; but they remain tables and walls and chairs. But man can love, he can hate, he can blunder, he can sacrifice himself for a worthy cause, he is restless with new aspirations and urges, he surpasses what he achieves, and, through all these, he expresses the dynamism of his inner life.

When this sets in, man will learn to treat his fellowmen, in the words of the German philosopher Kant, defining the nature of the ethical attitude, as ends in themselves, and not always as means. Man lives in three environments, namely, the natural and the social outside, and the spiritual within. His outside environment comprises *natural objects* consisting of tables and chairs, houses and other possessions, rivers and forests, and the starry heavens, etc. and *social objects* consisting of other human beings. He treats the former entirely as *means* to the satisfaction of his appetites and desires. But when he extends the same treatment to the latter also, namely, social objects, he commits a serious ethical blunder; for he fails to recognize that these social objects have, unlike the natural objects, *ends of their own,* and cannot therefore be treated entirely as means. Such treatment is what we call exploitation and is entirely unethical. As he sees a subject in himself and treats himself as an end accordingly, ethical awareness educates him to treat other

human beings as subjects and ends in themselves. Ethical awareness, therefore, is *the recognition of a subject in a social object.* It is this that stirs the stagnant waters of man's inner life and makes it morally dynamic.

It was this dynamism of the inner life that we missed all these centuries, resulting in all-round stagnation. That stagnation is passing now; man in India is on the march; and this march, carried into the inner life, is what results in spiritual growth and moral strength. When this dynamic inner march begins, man learns to treat his body as a servant and not as a master. Till then the body was the prison of the soul, it was its tomb. Now it becomes what it is meant to be, a good instrument in his march to character and life fulfilment, not only for himself, but also for his fellowmen in society. The body becomes like the house we live in. If we are not free to come out of it, it becomes a prison to us; for that is the definition of a prison. A prison is a house into which one is not free to go in and from which one is not free to come out. If a house permits freedom, it ceases to be a prison. Slavery or attachment to the body and its demands makes man a prisoner in his body. He was not free when he got into it. But having got into it, he is free to assert his spiritual freedom; and that is the best use he can make of his body, says the spiritual wisdom of humanity. It is by breaking this attachment that he grows spiritually and achieves spiritual freedom and the capacity to dig his affections in the hearts of others, the capacity to go out of, and return to, his body freely with a view to identifying himself with millions of other bodies and their residents, with their pains and pleasures, urges and aspirations. The psycho-physical energy system of man should not be allowed to become a stagnant pool, but a running stream of energy, entering, and being entered into by, other similar streams of psycho-physical energy systems of society. It is in this context of social inter-action, that man develops character and achieves his spiritual growth. Modern biology defines society as an inter-thinking group; it is also an inter-feeling group. Animals have feelings and emotions like man; but they are fully under the control of their emotions; but man, even the most primitive man, learnt to interpose thought or reason between the stimulus-response mechanism of the nervous system and thus to gain increasing control over his emotions and feelings, the first step in gaining self-knowledge, according to twentieth-century biology. *And the dominance of man over the rest of creation has come about from this self-knowledge, arising from his inter-thinking capacity getting superposed on the given inter-feeling process.* This results in the growth of his social personality through ethical awareness and self-discipline over and above

his given organic individuality. This is the characteristic of man's spiritual growth.

Man versus His Environment

Since our independence, our nation has registered its growth in various fields—economic, social, and political. Our industrial growth is impressive; and behind it, and meant to sustain it, has grown a chain of national science laboratories and research institutions. Our free constitution and the several general elections held under it have shattered the political apathy of our common people and given them, in twenty years, a political education which they did not get in the five thousand years of their history. Industrialization has disturbed the centuries-old sleepiness of our social *milieu* and made for social mobility and change which are the essential prerequisites for human growth. This, aided by our educational expansion, has similarly awakened masses of our humanity to an awareness of the forces shaping the modern world and to a measure of faith and confidence in themselves. All these have made them forsake their age-old role of *creatures* of history and planted in them the urges to be *creators* of history.

These are impressive gains; they tell us in unmistakable accents that our people have, in the language of our spiritual tradition as referred to earlier, risen from their erstwhile *tāmasic* state to the higher *rājasic* stage of social evolution. But we should realize that these are essentially environmental gains only. If they are not accompanied by a corresponding strengthening and enrichment within the organism itself, within the world of man's inner life, that inner world will be eventually invaded by the external environment and reduced to the status of an extension of itself. This results in the mechanization of man, in the warping of his spirit, and, eventually, in his spiritual death. This is the predicament of man in the West, which its thinkers are taking steps to solve by proclaiming once again, what has been always upheld by the world's religions, the truth of the supremacy of the human spirit. In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

> 'The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan and its worship is the modern diabolism....Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

Spirituality and Human Fulfilment

And so, along with the industrial and economic growth of our nation, we have to take steps to ensure also the spiritual growth of our people,

so that man in India may be saved from becoming a mere function or outpost of his external environment, so that he may be made to realize his spiritual integrity, and made capable, in that strength of inner enrichment, to control and manipulate that dynamic external environment to ensure his own total fulfilment, individual and collective.

This proclaims the importance of that third growth of man mentioned earlier, namely, his spiritual growth, over and above his physical and intellectual growths. Neglect of this third growth is confronting the modern age with the problems of mental giants versus moral pigmies; physical vigour versus spiritual inanition; external enrichment versus inner impoverishment. As he solves the difficult problems of his outer life, his inner life raises more intractable problems. As poignantly expressed by Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Idea*, Vol. I, p. 404):

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

Today, in most technically advanced countries, man's only problem is himself. He feels inwardly insecure in a social context which has achieved for him social security through his own physical and mental labours. *The modern world is in search of that knowledge and technique which can confer on man inner peace and security and the sense of fulfilment.* This is the science of spirituality which India has in her Vedānta; it proclaims spiritual truths which are impersonal, rational, and verifiable, and therefore universal. And it will help the great world religions to release, out of their incrustations of dogmas and creeds, this great science of sciences, namely, spirituality, as the *Gītā* puts it (X.32): *adhyātma vidyā vidyānām*, and provide spiritual nourishment to modern man who is in earnest search of it.

The people of India have this vital nourishment available to them in their own authentic spiritual tradition, a tradition which derives its strength and cogency from being tested and amplified by generations of spiritual seekers and teachers, including Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in our own time. It has nothing to do with any magic or superstition which our people, especially our educated people, often run after in the name of religion. *The sooner our people banish the association of magic with religion the better for them and for their religion.* A magic fruit cannot satisfy our hunger, only a real fruit can do so. Magic and mummeries cannot strengthen man and give him a sense of fulfilment. It is only the science of spirituality that can do this by revealing to him, and making him realize, the infinite divine dimension of his personality. The Upaniṣads present spirituality as

the birthright of every one, and warn man that he neglects this birthright at his peril. *Ātmanā vindate vīryam*—'Through the (realization of the) Ātman, his true Self, man achieves great energy', says the *Kena Upaniṣad* and adds: *Iha ced avedīt atha satyamasti; na cedihāvedīt mahatī vinaṣṭiḥ*—'If one realizes It here (in this life), then is there true life for him; (but) if he fails to realize It, great shall be his loss.'

Our Spiritual Malnutrition

The bitter lesson of the neglect of this vital science of spirituality is writ large in post-independent India in the moral decline of our people. The strength to resist temptations to indulge in anti-social practices is not a physical strength or an intellectual strength arising from man's physical growth or mental growth. Men and women well endowed with growth in these two dimensions have, alas!, shown themselves incapable of resisting even ordinary temptations, what to speak of big ones. They do not show the presence in them of that strength which helps man to resist and overcome impulses to selfishness, greed, anger, jealousy, meanness, and pettiness; for *that strength is the moral strength arising from the spiritual nourishment of man.* This proclaims the primacy of the spiritual growth of man over his every other growth, the very sustenance of which depends upon that spiritual growth.

The moral maladies of our nation manifesting as gross selfishness, uninhibited dishonesty, exploitation, bribery, corruption, malpractices of all sorts in politics, industry and business, petty thefts, by students, of each other's books and goods in our schools and colleges, and, above all, the erosion of mutual trust and confidence even in the pledged word, reveal only the enormous extent of the spiritual malnutrition of our people. The English poet Goldsmith warned:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

Our masses had never decayed in their age-long poverty to the same extent as our classes have decayed in their wealth during this brief post-independence period. And today the decay of our classes is filtering down to our masses as well. Shall we allow our nation to grow into an industrial and economic giant but remain a moral pigmy, with millions steeped in poverty and squalor in between? So far this has been the trend; and we are reaping the poisonous fruits of that trend in the prevailing sense of fear as to the unity and integrity of our beloved nation, and the sense of despair as to the future of our new-won freedom. This fear and despair have recently evoked a mood of thinking and self-criticism in our people and a desire to reverse this down-

ward trend. After independence, our nation had said good-bye to thought in favour of a care-free 'honeymoon' attitude and its ways which, even in marriage, are disastrous if continued too long, with hard work and earning neglected. By this we only succeeded in frittering away not only our accumulated sterling balances but also our accumulated moral assets. We failed to realize the truth of the dictum that eternal vigilance is the prize of liberty and the guarantee of culture and civilization. The new self-assessment and questioning as to whither the nation is going is the only silver lining to the otherwise sombre clouds filling the Indian sky. *This mood and temper, with fearless, critical thought to sustain it, have to be nourished and strengthened in a pervasive way so as to release a new wave of confidence and self-reliance within the nation.*

Need for Creative Thinking

Thought is the driving force behind all development and expansion of culture. Behind the world-wide impact of modern western culture lies its scientific and socio-political thought. Devotion to the pursuit of truth in nature and in life, backed by the intellectual discipline of critical inquiry, detachment, and objectivity, and yoked to the discipline of precision in thought and speech, constitutes the power of thought in science. That root power of pure science, finding expression, in quick succession, in the bumper fruits of technological inventions and discoveries of applied science, has had an explosive impact, world-wide in its scope, as much on man's thinking as on his ways of living. Long before India became free, her great teacher and awakener, Vivekananda, had welcomed these deliverances of modern science and summoned his countrymen to *assimilate* its spirit and modernize their country with its creative strength, and not rest content with slavish *imitation* of the western ways of living. But since our independence, our people were more after the *fruits* of modern science than after its *roots*. They were more eager to enjoy the amenities of modern civilization *second-hand*, by buying or borrowing or getting gifted its dazzling fruits, than by planting its roots in India by the assimilation of the scientific spirit and temper and critical approach, and helping to produce its bumper fruits *first-hand* within the nation. We failed to realize with sufficient clarity and emotional involvement the greatness of India's scientific past and the need to make her once more the home of original science in the modern age.

The Primacy of Man

Whether it is science or education, politics or money-making, or even religion itself, in every field of national endeavour, we failed to

capture the heroic attitude which welcomes struggle and hardship and scorns charity and gifts, but favoured cheap easy-going ways and methods, resulting in an all-round lowering of standards and efficiency. We thus devalued man long before we were compelled, by overwhelming national and international forces, to devalue our rupee. All these will be great national gain, however, if they have now led us to realize the primacy of man over his environment, the primacy of his total personality-growth over every other growth such as industrial or commercial, and to realize that the criterion of the utility and worth of the latter lies in the former.

This idea of the primacy of man, his all-round growth, development, and fulfilment is what we need to grasp and inspire ourselves with today. Our people bear the impress of arrested growth, partly through centuries of external invasions and oppressions, but largely through our own internal weaknesses—weaknesses arising from partial or inadequate philosophies, and wrong and often pernicious inter-personal attitudes and relationships. Self-centredness and selfishness became raised to a philosophy—the philosophy of worldliness. We converted India into a land of a few real saints and millions of worldly people; this was the result, as Vivekananda has shown, of our people being provided with only one far-away saintly ideal—the ideal of *mokṣa* or *mukti*, with no nearby *attainable* ideals intervening. This resulted in the spiritual malnutrition of the masses of our people and in the cheapening of religion into a static piety, into a form of *piety-fringed worldliness.* Much of our laziness and inertia, our selfishness and self-centredness, our involved and often crooked thinking, our want of character-efficiency and genuine concern for the other man can be traced to this *indigestion* of the high saintly ideal of *mukti* which our religion had wrongly placed before one and all, against the clear teaching of the *Gītā* that the path of action in the service of society leading to strength and character-efficiency is the correct and proper way to the attainment of high spirituality (III. 4):

> *Na karmaṇām anāraṁbhāt naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣośnute;*
> *Na ca sannyasanāt eva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati—*

'Not by non-performance of actions does man reach (true) actionlessness; by mere renunciation (of action) man does not attain spiritual perfection.'

We clean forgot that true saintliness can be achieved only by passing through the discipline of manliness which involves the discipline and control of the lower self of man, centred in his physical and sensate nature, with a view to manifesting his higher self through the cultiva-

tion of ethical awareness and social feeling in the context of life and action. This registers the beginnings of the *growth* of the worldly man into the spiritual man, the launching of him into the stream of 'saint-in-the-making', into the stream of what Julian Huxley refers to as psycho-social evolution. This is *Yoga,* spirituality, which the *Gītā* defines as *karmasu kauśalam*—'efficiency in action'.

The Householder to Grow into the Citizen

Indian sociology gives a high place of honour to the *gṛhastha* or householder. By his intelligent hard work he sustains the whole society of which he is the only producer; the other three *āśramās* or orders, namely, the *brahmachārin,* the student, the *vānaprasthin,* the ascetic, and the *sannyāsin,* the monk, besides the physically and mentally handicapped sections of the society—all depend upon him. Our great social philosopher, Manu, therefore, speaks of the *gṛhastha āśramā* as the 'pre-eminent *āśramā*', and the *gṛhastha* as the 'pre-eminent' among members of all the four *āśramās* (*Manu-Smṛti,* III. 78):

Yasmāt trayo'pyāśramiṇo jñānenānnena cānvaham;
Gṛhasthenaiva dhāryante tasmāt jyeṣṭhāśramo gṛhī—

'Because (all) the members of the three (other) *āśramās* are always sustained physically and mentally by the *gṛhastha,* therefore, the *gṛhastha's* is the *jyeṣṭhāśramā,* the pre-eminent *āśramā.*'

This high *gṛhastha* ideal became watered down to the level of a self-sufficient worldliness when, in recent centuries, we subordinated it to another concept, namely, the *saṁsāri,* the worldly man. And when ethical values and the welfare of society claimed the sacrifices and services of our people, they failed to respond by saying that they were after all *saṁsāris* and not saints. *Modern India is engaged in correcting this wrong and pernicious notion that man is to be grovelling in worldliness if he is not able to rise to the heights of saintliness.* This wrong philosophy has deprived millions of our people of the opportunity of achieving *attainable* levels of human excellence, and realizing the true dignity and worth of man. It prevented them from *growing* spiritually, from evolving psycho-socially and morally, and made them content with a static *piety-fringed worldliness.*

Modern India summons our people to discard that wrong philosophy and apply the corrective, by the *gṛhastha* or householder *growing* into the citizen. This is his or her psycho-social growth and development. The psyche or soul, centred in, and limited by, a small biological group which is the family, breaks that limitation and expands into a social

personality through conscious social participation. This is the modern concept of citizenship with its twin constituents, namely, the political and the ethical. The merely political constituent relates man to membership *in* a free community; the ethical constituent relates him to membership *of* the same free community. It is the latter constituent that registers his psycho-social growth. The true citizen is thus defined as the *free* and *responsible* member of a free community. *Freedom and responsibility are spiritual values which are the by-products of the spiritual growth of man.* They do not come out of the external environment; they proceed from the inner spiritual depths of man's life by suitable manipulations of that external environment, natural and social, through technical and socio-political processes. As these values manifest in man, they in turn help to raise the tone of his social environment. This interaction between man and his social environment is what is sought to be controlled and directed by the forces of ethics and politics. Where these two forces work together, there is true citizenship and general human welfare. Where, however, the ethical constituent is neglected, we get the worldly citizen or the *citizen-fringed* worldliness of politics, like the *piety-fringed* worldliness of religion. This is, unfortunately, the type of citizen that we have been turning out since independence. We have yet to realize the importance of the *spiritual growth of man* into the citizen. We were satisfied if he grew into it physically and intellectually. Every new-born generation stands in a queue, and as soon as he or she attains the age of twenty-one, he or she automatically becomes a citizen of India's sovereign democratic republic. He or she may not have captured the spirit of freedom in himself or herself, and the sense of self-discipline it involves and the sense of national responsibility it gives birth to. *We can trace many of our contemporary national ills to this cheap and easy concept of citizenship.*

Man : Mature versus Immature

In such citizenship, where freedom is not sustained by the ethical sense of national responsibility, there reigns the irresponsibility of self-seeking worldliness, where the individual seeks every opportunity to exploit the state and society for purposes of his or her own family or group. In his or her hands, social justice, which is the mainstay of a free state or society, becomes constantly imperilled. This is the source of all the nepotism that is plaguing our nation today, and the cause, too, of much of the social agitations and explosions arising from the grievances of those who feel that their claims have been unjustly passed over, whether in the field of appointments or promotions, of licences or permits, of admissions or scholarships.

It is this sense of national responsibility that marks man's rise in moral stature and maturity. Where it is lacking, there is dwarfishness and immaturity. Swami Vivekananda, in one of his Indian lectures, calls such people 'moustached babies'; their physical growth and maturity have not been accompanied by mental and moral maturity. We have produced masses of such 'moustached babies' in India since our independence. They have to be trained to mental and moral maturity. This can be done if a higher concept of human excellence is presented to the nation than that of selfishness and exploitation. This is contained in the message of *renunciation and service* which Vivekananda has imparted to modern India.

Spirituality versus Worldliness

It is renunciation of the lower, biologically-conditioned self, with its constant mood and impulse of self-seeking and exploitation, and manifestation of the higher, spiritually-free Self, with its constant mood and impulse of service. *The liberation of these two values of renunciation and service will galvanize our nation by initiating and sustaining the spiritual growth of our people, to match the growth of the nation in the socio-economic and other external fields.* Every work becomes service when the human motive inspires it and national responsibility sustains it. In its light, no work is high or low. It raises all work to high excellence through raising the spiritual excellence of the worker, be he a shoe-maker or an administrator, an industrialist or a labourer, a farmer or a professor, a prime minister or a simple housewife. Every such work not only adds to the wealth and welfare of society, but also raises the spiritual height of the worker and the moral strength of the nation. Work thus achieves, under this philosophy, this double character-efficiency for man, namely, productive efficiency outside and personality-efficiency within. This is the meaning of the *Gītā's* definition of *Yoga* as *karmasu kauśalam.*

When we combine the *gṛhastha* ideal with the citizenship ideal, we get a new type of human excellence, revealing the *growth* of man in the third, that is, the spiritual dimension. The *gṛhastha* may, and in recent centuries has, often confined his interest and attention to himself and to his small family; but the citizen rises above the limitations of his little household and of his own physical personality, and embraces his society in a sweeping concern of love and service. *Our society needs the ministrations of such people who have assimilated this citizenship ideal in small or large measures.* Millions of our fellow-citizens are crying for light and life; they have been in darkness and have suffered privations for ages. Our political freedom has no mean-

ing unless they get the blessings of a better and a fuller life. And this is the responsibility and privilege of all educated citizens in our democracy today.

When our educated section will realize this truth, when they will *assimilate* the values of freedom, self-discipline, and responsibility, then a welcome change will come over the mind and face of free India. It will bring us strength and character-efficiency and the capacity for team-work. *This is the way to bring our country from the medieval to the modern age, from the feudal to the democratic outlook.* This is true progress; *this is true spirituality as well.* To be *modern* is to assimilate this spirit of progress, with its spirit of equality, freedom, energy, and capacity for team-work, *and not to run after the shallow ways of modernism in food and drink and dress, buttressed by a cheap cosmopolitanism.*

Freedom and responsibility involve, as I said before, self-discipline. It is only slaves that want to dominate and enslave others and that resent discipline; but free men never do either. Our post-independence burst of indiscipline largely reveals only one truth—that our inner life is still afflicted by a disposition resulting from our slavery of centuries. 'So give up being a slave', exhorts Vivekananda in his lecture on 'The Future of India', and asks the nation to recognize the dignity and worth of man in oneself and in others, to serve the nation irrespective of caste or creed or sex, and thus forge a new national character and destiny.

Sri Ramakrishna expresses this new philosophy of the *gṛhastha* growing into the citizen in a few simple illumining words of exhortation to man: Live in *saṁsāra,* the world; for that is the only venue for life, for all its struggles and achievements; even saints and incarnations of God live in *saṁsāra.* But allow not *saṁsāra,* worldliness, to enter into you, to live in you; for that will turn life into a stagnant pool, swampy and malarious, instead of transforming it into a healthy running stream fertilizing life around. A boat will be on the water; that is the proper place for it; there alone can it express its true function. But water should not be allowed to get into the boat; for that will defeat the purpose for which the boat is meant.

In these few words, Sri Ramakrishna has given us the combined message of social ethics and religion. Living in the world is not the same as being worldly. Worldliness is a spiritual disease; it breeds selfishness, meanness, jealousy, exploitation, proneness to litigation, and other evils, reducing collective human life to elementary proportions.

This is our country's dismal experience. When worldliness gets into man, he becomes 'a little clod of ailments and grievances ever complaining that the world does not devote itself to making you happy', as expressed by Bernard Shaw. Life then ceases to be the venue, the *Kurukṣetra,* for the great struggle to continue evolution into the specifically human levels, namely, the psycho-social, moral, and spiritual. India had carried evolution into these higher fields, but only in the life of a small minority; she left her millions, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, in the stagnation of *saṁsāra. This is in for a revolutionary change in the modern age.* Vivekananda proclaimed that *the very significance of the modern age in our age-old Indian history lay precisely in this social revolution, in this effort and struggle to awaken our millions to an awareness of their human dignity and worth, and also in the possibility of its success, thanks to the sustenance it can receive today from modern science, technology, and socio-political thought.*

The Indian Rotary : Its National Role

The current problems of our nation are problems of our nation's socio-political adolescence; they are the magnified version of the psychological problems confronting a child entering the age of thirteen or fourteen, the age of adolescence. Other nations also have passed through this stage in their formative years and experienced these problems, including the mighty United States of today. Many of them are still faced with intractable problems of their own. Let us not, therefore, be baffled by our problems; let us strive to take the nation to the maturity of adulthood by instilling in ourselves and in others the spiritual values of freedom and responsibility. Only by experiencing and handling problems can we eventually overcome them. We cannot start with other nations' finished wisdom; their experience can give us guidance; and often warning also; but it cannot be a substitute for our struggle to gain wisdom ourselves. *We sought for political freedom not only to behave correctly but even to commit blunders and mistakes.* Freedom is no freedom otherwise. When we were in bondage, we rarely committed blunders. The slave and his actions are not subjects of ethical judgment; that is the privilege only of free men and their actions. So let us not be too much baffled by the blunders committed by our nation after it became free. True freedom has in it the power to rescue the nation from its blunders and their effects. And let us pray with poet Tagore in his *Gītāñjali*: 'Into that heaven of freedom, O Father, let my country awake.'

Members of a movement like the Rotary, which consists of thousands of our citizens possessed of the blessings not only of education

but also of other good things of life, have the responsibility, opportunity, and privilege before them of educating themselves and their fellow-citizens in the citizenship values of freedom, self-discipline, and responsibility. *This is practical patriotism; it is also practical politics and religion in one.* 'Be and make' shall be our motto, says Swami Vivekananda; be men yourselves and help others to be men. He preached the strengthening, purifying, and unifying message of a man-making education and a man-making religion. Today we have in our youths the manifestation of high emotional energy. It is the raw material of all character; but it is only raw material; it needs processing. This emotional energy, disciplined and controlled by a socially-oriented moral will, and directed to socially useful channels of action, is character-efficiency, says Vivekananda. Where that emotional energy-resource is less, the resulting character will also be of a lower order; where that energy is more, the resulting character will also be of a higher order.

Vivekananda: 'the Harmony of All Human Energy'

We have today abundant raw material of this emotional energy for producing efficient manhood and womanhood. *The science and technique of processing it into character is what the nation will learn from Vivekananda.* Addressing the Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations in the Ramlila grounds in Delhi five years ago, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru commended to the youth of India the study of Vivekananda literature. He said that if he were to place before them a teacher whose teachings had the power to inspire them to work for the all-round good of the nation, it was Vivekananda. In his *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru gives the following tribute to Swamiji:

> 'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

Romain Rolland in his *Life of Vivekananda* refers to Vivekananda as 'the personification of the harmony of all human energy'. This capacity to become a harmony of all human energy, and to bridge the gulf between our national past and present must come, in some measure, to every citizen of India. This blessing will come to the nation through the Vivekananda literature available today in eight volumes in English, in ten volumes in Hindi, and similarly in most of our national languages. We have to make this blessing available to our youths, especially the blessing contained in his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and *Letters.*

Romain Rolland writes thus about this literature in his *Life of Vivekananda* :

'Vivekananda's words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these utterances of Vivekananda, separated as they are from me in books of thirty years distance, without getting a thrill through my body as of an electric shock. And what shocks and transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!'

Conclusion

This literature will help to shock us out of our complacencies, lift us out of our self-centred attitudes, and cure us of our mental flabbiness; it brings to us an awareness of our pressing national problems and a keen desire to be instruments of their solution through a sense of national commitment and involvement. And most of our educated people suffer from these maladies and are in need of this remedy. In this connection I can do no better than share with you a recent experience, highly relevant to the present theme, of one of our sensitive youths. A few months ago, Mrs. Amala Shankar, artist, and wife of the well-known artist, Mr. Uday Shankar, came to me at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, with her twenty-year old son, Anand, who is a student of music at Varanasi and who had come to bid me farewell on the eve of his return to Varanasi. I asked him whether he had read Vivekananda; he replied that he had read a small book by name *Thus Spake Vivekananda.* I said that that was just an 'appetiser'. I requested the mother to purchase from the Institute bookstall a copy of Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora.* She bought a copy and I autographed and gave it to Anand saying that he would find it inspiring. Mother and son took leave and the son left for Varanasi the next day. A few days later, the mother phoned to me in great joy and read out to me the letter just then received from her son from Varanasi. He wrote to say that, as the train left Howrah station, he occupied his seat in the compartment and became absorbed in Vivekananda's book. The compartment was full of passengers, many of whom were railway staff. They were talking rot all the time; there was a mood of flimsiness and light-heartedness about them and their talk; and the subjects of the talk were mostly grievances and complaints against the railway administration and abuse of the Government, in which the whole compartment participated. This continued for some time. Then suddenly one of the railway staff, seeing Anand absorbed in a book and not participating in their hilarity, came towards him and asked him in a brusque manner what he was reading, and snatching the book from him, started reading the book himself. Soon the book gripped him and he sat absorbed in its reading. The rest of the passengers continued

merrily as before. A little later, this officer looked up and, finding the others still absorbed in their flimsy talk, shouted at them and asked them to shut up and to listen to what Vivekananda had to say; the compartment becoming silent, he read out passage after passage from the Swami's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora,* dealing with the nation's problems of poverty and illiteracy of the mass of the people, the heartlessness and character-deficiency of the upper classes, and how these were to be eradicated and a progressive national life ensured. This, wrote Anand, created a revolutionary transformation in the atmosphere of the compartment and in the subjects of discussion, which continued till the end of the journey. The passengers became aware of the nation's problems and their own national responsibility as citizens; the flimsy, light-hearted mood gave place to a sense of national urgency and personal involvement in it. Anand was deeply impressed and inspired by this experience and could not find adequate words to convey it to his mother. But he had thus become the nation's instrument to convey the blessings of human excellence imbedded in the Vivekananda literature to a section of India's light-hearted citizens who were asleep to their citizenship privileges and responsibilities.

And millions of our young and old, similarly, are living flimsy lives, ignorant of their nation's struggles, and ignorant, too, of this mine of strength and inspiration lying about them in this great literature, and waiting for the opportunity to be introduced to the same. Whatever may be the position of our nation with respect to food supply and technical know-how—we may have to be at the receiving end for these for some more years to come—we are not lacking in the resources of man-making and nation-building ideas and ideologies. In this field, we are in surplus and in a position to export to other countries, which we are already doing. *In this sphere at least, we are starving in the sight of plenty.* Let us cease to starve spiritually, but strengthen ourselves with the nourishment provided by our rich spiritual and cultural heritage, past and present. Vivekananda brought the message of the Upaniṣads, the message of Vedānta, from the obscurity of books and the close custody of pundits, to the daylight of everyman's everyday life. The central truth of this message is the glory of the human spirit, its infinite powers and possibilities, and the need for its manifestation in life. He expounded Vedānta as the science of human growth, development, and fulfilment, as 'the science of human possibilities', in the words used by Julian Huxley to pinpoint the urgent demand of the modern age. Human experience tells us that every sinner has a future as every saint had a past. The rowdy youth of today is the disciplined citizen of tomorrow. It is more of education and less of condemnation that we need. And this education is essentially the awakening of the ever-present purity

and perfection of the inner man. And it is this awakening that Vivekananda imparts to man in East and West today. And let me conclude with a flash of his inspiration compressed by him in a few words. Speaking on 'The Mission of the Vedānta' at Kumbakonam, Tamilnad, in 1897, in the course of his whirlwind tour of national awakening from Colombo to Almora, he says (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 193):

'Teach yourselves, teach every one his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION

I AM happy to come to this Institute of Public Administration, Mysore branch, and to spend a few minutes with you, the staff of the Secretariat of the state of Mysore, to discuss problems that confront us today in India and to find some solutions to them by thinking together. As I entered this hall of the Vidhan Saudha, Bangalore, a few minutes ago, Mr. R. N. Vasudeva, your Chief Secretary and an old friend of mine, told me that this Conference Hall of the Vidhan Saudha was being used by you to do a little occasional thinking through meetings such as this. I was happy to hear this particular remark, because one of the things we seem to have banished, ever since we became free, is this habit of thinking, and thinking together. Since freedom came, we became more interested in talking and shouting than in thinking.

Humanity: Nature's Sole Inter-thinking Species

Man is described by modern biology not only as an inter-breeding species, the only such species in nature, but also as, what is more significant, an inter-thinking species, again the only such species in nature. Man thinks, and thinks together and, through such inter-penetration of minds, achieves great heights of culture and civilization. Our own ancient culture is a product of such profound thinking and inter-thinking. Modern western culture, similarly, is the product of the same process.

But since we became independent, as I said before, we seem to have gradually deprived ourselves of this great discipline of thought and its great energy resources. We became complacent. We had to

be awakened to it by certain experiences, one of which was the Chinese invasion. A sense of complacency, with its offshot of stagnation and a colossal lack of a sense of dedication and national vision, descended upon us within a few brief years of our becoming politically free.

Yet, in spite of this, our nation has registered some real progress in various fields during the past twenty-two years of our post-independence existence. There has always been, and there is still, a small minority of thinking people in India, at the centre and in the states—in politics, administration, and public life—who are imbued with the spirit of patriotism and national dedication; and through their devoted endeavours, the country did achieve some progress.

Politics Versus Administration

But the problems that confront us today are not problems to be tackled by a small minority of dedicated people. That creative minority we always had in India. But the problems are so complex, multifarious, and urgent that we need to have this spirit of vision and dedication more widely diffused in the various sections of our population, and more especially, in that branch of our population known as *the administrative branch*, both at the centre and in the states. I have always felt that, ever since we became free, the greatest responsibility for national welfare rests upon our administration. Just as, in the field of health, the doctor does the operation, but it is the nurse who, through her devoted and efficient care in the light of the doctor's directions, brings the patient back to health, so is it with respect to the health of the nation. Between the two branches of politics and administration, the former directs national affairs in a particular direction, leaving to the latter the achievement of that direction with energy and dedication. Hence the importance of all our training programmes for our administrators. Such training programmes are meant not only to impart and acquire the technical know-how of the subject, but also to impart and acquire a sense of national vision, a spirit of national dedication.

This is very very relevant today when we are engaged in transforming our erstwhile police state of the period of subjection into a welfare state of the era of freedom. *There is need for our administrators, from the highest to the most ordinary cadre, to be constantly impressed with the fact that their country is engaged today in a mighty task of peaceful social reconstruction and transformation of revolutionary dimensions, in response to the centuries-long suppressed urges and aspirations of our people.*

The Place of the Administrator in the Nation

This constitutes a dynamic external environment for the life of every Indian citizen today. It calls for a corresponding dynamism within our personality—in our attitudes, outlooks, and behaviour patterns. Unfortunately, many in our administration have not achieved this inner change. They still function as static centres in their dynamic national environment. This is true of millions of our educated citizens as well. That is the tragedy of our nation today.

I have had occasions to discuss with our Planning Commission, when it put out its First Five-Year Plan Draft about twenty years ago, and later with our Central Services Trainees, first in Metcalfe House, New Delhi, and later in the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, that a change in attitude of the administrators is absolutely essential if our nation is to change over from a police state to a welfare state. I then wrote an article for the *Metcalfe House Journal* of the Indian Administrative Service entitled 'The Administrator in a Welfare State'. This and a later lecture on 'The Training of our Administrators' at the Central Secretariat Training School, New Delhi, are now available in a booklet titled *The Administrator in a Welfare State*, published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta 29.

This change in attitude is necessitated by one important factor, namely, political freedom. When India was under foreign British rule till 1947, the entire administration was the tool in the hands of a foreign power to perpetuate itself in this country. As soon as the British left and India became free, the administration in India became the tool in the hands of the free people of India to enhance the dignity and welfare of men and women in the nation. That change makes, or ought to make, a world of difference. It is that world of difference, the difference between subjection and freedom, that I find missing from the awareness and behaviour of the vast majority of members of the administrative apparatus today.

The fundamental impact of the change from subjection to freedom on the administrator is that the primary focus of his personality is now *in his being the citizen of a free country,* and only secondarily *in his being a job-holder or a social functionary.* We are all primarily citizens of free India and only secondarily administrators or other social functionaries. This change in outlook, this change arising from the recognition of the context of freedom in which we live and work, ought to make a world of difference in the handling of one's job as an administrator. As a citizen, he becomes an insider, not an outsider; he is involved in the work of

the nation and for the nation. He is concerned with the happiness and welfare of his people. This idea of one being not an outsider but an insider is a tremendous force, making for a sense of responsibility and effectiveness of personality.

But it is sad to note that millions of people in India have not been able to grasp this fact and evolve this fusion of freedom and responsibility in their personalities. They have failed to grasp that they are *of* the nation and not only *in* the nation. While sitting on the chair of the administrator in an office, one becomes the focal point of the mounting hopes and aspirations of the nation and of the possibility of free India satisfying those aspirations. The administrator is thus a focal point of the two great forces of national freedom and national responsibility; and when he or she realises this, he or she ceases to be a mere *static individual* but becomes a *dynamic personality*. If this change had come in a big way over the personnel in the administration from top to bottom, and generally over all else also in the nation, our economic and social progress would have been more impressive and revolutionary.

Athens and the Ecstasy of Freedom

We learn from history that when a people achieved political freedom after foreign subjection, they often experienced a sense of exuberance, which found expression in an outburst of creative adventure. One such historical episode has a great lesson for us today. The late Bertrand Russell, in his *History of Western Philosophy* refers to the tremendous impact of political freedom on the ancient Athenian state in the wake of its victory over its Persian invaders. For two decades Athens was under the threat and shadow of the Persian Empire. That Empire destroyed part of the city and constantly harassed the free people of Athens. But, by their patriotism, dedication, courage, and sacrifice, they defeated the mighty Persians on sea and land and achieved political freedom and security. This glorious victory had an ecstatic impact on the national mind, an ecstasy which found expression in a tremendous outburst of creative activity in Athens during the succeeding fifty years and which gave to the world the great classical Greek culture which has powerfully influenced all Western culture thereafter. The ecstasy of freedom was the stimulus to an outburst of creative activity in many fields of human culture on the part of a small state comprising hardly two hundred and thirty thousand citizens; and that state wrote an immortal chapter in human history in a brief span of fifty years, exemplifying the dictum of the *Mahābhārata* in its exhortation of a queen mother to her princely son: *Muhūrtaṁ jvalitaṁ śreyo, na tu dhūmāvitaṁ ciram*—'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for ages'.

This is an episode which will do much good to us today if we ponder over it and assimilate its implications. As far as India is concerned, we have achieved our freedom not after ten, twenty, or thirty years of political subjection and humiliation, as in the case of the Greeks, but after centuries of foreign rule. We have been thwarted in our aspirations for centuries together. But thanks to the teachings, leadership, sacrifices, and dedications of a few generations of great patriots and thinkers in the last and this century, our nation became free on 15 August 1947 and adopted a sovereign democratic republican constitution for itself in 1950.

Why Our Ecstasy Was Short-lived

Any Indian student of his or her national history who reads this story cannot remain a mere onlooker of events, but will become involved in the fortunes of his nation thereafter; unless, of course, our long centuries of servitude has blasted away our appreciation of freedom and its challenges; and unless our education has failed to make for *assimilation of ideas* in place of mere *gathering of information.* It looks as if such a blasting has taken place; it is also evident that our education had no relation to national realities.

How ineffective has been our education will be evident when we compare it with Vivekananda's educational ideas given to the nation at the end of the last century. Said he (*Vivekananda: His Call to the Nation,* pp. 49-50):

> 'What is education? Is it book learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.
>
> 'The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.'

Accordingly, our joy of freedom turned out to be a temporary emotional experience. Many of us were eager that the Britisher should go. Many of our people were looking forward to an era of freedom. But when freedom actually came, the spiritual quality of that emotion and its intensity soon evaporated, and millions of our intelligentsia quietly settled down to seek and enjoy personal profit, power, and pleasure. After a very brief spell of post-independence national enthusiasm, a 'honeymoon' spirit set in, and the sense of national urgency, striving, and responsibility vanished. We soon settled down to *squeeze* the fruit of freedom each one unto himself and herself, and silently

adopted the motto of 'each man unto himself and the devil take the hindmost.'

A story told by Swami Vivekananda well illustrates this post-independence attitude and behaviour of many of us in India:

A certain king had great faith in his courtiers. The Prime Minister of the king told him not to put so much trust in his courtiers, for they were, after all, courtiers, self-seeking and given to flattery. The king was not convinced. The Prime Minister promised to prove his point. With the permission of the king he announced a festival in the royal palace which required every courtier to bring a jug of milk early morning before sunrise and pour it into a container kept behind a curtain. The morning came and the courtiers came one by one and poured their quota into the container and left. The Prime Minister then took the king to the enclosure to inspect the container. And both were surprised, the king more than the Prime Minister, to find the container filled with water with not a drop of milk in it. When questioned by the king, each courtier said that since all the other courtiers would be pouring their quota of milk, he thought his own jug of water would be too insignificant to be detected.

Similarly, every person and every group in the nation thought that since other persons and groups would be working for the nation patriotically, a bit of self-aggrandizement on his or its part would not matter, would not be detected.

This is all recent history. What is this due to? There is obviously something wrong in our mental make-up that prevents us from experiencing sustained national enthusiasms and patriotic endeavours. It is this weakness in our mental constitution that we have to tackle today. Unless we tackle it, we shall continue to wobble all through our life and history. India has a long history. It has seen history when the ancient Romans and Greeks were not there; and it is seeing history when the modern Americans and Russians are there today. This impressive continuity of India is a unique aspect of world history. In fact, even the one hundred and ninety year-long British subjection appears like a brief dream in our long history. There is an interesting story which helps to bring into focus this brief British period of our history in the context of our five-thousand-year-long history. After we became free in 1947, there was an interesting account in one of our newspapers of an interview which one of its correspondents had with an old man living in a village a few miles outside the city of Calcutta. Accosting the aged villager, the correspondent asked him in the understandable pride of a conveyor of an important piece of information: My

dear old friend, haven't you heard the great news? What is that? asked the old villager. The Britishers have left; we are now independent, said the correspondent with some excitement. The old man just looked up and asked quietly: But when did they come?

Our New Democratic State : Its Historic Uniqueness

There you have the impact of the age-old history of India. Against that impressive time back-ground, the one-hundred and ninety years of British rule looks like a brief dream. In 1947 that brief dream ended and the nation resumed its march. But it has now new problems to face, new obstacles to overcome, and also new opportunities for self-expression, undreamed of in the past. For the state we established in 1950 has a very special quality which no state in our long history has ever had. All the states we had in the past depended upon a king, an emperor, or a military conqueror, native or foreign. Not one of them was founded on the strength of the political awareness and consent of the people. But now, for the first time in our five-thousand-year history, we have founded a state in India drawing its sustenance from 'We, the people of India', as the preamble to our constitution states. It is a state deriving its strength and sustenance, not from a king or an emperor or a military conqueror, but from the millions and millions of the people of India, and seeking to give that strength and sustenance back to them in an enhanced form. This is the nature and scope of our sovereign democratic republic. It is a unique experiment, as I said, in our long history.

Three Lessons to Our Democratic Success

The success of this unique experiment depends on our people developing virtues and graces appropriate to this new venture, and unlearning those attitudes, habits, and ways which incapacitated us from establishing and maintaining a continuing political state in our country all these thousands of years. This is the challenge before us. How shall we go about meeting it?

The first lesson we have to learn today is to educate ourselves to shed our feudal attitude and ways and assimilate the democratic outlook and behaviour. Democracy is not just a political arrangement only; it is more a social outlook and temper. Feudal minds cannot handle a democratic machinery successfully; only democratic minds can do that.

The second lesson we need to learn is to become an insider and not continue to remain an outsider with respect to our new state; to

become involved in its promises and performances, its successes and failures.

The third lesson we have to learn—and this is the most difficult one for many of us in India—is to grow into a truly dynamic personality from the level of a static individual; to develop our family awareness into a national political awareness; it means, in short, the *gṛhastha* or the house-holder growing into the citizen; *man's biological individuality rising to the first stages of his spiritual personality.* I shall discuss this last in more detail a little later.

The Ethical Content of Democratic Citizenship

Citizenship of a democratic state involves growth of ethical awareness and human concern beyond the confines of one's biological family group. It betokens an expansion of personality beyond the texture of genetic relationships. This is what discloses the truth of the political concept of citizenship possessing an ethical content, investing it with a spiritual value. By the *gṛhastha* growing into the citizen, life registers an advance from the organic to the spiritual level. This is what twentieth-century biology refers to as *psycho-social evolution.* Evolution at the human stage ceases to be physical or organic, and becomes psycho-social; it becomes ethical and spiritual.

It is through such evolution that man grows into a new dimension, at once personal and impersonal, in which private morality becomes reinforced by public morality. Such citizens form the main source of strength and sustenance of a progressive socio-political order.

It was this development in a systematic form that we missed in India in the past. We can trace our current social problems to our long neglect of this aspect of human excellence. Public spirit, practical efficiency, a pervasive human concern, and resistance to social injustice and oppression form a galaxy of dynamic and positive character-traits which are the hall-mark of a citizen. Man in India in recent centuries tended more to be a bundle of negative traits than an integrated character of positive virtues and graces. That explains why we remained static individuals and failed to become dynamic personalities.

When we now strive to grow into dynamic personalities and develop positive virtues and graces in our character, we shall ensure and witness the steady progress of our nation in all fields. Our national development is too slow compared not only to such developed countries like Japan and Germany, but also to the countries of our own develop-

ment level such as Malaysia and some other Asian nations. It is about ninetieth in order in the list of the members of the United Nations, and about thirtieth among Asian Nations, in per capita gross national product!

The Energy of Manliness

The energy and practical efficiency of countries like Germany and Japan can be an eye-opener to us. I have been to these countries. It is amazing how these, shattered by the second World War, completely shattered, rebuilt themselves in two decades and have become industrially and commercially a challenge to the highly developed countries like USA and USSR. Today Japan stands foremost in the field of shipbuilding, replacing pre-war UK and post-war USA, and near-foremost in steel production. Japan now builds about 20 million tonnage of shipping every year. How did they achieve these miracles of national recovery and reconstruction? They have a quality which Swami Vivekananda referred to in his speeches and writings as something which he wanted our people to acquire, namely, *manliness.* This represents a totality of positive attitudes based on faith in oneself and faith in fellow human beings, *and the heroic mood of facing life's problems* instead of *evading them or running away from them.* This is known as *śraddhā* in Sanskrit, faith in oneself and faith in the ultimate meaningfulness of the world. Swami Vivekananda exhorted our people to capture this *śraddhā* and emphasized again and again the need for resorting to a *man-making education and man-making religion.* We have many religions in our country; and our country was partitioned into India and Pakistan on the basis of religion. It is good to remember in this connection what Swami Vivekananda said on the subject of such divisive religion. Writing from London to Sister Nivedita on 7 June 1896, he said:

> 'Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt'.

What we need is an education and a religion that will give us character-efficiency, that will make us active, energetic, patriotic, and dedicated, that will help our people to respond to the human situation around them, a situation compounded of misery, oppression, and injustice for millions of our people for hundreds of years, on the one side, and mounting hopes and aspirations of our people for a good life, in the wake of our political freedom, on the other.

That is the dynamic context in which you and I and every newborn child live and work today; it is the context in which every child

of ours is to be educated and brought up. Unless we become fully cognizant of this situation, we shall not be able to bring out the best out of ourselves for our own personal development and in the service of our state, in the service of the millions of our nation. What grinding poverty, backwardness, social injustice, oppression, have been heaped upon our people for centuries together! Due to these constant oppressions, our people have lost their individuality, self-respect, and initiative. Our new-won freedom must restore these to them. This very state of Mysore, this Karnataka region, how much suffering its common people have passed through! Contending armies of ambitious rulers marching across the land, decade after decade, making for poverty, social backwardness, and a spirit of despair and resignation. This has happened again and again. The continuous depredations of invaders and petty chieftains, first, foreign and, later, bred within by chaotic political conditions, made the peasant, the artisan, and the common people of Mysore and the rest of India develop a conditional reflex of fear of the world around them and apathy as to their own lot in it. Continuous thwarting created a conditioned reflex, first of fear, then of apathy, and finally of resignation.

But that dark period is now over for us. The nation is free; it is united under a democratic constitution. It is poised for a mighty adventure of, what Vivekananda over seventy years ago had called, *man-making and nation-building.* But if we let this opportunity go and continue to think and act in terms of personal aggrandizements, petty jealousies, and small loyalties, we may as well jeopardize our new-won freedom and pawn our future. We have constantly to remember that you and I are free if India is free. If India goes down, where are you and where am I? This we sometimes forget, and all our national ailments of the last twenty-two years have come from our parochial attitudes and frenzied actions. This is absolutely irrelevant in the India of today. What is relevant is the cultivation of broad national attitudes and the spirit of service and the sense of national responsibility, which are the essential hallmarks of a citizen in a free democracy.

The citizen has been defined in political philosophy as the free and responsible member of a free society. Freedom and responsibility constitute the two great values of a citizen. As citizens of free India, therefore, we are all involved in the problems and prospects of our country.

The Power of Organization

Our problems are staggering; they can be tackled and overcome only by our joining our separate wills together to form an organized

whole. This is the meaning and significance of *organization;* and among organizations, the most significant one is the political state. As a people, we had been woefully lacking in this capacity for organization, whose basis is character, mutual trust, and team-spirit. These are spiritual qualities. Exhorting our nation to develop this spiritual capacity, Vivekananda says, in his lecture on 'The Future of India' delivered in Madras in 1897 (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, pp. 299-300):

'Why is it that organizations are so powerful? Do not say that organization is material. Why is it, to take a case in point, that forty millions of Englishmen rule three hundred millions of people here? What is the psychological explanation? These forty millions put their wills together and that means infinite power and you three hundred millions have a will each separate from the other. *Therefore, to make a great future India, the whole secret lies in organization, accumulation of power, co-ordination of wills.*

'...Being of one mind is the secret of society. And the more you go on fighting and quarrelling about all trivialities such as "Dravidian" and "Aryan", and the question of Brahmins and non-Brahmins and all that, the further you are off from that accumulation of energy and power which is going to make the future India. For, mark you, the future India depends entirely upon that. That is the secret—accumulation of will power, co-ordination, bringing them all, as it were, into one focus'.

Here is our democratic state as the instrument of the collective will of its citizens. And the administration is the main instrument of action of the state. It is necessary to keep this instrument from becoming flabby and blunted. It is to be kept sharp and fit. That is the purpose of all administrative training programmes; it *ought to be* their aim and purpose. Administrative efficiency is the product of four factors:

Mastery of the technical know-how; keen awareness of, and imaginative involvement in, the national urges and aspirations; a consequent sense of dedication; and capacity for hard work in a team-spirit.

It is this type of efficiency that makes the administration capable of mobilising the vast human resources of the nation and getting the average citizen involved in its developmental programmes, instead of resting content with handling the nation's material resources only.

Men Versus Money

Herein lies the weakness of free India's politics and administration. We have often tended to put the cart before the horse. We have been enthusiastic more about voting the crores for the plans than for enthusing the people to work out the plan programmes themselves. We tended to put money before men. This has been our national weakness. Even in our marriages, we have been accustomed more often

to marry the dowry and not the girl. Swami Vivekananda drew the nation's attention powerfully to this, our national weakness, in his lectures and letters. His voice tells us today that man is primary and money is secondary. It is man that makes money do wonders. With efficient dedicated men and women behind its money, the nation can produce ten crores out of one. That is a great lesson that history teaches us again and again. Nations with limited material resources have achieved great economic and social progress. There we find demonstrated the primacy of man over money. In the same lecture on 'The Future of India' referred to earlier, Swami Vivekananda said, referring to his plan for nation-building in India (*ibid.*, p. 303):

> 'That is my plan. It may appear gigantic, but it is much needed. You may ask, where is the money? Money is not needed. Money is nothing...Money and everything else I want must come, because they are my slaves, and not I theirs.... Must—that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question!'

The Tyranny of the Triple 'p's

The human resources in India, distributed in our sprawling administrative apparatus in the centre and in the states and down to the village level, need to be developed into a powerful agency for energising the rest of the human resources of the nation, with a view to achieving all-round national development. That comes only from the injection of the motivation of national dedication and service into that apparatus. The word 'service' is used in India often in the most static sense, often euphemistically. We have any number of 'services' inherited from the British regime. We have added many more 'services' since we became free, at the union and state levels. These are often 'services' merely in the literal sense of the term. That is a necessary aspect but not a sufficient aspect. They need to be 'services' not in letter only but in spirit also. Undue stress on career and salary, privileges and perquisites, in short, *on the triple 'p's of pay, prospect and promotion,* make these services static and stagnant, a deadweight on a nation engaged on its arduous march to destiny. The eternal glory of the human spirit is not manifested in them. The salary one gets and the chair of power on which one sits and exercises authority do not express the true glory of man. These are variables; they come and go. But there is the manliness in man, the quality of the heroic in him, which rises above the selfish and the mercenary, and imparts richness and quality to the work one does and the life one lives. Herein is the expression in man of the Ātman through his body, of the immortal through the mortal. Such men elevate and enrich the functions they perform in society through the elevation and richness of their own personality. The work they do in society bears the true mark of 'service' in spirit and in letter.

Such 'service' is a spontaneous expression of their personality. They live and function in the constant mood and mode of 'what can I do for you'? and 'how can I serve you'?

The Philosophy of Service

We need to understand today the place of this philosophy of service in human society. From ancient times, man has been confronted with the problem of how to deal with his neighbour, with his fellow human beings. The problem of inter-human relationship is a continuing problem in human society. Man has found two broad answers to this question; one answer is to 'exploit' the other man for one's own advantage; and the other answer is to 'serve' the other man, so that he and I can prosper together. These are the two answers. But, unfortunately, the second answer has not found any widespread response from the hearts of men and women. It is a bit difficult; it calls for farsight, whereas, the first is easy and natural, involving no stretching of sight. As an ego centred in the organic system, man is impelled to seek only his own organic satisfactions and organic survival. And he is driven to exploit others in search of these. If this is the true nature of man, if he is only an individuality confined to his organic system, and if he can aggrandize himself and get away with it, without caring for others, he is perfectly right in exploiting others and in resorting to it judiciously. This is raw worldliness.

We coolly exploit the misery of other people. When a man in distress comes to us for a job, we most often take him in for the job, not on a wage or salary appropriate for the job, but on a wage or salary squeezed low out of his miserable state. This we do in the high-sounding name of worldly wisdom. But it is unethical exploitation; it is sheer injustice to the dignity of man.

And this has been the prevailing mood and temper of our society, inspite of the tall talk and profession of religion by our people. For, that religion, as practised, was nothing but a static piety; and our prevailing religious ideology was nothing but a 'piety-fringed worldliness'. This alone explains our social and political defeats and failures during the past few centuries, demonstrating the social truth that self-aggrandizement and social unconcern does not ultimately pay. Religion and politics and society must certainly be made of sterner stuff. They are the products of a dynamic spirituality endowed with farsight and foresight, and beyond the reach of static piety and self-seeking politics. In the absence of that spirituality, man in India indulged in mutual exploitation of every conceivable kind: the strong and the powerful exploiting the weak and the helpless; the learned exploiting the igno-

rant; man exploiting woman; and woman also, strangely enough, exploiting other women.

The result of this easy-going policy of exploitation over the centuries has been the stunting of the human personality in India and making it ineffective in history. We are now learning to unlearn this first answer and begin to experiment with the second answer, namely, service. This is the new philosophy of human excellence that stands sponsor to the mighty modern renaissance in India.

This new philosophy seeks to lift man out of that stunted ineffective state and put him on the road to growth, expansion, creativity, and fulfilment. And *renunciation* and *service*, *tyāga* and *sevā*, are the twin watchwords of this philosophy. It is renunciation of the puny ego centred in the organic system, and manifestation of the Ātman, the infinite Self which is the self of all; and service is the royal channel of that manifestation.

This is the ideology that will restore man to his dignity and strength, and integrate man to man to form the continued guarantee of the freedom of the individual and the unity and progress of the nation. This is true *nation-building through man-making*, in the words of Vivekananda. In passionate words, uttered in the course of a letter from Chicago to the Dewan of Junagadh on 20 June 1894, Swami Vivekananda says:

'The whole defect is here: The real nation who live in cottages have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Mussalman, or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost individuality.'

Need for Imaginative Sympathy

Here is tremendous work for our administrators and our other patriots. *It is a work for patriots, not for mere job-hunters;* for seekers of *dynamic spirituality*, and not of *static piety-fringed worldliness;* for men and women endowed with the spirit of service, and not for puny self-centred careerists.

I have often spoken on this subject to our university students and administrators in various parts of India when I used to point out the need for a particular quality to be developed by our administrators today in their character and outlook. This is, in the phrase I have coined for it, *a capacity for imaginative sympathy* or *abstract sympathy.* What do I mean by this term? When we come across a poor man or a

suffering man in the street, most of us will react with a measure of sympathy and compassion. We have that goodness in us. But that is only elementary ethical sense. It is not enough to make a citizen or an administrator in our free democratic state today. For that reaction to suffering ends up with the tossing of a coin; it does not ask, why this suffering? It does not have the impulse to trace that suffering to its roots and uproot it by effective measures through joining knowledge to social will and purpose, and joining will to will in collective social action. It is entirely a personal reaction to a personal experience.

But it is not everyday that an administrator or a citizen comes across human need or suffering in a concrete personal experience. And yet, there is immense privation and suffering in our society; and our administration is meant to be the dedicated instrument of our constitution and our state to put an end to this centuries-long condition of our people. How is this to be achieved? The answer is: by the administrator developing the *unique capacity for abstract sympathy.* Most of the administrators sit and function in the rooms of the secretariats, far away from the actual scenes of pulsating human life, of which they cannot have *concrete* personal experience. And yet the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration depend on the administrators becoming involved in the sufferings and joys, hopes and aspirations, of the nation's millions. This is possible only if the administrators in our secretariats develop a capacity for *abstract* sympathy, a capacity for *imaginative* sympathy.

It is the absence of this quality that converts an administration into a mere bureaucracy, sometimes into a soulless bureaucracy. This was the complaint and criticism often levelled by our national movement against the British administration in India. Unfortunately, our post-independence administration also continues to be the target of such attacks from our free citizens. And our administration in the centre and the states needs to take note of this criticism and set about to correct this deficiency. This is done by our administrators developing *this capacity for imaginative sympathy* and living and working under *a constant awareness that their primary personality is that of a free and responsible citizen of free India,* deeply involved in the developmental processes of their country and called to serve the nation in a particular capacity. This is how the Government can be made responsive to the people's urges and aspirations. This is how the otherwise slow-moving Government machinery can be made fast-moving. Indian and foreign observers have often criticised the slowness of our bureaucratic machinery and its incapacity to respond to social urges. The secretariat files do not have any motive power; they move slow or fast according to the slowness or energy, respectively, of the officers sitting on the secretariat chair. As a mere bureaucrat, he can-

not escape being slow, as he is only concerned with his job as a personal career and is incapable, consequently, of experiencing this *imaginative sympathy* with the social urges conveyed through the files in front, and of getting involved in the dynamic social processes of his nation. But as soon as he becomes capable of these two experiences, he ceases to be a *static individual* and gets transformed into a *dynamic personality*, the energies proceeding from which making, in turn, for the faster movement of the files, the quicker tempo of the administration, and higher and higher rate of economic growth and social development. This is also the index of the spiritual growth of the administrator from the *gṛhastha* to the citizen.

Orderly Revolution

This is the type of human growth that we need in India today in her administrators, politicians, intellectuals, and citizens before we can, and with a view to equipping us to, tackle successfully our mounting problems of economic and social growth and development. We must realise that millions in our country are poor and millions of them, for example, in south Bihar, still subsist on mohua flowers. Every one of us has to make our life and work a pledge that such state of things will be ended soon.

We often hear some people talk of revolution. *I want all people in India today to demand and work for a revolution.* For that is the truth about our country today. It has been trying for over a century to achieve revolutionary progress in an orderly way. It is a unique type of revolution, a revolution through steady evolution; the effecting of revolutionary social changes peacefully through social education and legislative action—the democratic way of revolution.

In his famous lecture on 'My Plan of Campaign' delivered in Madras in 1897, Swami Vivekananda had summoned our people to work for such a revolution (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, pp. 213-16, Ninth Edition):

> 'I want root and branch reform....I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth....The tyranny of a minority is the worst tyranny that the world ever sees.... A few men who think that certain things are evil will not make a nation move. Why does not the nation move? First educate the nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the law will spring. The kings are gone. Where is the new sanction, the new power of the people? Bring it up....You must go down to the basis of the thing, to the root of the matter. That is what I call radical reform. Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation.'

We have registered substantial socio-political gains already through our chosen democratic path. But challenges are still there; tremendous

challenges still face us. Can we move fast enough and respond to these challenges, arising from the mounting urges of our long-suffering people for justice, equality, and economic and cultural opportunity?

If democracy, with its peaceful and orderly change, fails to generate dynamism, revolutionary violence will take over the control of these socio-political urges and overwhelm the nation. No nation manufactures and goes in for a violent revolution deliberately. All violent revolutions are products of social despair. They overwhelm a nation when its intelligentsia cease to become dynamic agents of social change and reduce themselves to slavery to the status quo, and become the tail-end of the privileged few at the top. *This is the sign of the bankruptcy of social wisdom on the part of the intelligentsia concerned and of its spiritual poverty.* This is the situation that generates despair of orderly social change, driving the social urges to burst out into a violent revolution. So far, our national wisdom has saved us from this contingency. But that wisdom has been flowing thin since our independence and it is no exaggeration to say that now, in this year of 1970, India is certainly on the crossroads of her national destiny, posing a serious challenge to our politics and administration. It is in this context that the problems of administrative efficiency in our newly established democracy become urgent. That efficiency is to be measured by only one test, namely, *its dynamic responsiveness to the national urges.* This is achieved only by the administrative personnel, representing a cross section of the national intelligentsia, *getting trained in imaginative sympathy* and *national dedication.* It is self-centredness and lack of concern for others that lead to corruption; and that evil is already afflicting man and society alike in India. We are not required to forego all concern for ourselves and become ascetics. We are only called upon to put this concern for ourselves in the context of a larger concern for others. This changes the whole aspect of our life and work. This is called *enlightened self-interest* in political philosophy. It is self-interest, but with a touch of spiritual enlightenment, resulting in the recognition of mutuality, inter-dependence, and the spirit of service as the truth of all healthy social processes.

Even international relationships between states are being inspired by this philosophy of enlightened self-interest since the end of the second World War. It finds expression in the active concern of the economically developed nations in the welfare of the less developed nations. But this philosophy needs to find more pervasive expression in the field of inter-human relationships within the nation itself, where service should be installed as the prime motivation in place of exploitation. *Parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ paraṁ avāpsyatha*—'cherishing the good of each other, all shall achieve their highest welfare', proclaims Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*.

From a Victim of History to a Creator of History

We have a religious tradition, whether we are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, or others. We have lived by this religious tradition. Some good has come to us from this tradition and some bad as well. But our religious traditions have become reduced to, what I had said earlier, a static piety, or piety-fringed worldliness. We do all the pietist acts of our religion, but they do not result in our spiritual growth, in the enhancement of our spiritual awareness. We continue to be steeped in worldliness with our petty attachments and hatreds and mutual exploitations and divisive loyalties. These have stood against our developing an integrated social order and evolving a progressive political state as the instrument of collective human welfare. This has resulted in our country becoming, for centuries together, *the victim of history.* Other nations created history. We became the victim of that history. Today, for the first time, we as a nation have the opportunity to become the *creator of history.* And that becomes possible only when we shed this static piety and adopt a dynamic spirituality as the essential message of religions. All religions seek to lift man from his trivial ego-centred individuality into an expansive God-centred personality, with concern for other beings as its ethical by-product. The central message of all religions is this spiritual growth, this growth of man beyond his organic limitations, beyond the trivialities of his ego-centred individuality. This is what Sri Ramakrishna describes as the growth of the 'raw' ego, which delights in self-centredness and exploitation, into the 'ripe' ego, which delights in renunciation of the little self and service of others.

Human Evolution as Spiritual Growth

This beautiful concept of human growth and development, upheld by the religions of the world, finds strong endorsement today from the pronouncements of twentieth-century biology as to the goal of evolution at the human stage. Twentieth-century biology speaks of human evolution precisely in these ethical terms; it is psycho-social evolution in place of the organic evolution of the pre-human stage. This cerebral system of man is the finest organ that nature has evolved. Having evolved this organ, organic evolution has no further significance. We do not need nature to evolve new organs in us for our survival when, with the help of this finest organ, we can invent any new organs more efficient than what nature can give us through her long wasteful efforts. Therefore, biology tells us today that evolution has to be sought not at the organic level, not at the physical level, but at a level higher than both.

Biology terms such evolution as psycho-social evolution. It is a meaningful term and concept which brings biology close to the science

of religion, to the science of the spiritual dimension of the human personality, and the know-how of its realization. Psycho-social evolution is evolution in which the human psyche, till now in thraldom to the organic system, goes beyond its conditionings and limitations, in an indefinite expansion of love and sympathy and concern for other psyches in society. This is essentially moral and ethical evolution—an unlimited personality stirring in a limited organic individuality. This is what the science of religion calls the *spiritual growth* of man, or the expression of the spiritual dimension of the human personality. Vedānta proclaims that *this spirituality is the birth-right of every human being* and that all religions show the way to man how to acquire this spirituality and express it in life and action. Vivekananda, therefore, defines religion as *the manifestation of the divinity already within man.* That profound dimension is there in you and in me, it is lying hidden, it is lying mixed up with our organic dimension. But man has—and he alone has, among all species—the requisite organic capacity to disengage the spiritual dimension from its organic tie-up, and manifest it freely in his life and character. That is religion as *lived experience*; and not as creed or dogma or conformity. And ethical awareness, human concern, and the mood and act of service, become by-products of this spiritual growth; they are a spill-over, into the world of society outside, of this spiritual expansion and enrichment within. This is the moral and ethical spontaneity and naturalness relevant to man, unlike the physical and organic spontaneity and naturalness relevant to all species in the pre-human stage of evolution.

Renunciation and Service

What we need today is this spiritual growth in our people, in small or big measure, and the increasing character-efficiency that it engenders. Men and women must evolve, by entering this road of their spiritual growth, and continue to march on, slow or fast. That is the royal road to life-fulfilment, individual and collective. That road, as defined for us by Vivekananda, is renunciation and service:

> *'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India; intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'*

It is renunciation of this trivial organic-centred ego and manifestation of our larger spiritual self that makes for one's life-expression in the mood and act of service and that gets nourished in turn by that mood and act of service. Intensify the nation in these channels and the rest will take care of itself, says Swami Vivekananda. These are great words conveying a profound truth. How much we need to capture that message in all of us today! Every citizen, every social func-

tionary, needs to grasp this truth and endeavour to live it according to one's strength. The administrator must live this truth more intensely than the average citizen, because he is the repository of state power. And that power is meant to be used for general welfare. This is not possible for a man who has not risen above his ego-centred individuality, who has not set his course on the road of psycho-social evolution and become spiritual. It is such evolution, such spiritual growth, resulting in the steady evolution of the value called *buddhi*, the fusion of enlightened reason, emotion, and will, as the *Gītā* calls it, that makes for character-efficiency, that makes man capable of wielding power to ensure general welfare. *This is the philosophy of man that should inspire all administration, all positions of social responsibility.* Herein we see human life rising to the *heroic* level, from the *vegetative* starting level of the pursuit of personal profit and pleasure. It is to nourish and sustain man at that heroic level that Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught the philosophy of Yoga, says Śaṅkara in his commentary on the fourth chapter of the *Gītā*, 'so that, thus strengthened, they may become capable to accomplish general human welfare.'

Kālidāsa on the Welfare State

Free India seeks to be a welfare state. There is one fine definition of a welfare state in our classical Sanskrit literature. It is given by Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvaṁśa*. Describing the greatness of King Raghu to whose dynasty Śrī Rāma belonged, Kālidāsa says:

Prajānām eva bhūtyarthaṁ sa tābhyo balimagrahīt;
Sahasraguṇamutsraṣṭuḥ ādatte hi rasaṁ raviḥ—

'It was only for the welfare of the people that he (King Raghu) took taxes from them, just like the sun, which takes moisture from the earth only to return it thousandfold in the form of beneficent rain.'

That is a welfare state in which the state returns to the people hundred rupees for every rupee taken from them through taxation, direct and indirect. Our Fourth Five-Year Plan has allocated a target of twenty-five thousand crores of rupees for investment in development. In a true welfare state, that amount should rise to at least a hundred thousand crores in benefit when it reaches the people. What makes this possible? Administrative efficiency, proceeding from the competence, social awareness, and character of the administrators.

This is the 'magic' wrought by that philosophy of *Yoga* expounded in the *Gītā*: *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'*yoga* is efficiency, dexterity, in action.' It is a double efficiency, constituted of growing personality-

efficiency within and productive work-efficiency without. That is the fruit of the dynamics of administration, the 'magic' of hundred-rupees-benefits coming out of ten-rupees-investment. Between that ten and that one hundred lies the 'magic' of the science of spirituality. Where this science is not in action, the administration becomes static and heavy, and produces only ten-rupee benefit for every hundred-rupee investment.

Physical Sciences and the Science of Spirituality

Some of our people, especially among our educated class, including our administrative personnel, run after all sorts of magic and miracles, puerile and sterile, in the name of cheap religion and *yoga*. In this age of the marvels of science, such magic and miracles appear infantile. What magic and miracles performed in the name of a cheap religion and *yoga*, which are secret and incommunicable, superstition-generating and weakening, can compare with the 'magic' performed by the physical sciences, verified and verifiable, open and communicable, whether in the field of curing of disease, increasing of food production, or putting a man or a vehicle on the moon and bringing both back to earth!

The only miracle that can match, and over-match, such miracles of physical science is the miracle of purity, love, compassion, character-efficiency and service—the miracles, as remarked by Gandhiji, of transmuting hatred into love and violence into non-violence, in collective human relationships—which are all the sweet fruits of man's spiritual growth. This is the product of religion as a science, verified and verifiable, open and communicable, unlike the miracles of that cheap religion, but like the truths of the physical sciences.

It will be the dawn of a great and glorious era in India when our people turn away from all cheap and flimsy, magical and misty and secret, ideas of religion and turn to cultivate religion as the science of the spiritual growth of man, yielding strength of character, clarity of thought, and love and service, along with the cultivation of the various physical sciences and technology. *The junction of these two energy resources will alone ensure the fullest growth of man and the all-round development of the nation.* Can we not dream of an India where there will be no poor people sleeping on the foot-paths or picking crumbs from the dust bins, and where man will be restored to his dignity and worth? What a beautiful national vision! And what possibilities are available today for its realization! Why is it that thousands of us, working in various institutions of government and private agencies, do not become ecstatic over this idea? The trouble is that we have become complacent, static, self-centred. We need to initiate the thinking process, as I said in the

beginning, which alone can stir the stagnant waters of our life and make it flow. Let me repeat that behind our great culture lies the energy of thought; behind modern western culture, similarly, lies the energy of thought. We need to blend both these energies today and have them at the back of our actions in order to realize that vision. So, thinking and especially thinking together, as we are doing now, and a will oriented to service, are essential for progress. And what we need is progress, development, fulfilment. We need to galvanize the administration by introducing human and social motivations into it. It is this energy of proper ethical motivation that is sadly lacking in our administration. In the field of our administrative efficiency, *the one truth that is proclaimed by the twenty-two years of our post-independence history is that forty-nine per cent alone is contributed by the training programme constituent, waiting for the remaining fifty-one per cent to be contributed by its motivation constituent.* Since the latter has been tardy in coming, administrative efficiency has remained marginal. It is high time that we recognize the significance of this ratio and take steps to stimulate the motivation constituent.

The Gṛhastha to Grow into the Citizen

I have referred earlier to the truth of the need of the *gṛhastha* to grow into the citizen. Freely translated, *gṛhastha* means the house-holder. The Hindu family, held together by the moral and spiritual bonds of mutual love and service, has functioned as a healthy unit of the Hindu society. And the *gṛhastha* is the presiding and integrating personality in that family unit. Our society has rendered a fine account, throughout history, of this social ideal of the *gṛhastha.* But it did not keep pace with the changing times and, becoming more inward-looking than is healthy, *it increasingly overlooked the fact of its being only a unit in a larger social whole.* That social whole has been expanding in range and scope through the centuries, until today it has become a multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-what-not nation. Yet all the time that *gṛhastha* concept has remained stuck up in its original formulation. Much of the political failures of India in recent centuries have to be attributed to this fact. The excess of his inward-looking direction, dictated by an other-worldly piety producing a merit with its other-worldly rewards, incapacitated him from evolving a stable political state which derives from a measure of his outward-looking energies and interests. Outward worldly interests meant for him only opportunities and activities to earn wealth for his little family circle. Such a policy led him eventually, not to a dynamic spirituality capable of synthesising the outer and inner aspects of life, such as is taught in the *Gītā,* but to that static piety, to

that piety-fringed worldliness, where both piety and worldliness conspired to narrow his interests and reduce him to ineffectiveness. The Indian *gṛhastha* needs to be redeemed from this stagnation. The great *gṛhastha* ideal needs to be invested with a new dynamism. This is the contribution of the dynamic spirituality of the *Gītā*, of the comprehensive philosophy of the *practical Vedānta* of Swami Vivekananda.

With the touch of this philosophy, the *gṛhastha* idea undergoes a dynamic spiritual transformation. A family is essentially a biological group. What holds the members of this group together is the sense of genetic relationship. There are present, undoubtedly, the spiritual values of love and service; but these values are restricted and limited by that genetic relationship and express themselves, therefore, more as biological values than as spiritual values. It is only when these values find expression outside that biological *milieu* of the genetic family group, that they disclose their truly spiritual character.

This is ethical sense, the onset of which puts man on the fascinating journey of his spiritual expansion, development, and fulfilment. This is expressed by Sri Ramakrishna in one of his sayings: 'I' and 'mine' is *māyā;* 'thou' and 'thine' is *dayā*. By this growth, the *gṛhastha*, while functioning in the limited *milieu* of his family, becomes also capable of responding to the wider social *milieu* outside, and developing a responsive and responsible political personality. And by so responding, he converts the family from the stagnation of *saṁsāra* or worldliness into a nursery of his spiritual education and growth, and his own body from the tomb of his soul into the venue, the *kurukṣetra,* of his spiritual evolution. This is the spiritual value of citizenship, with its twin constituents of the political and the ethical.

Political citizenship can be achieved by any individual by merely attaining the physical age prescribed by the constitution. We stand in a queue from birth and when we count our age as twenty-one, as at present, or even eighteen, as it may one day be, we automatically become citizens. But the ethical constituent demands that we become citizens only when we imbibe the value of *freedom* and *responsibility*. These values are spiritual and their onset in a person reveals that that person has started growing spiritually and that he or she has added *educational maturity* to his *physical maturity*.

And today the Hindu ideal of the gṛhastha must grow into the modern ideal of the citizen. With this expansion and growth of his personality, the *gṛhastha* will develop into a mighty centre of creative energy and character-efficiency, capable of working out a progressive

social order reflecting the Vedāntic vision of human dignity and excellence.

The Anatomy of Nepotism

This is how man in India will rise from the tyranny of the genetic and the biological and the sensate into the freedom of the spiritual, which is his birth-right and which he alone, among all species in nature, is organically fitted to strive for and realise.

The tyranny of the genetic over man in society is what lies behind social evils such as nepotism. Indian and foreign observers of the Indian scene have marked this as one of our more serious social evils, especially after independence. We have plenty of instances of persons holding political or social authority, appointed to select candidates for scholarships or jobs, selecting candidates who are less qualified but closer to them in genetic relationships, which some of them can detect even by smell! In all such instances, *we see the presence of the old genetically limited gṛhastha and miss the new spiritually-grown citizen.* While disclosing the spiritual dwarfishness of the person concerned in authority, all nepotism also increases injustice in society and weakens the social fabric. Justice or *dharma* or ethical sense, is the cement that unites man to man, to form the integrated structure of a society. A mere aggregation of humanity does not make a society, just as a mere accumulation of bricks does not constitute a building. A polity is held together by the spiritual value of *dharma,* ethical sense. *Dhāraṇāt dharma ityāhuḥ dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ*—'*Dharma* is what holds together; dharma holds together people (in a society)' says the *Mahābhārata.*

The Genetic versus the Spiritual

The biological and genetic bond can hold together a society at best upto the clan or tribe level; even at these levels, the more serious social strains and tensions need for their resolution the spiritual value of *dharma* or ethical sense. And modern biology rules out the possibility of pure genetic races obtaining in any civilized societies today. The genetic bond becomes completely ineffective, therefore, for the integration of humanity in the large human aggregations of the national and multi-national states. The strength of these modern states proceed from their human integration; and that integration is essentially the product of the general political education of their populations in ethical sense and human concern. This makes for a certain social compactness, national self-discipline, and general effectiveness, within the nation and without. Their ethical sense may not have grown beyond that national level;

some of them may have expressed themselves internationally in exploitation and aggression. And that needs correction and education through the increasing liberation of ethical and spiritual values. But that they have taken the first steps in ethical expansion, and in diffusing ethical awareness in their human populations generally, is evident from the fact that they have released the spiritual resources in man to successfully solve their basic human problems of poverty and general backwardness. Individually, some few in India may have advanced far ahead spiritually. But collectively, we as a nation are yet to master the first lessons of that ethical and spiritual education involved in the *gṛhastha* growing into the citizen and thus developing India's vast human resources.

Dynamic Goodness

This is the meaning of Vivekananda's stress on a *man-making education* and a *man-making religion;* and this also is the significance of his observation that, as followers of the *Gītā,* the Western nations are more advanced than we in India. *All political growth of man involves an expansion of ethical awareness in varying degrees, beyond the limited biological family group, and the manifestation of the spirit of service as its by-product.* The general absence of this spirit of service in India is evidence of our political and ethical illiteracy, in spite of our talking high philosophy and religion and politics. As a result, we have bundles of opinions and beliefs, which we never cared to develop into *lived convictions.* We have yet to realize that opinions and beliefs are sterile and that it is only when we develop some of them into lived convictions that we achieve the character-efficiency of manliness, with the power of impact on the social situation around us. *This is dynamic goodness* unlike the static ineffective goodness, what is called goody-goodyness, which is such a prominent characteristic of most of our people. This, again, is the result of our people's putting the cart before the horse, in the field of religion. We resorted to the higher ideals of religion, consisting of the struggle for saintliness, before we had built the base level of religion, through the struggle to achieve manliness. Our goody-goodyness is the product of our *indigestion* of these higher ideals of religion; the capacity for that digestion can come to us only through the struggle for, and achievement of, manliness, of which the spirit and mood of service is the nursery and the fruit.

The Mood and Mode of Service

Barring a small minority, most of us in India have not captured the spirit and mood of service. In most of our offices and institutions, like banks, railway ticket offices, airline offices, secretariat offices etc.,

a citizen is treated by the person-in-charge, in mood and mode and words, more as an intruder than as one in need of help. He forgets that he is there, and is paid for, to help and serve a fellow-citizen. The contrast becomes glaring when we go to foreign countries, where you are greeted with a face of welcome and helpfulness and with the words: what can I do for you? how can I help you? In America, I have experienced this again and again; if you go to catch a plane rather late, the person-in-charge at the air office counter will sympathise with you and hurry up your checking and other formalities and put you on the waiting van to the plane. In India, often you may be scolded for coming late and left to stew in your own juice! In other countries, the person-in-charge responds to such situations by *imaginatively* realising that you had some difficulty on the way and are in need of his help. This is the normal pattern in other countries. When will it become a normal pattern in ours also? And when it becomes so, will it not disclose that spiritual growth of the Indian personality which we have been discussing?

Charity: Enlightened versus Un-enlightened

Such a spiritual growth will have a wholesome impact on all aspects of our inter-human relationship. Take for example, charity, especially charity by our rich people. Again, barring some minority of our rich people who are truly enlightened in their charity, the vast majority do charity in the most un-enlightened way. It is more to earn a pious merit for oneself than to remove the suffering of the person in front; often, it is unwilling and forced charity, mostly given without grace, without understanding, and without freedom of the spirit, *as if one rich slave is tossing some coins to another poor slave.* I once addressed an assembly of industrialists and businessmen and took the occasion to tell them that we in India did not know the mood and mode of charity. Even in a welfare state, there will be need for charity, a personal response to a social need. I narrated to them my experience in Rangoon. The Ramakrishna Mission was running one of the finest and most popular of hospitals in the whole of Burma in Rangoon for decades till it was nationalised, along with all other similar ones, a few years ago. We used to collect funds for the hospital from the Hindu, Burmese Buddhist, and European merchants of Rangoon. And we experienced a world of difference between the way of charity of the Hindu merchants and Burmese Buddhist merchants. Of course, the Hindu merchants paid substantially; and after Burma's independence, when many Hindus left for India, the Burmese Buddhist merchants became the more substantial donors. But the difference between the two groups remained wide as to the method of giving charity. When you go to

a Hindu merchant to collect the promised amount, you will be greeted often with the words: come tomorrow. This will rarely happen in the case of the Burmese Buddhist merchant. He makes you feel you are wanted and gives you the promised amount with a sense of devotion. They follow the Buddha's precept; they observe, better than the Hindu, the spirit of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad's* exhortation on charity:

> *Śraddhayā deyam; aśradhayā adeyam; śriyā deyam;*
> *hriyā deyam; bhiyā deyam; saṁvidā deyam—*

'Give with *śraddhā;* give not without *śraddhā;* give with *Śrī* (with open hand); give with modesty; give with fear (that what you give may be too small for the purpose); give with understanding (of the purpose and social relevance of the charity).'

What beautiful sentiments these are! And how much we have deviated from them by remaining content with a static piety and failing to strive for a dynamic spirituality! Our rich have to realise that spending is the dynamics of economics and that wise spending is more difficult and important than earning. And if some person or institution comes to one of them on behalf of a project of social service, he must consider it his privilege to have an opportunity to come across a healthy channel for the flow of his surplus wealth. If he has money to spare or if he has none, or even if he has paid his bit to some other cause, he can always receive the charity-seeker with a welcome word of appreciation for his good work and wish him god-speed in that worthy field of human service, for which he himself cannot spare the time. This is the prevailing attitude of the rich in America where, as one American writer has put it, between the two exhortations of Jesus as to loving God with all one's heart and mind and soul, and loving one's neighbour as oneself, the American has wonderfully responded to the second, though not to the first, which he thinks beyond his understanding.

The Gītā's Philosophy of Administration

The philosophy of administration will vary according to the philosophy of the society and the state. It will be one type in a feudal set-up, another in a totalitarian one, and still another in a democratic one. The philosophy of democratic administration derives from the inalienable dignity and worth of the human personality and the active concern to foster the same. Its operative principle is that man is essentially educable and not vile, and that social change is, and can be, brought about in an orderly way and peacefully by breaking of wits and not by breaking of heads.

The *Gītā* gives us profound insight into such a philosophy and its relevance to all men of responsibility, into which category fall all our

administrators. Philosophy is like a lamp; it illumines our way. A single person needs only a small lamp to light his way. But a large congregation will need a more powerful light to light its way. Similarly, an ordinary philosophy is enough to light the life-path of a private citizen. But a more-than-ordinary philosophy is necessary to light the path of life and work of a man of social responsibility. What is the nature and scope of this more-than-ordinary philosophy?

In his brief but masterly introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā*, Śaṅkarācārya conveys in two sentences the nature and scope of this philosophy:

'The Vedānta is (an integrated philosophy of) a two-fold *dharma*, namely, *pravṛtti* or outward-directed action and *nivṛtti* or inward-directed meditation, which (together) form the means for the maintenance of the world on even keel; for they are, verily, the means of the *abhyudaya*, social welfare, and *niḥśreyasa*, spiritual growth and fulfilment, of all beings'.

Philosophy has been defined as seeing life steadily and seeing it as a whole. Politics, economics, sociology, art, ethics, and religion view life in segments, and they thus form departments of the science of man. Similarly physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology view nature in segments, and form departments of the science of physical nature. And philosophy or *brahmavidyā*, as understood in Vedānta, is the science of sciences, *sarvavidyā-pratiṣṭha*, as the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* expresses it, being the synthesis of the sciences of physical nature and the sciences of human nature. And the *Gītā* is the *yoga śāstra*, the science and technique of *yoga*, deriving from that *brahmavidyā*, as the colophon at the end of each of its chapters proclaims.

It is in the light of this rational and comprehensive philosophy that the *Gītā* expounds its philosophy of administration. The touch of that philosophy transforms the administrator from a static individual into a dynamic personality; from a *creature* of history into a *creator* of history; from a subject or *prajā* into a sovereign or *rājā*.

We have a word in Sanskrit; it comes in the fourth chapter of the *Gītā*. That word is *Rājarṣi*. For many of us, Hindus, this great word evokes all sorts of distorted meanings, magical and misty and uncanny. We shall have to remove all such distorted meanings from our minds; and then we shall find a wonderfully constructive and creative idea in it. Śaṅkarācārya defines this word *Rājarṣi* as *rājānaḥ ca te ṛṣyaḥ ca*—'they who are both *rājās* and *ṛṣis* in one.' What does that mean? We have no *rājās* in the sense of kings or crowned heads today. Ours is a republican state. We have thus no *rājā* or *rājās* in the formal sense of the term, in the sense arising from the external accoutrements

attached to the office of a *rājā*. Who, then, is a *rājā* in the basic sense? Anyone on whom depends the happiness and welfare of thousands. That is the meaning of the word *rājā* in the Sanskrit tradition, *rājate, virājate,* 'shines'—the one who shines in responsibility. The light in him is not in a bushel but on a candle stand, as remarked by Jesus, so that it can throw light all-round. In this sense, even the father and the mother at home are *rājās*. The administrator is a *rājā*. A minister is a *rājā*. An industrial magnate is a *rājā;* for, on them depend the happiness and welfare of thousands and thousands. Every citizen in a free republic is sovereign and free; in that, they are all *rājās* in a general sense; among them all, the holders of power and responsibility are *rājās* in a special sense. How do they handle their power and responsibility? What philosophy, what light, guides them? That is the most vital question.

If they are guided by the lamp of the ordinary philosophy to which the ordinary person resorts to light his path, they may more likely and more often use the power and position to aggrandize themselves at the cost of society. This is not intelligence, but only foxy cleverness. It does not express the *heroism of manliness*. But if they are to enhance the life and welfare of the people under their charge, and also light up their paths to happiness and fulfilment, they will need to resort to the light of a more-than-ordinary light shed by a more-than-ordinary philosophy, which can lead them on the steep and rough path of ethical development and human concern, and generate the extraordinary energy of character-efficiency and dedication. This is the *sādhana* or struggle that makes one a *ṛṣi* or a sage; it is the *heroism of saintliness*.

The combination of a *rājā* and a *ṛṣi* in an administrator, the synthesis of *manliness* and *saintliness*, this is what is desired by the *Gītā*. When one combines power and social responsibility with the strength arising from character, clear thinking, dedication, and practical efficiency, one effects in oneself this unique synthesis of the *Rājarṣi* of the *Gītā*. So Kṛṣṇa says in the opening three verses of the *Gita:*

'I taught this immortal *yoga* to Vivaswān; he taught it to Manu who, in turn, taught it to Īkṣvāku. Coming down thus in a tradition, this *yoga* was known to the *rājarṣis*; in the course of long ages, this *yoga* was lost, O Arjuna. This same ancient *yoga*, this invaluable mystery, I am now imparting to you, finding in you a devotee and a friend.'

Yogaḥ Karmasu Kauśalam

Why was this *yoga* lost in the course of ages? asks Śaṅkara in his commentary and answers: 'because it fell into the hands of physical and mental weaklings and of those without discipline of their sense

organs'—*durbālan ajitendriyān prāpya;* and he adds that Kṛṣṇa taught it to such men of high responsibility 'in order to strengthen them and, endowed with which, they may work successfully to protect and cherish the people'.

When we became free, we instituted the Indian Administrative Service. This service, the I.A.S., adopted a phrase from the second chapter of the *Gītā* as its motto: *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'*Yoga* is efficiency or dexterity in action'. That should be the philosophy not only of the I.A.S., but of every branch of the administration, of every person of responsibility. Do not associate anything magical or misty with this great philosophy of *yoga*. Kṛṣṇa did not want that Arjuna should sit in a cave or on the road-side and do some *prāṇāyāma* or the *yoga* postures. But such, and often something less than such, is, unfortunately, what the generality of Hindus understand by *yoga*. We have well-nigh destroyed this grand science of practical spirituality. We will have to disabuse our minds completely of all such notions, and approach the *Gītā* with a free and fresh mind, to understand its *yoga*. It is a lofty philosophy; it is strong meat for weak stomachs, as it is a teaching imparted by a vital and dynamic teacher to his vital and dynamic disciple.

'Tasmāt Yogī Bhavārjuna'

And Kṛṣṇa will be happy today that, after many many centuries, his philosophy is going to be courageously tested and verified by batches and batches of free India's youth called to her service in various responsible positions. And Kṛṣṇa will today whisper to every such youth what he commanded Arjuna: *tasmāt yogī bhavārjuna*—'therefore, O Arjuna, be a *yogī*.' *Tasmāt* means 'therefore', i.e., if this philosophy is true and commends itself to your reason, be spiritual and work out the salvation of your nation, says Kṛṣṇa to us today. This *yoga* can be practised in offices, homes, farms, and factories, in the bench, the bar, and the pulpit. Banish the idea of *yoga* as something professional. Be each one of you a *yogī*, some more perfect, some less; every one has the organic capacity to manifest the ever-present divinity within, by going beyond organic limitations.

In this philosophy, there is the confluence of two energy streams, namely, *the energy of vision and the energy of practical implementation,* the energy of meditation and the energy of action. It signifies the confluence of the energy of Kṛṣṇa, the unarmed charioteer and the master of yoga, and the energy of Arjuna, fully armed for heroic action under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa.

Conclusion: The Challenge of a Grand Testament

This is the great message of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. *It is the loftiest and the most practical philosophy of administration.* Here is, for instance, a district for which the state has allocated twenty crores of rupees of the Fourth Plan funds. The administration converts it into a one-hundred-crore-rupees benefits for the people of the district. This is *yoga;* this is *karmasu kauśalam.* Where, on an acre, its farmers raised five hundred kilograms of food grains before, they now raise fifteen hundred kilograms. That is *yoga.* Where there was insult and oppression of the scheduled castes and tribes, there now reigns equality and human dignity; where there was darkness of ignorance and superstition, there is now the light of knowledge and culture. Where there was a steady increase of crime and litigation over the years, there now shines the spirit of mutual trust and co-operation. Where there was the virus of communal conflicts and suspicion, there now reigns peace and social cohesion, and an enlightened clamour from all communities for the enactment of a common national civil code to complete the process of nation-building. The social process as a whole, which was aimless and directionless before, due to which there was the growing tendency to boredom and frustration even among the youth and the rich, which found expression in anti-social attitudes and behaviour, now becomes dynamic and steady and geared to the steady liberation of spiritual values imbedded in life, and to human fulfilment in a fundamental way. All these are the external fruits of that *yoga,* of which the internal fruits are the happiness, peace, and the sense of fulfilment of the administrators concerned, resulting from their growth in ethical sense and spiritual awareness. *This is the fusion of the energy of manliness with the energy of saintliness,* which alone has the power of impact on the world situation to lead humanity on the road to collective human welfare. This is the combination of *philanthropic energy with philosophic calm,* demanded of the science of sociology by Herbert Spencer.

This is the double efficiency issuing from the philosophy of *yoga* of the *Gītā* and from its *rājarṣi* spirit inspiring politics and administration. This is the meaning and significance of the grand testament of the *Gītā* given in its closing verse, which the people of modern India will do well to take as a challenge to them:

> *Yatra yogeśwaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ;*
> *Tatra śrīḥ vijayo bhūtiḥ dhruvā nītiḥ matiḥ mama—*

'where (there is) Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga* (and) where (there is) Pārtha, the wielder of the bow, there (in that society), I think, wealth, victory, welfare, and unshakable Justice (shall prevail).'

THE MESSAGE OF KANYAKUMARI

IT is a great honour to all of us that we are assembled here at Kanyākumāri, at this sacred spot of India, this morning when we have with us our Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi to participate in the dedication celebrations of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial. Kanyākumāri has become a real symbol of the great national aspirations and ideals and struggles which are ahead of us in the modern age. Swami Vivekananda's meditation on the rock at Kanyākumāri brings before us the vision of a new India in the process of realization.

The Eternal Message of our Himalayas

The mighty Himalayas to the far north have been the symbol of India and her focus of national inspiration during all these millennia of our history; and the Himalayas represent the spirit of meditation, the spirit of inwardness. That spirit gave to humanity the Vedāntic vision of human excellence, namely, his inborn divinity. India has written a luminous chapter in the history of man, in the history of the tremendous development in his life of inwardness, meditation, and transcendentalism, in that immortal literature of our nation, namely, the Upaniṣads. A little later came the great Buddha who added a fresh chapter of re-authentication, bright and glorious, to this great ideal and technique of meditation, to this heroic struggle of man rising above his sensate level, of man achieving inner penetration and experiencing and expressing his profound spiritual dimension, making for universality in his vision and sympathy.

Today, we have another symbol and centre of inspiration for India in this Kanyākumāri in the far south, impressively situated at the con-

fluence of the three oceans. Kanyākumāri represents the expression of that innate divinity of man, and of the consequent universality in his vision and sympathy, in the practical field of individual and collective life and endeavour; it represents what Vivekananda calls *Practical Vedānta.*

The New Message of Kanyākumāri

For centuries we have prayed and meditated and undergone various austerities; we have achieved thereby a proficiency and greatness in that discipline of the inner life and built up a vast national reservoir of spiritual energy. Swami Vivekananda realized during his meditations on this Kanyākumāri rock that today's problems of our nation call for a dedication of these great energies of our culture to the urgent work of the social, economic, cultural, and all-round betterment of the millions of our people. That calls for the expression of the national spiritual energies in the field of work, of efficient, co-operative work. And the message which Kanyākumāri conveys to us today, therefore, is *meditation combined with action*, resulting in the evolution of a perfect national character, and synthesizing our age-old moral and spiritual efficiency with modern scientific and technical efficiency.

It is this new emphasis on work, on intelligent, co-operative, team work, for the betterment of the lives of millions and millions of human beings, that is symbolized in this Kanyākumāri. For it was here that Swami Vivekananda discovered that, in spite of the high spiritual dimensions of our great culture, in spite of our producing some of the most outstanding spiritual geniuses of the world, our culture had neglected our common men and women as a result of our neglect of the material and socio-political aspects of human life, a neglect which became cruel in recent centuries. Today, we need to emphasise this aspect of human life, and uphold the philosophy relevant to it, namely, intelligent, co-operative work. Poverty and social backwardness cannot be removed by that prayer and meditation and ritual which do not result in efficient action. Poverty cannot be removed by ritualism, much less by religious magic, by rituals and ceremonies taken as the be-all and end-all of religion; their efficacy has to be proved by their fruits of purity of character and work-efficiency, behind which lies a deep concern for man, for the divine in the heart of man. This is the call of Kanyākumāri to all our religions.

Kanyākumāri today proclaims the close spiritual kinship of such action with meditation. It proclaims the technique by which vision can flow into action, by which love of God can flow into the love and service of man. In Kanyākumāri, India's spiritual quest, which mostly

found its channel of expression in the *tapas* of inwardness, of meditation, through the inspiration of the Himalayas, now finds a new channel of outward expression in dedicated action. That is the inspiration that Swami Vivekananda received from Kanyākumāri during the intense hours he spent here towards the end of 1892. He discovered his life's mission on this rock.

The ancient sacred temple to the Divine Mother in this very Kanyākumāri proclaims this truth; for here, the Divine Mother is worshipped as a *Kanyākumāri*, youthful maiden, engaged in *tapas*. And She represents the very spirit of India, ever-aging but never old, ever youthful in vitality and beauty and charm.

Vivekananda was deeply impressed by the enormous spiritual energies that India had accumulated by her long record of *tapas*. And his mission was to cut a perennial outlet channel of social action from this reservoir, keeping at the same time its inlet channel of inward meditation flowing clean and steady. The waters of such social action alone have the energy and power to fertilize the fields of individual and collective life in a fundamental way; for it alone can provide the root nourishment to the human personality, with its economic, political, intellectual, and moral dimensions getting nourished as a by-product, just as a tree gets fundamentally nourished by the watering of its roots but not by the watering of its leaves and twigs and trunk. Says Vivekananda in one of his great utterances voicing man's awakening to his inborn divine nature:

'Teach yourself, teach every one, his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, everything great and glorious will come, when the sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

The Tragic Face of India

Swami Vivekananda's meditations on the Kanyākumāri rock found explosive expression immediately after in the message of dynamic spirituality which he delivered in America, England, and India during the remaining ten years of his life, a message comprehensive of man's total welfare, material as well as spiritual.

Swami Vivekananda was inspired by the great truth discovered by the ancient sages of India and conveyed to humanity at large by that immortal literature of our philosophical and spiritual tradition, namely, the Upaniṣads, that the true glory of man lies in his inalienable, divine, immortal Self, the Ātman. He had seen in his master, Sri Ramakrishna, the full manifestation of this human glory; he had verified this truth of

man in his own life as well. But when, after the passing away of his master in 1886, he went round his country as a *parivrājaka* or wandering monk, and lived with its princes and peasants, its brahmins and untouchables, its poor and rich, in intimate communion with his people, he was deeply grieved to see the tragic face of the real India, the millions of battered, bruised, and broken men and women of his country. Evidently, that glory of the human spirit proclaimed by his nation's books and saints had not passed on to the nation's multitudes. They bore the mark of arrested growth due to continued neglect, and also oppressions, first, by invaders coming from without and, later, by invaders and oppressors bred within the country. This had made India a *creature* of history instead of being its *creator*, as she was for long ages. Other nations created history, and India became its victim century after century. This was the price India was forced to pay, said Swami Vivekananda, for her continued neglect and oppression of her common people. And he summoned modern India to reverse this trend and give back to the people their lost individuality and restore them to their human dignity and glory. He proclaimed this to be the central theme of the modern Indian awakening, the central purpose of his *Practical Vedānta*. Said he about the Indian masses in one of his letters:

'Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Mussalman, or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their individuality. They are to be educated....Our duty is to put the chemicals together; the crystallization will come through God's laws. Let us put ideas into their heads. Now this means educating the masses.'

Vivekananda's Summons to Our Intelligentsia

The masses must be roused, made aware of their own dignity, their own divine heritage. This is the work he has set before our people today. He summons the intelligentsia of our country, our young educated citizens, to realize their alignment with the common people of their nation. Too long have our intelligentsia been aligned with the small upper strata of the society, the wealthy and the holders of power, ever yearning to catch a glance from them and get a crumb of their wealth and power. By so doing, our intelligentsia reduced itself to being the tail-end of an unjust social order, static and uncreative, and reduced itself also to a spiritually bankrupt and socially ineffective group. Certainly, human intelligence must have a higher role to play; certainly, it can function creatively to carry human evolution forward. Vivekananda invites them today to play this new role in their nation, the role of creative agents of social change, dynamic agents of free India to diffuse the blessings of that freedom among the nation's mil-

lions, so that Indian society may progressively bear the impress of the Upaniṣadic vision of human glory and dignity. That calls for the capturing by our intelligentsia, whether in the professions, the union and state services, or in other fields, of a dynamic character-efficiency which is the product of intelligence yoked to patriotic dedication and service. They need to respond to the following truth uttered by Vivekananda:

'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India; intensity her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

It is the renunciation of the lower trivial self and the manifestation of the higher self, whose spontaneous channel of outward expression is the mood and act of service. Such renunciation and service constitute a new form of *tapas* or austerity, constructive and creative, yielding the twin fruits of the spiritual growth of the person who serves and the all-round growth of the nation served. *Be and Make* is the motto that Swamiji has therefore given us: Be men yourselves and stand on your feet and make men of others by helping them also to stand on their feet. It is only through this human transformation, said Vivekananda, that we shall be able to forge a healthy body-politic for the ever-healthy eternal soul of our mother India. And India means a sixth of the human race. Its health is as much an international as a national concern in this post-war age. But our own national responsibility is primary.

The Promise of the Present to the Future

Swamiji reminded us again and again that the soul of India is strong and pure. That is the Eternal India, *amar bhārat.* It has inspired the nations of the world again and again. In every contemporary period of world history, nations outside, civilizations outside, have always sought to come in touch with its eternal soul, to learn from its ancient wisdom. But, during the past few centuries, there has been a spiritual malnutrition in our body-politic; it had consequently suffered from many social ailments, which had made it weak and largely ineffective, both within the nation and without. It had lost its own former greatness and glory. Today, we need to build a new body for that eternal soul of our nation. When these two become conjoined together, the healthy and eternal soul finding its vehicle in a healthy and dynamic body-politic, we shall see a resurgence of India, before which all her past resurgences will pale into secondary achievements.

This is the promise of the present to our future, according to Swami Vivekananda. A part of the promise has been realized by our achievement of political independence in 1947 and the resulting freedom to

shape our own destiny. We then gave ourselves a constitution which, for the first time in our long history, is based upon the people of India. All our previous political states derived their strength from emperors, kings, or military conquerors. The people had played no part and found no place in them. For the first time in the five thousand years of our history, we have been able to evolve a political state which derives its strength and sanction from 'We, the people of India.' Our constitution embodies the vision of human dignity and glory upheld in our ancient spiritual and philosophical tradition and in the modern socio-political humanistic heritage, and also breathes the will to translate that vision into social realities. The latter is the role which our sovereign democratic state is called upon to play and to fulfil. Our state has to respond to the lofty visions embodied in the constitution, on the one side, and to the mounting urges and aspirations of the Indian people, on the other. Our state can play this high role effectively only if the people of India realise the responsibilities and opportunities of their citizenship of free India. It is to such free and responsible citizens, who are called to the service of the nation in the Union and State and panchayat services, in the public and private sector industrial undertakings, and in the educational, medical, and other professions, that Vivekananda's message goes today with a unique relevance and force, so that they may become effective agents of the national development purposes, purposes which he had formulated in the following words in one of his letters written from Japan in 1893:

> '... to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large, and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers.'

The Junction of Two Spiritual Streams

This is what he presented to the people of India as practical religion and practical politics in one, the twin aspects of his philosophy of *Practical Vedānta*. He used to quote his master's pungent words relating to religion understood as static worldly piety or piety-fringed worldliness: 'Religion is not for empty bellies.' We need the religion of work, the discipline of intelligent co-operative team-work, to destroy the demon of hunger. This is the *yoga* of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, with its message of dynamic spirituality conveyed in three words: *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'*yoga* is efficiency, dexterity, in action.' In contemporary post-independence India, where the unhealthy politics of the sheer pursuit of power has ousted the healthy politics of service, we need a new dictum to complement that dictum of Sri Ramakrishna, namely, 'politics is not for empty bellies.' The problems of poverty and general

backwardness can be successfully tackled only by a politics of service; and such politics is what is inspired by a sense of national vision and dedication. 'God and truth are the only politics in the world, all else is trash,' says Vivekananda. Our nation has to infuse this sense of dedication for the service of the common man in our politics and administration. This is the spirituality of politics; and the other is the spirituality of practical religion. *These two rivers of spirituality need to flow together today to fertilize the life of our people in a fundamental way.* Our people need healthy political education. Their awakened political sense will be the perennial strength of our infant democratic state.

It is in such life and work that we shall manifest the spirit of Vivekananda. It is by such work that we shall pay our tribute to the memory of this great teacher, this lover of man, who lives in spirit in the hearts of our millions, in the hearts of millions in all parts of the world. There is no greater work for us today than to inspire ourselves with that vision of Vivekananda, the vision of India's greatness and glory, and with the resolve to translate that vision into our social experiment and experience. This is the way by which we can endow our nation with a healthy body-politic; this is the guarantee of the steady moral and spiritual uplift of not only our own people, but of the rest of the world as well.

India has always exercised a fascination for all contemporary civilizations during the millennia of her history. There is much hunger today in the rest of the world for that bread of spirituality which India has always produced and accumulated for the good of mankind. It is true that when we look around us today we do not see evidences of that spirituality on the surface of our national life. That surface greets us with much that is unspiritual, much that is distressing and depressing. But in the depths of our national consciousness Vivekananda experienced the tangible pulsations of the spiritual energy resources of our nation. We need to master and apply the technical know-how of bringing these spiritual energy resources to the surface of life so that they may become available to our people, so that we may overcome the spiritual and moral malnutrition of our nation, side by side with our mastering and applying the technical know-how of bringing to the surface the physical energy resources of our nation to overcome our material backwardness.

This technical know-how of the science of spirituality teaches us that it can be mastered and applied by every citizen in every field of life—in the fields and factories, in the homes and offices, everywhere.

None need to go to a forest or a cave to become spiritual, except to intensify the spirituality gained in life and work; for this science teaches us that spirituality is the birthright of one and all, that the Ātman is our true nature, that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and that life and action are the field, the *Kurukṣetra*, for the culture of our spiritual awareness. This is the great message of *Practical Vedānta* of Swami Vivekananda, the perennial message of dynamic and comprehensive spirituality of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

Worldliness versus Life in the World

In the simple humble duties and joys of life, man can cultivate and manifest the divine that is within him, making for compassion, making for social concern, making for love and service. This is the type of practical spirituality which has to become the character-strength of every citizen in our country. Too long have we made a distinction between life in the world and the life of religion. And we have been widening that gulf century after century, in spite of the clear and definite teaching of the *Gītā*. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came to bridge this gulf between life and religion. In the words of Ramakrishna, in which the essence of the philosophy of Vedānta, of the message of the *Gītā*, is given in a brief utterance:

'Live in the world; but don't allow worldliness to enter into you.'

Worldliness should not be allowed to enter our hearts; if it enters, life will become heavy with selfishness and pettiness, jealousy and exploitation, making for stagnation. But with the stirring of the ever-present divinity in the heart, life flows out in a spirit of love and service, making for dynamism and progress. So Ramakrishna adds, by way of an illustration:

'The boat will be on the water; but water should not be in the boat. That is the wrong place for the water and bad for the boat. For, then, the boat will become stagnant and unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.'

So when worldliness enters the human heart, it makes for the stagnation of *saṁsāra*, the stagnation of the little self of 'I' and 'mine', resulting in exploitation, social tension, violence; human life then becomes, in the words of Hobbes, 'short, nasty, and brutish'. That is what happened to us during the last few centuries. In spite of our piety, in spite of our religiosity, which were becoming increasingly showy, noisy, and fussy, we remained essentially worldly; we were mainly selfish and self-centred. We practised what may be termed a piety-fringed worldliness, which could not generate ethical sense, human concern, or character-efficiency. We exploited each other and reduced our collective life to elementary levels. *Vivekananda rescued us from that false*

idea of religion as static piety and inspired us with his message of religion as dynamic spirituality, with its twin expressions of renunciation and service.

Twin Criteria of National Development

And Kanyākumārī represents this great message of dynamic spirituality, the fruit of *Practical Vedānta*, whereby Eternal India's energy of spiritual vision becomes channelized into socially creative ends and purposes, endowing the nation with the resources of an ever-increasing spirituality, side by side with the other type of strength and resource, namely, physical energy resources, which are being increasingly generated and utilized by our five-year plans of economic development. The per capita production and consumption of this latter energy is the accepted criterion to assess the development of a country. According to this criterion, India today is far behind, tenth or twelfth among the nations, with America leading, followed by U.S.S.R, Germany, Japan, U.K. and so on. But India is catching up, with the steady implementation of her development programmes. Very soon we shall be developing a national electrical grid, connecting every region of our vast country with every other region, and helping to hasten the pace of our industrial growth and brighten the *environment* of the life of our people.

But this alone will not make for human fulfilment. The criterion of per capita production and consumption of physical energy with respect to national development is *a necessary* but not *a sufficient criterion*. Humanity today, in several nations which have fulfilled this criterion and are classed as highly developed, is not experiencing the expected sense of fulfilment. Vivekananda had, therefore, proposed more than seventy years ago, after a penetrating study of the philosophy of man behind modern western civilization, a second criterion of human development, not opposed but complementary to that first criterion, namely, the per capita production and consumption of spiritual energy. He wanted India to retain her historically acquired hold on the science and technical know-how of this unique energy generation and consumption, and to share it with the rest of humanity, while learning from the advanced nations the know-how of the physical sciences and technology. He wanted India to achieve a happy synthesis of the sciences of physical nature and the science of man, *with a view to enriching man externally and internally, materially and spiritually.*

Conclusion

We are very happy that our Prime Minister is with us this morning. She has studied Vivekananda literature. We had our President

Mr. V. V. Giri, the first servant of our nation, on the first day of the inauguration of this Vivekananda Rock Memorial two weeks ago. And today we have with us our Prime Minister, the second servant of our nation, who has spared a day for this national memorial out of her busy schedule. And we shall be happy to listen to her words on this occasion, words which will cheer up our nation. For there is a sense of depression all round. This depression can be removed by the energy of that vision of man and his excellence given to us by Swami Vivekananda, who was essentially a teacher of strength and fearlessness. I now request our Prime Minister to deliver her speech and give to the nation a touch of that message of hope, of courage, and of dedication.

Part Six

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION: ITS IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES

'The national ideals of India are Renunciation and Service; intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

—Swami Vivekananda

THE first quarter of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of British supremacy in India. Within the space of two centuries, a small company of intrepid merchants from over the seas had become the rulers of a vast continent. The people of India, both Hindu and Muslim, awoke one fine morning to find the great Moghul Empire fallen and the new Empire of the British risen on its ruins. India's first reaction was a sigh of relief; after decades of warfare and strife, the country was blessed with the beginnings of a long era of peace and political unity.

Meeting of India and the West

But this new phenomenon in Indian history held deeper implications within itself. For the first time after several centuries, East and West met on the soil of India. India had been in direct cultural and commercial intercourse with ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt till the rise of the Arabian Empire. This contact was continued indirectly through the Arabs till about the middle of the thirteenth century. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire, this contact almost ceased, and India became a memory with the peoples of Europe. The last decade of the fifteenth century saw the discovery of America by Columbus and the re-discovery of India by Vasco de Gama—two events which were to affect profoundly the history of the world.

In Europe itself, the Renaissance saw the re-birth of ancient Greece. The keen intelligence and bubbling energy of the European races manifested themselves in a great outburst of scientific thought and inquiry which was to revolutionize every department of life and activity. Invention followed invention, discovery followed discovery, while an extended commerce brought material prosperity in its train. Within the space of three hundred years, the nations of Western Europe became the creators and representatives of a virile culture and civilization whose basis was technical efficiency and whose aim was material prosperity. It was such a Europe that came to India through England in the nineteenth century.

India: Its Historic Background

India was dazed. The most ancient nation on the face of the earth, which remembered itself in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, which counted history not in centuries but in millenniums, which had grappled with some of the deepest problems of life and existence, whose trade and commerce had brought prosperity to Rome and Greece and Egypt in the past—such a nation found itself in a critical situation. Though the shock of conquest and the shame of subjection is a serious matter for any nation, the source of apprehension in this case lay deeper. India had seen conquests and invasions before. These invasions passed off, leaving the national ideals unchanged. The invaders in a short time became assimilated in the body-politic of the nation. As invasions go, this one was mild in comparison. But the subtle influence of the powerful culture of the West, working on the mind of India in a variety of ways, began to uproot the inheritance of the race itself. India inherits a culture and a civilization which had been built up silently and steadily since five thousand years or more by a succession of sages, thinkers, philosophers, and national leaders of the first magnitude. The very soul of India is enshrined in this culture. It is at the back of the spirit of charity and universality for which Indians are noted. In the field of religion it expresses itself as toleration and forbearance. The memorable words of the *Ṛg-Veda:* 'Truth is One; sages call it by various names', form the Magna Charta of religious freedom. This, along with the synthetic teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the great love and compassion of Buddha, has made the average Indians fine specimens of gentleness and courtesy. Another aspect of this culture is its deep spirituality. The Upaniṣads had proclaimed: 'The Ātman is to be realized', and an unending procession of seekers and devotees has borne witness to this highest Reality. India has existed to bear witness to the great truth of all religions, the reality of the highest in us. She has given the highest place of honour to her 'madmen of God'.

Today, we are able to perceive that these two characteristics of Indian culture—tolerance and catholicity on the one hand, and thirst for and search after the Spirit on the other—are of supreme importance not merely to India but to the whole world as well. Many a western thinker has felt and expressed that India's contribution towards a stabler and completer world civilization is invaluable. She has been hugging to her bosom the promise of this fulfilment.

The Shock of British Conquest

But in the nineteenth century it looked as though India is to lose this culture and her soul as well. The dominant European culture came to India through the new system of education introduced by Macaulay in 1836. Before the dazzling civilization of the West, India could put up only a poor show. As the new education advanced, imitation of the West began to spread, and very soon the old culture ceased to have any hold on the minds of the English-educated generation.

The old heritage of India began to be assailed from many directions. The spread of the naive materialistic philosophy of the century weakened the hold of religion on the minds of the youth. Macaulay could write to his father with evident satisfaction in 1836 (Sir George Otto Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, Vol. I, Longmans Green & Co., 1923 Edition, p. 330):

> 'No Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion.'

On the other hand, Christian missionaries indulged in a wholesale vilification of the Hindu religion. It is a sad chapter in the history of inter-religious contact. William Edward, Judge of the Agra High Court, gave expression to the prevailing missionary attitude: 'Our best safeguard is in the evangelization of the country.'

Hindu religion itself had fallen on evil days. The pure religion of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* had degenerated into meaningless formalism; superstition was rampant. The race had almost lost its spirit of independence and fearlessness due to long subjection. Social rigidity and exclusiveness had nurtured many an injustice and oppression. The dynamic conception of life taught by the Upaniṣads had given place to a static complaisance, and life moved in the narrowest circle possible. Society as a whole seemed to have forgotten the larger purpose and plan of the ancient seers and law-givers. There was a languishing of spirit everywhere.

The Modern Renaissance: Early Leaders

Into this old bottle of social and national life was poured the new wine of European culture. There was a ferment, unrest, and questioning, which issued forth in a Renaissance of the spirit of India. At the head of this movement in its first phases, guiding it and giving it a healthy direction, stands the personality and character of Raja Rammohun Roy. The Raja strove hard to revive the spirit of his countrymen by drawing inspiration from the Upaniṣads. At the same time, he was liberal and catholic enough to accept and assimilate the spiritual deliverances of western culture on a basis of equality. But the time was not propitious. The work of synthesis had to wait owing to two factors: first, the racial superiority-complex of the rulers, coupled with the superior arrogance of the Christian missionaries, judged India and Hinduism as benighted and spent-up forces; secondly, Hinduism had to re-discover herself and collect her scattered spiritual forces. India was to achieve these two purposes much later in the personalities of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

The first stirrings of the re-awakening were felt in Bengal. The Brahmo Samaj, under the leadership of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen, liberalized Hindu religion and society and, by its appeal to the educated minds of India, stemmed the tide of conversion to a de-nationalizing Christianity, on the one hand, and a cheap atheism, on the other. In the Punjab, Swami Dayananda Saraswati 'forged a dynamic Faith from the pure metal of the Vedas', and his Arya Samaj vitalized Hindu society in that quarter. A similar service was rendered by the Theosophical Society in the South. On the one hand, the reformers, in their crusading zeal, mercilessly battered the ancient edifice of Hinduism, while, on the other, the missionaries lost no opportunities in vilifying Hinduism and creating social disruption. The noble ideal of the synthesis of eastern and western cultures, for which the great Raja lived and worked, was receding further into the background. India, through the Raja, offered the hand of fellowship and reconciliation, but there was none competent to receive it. Western culture had yet to find its best representatives in India who would be free from arrogance and superciliousness.

As it was, the double attack on orthodoxy provoked a reaction: leaving aside the defensive attitude, it launched on an offensive. And the result was the creation of an atmosphere in India charged with hatred and violence, and a most vituperative literature in many a provincial language which was the shame of the country.

As a result of these reform and anti-reform movements and the incursions of the Christian missionaries, the whole Hindu society was convulsed, and many earnest and thinking men began to turn their attention to science and to the agnostic philosophers of the West, like Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley.

The Modern Renaissance and Sri Ramakrishna

In the midst of this chaos and confusion, a new star was rising in the firmament of India—one that was ere long to shed peace and light in the land. The great Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) was performing his unique experiments in the realm of the spirit, in the vast and well-equipped laboratory of his mind. Away from the 'madding crowd's ignoble strife', in the quiet temple of Dakshineswar near Calcutta, on the banks of the sacred Gaṅgā, Sri Ramakrishna lived all the major religions in turn and tasted truth through all of them. By the year 1875, he had finished his experiments, and very soon, he came into intimate contact with the thought currents and aspirations of Renascent India through Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brahmo Samaj. For the next eleven years, till his entering *mahāsamādhi* or final passing away in 1886, he was constantly pouring forth, in simple words and rich eloquence, with the aid of stories and parables, the great truths he had realized, and hundreds of men and women, educated and unlettered, young and old, were his listeners.

What was his message? All religions are true; there is no need for any fight among religions. A simple teaching indeed! But what tremendous consequences follow from this simple message! Undoubtedly, the world has heard this teaching before; but *his* teaching of it made a vast difference; for 'he spoke as one with authority and not as the scribes'. So far as Hinduism is concerned, it was only a re-discovery of the spirit of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. A tree is to be judged by its best fruits; the fruit of religion is sainthood which is character and character which is sainthood. Judged by this standard, we shall find that all religions have produced men and women of the most exalted character and saintliness. To be religious, therefore, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is to struggle to *realize* God; nothing more and nothing less. Professions are not enough; we are to live, move, and have our being in spirit which is God. Indifference is a greater enemy of religion than even irreligion. In the words of the biblical prophet, a lengthening of the ropes requires a strengthening of the stakes. What is required is a deepening of the spiritual life of humanity. Spirituality is the core of religion; it alone can allay the hunger of the religious soul. Dogmas and doctrines are as stones to a hungry man. They divide and lead to conflict, and these conflicts have brought religion

into contempt. What is required is inter-religious fellowship, and this will come about only if we realize the fundamental unity of all religions.

Swami Vivekananda at Kanyākumāri

Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886; but he left a batch of young disciples imbued with his spirit, to continue his work. Headed by the great Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), these educated young men lived in obscurity for about six years, performing intense spiritual *sādhanā* and wandering, mostly on foot, through the length and breadth of India, penniless, and depending upon God alone. Thus, towards the close of 1892, Swami Vivekananda reached Kanyākumāri, the last southern extremity of India, where, in deep meditation, the whole history of India unfolded before his vision, and he became identified, as it were, with the achievements and failures, sorrows and triumphs of his motherland. Her past glory and continued existence through millenniums filled him with inspiration; but her present condition filled him with dismay and dejection. Yet, presently, the future filled him with hope. With tears in his eyes and hope in his breast, he discovered his mission in life, which was to dedicate himself to the regeneration of India, the queen of his adoration, to reawaken her from her deep long sleep. *And this awakening is to be of real good not only to herself but also to the whole world. In short, an awakened India is to be a complete synthesis of the past and the present, of the East and the West.*

Like a second Buddha emerging from the seclusion of Buddha Gaya, Swami Vivekananda emerged from his meditations at Kanyākumāri with the same determination which impelled Buddha 2,500 years ago to preach his great Gospel, 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many', *bahujana-hitāya, bahujana-sukhāya,* and in this mood of assurance and resolve, he arrived in Madras. Here he attracted the attention of a few intelligent and educated young men and here he closed, once for all, the chapter of his obscurity. The enthusiasm of these young men and the help and sympathy of the princely rulers of Mysore and Khetri enabled him to proceed to America to attend the Parliament of Religions at Chicago to be held in September 1893.

Swami Vivekananda in America

His speeches at the Parliament are characterized by a wide sympathy, broad outlook, and utter sincerity. Referring to his addresses before the Parliament, Romain Rolland says (*The Life of Vivekananda,* pp. 43-44):

'He repeated with new argument, but with the same force of conviction, his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the most

liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonized them into a magnificent synthesis, which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.'

He closed his brilliant addresses with the following prophetic words (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 24):

'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. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance, "Help and not Fight", "Assimilation and not Destruction", "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension" '.

No such prophetic words have ever been uttered. The Chicago Parliament of Religions is remembered because of Swami Vivekananda. The Parliament in turn introduced Vivekananda to the people of the United States of America. And for the next four years, the western world, for the first time through the lips of an anointed son of India, heard the universal teachings of the sages of India. The East India Company had exposed before the gaze of the world for nearly three centuries the perishable portion of the wealth of India; but India herself, through Vivekananda, now gave to the same world the imperishable wealth of spiritual and cultural treasures of India.

In the briefest possible statement of his message of India to the modern world, he conveyed also the essential spiritual message of every religion (*Ibid.*, p. 124):

'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal (of life) is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'

Back in India: From Colombo to Almora

After a strenuous record of lecturing and teaching in America and England, and establishing a permanent Vedanta Society in New York, Swami Vivekananda returned to India in 1897 to enter upon, what proved to be, the supreme moment not merely of his own career but of the history of Modern India as well. The unknown *sannyāsin*, who carried within his bosom the heart of a patriot and of a lover of humanity, who had traversed the sacred soil of India almost unknown five years back, now landed at Colombo armed with conviction and prestige. From

Colombo in the South to distant Almora in the Himalayas to the north, his movement was one triumphal procession, and in a series of brilliant lectures, he expounded his philosophy of the Indian national awakening, the way it has to be worked out, the various difficulties ahead, and what part an awakened India is to play in the coming world events. He upheld the glory of our ancient heritage, the greatness of the Vedānta philosophy, and emphasized the need for making spirituality the basis of all national programmes. Like a true leader befitting the Indian nation, he enunciated the domestic and foreign policy of India to consist in the application of the Vedāntic principles of life to the solution of her religious, economic, social, and political ills, and the preaching of the same broad and catholic ideas of Vedānta to the world outside in order to bring about a spiritual revival in the West in tune with the rational and scientific spirit of the modern age.

Says Romain Rolland about his message (*The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 162):

'His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports, must have been produced when, in burning words, they issued from the lips of the hero.'

The *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* has rightly been considered the fountain-head of national inspiration, and Swami Vivekananda stands as the great 'Patriot Saint of Modern India.'

Founding of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission

Apart from lectures and discourses, valuable as they are, another gift of Swami Vivekananda to India and the world is the organization which he founded as an effective conduit for the working out of his ideas. Ever since the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, a monastic order bearing his name had been organized by his *sannyāsin* disciples headed by Swami Vivekananda, which gradually set up the following twin but inseparable objects before itself:

(*i*) To bring into existence a band of monks devoted to leading a life of purity, renunciation, and practical spirituality under the inspiration of the life of Sri Ramakrishna, from among whom teachers and workers could be trained and sent out to serve the world in all possible ways. And,

(*ii*) to carry on, in conjunction with lay workers, religious, philanthropic, and charitable activities, *looking upon all men, women, and children, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, sex, and colour, as veritable manifestations of the Divine.*

In 1899, Swami Vivekananda, on his return from the West, established the Ramakrishna Math, which embodies the first of the above objects, at Belur (Howrah District, Bengal) under a Deed of Trust known as the Belur Math Trust. Two years earlier, in May 1897, he had started an association called the Ramakrishna Mission Association with a view to giving a concrete shape to the second of the above objects. Soon after this, the Math took upon itself, and for some years carried on, the work of the Mission Association also. As its activities increased and responsibilities grew, it was found necessary to give the Association a legal status. Accordingly, it was registered in 1909 under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 under the name of the RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, with its management vested in a Governing Body consisting of the Trustees of the Belur Math for the time being. Both the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission soon extended their sphere of activity with branches in different parts of the country and abroad.

Ideas and Ideals Behind the Movement

At the back of these principles of the Ramakrishna Movement, there are, as their sanction, certain experiences of Sri Ramakrishna, besides the teachings of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* and the great examples of Buddha and Jesus and the movements associated with them. The one idea that haunted Swami Vivekananda during his *parivrājaka* (wandering monk) days was how to make Vedānta practical, how to bridge the gulf between *paramārtha* and *vyavahāra,* between the claims of spirituality and the practical life of the world. The Upaniṣads proclaim the solidarity and spiritual oneness of the whole universe, but human experience affirms the many. Life demands a reconciliation of these two poles of experience. The *Gītā,* through its teaching of *niṣkāma karma,* had enunciated this principle long ago, but circumstances were then not propitious to apply it on a collective scale. The genius of Swami Vivekananda lies in the formulation of his scheme of Practical Vedānta through his famous doctrine of service—the service of all beings, looking upon them as the Divine or as sparks thereof. The good of self is reconciled with the welfare of the world: *Ātmano mokṣārthaṁ jagaddhitāya ca.* This attitude at once removes all distinction between the sacred and the secular; work *is* worship. Life itself is religion. Ordination is as much necessary for the worker as for the priest. In the words of Sister Nivedita ('Introduction' to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. xv):

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

This is the background, this the basis of all the activities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Julian Huxley, in one of his thoughtful books, points to the necessity for creating a body of people which will join the liberal and rational spirit of science to the ardour and faith of religion. He asks *What Dare I Think?* (The Challenge of Modern Science to Human Action and Belief), 1931, pp. 172-73):

'Is it possible to plan a body which shall engender enthusiasm and canonize devotion after the fashion of a young religious order, but which shall not fall into the dangers of religious dogmatism on the one hand, and on the other shall, by defects in its organization, slip into the conservatism or worldliness which is the usual fate of so many orders?'

The history of India of the last few decades demonstrates clearly the practicability of this proposition. *The new movements of the spirit of India, as initiated by Swami Vivekananda, are synthetic of not merely science and religion, but also of the sacred and the secular, of the East and the West.*

The Memorandum of Association of the Mission

The aims and objects of the Ramakrishna Mission can be more fully understood if we give a few extracts from the Memorandum of Association of the Ramakrishna Mission:

(*a*) To impart and promote the study of Vedānta and its principles as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and practically illustrated by his own life, and of comparative Theology in its widest form.

(*b*) To impart and promote the study of arts, sciences, and industries.

(*c*) To train teachers in all branches of knowledge above-mentioned and enable them to reach the masses.

(*d*) To carry on educational work among the masses.

(*e*) To establish, maintain, carry on, and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the infirm, the invalid, and the afflicted, famine relief works, and other educational and charitable works and institutions of a like nature.

(*f*) To print and publish and to sell or distribute, gratuitously or otherwise, journals, periodicals, books, or leaflets, that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.

(*g*) To carry on any other work which may seem to the Association capable of being conveniently carried on in connexion with, and calculated directly or indirectly to promote, any of the above-mentioned objects.

Members' Declaration Form

Anyone irrespective of caste or creed, sex or nationality, can become a member of the Mission by subscribing to the following declaration of conviction:

(i) I look upon Sri Ramakrishna as an illustration and embodiment of the Religion Eternal, whose life and teachings help one to understand the plan and purpose of all the religions of the world and their underlying truth and harmony.

(*ii*) I look upon all religions as paths to God, and shall try to live in peace and fellowship with the followers of all religions.

(*iii*) I have full sympathy with all the objects of the Ramakrishna Mission as set forth in the Memorandum of Association, and I will actively co-operate with the work of the Mission.

The Belur Math: the Headquarters of the Movement

The Headquarters of the Mission is at Belur, a small town on the banks of the Gaṅgā, about four miles up Calcutta. This Centre was established in 1899 by Swami Vivekananda himself, after his return from the West, as the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order of monks and, subsequently, also of the Ramakrishna Mission. Situated on the banks of the sacred Gaṅgā and commanding a distant view of the Dakshineswar temple garden, where Sri Ramakrishna had lived and taught, the Belur Math contains, besides the monastery, a library, a guest house, a charitable dispensary, and a magnificent temple dedicated in 1938 to Sri Ramakrishna and built at a cost of about 8 lakhs of rupees, most of it being the kind donation of two American ladies who were friends of India and devotees of the Mission. A Degree College, a Teachers' Training College, and a Social Education Organizers' Training College—all run on residential lines, with the first two affiliated to the Calcutta University—and an Industrial and Technical School, which bids fair to develop into a full-fledged Engineering College at an early date, comprise the important educational institutions conducted by the Mission in the close vicinity of the Belur Math.

Branch Centres and their Activities

Along with the Headquarters at Belur, there were, in March 1963, 42 Mission centres, 15 combined Math and Mission centres, and 28 Math centres in India, which were distributed as follows: 30 in West Bengal, 12 in Uttar Pradesh, 11 in Madras, 7 in Bihar, 6 in Kerala, 4 each in Assam and Mysore, 3 in Orissa, 2 each in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, and 1 each in the Punjab, Gujarat, Delhi, and Rajasthan. In addition, there were two Mission centres, 6 combined Math and Mission centres, and 3 Math centres in East Pakistan, 2 Mission

centres in Burma, 1 Mission centre each in Ceylon, Singapore, Fiji, Mauritius, and France, 1 Math centre each in England, Switzerland, and Argentina, and 10 Math centres in the United States of America. Thus there were altogether 72 Mission centres and 65 Math centres. Moreover, attached to the branch centres, there were 22 sub-centres, where monastic workers resided more or less permanently.

Medical Service

Most of the Math and Mission centres in India and Burma conducted various activities ministering to the physical needs of the public in general, irrespective of creed, colour, or nationality. Typical of these are the Sevashramas (hospitals) at Varanasi, Vrindaban, Kankhal, Trivandrum, and Rangoon, and the T.B. Sanatorium at Ranchi and the Seva Pratisthan in Calcutta. In 1963, there were 12 indoor hospitals, with 1,213 indoor beds, which accommodated 28,007 patients and 62 outdoor dispensaries, which treated 30,82,433 cases. Besides, gratuitous relief and other kinds of service were rendered by some of the Ashramas.

The Sevashrama in Rangoon which was started in 1921 and which has been one of the most efficiently run hospitals in Burma, was taken over by the Government of Burma in 1965 under its general policy and programme of nationalization. When the Mission handed it over to the Government, it had about 175 indoor beds with separate medical, surgical, pediatric, cancer, eye, and children's wards, and Nurses Training School.

Educational Work

The organization ran during the period 3 general colleges at Madras, Belur, and Narendrapur (Calcutta)—the last two residential—with 1,911 students on their rolls, 2 B.T. colleges at Belur and Perianaickenpalayam (Coimbatore) with 216 students, 2 Basic Training schools at Perianaickenpalayam and Madras with 219 students, one Post-graduate Teachers' Training college at Rahara and 3 Junior Basic Training colleges at Rahara, Sarisha, and Sargachi with 349 students, 2 colleges for Physical Education and Rural Higher Education and a School of Agriculture with 80, 208, and 62 students respectively at Perianaickenpalayam, 2 Social Education Organizer's Training Centres there and at Belur with 193 trainees, 4 Engineering schools at Belur, Belgharia, Madras, and Perianaickenpalayam with 1,312 students, 9 Junior Technical or Industrial schools with 640 boys and 172 girls, 83 Students' Homes or hostels, including some orphanages, with 6,523 boys and 530 girls, 3 *catuṣpāṭhis* with 65 students, 13 Multipurpose Higher Secondary schools with 4,163 boys and 769 girls, 7 Higher Secondary schools

with 2,455 boys and 1,204 girls, 19 High and Secondary schools with 7,478 boys and 3,908 girls, 25 Senior Basic and M.E. schools with 5,438 boys and 3,284 girls, 44 Junior Basic, Elementary, and Upper Primary schools with 5,652 boys and 2,636 girls, and 46 Lower and other grades of schools with 1,856 boys and 2,282 girls. The Seva Pratisthan in Calcutta and the Sevashrama at Rangoon trained nurses, the number of trainees being 139. Thus there were altogether 38,810 boys and 14,923 girls in the educational institutions run by the Math and Mission in India, Pakistan, Singapore, Fiji, and Mauritius. The Students' Homes at Belgharia, Narendrapur, and Madras, and the schools and colleges at Cherrapunji, Calcutta, Belur, Sarisha, Manasadwip, Midnapore, Jamshedpur, Asansol, Deoghar, Kanpur, Madras, Mysore, Perianaickenpalayam, Calicut, Trichur, and Kalady, and the Boy's Home at Rahara are illustrative of the educational work done by the organization.

Work among the Rural, Labouring, and Backward Classes

The Math and Mission have all along tried their best for serving their unfortunate countrymen who have fallen back culturally or otherwise. In addition to the more prominent village ashramas like those at Sarisha, Manasadwip, Jairambati, Kamarpukur, Sargachi, Taki, Perianaickenpalayam, Kalady, and Cherrapunji, and the Gurukula at Trichur in Kerala, quite a number of centres—both permanent—are run under the Mission branches at Belur, Sarisha, Bankura, Tiruvalla, Narendrapur, and Cherrapunji. Of these, special mention may be made of the 186 village sub-centres which have been started for serving the hill tribes, the backward classes, and the village folk. In addition to such numerous activities, preaching and educative tours with magic lanterns, films, gramophones, etc. are also undertaken. For the labouring classes in industrial areas, the Mission conducted a good number of Night Schools and Clinics.

In response to pressing requests from the people and the Government, the Mission extended its services to the tribal areas of the North East Frontier Agency, Assam, by opening a Ramakrishna Mission branch centre, with a school and a hospital, in the township of Along, Siang Division, in April 1966. The tribal population of the division enthusiastically welcomed this step of the Mission and are extending to it all help, including giving of land, in its programme of educational and cultural services to the people. Within a year of its starting, the centre in Along has succeeded in establishing itself so deeply in the affections and esteem of the people as to receive pressing invitations from the tribal people of the neighbouring Tirap division to extend the Mission's activities to that area also.

Relief Work

From the very commencement of its existence, the Mission has responded to the call of distress arising from the natural calamities like flood, earthquake, and civil disturbance. Since the country attained political independence in 1947, the national government takes the initiative in starting relief measures on such occasions. Still, the Mission has continued to respond to the nation's call in times of general distress.

Foreign Work

The monks of the Ramakrishna Math took upon themselves the task of carrying the message of India to distant lands. The various centres in North and South America, Europe, and outlying parts of Asia bear ample evidence of their labour of love.

Spiritual and Cultural

Both Math and Mission centres laid special emphasis on the dissemination of the spiritual and cultural ideals of India, and, through various types of activity, tried to give a practical shape to the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna that all religions are true. The centres established real points of contact between people of different faiths through public celebrations, meetings, classes, publications, etc. They also conducted libraries and reading rooms. A number of Sanskrit *catuṣpāṭhis*, too, were run, partly for the benefit of the members of the Order. Special mention should also be made of the Institute of Culture in Calcutta, which tries to bring together eminent men and women of India and other lands in cultural fellowship.

The Math and Mission have published a large number of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and other types of religious and philosophical works in English, French, Spanish, and Hindi and many other Indian languages. In this connexion, special mention must be made of the publication, in several Indian languages, of the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* during the world-wide Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary celebrations in 1963-64. The Centenary gave the impetus for the publication of books of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in Japanese and some other foreign languages as well. These are finding ever increasing circulation in India and abroad. Besides journals in Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, and Malayalam, the Math and Mission publish 5 English journals—*Prabuddha Bharata, The Vedanta Kesari*, and *The Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture* from India, *Vedanta and the West* from U.S.A. (Hollywood), and *Vedanta for East and West* from U.K. (London).

Work for Women

The Mission has ever been conscious of its duties to the women of India. Typical of the work done for them are the Seva Pratisthan (Maternity and General Hospital) in Calcutta, the Maternity Clinic at Jalpaiguri, the women's sections of the hospitals at Varanasi, Vrindavan, and Rangoon, the attached Invalid Women's Home at Varanasi, the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras, the Girls' High Schools at Jamshedpur, the Sister Nivedita Girls' School in Calcutta, and the Sarada Mandir at Sarisha (24-Parganas). Besides, there are special arrangements for women in the other hospitals, dispensaries, and schools, and some institutions are conducted particularly for them.

Swami Vivekananda had keenly felt the need to organize an independent Order for women under the inspiration of Sri Sarada Devi, the holy consort of Sri Ramakrishna, parallel to the Ramakrishna Order for men. He himself had started a nucleus of such an Order with his two western women disciples, namely, Sister Nivedita and Sister Christine, who had followed him to India and started an educational institution for girls in Calcutta which, in due course, developed into the present Sister Nivedita Girls' School. Fired with the spirit of renunciation and service, groups of educated women had joined in later years this and other Mission institutions in India and in the West, particularly institutions meant for the service of women.

The Sarada Order of Nuns

During the birth centenary of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, in 1953-54, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission decided that the time was ripe for giving a concrete shape to Swami Vivekananda's visions and ideas in the matter. Accordingly, the first group of these dedicated women were initiated into *brahmacarya* during the Holy Mother's birth centenary, and into *sannyāsa* on the Holy Mother's birthday in 1959, by the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at the Belur Math. This group formed the nucleus of a new order of nuns, the Ramakrishna Sarada Order, with its own President and Board of Trustees chosen from among themselves. Earlier, on 2 December 1953, a spacious premises on the left bank of the Gaṅgā, adjacent to the northern suburbs of Calcutta, and close to the Dakshineswar temple, which had been purchased for this purpose, was dedicated as the permanent Headquarters of this Order which, with its nuns and nun probationers, has come to be known as the Sarada Math.

Along with the Sarada Math was also constituted the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, on parallel lines with the Ramakrishna Mission, with a Governing Body consisting of the Trustees of the Sarada Math for the

time being. The authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission immediately took steps to legally transfer to the new Ramakrishna Sarada Mission the properties and management responsibilities of some of its educational, cultural, and medical service institutions which were specially meant for women and which were being ably run by this group of dedicated women since some years. These comprise the Sister Nivedita Girls' School, the Matribhavan Maternity Hospital, and the Women's Welfare Centre in Calcutta, and the Sarada Ashrama, with its Girls' High School and Hostel, in Trichur, Kerala State. To these were added in subsequent years three new institutions started by the nuns of the Sarada Math themselves, namely, the Vivekananda Vidyabhavan (Residential College for Women), and the Siksha Mandir for women in Calcutta and the Sarada Math branch in Madras.

In the West, a number of nuns and nun probationers of the Ramakrishna Order reside in the Sri Sarada Math at Santa Barbara in the U.S.A. and at the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, in France.

The first batch of two of these *brahmacāriṇīs* (nun probationers) of U.S.A. had been initiated into *brahmacarya* as early as in September 1947 at a solemn ceremony at the Vedanta Society, Hollywood, in the presence of seven senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order residing in the United States. One month later, the first convent of the Order in the western world came into being when seven of these nun probationers moved into the convent's newly acquired premises in the nearby town of Santa Barbara.

Since its constitution, the Ramakrishna Sarada Order has continued to receive new accession of strength in India, United States, and France. More and more members have joined it as *brahmacāriṇīs* and more and more *brahmacāriṇīs* have been initiated into *sannyāsa*. The nuns of the Ramakrishna Sarada Order are called *pravrājikās*, which is the equivalent of the term *swamis* applied to the monks of the Ramakrishna Order.

Though drawing inspiration from a common spiritual source and rendering service to humanity on parallel lines, with the awareness that service of man is the worship of God, the Sarada Math and Mission is constitutionally and legally independent of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and is meant to take over, in a large measure, and prosecute more energetically, the latter's work for women.

The Math Versus the Mission

Though the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, with their respective branches, are distinct institutions, they are closely re-

lated, since the Governing Body of the Mission is made up of the Trustees of the Math; the principal workers of the Mission are members of the Ramakrishna Math; and both have their headquarters at the Belur Math. The name 'Ramakrishna Mission' is, however, loosely associated by people with all Math activities also.

It is necessary to point out that the appropriation of the name of Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda by any institution does not necessarily imply that it is controlled by the central organization at Belur.

The Math and the Mission own separate funds and keep separate accounts of them. The Math fund consists of subscriptions and donations from friends and devotees, while subscriptions and donations from the general public—supplemented in certain cases by municipal or government grants—constitute the Mission fund. Both the Math and the Mission funds are annually audited by auditors duly appointed for the purpose.

The Movement's Universal Approach

The Ramakrishna Mission is in existence for about sixty-nine years, and from very humble beginnings it has become today the world-wide organization that it is, working in a wide variety of fields. Deeply religious as the members of the Ramakrishna Order are, and remaining Hindus to the core, they yet feel one with the followers of all other religions and prophets. *True to the spirit of Hinduism and Sri Ramakrishna, the Mission is not a proselytizing body, nor is it a sect within Hinduism itself.* The work of the Ramakrishna Mission outside India is merely the propagation of the universal principles of Vedānta and the spreading of true ideas about India and her catholic culture. It does not seek to transplant the American or the European or the Arab from his Christian or Islamic soil to that of Hinduism. It believes that the rational philosophy of Vedānta can make a Christian a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim, as much as a Hindu a better Hindu. The increasing demand from various parts of the world for workers of the Mission is a clear evidence of the genuineness and need for this kind of missionary enterprise.

A dynamic institution of this nature cannot but be a growing organism. No year passes without seeing the springing up of new branches, and it has become almost difficult to respond to the incessant calls from the public to open more centres. In the words of the Bible, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few'. The Mission owes not a little of its success to the kind and generous public for the help

they have readily given in all its undertakings. The heartiest thanks of the Mission go to one and all who have sympathized with its aims and objects and helped it materially or otherwise in the conduct of its multifarious activities.

Admission to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission

As a monastic member, to the Ramakrishna Math (Order).

The Order admits to its membership unmarried young men of ages above 18 and below 25, for undergraduates and below 30, for graduates who have due regard for the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and who feel a keen desire to devote their lives to the realization of God and service of man through renunciation of lust and gold. They should have a minimum educational qualification of the School Final or other equivalent standard. Such a spiritual aspirant, who also possesses good health, and is accommodative by nature, and free from all family encumbrances, is admitted into the Order either at its Headquarters at the Belur Math (Calcutta) or at the various branch centres authorized to do so. After one year of pre-probation and eight years of probation, if not found unfit spiritually or otherwise, he will be initiated into *sannyāsa* (monkhood) to become a full-fledged member of the Order.

As a lay member, to the Ramakrishna Mission:

Any person intending to be a lay member of the Mission may apply in the prescribed form available at the principal centres of the Organization.

He will look upon Sri Ramakrishna as an Illustration and Embodiment of the Religion Eternal, whose life and teachings help one to understand the plan and purpose of all the religions of the world and their underlying truth and harmony. He will fully sympathize with all the objects of the Mission and actively co-operate with the work of the Mission.

Conclusion

With the attainment of political independence, the people of India have now the opportunity and privilege to work out at home and abroad the dreams and visions of her sages and teachers, recent and past. These dreams and visions in the case of India have, as has been mentioned earlier, the innate Divinity of man for their theme and the unity and fellowship of man for their objective. In this modern age, this ancient theme and objective of India has found striking

expression in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It is the privilege of the members of the Ramakrishna Order and the Ramakrishna Mission to make free India realize the significance of these two lives and help her to mould herself in the light of the finest and best in her spiritual and cultural heritage, and to be the carriers to the world at large of the spiritual peace and benediction of Renascent India.

OUR CAUSE AND OUR RESOLVE

WITHIN fifteen years of political independence, India has received a challenge to her newly won freedom and her age-old way of life from the present massive Chinese aggression over the Himalayas. The whole nation has responded magnificently to this challenge, thereby proving to herself and to the world at large that her policy of peace is the product of strength and not of weakness. It proceeds from her vision of human unity achieved ages ago in her Upaniṣads, and re-authenticated by the compassionate Buddha and other sages and thinkers in subsequent epochs, down to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in our own time.

India's Historic Record of Non-aggression

Out of this vision has flown uninterruptedly 'her unifying and pacifying love for all mankind', in the words of Will Durant. From the point of view of human history, the utter absence of a mood and policy of military aggression by India in her long history is a fact of arresting human significance. Referring to this mood and outlook of the Indian people in his lecture on 'My Master' delivered in New York in 1896, Swami Vivekananda says (*Complete Works,* Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, pp. 156-57):

> 'There live the only men in the world who, in the whole history of humanity, never went beyond their frontiers to conquer anyone, who never coveted that which belonged to anyone else, whose only fault was that their lands were so fertile, and they accumulated wealth by the hard labour of their hands, and so tempted other nations to come and despoil them.'

Her Modern Renaissance

We as a nation did not harm others; but we have been harmed by others. By our political and social disunity and selfish self-centred

outlooks, we often weakened ourselves politically and so tempted, in the poignant words of Vivekananda, 'other nations to come and despoil' us. The modern renaissance in India which originated from Bengal in the last century had taken due note of this weakness and its lessons and had given, through Swami Vivekananda, the refreshing message of nation-building through man-making. Our national movement thus emerged out of this renaissance with the message of all-round national unity and strength—a message which galvanized our people into united action and endeavour during the first half of this century and which found its partial consummation in the proclamation of our Sovereign Democratic Republic in 1950. The vision of this all-round national awakening finds glowing expression in a moving passage of the first lecture that Swami Vivekananda gave in India on his triumphal return from the West in 1897. Opening his reply to the public welcome at Ramnad, near Rameshwaram, the Swami said (*ibid.*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 145-46):

> 'The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking... India, this motherland of ours...from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.'

Need to Combine Gentleness with Strength

Since our independence, we seemed to have developed a mood of complacency, an inordinate love of money, ease, and comfort, and a suicidal political tendency to indulge in parochial interests and petty issues. We began to take freedom for granted and indulge, in its sacred name, in every conceivable form of indiscipline, on grounds of individual or group interests, receiving applause from the rest of the nation. We had not learnt the lessons that self-discipline is the mark of a free man and indiscipline that of a slave, and that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. It is these lessons that are being burnt into the nation's soul today by the present national emergency. No books or sermons can teach these stern virtues to a people; only the harsh realities of experience can do so. We must take advantage of the fiery ordeal of the present experience to forge a new character and a new destiny for ourselves. *Let every one of us resolve to put first things first*—the freedom and integrity of our ancient land and the happiness and welfare of the millions of our ancient people; and let us once for all realize that citizenship of a free country is made of sterner stuff, and let us say goodbye to all selfish gain and love of ease. And, above all, let us resolve to combine our age-old peaceableness with strength and fearlessness, in response to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's advice in the *Gītā* (XII.15):

Yasmāt nodvijate loko lokāt nodvijate ca yaḥ—

'From whom the world gets no fear and whom the world also cannot frighten.'

'Yato Dharmaḥ Tato Jayaḥ'

Our country has experienced many ups and downs in her long history. But India marches on. Our faith in ourselves and in our way of life helped us to overcome the shocks of temporary setbacks. Faith has given nations strength and courage even for the pursuit of wrong causes and policies. Our cause, on the other hand, is just, and our policy right. We have no desire to harm any other country; on the contrary, we have followed, since our independence, our historic policy of seeking the good of all peoples. *The justice of our cause is the source of our faith in our eventual victory. Yato dharmaḥ tato jayaḥ*—'Where there is righteousness there is victory'—is the constant theme of our great epic, the *Mahābhārata*. We have to strengthen our faith and brighten our resolve, to ensure the march of free India from victory to victory—a victory which spells defeat to no other country. The struggle may be long; it may even entail occasional set-backs; but its end will see the nation spiritually purified, emotionally integrated, and politically and socially alert.

Conclusion

This is the promethean spirit that Vivekananda has left us as an imperishable legacy. In a letter entitled 'To My Brave Boys' written by him in 1894, we breathe this spirit (*Complete Works*, Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, p. 367):

'Struggle, struggle, was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still I say. When it was all dark, I used to say, struggle; when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle.'

The nation today, and for ever after, must constantly inspire itself by this spirit of eternal hope and unceasing endeavour.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY AND THE PRIMACY OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

THE learned speakers before me have placed in its proper perspective this important subject which we are assembled here to discuss. One of the significant points that has emerged out of their expositions, one with which all will agree, is that we, the people of India, needed a shock treatment. The amount of complacency that had gripped our minds for the last several years was such that, every day, we were weakening ourselves as a people and as a State. But today, fortunately, an awakening has come. This emergency has given us the opportunity to think and evaluate what we are and where we are going. In the context of this emergency, a discussion such as this is of great value to us. Some of the speakers who preceded me have given you an insight into the mind and mood and methods of the present Chinese rulers; on the other hand, we have a different mind and mood and methods. It is good for us to understand something about our own national approach and methods, and learn to have faith in them and to stand by them in weal and woe.

Our National Context of Freedom

We are a democracy. We are a free people. Everything is done in our country by free public discussion. That is the great proud privilege of a free people. This very symposium could not have been possible in the China of today. It is only here that we can hold such a symposium, discuss and analyse our mistakes, and suggest and demand the correctives. I wish the people of India fully realize the importance and significance of this great context in which we live and function. Democracy cannot be taken for granted. Democratic liberties cannot

be taken for granted. A keen and pervasive awareness on the part of the people about the worth and value of freedom is necessary to strengthen democracy. It is, however, sad to reflect that during the last fifteen years of our politically independent existence our thoughts and our actions have been tending more to weaken and disrupt our national freedom than to strengthen and consolidate it. We have indulged in several forms of suicidal activities leading to the weakening of our democracy through our encouragement of many a centrifugal tendency. We often forgot our national purpose and resolve which seek expression in a tremendous democratic experiment involving the life and welfare of the 440 million people of our country—an experiment of human transformation based on freedom, on the dignity and worth of man as an individual, and the primacy of spiritual values. This experiment is the direct offshoot of the spiritual and human urges behind the great cultural and spiritual traditions of our country, strengthened and amplified by the great lessons our country has learnt from its contact with modern western culture. Our nation, thus, is a confluence of two powerful streams of culture—our own ancient heritage and the modern western heritage. Freedom was the watchword of our national spiritual thought; freedom is the watchword of modern western socio-political thought as well.

Our Post-independence Complacency

We are trying to enhance our inherited concept of freedom by assimilating into it the concepts and expressions of freedom which the West has brought to us. Therefore, in the heart of our new Constitution, in our new democratic experiment, we have implanted this great idea of man's worth as man, his dignity, his freedom, and his equality. And all our social and political processes are meant to make him realize his fullest stature. This idealistic impulse at the back of our national resolve and purpose should have inspired and strengthened us in all our activities, individual and collective. But, as I said earlier, we did not imbibe this idealism and develop this faith in sufficient measure; we treated it as sacred sentiments, but allowed it to remain in the pages of the Indian Constitution, and did not take steps to make it a moving force in the hearts of our men and women. We saw the steady waning, year by year, of the idealism and patriotic fervour of our pre-independence days, and we took no steps to arrest this national decadence.

Significance of Our Democratic Experiment

We have indulged in the licence of weakening criticism in the sacred name of freedom. We have also engaged ourselves too much

in the pastime of finding fault with what our State has been doing, while praising the real or fancied achievements of other States, especially of Communist China. Nor could we have done otherwise, because we had no faith in ourselves. Through following these suicidal ways, we developed a cynical complacency and weakened our national resolve. This national emergency has helped to awaken us and to make us realize the significance of the experiment that our own nation is making. It is dawning on us slowly that that experiment has both a national and an international significance; it is positive and creative and not negative and destructive. If it succeeds, it will have great repercussions on the world; but if it fails, it will equally have great world impacts. The success of the democratic experiment in India will mean the eventual success of democracy in Asia and Africa. India is a miniature world with its many religions, cultures, cultural levels, language groups, and racial types. Welding all these varieties into a nation, economically strong, socially progressive, and spiritually united, through the democratic methods of individual freedom and responsibility is, in every sense, a significant experiment. It is the arresting drama of human development through freedom, involving a seventh of the human race.

The Nation to be Educated in Its Ideological Basis

India has experienced freedom in religion for ages; it has resulted in the flowering of her national genius in the field of religion. Today, we have extended that freedom to social and political fields as well, with a view to effecting an all-round efflorescence of our national life. It is a mighty adventure, especially when we consider the number and variety of human beings involved. We shall need all the strength derived from our own age-old national heritage; we shall also need all the strength derived from our assimilation of the legacy of other nations and cultures. Our experiment is outward-looking and forward-gazing, not inward-looking and backward-gazing. It is not rigidly cast in a doctrinaire mould, but is resilient and hospitable to new ideas. That is the sign of its dynamism and vigour. The nation today needs to be educated in this ideological basis of its existence and the direction of its life forces.

In a true democracy, the state derives its strength from its citizens, from its educated, enlightened, and responsible citizens. We require, therefore, to develop today that sense of responsibility characteristic of a free people. Whatever happens, happens because of us. Public criticism of the state in a democracy needs to be controlled by this citizen's sense of responsibility. Our state is not the rule of a minority over the majority, which is the case in Communist China, according to

the previous speaker's description. It is not the tyranny of a minority. It is, as proclaimed in our Constitution, we, the people of India, that have given ourselves this free democratic Constitution; ours, therefore, is the People's State in the true sense of the term and not in its euphemistic sense. We are not just *in* the State or *under* the State; we *belong* to it and it *belongs* to us.

Authoritarian State versus Free State

This particular emergency will pass, sooner or later; but we must learn to retain our will to be free and increase our national strength step by step. In this connection, it is good for us to remember that there is a different method of getting strength in a democracy compared to what it is in a regimented state. From the description given by the previous speaker, of present-day China, you would have noted that it is an authoritarian state where the life of the people is completely controlled and regimented. Millions of its people are made to believe in a particular way, act in a particular way; they have no individuality, no status as free citizens of a free society. That is *their* method; they are welcome to have it. But *we* have a different method, a different objective, and a different set of values. One of the greatest problems of a democracy, especially in times of crisis, is to find that motive power of effective action which comes from within the citizen himself. It cannot be sought from a regimenting authority outside. It must come from within each one of the citizens themselves. In an ideal democracy, the citizen supplies the driving power of the state, just as, in a regimented state, the state drives the citizens.

A totalitarian state is strong in proportion to the lack of capacity for fearless thought and independent action in its people. Such a state sits heavily on its people. But the strength of a democratic state is directly proportional to the capacity for fearless thought and independent action of all its citizens. Thus democracy alone can be a People's State. Therein alone do the people receive the stimulus to rise to their highest stature, by assimilating the values of freedom, equality, and the sense of responsibility.

Our Education in the Light of the Present Emergency

Responsible citizenship is the only remedy for all the problems of our new democratic state. But this is dependent upon a sound system of education, upon what Swami Vivekananda called a man-making education. To rouse the citizen to an awareness of his own worth, dignity, and responsibility, to make him the source of all the strength and sustenance of society—that is the true purpose and role of educa-

tion in a democracy. Such a society will provide a healthy *milieu* for the development of character and personality of all its children. Education and more education, institutional and social, is the one source of strength of a free society.

This is the work that we have neglected so long. This emergency will be a God-sent blessing if it impresses upon us the urgency of this task—the entire reshaping of the educational policy of our country, the defining of its objectives and methods in terms of the national goal and purpose. Let it not be said that it is only in a regimented state that people can be roused to enthusiasm. A democracy should also be able to rouse people's enthusiasm and canonize their devotion, not by external pressure, but by educating its free people to respond spontaneously to a national problem or emergency. This is already an achievement in our country, as is attested by the spontaneous and magnificent response of our people to the present emergency. But we cannot overlook the fact that this response was preceded by a period of utter complacency, and that it was called forth by a challenge of an unprecedented magnitude. National education should be so oriented as to increase the strength of patriotic impulse and the quality of alertness of mind of the people. Otherwise, within a few years, complacency may again overtake us, probably in a worse way; for, after an emergency passes, there is always a tendency to relapse into worse conditions of weakness or complacency. If our awakening today is not genuinely democratic, if it is not the true upsurge of a people who are conscious of the meaning of freedom and the great responsibility involved in preserving that freedom, then the present awakening will be just like the spurt of energy experienced by a hysteric patient. Much energy is released during the attack of hysteria, but when that neurotic condition passes away, the patient is left weaker than before. All lovers of India desire to see India growing from strength to strength, so that it may become a bulwark of freedom and dignity of man in this part of the world. That is why the spiritual, social, and cultural implications for India of the present Chinese aggression on our country are going to be vast and varied; they will touch our individual and collective lives at all points.

Need for a Spiritual Orientation

After centuries of political subjection, our country has become free. Shall we imperil that freedom by our loose talk, by our want of faith, by our want of response to the challenge of national unity and strength? A spiritual orientation of our national mind is of supreme significance today. Loss of faith in the nation and its way of life is the greatest

source of weakness to any people. This gives rise to a lack of seriousness, to a mood of cynicism. These weaknesses have corroded the hearts and wills of many of our educated sections; many of them betray a negative outlook and mood; they are the products of a negative education. The study of their national history has not burnt into them the shame of subjection and the joy of freedom, and the price to be paid for the enjoyment of the latter. Loss of faith on the part of a single generation can weaken the five thousand year-long chain of our national existence.

In the history of ancient Greece, we read of the great upsurge in culture and thought in the Athens of fifth century B.C. produced by the stimulus of victory against the Persian invaders. Though Greece, and particularly Athens, suffered grievously from the invasion, yet the stimulus of freedom resulted in an outburst of creative activity in art, literature, and philosophy in the succeeding fifty years, which became the golden age of Greek history and the perennial inspiration for the western peoples down to our own time. The number of people who created that culture was very small; the free population of Athens then numbered only about 2,30,000. It is a glowing example of what a people, spiritually stimulated and rich in quality, though small in numbers, can achieve. This has a lesson for the whole of humanity. It has a great lesson for democratic India. Look at our own recent history. After centuries of political immobilization, during which the nation experienced much humiliation and privation, we achieved freedom; we made sacrifices for that freedom and we intended that freedom to be the means to enhance the glory of man in our own country and everywhere else. If that freedom is imperilled today, largely by our own weaknesses, then it is our duty to awaken and discipline ourselves once again, improve the spiritual quality of our men and women, and increase their alertness and sense of responsibility. .If our new-found freedom is a pervasive spiritual stimulus, we shall certainly achieve all this and write a new and unprecedented golden chapter in our age-old history.

The Bane of Small-mindedness

We have to confess—and the present emergency compels us to do a little searching of heart—that we have, since independence, cared more to exploit our newly won freedom for selfish purposes than to serve its cause or enhance its value. We have tried to weaken our state by advocating regional, linguistic, and other narrow claims backed by organized movements often of a violent nature. The idea that the state derives its strength and sustenance from the loyalty of a free and responsible people was not emphasized as it should have been. The people often exhibited a tendency to consider themselves as sub-

jects and not as free citizens of the state, which they treated as the 'other', as something set over or against them, to be criticized or ridiculed as the mood of the moment dictated. Little did we pause to think that such moods and actions on the part of the citizens of a democratic state would weaken the fabric of the state and corrode into its vitality and strength.

Swami Vivekananda tells us a story which well illustrates the post-independence behaviour of large sections of our people (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, pp. 427-28):

'There was a certain king who had a huge number of courtiers, and each one of these countries declared that he was ready to sacrifice his life for his master, and that he was the most sincere being ever born. In course of time, a *sannyāsin* came to the king. The king said to him that there never was a king who had so many sincere courtiers as he had. The *sannyāsin* smiled and said he did not believe that. The king said the *sannyāsin* could test it if he liked. So the *sannyāsin* declared that he would make a great sacrifice by which the king's reign would be extended very long, with the condition that there should be made a small tank into which each one of his courtiers should pour a pitcher of milk in the dark of night. The king smiled and said, "Is this the test?" And he asked his courtiers to come to him, and told them what was to be done. They all expressed their joyful assent to the proposal and returned. In the dead of night they came and emptied their pitchers into the tank. But in the morning it was found full of water only. The courtiers were assembled and questioned about the matter. Each one of them had thought there would be so many pitchers of milk that his water would not be detected. Unfortunately, most of us have the same idea, and we do our share of work as did the courtiers in the story.'

Many of us have behaved with our state like those courtiers. Each one of us thought that our own individual self-seeking would not matter, since others were moved by patriotic impulses and selfless attitudes. At the birth of our independence, only a few thought like this. But their number began to increase year by year, until selfishness and self-seeking became a pervasive trait of our national life bringing national morality to the lowest ebb.

Democracy Is Made of Sterner Stuff

The nation stands in sore need of a spiritual regeneration today. There has been much talk of raising the economic standard of the people, but very little about their moral standard. The nation was merrily going along with the idea that the index of national development is increase in national wealth. This led to an excessive love of money with its attendant evils: the resort to easy ways of making money through corruption and all conceivable forms of malpractices, love of ease, and the neglect of the heroic virtues and graces. The present Chinese invasion has administered the much-needed shock to

our shallow optimism and facile moods. We have now to take steps to ensure that this catharsis leads to a root-and-branch spiritual regeneration. The nation must learn once for all that freedom and democracy are made of sterner stuff than what they had exhibited so far. This emphasis on spiritual values will help to redeem the Indian man from thraldom to false values and put him in the centre of our national development programme. His growth and development in self-discipline, social awareness, personal integrity, and practical efficiency shall henceforth become the index of national development. This is what Swami Vivekananda termed man-making religion and man-making education.

Conclusion

For the last 150 years, all the great leaders of our national renaissance had upheld the primacy of spiritual values. Raja Rammohun Roy, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi had uniformly emphasized the need to enrich the Indian man and woman spiritually, and worked energetically towards the same. *They advocated material and all other improvements only with a view to raising the spiritual quality of our people.* Their vision of human excellence was universal and human; and they preached their message of national renaissance keeping this wider end in view. We have to educate ourselves today in the blue-prints for human development which they have provided. By this we shall be able to refresh ourselves spiritually, and recapture faith in ourselves and in our national objectives. With that faith in our hearts we shall be able to work with added vigour and dedication to strengthen our infant democratic state, and make our distinct contribution to the enhancement of human dignity and freedom everywhere.

DEMOCRACY AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

I WAS invited to come and join this Convention by its patriotic convenors. Attracted by its high objectives and its non-party approach to the nation's political problems, I accepted their kind invitation; and I am here with you all to discuss ways and means to strengthen the great democratic experiment of our nation.

The New Awakening

I am glad to find that, in recent months, our people have become somewhat awakened to their citizenship responsibilities towards our infant democratic state. For a long time we had left everything to the state, to the government, and to the political parties, and the people had abdicated their responsibilities as citizens. During the last two years or so, we have been experiencing that the parliamentary democracy which we have established in our country since we proclaimed our constitution in 1950, has developed several undesirable features. The weak functioning of the governments, both in the centre and in the states, the unprecedented manifestation of violence in our civil life, the irresponsible behaviour of most of our political parties, widespread corruption in public life, malpractices in our industry and trade, and the general apathy of the people—all these phenomena have tended to weaken the fabric of our infant democratic state. Many democracies have gone asunder under such circumstances.

It is up to the citizens of India to strengthen their democracy. The strength of a democracy lies in its alert and patriotic citizens; but somehow or other we, as citizens, did not come forward to protect and sustain our democracy; we did nothing to arrest these undesirable trends all these years. We failed to be inspired by the ever-tested truth that

eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Now things have gone too far. Yet it is not too late to reverse the trend towards disorder and chaos. This consideration has, to the nation's good fortune, initiated a mood of self-criticism in our people and a will to reverse that trend. Our nation does not want to destroy itself today, just as it has not been destroyed by outside powers all these thousands of years. It must, therefore, resolve to acquire self-reliance and self-confidence with a view to building up its democratic structure on adamantine foundations.

The Mood and Method of Self-Reliance

This Convention can be taken as one of the fruits of that new resolve. A Convention of this type was first held in Delhi; now it is being held here in the capital city of West Bengal, the premier industrial and intellectual city of India. I am very much interested in this approach to our national problems because it offers to our people the mood and method of self-reliance, which is essential for strengthening our democracy, and raises their stature as citizens of a free nation. We are being taught today by foreign nations to become self-reliant in our agriculture and food production. This is a very salutary advice; and it is to our good that circumstances are compelling us to accept it. But the most significant field in which this mood of self-reliance is to be implemented is in the safeguarding of our national liberty and the democratic way of life proclaimed in our constitution.

Our Post-independence Complacency

We have established a sovereign democratic state after centuries of political subjection and social immobilization. Any nation which becomes free after years of political slavery and oppression becomes jealous of its new-won freedom and strives energetically to protect it from disruption from within or invasion from without. Our country was under foreign domination, foreign subjugation and oppression, not for a few years but for centuries. In spite of this, why is it that within a few years of our attaining independence, we have lost the dynamics of freedom, we have become lost in divisive attitudes and selfish pursuits?

Other nations under similar circumstances have sacrificed everything to protect their political freedom and worked hard to ensure all-round development. We, on the other hand, became quickly complacent, neglected the cultivation of heroic virtues, and opted for the easy life. We sadly neglected the cherishing and nourishing of that freedom which we had gained after centuries of slavery. We all too soon forgot the vital lesson of history that liberty thrives only under constant and eternal vigilance. The Chinese aggression, and, later the

Pakistani aggression, shook us out of our complacency; but, alas! only for a short time. Internal dissensions soon raised their heads until we and the world outside feared that our state was cracking up. There was a mood of fear and despair. But out of that depth of despair has now come the national will to survive and the national resolve to reverse the downward trend.

Our Democratic Responsibilities

It is a happy augury that, since the past one year, many of our citizens have become conscious of our national ailments and of their responsibilities to avert national disintegration. We are slowly realizing that our responsibilities as citizens do not end with casting our votes once in five years; we are realizing that we have the responsibility to ensure the health of our democracy by being alert and sensitive, intelligent and effective. We have to see that our democracy expresses itself not only in the constitution of the state, but also in its administration, in the functioning of its political parties and social groups, and in the awareness of its citizens. *We have also to keep in mind that political democracy becomes a sham if it does not strive to transform itself into economic and social democracy.* This penetration of the democratic spirit and value into the nation is what strengthens democracy; and that is achieved by constant vigilance on the part of the citizens.

Our State to Be Made Responsive to Its Citizens

Obviously, we as a nation have to reckon with the failings of our administration, the weaknesses of our government, and the irresponsible behaviour of our political parties. We need basic training in the virtues and graces of responsible citizenship; we need training in the way free citizens deal with each other and with the state. *What is more, we need our state to become more responsive to its citizens.* The public feeling that public grievances cannot be redressed without resort to violence is disastrous for any democracy. This malady is afflicting us today. It can be cured only by our government and administration becoming more efficient and more responsive to people's needs. This involves the ministers, legislators, and officers learning to think of themselves as citizens first and as state functionaries afterwards. They are essentially citizens called to perform a particular state function.

The Strength of a Democratic State Lies in Its Free Citizens

Our education has not trained us in this kind of attitude to ourselves and to our fellow citizens. The fruit of this attitude is a sense of national responsibility and the spirit of service. Unless we respect the rights of our fellow citizens, we do not raise our own democratic

stature. *The strength of a democracy lies in its democratic citizens and not in its officers and ministers.* All institutional education and socio-political education in a democracy must be designed to produce such citizens, free, responsible, and politically aware. Persons living in a free state but without a sense of *belonging* to it, and apathetic towards what is happening around them, cannot be called democratic citizens. Unfortunately, this apathy is writ large in the attitude and functioning of most of our people. This apathy gives rise to loss of self-confidence and resignation, which reacts to the political maladies of the country with the only slogan, the slogan of despair, expressing its helplessness with the cry: hell to the politicians and the political parties. Such a reaction is destructive of the good life, which is nourished and sustained only by a healthy political state. Such an attitude in a people shows them up as citizens only in name and not in reality. We do not become free merely by living *in* a free environment, *under* a free constitution. We become truly free when the spirit of freedom *enters into* us, suffusing our inner being and raising our stature and dignity as free and responsible citizens of a free society.

Need for more Political Education

From this point of view, we have sadly to admit that our political education has been very very poor. The various activities of the different political parties would have become our democratic assets *if they had tended to educate our people in political awareness and democratic responsibilities;* it is not enough that people get stirred up at the time of an election once in five years. That stir must have the backing of a general level of political awareness and citizenship responsibility, cultivated in the field of day to day life and action. The lack of these is seen in the sad functioning of our local self-government institutions, urban and rural. So, in every sphere there is the need for the effective education of our people—education not merely to equip a citizen to earn a living, but also to intelligently manipulate the social *milieu;* this is the *political* education of the citizens, using the term 'political' in its widest sense. There are two types of education, namely, religious education and political education. One is education for the inward life and the other is education for the outward life. We have a strong tradition of religious education in our nation, some of which is healthy, some unhealthy. What we now need is the political education of our people, by which they will be able to understand their rights and duties, and intelligently participate in the collective life of the nation.

Democratic Tolerance and Our Citizens

Democracy needs a measure of tolerance of other people's views and ways. We are a tolerant people; we have to preserve this trait of

ours even while holding strong political and religious convictions. The desire to influence other people must be accompanied by a willingness to listen patiently to them. Democracy is defined as government by discussion and not by coercion; democracy is breaking wits and not breaking heads. Voltaire's famous dictum has to be constantly kept in view: *I do not believe a single word of what you say; but I shall defend with my life your right to say so.* And when we proceed to convince other people, we shall feel the need for new talents and capacities in ourselves. The mind has to be disciplined in scientific objectivity and precision and the passion for facts. We can silence another by shouting; but we cannot *convince* him or her by that method. This can be done only through massing facts and figures, and insight into their meaning and significance. Hence the need for sound knowledge and information.

Along with this, there is need to develop the art of effective communication of ideas. Here comes the importance of the cultivation of speech, getting a grip on language. For, in every society, man influences his neighbour through speech. In a democracy, the importance of this medium of communication is very high. Unfortunately, it is least cultivated in our education. To have sound ideas, and to be able to communicate them effectively to others through speech and writing, so as to influence their thinking and action—the wide-spread acceptance of this sane method, in the context of a general attitude of active tolerance, is what constitutes the ethical basis of democratic politics. This training must come to our citizens right from the debating forums of their schools and colleges.

Democratic Tolerance and Our Legislators

If this is essential in our inter-human relationships, it is still more essential in the conduct of our legislatures and parliaments. They are the barometers of a nation's political and social health. They are the forums which call for the utmost restraint and decorum, mutual respect and tolerance in the members, even while they vehemently criticize each other's policies and programmes, follies and failures. It is a matter of grave concern that our standards of parliamentary behaviour have been falling fast in recent years. Our parliament and legislatures have to create and maintain the highest traditions of intellectual competence and moral integrity, courtesy and tolerance, vigilance and national responsiveness. Through exercising the privileges of free discussion and debate, fearless criticism and constructive policy suggestions, the members of the opposition, as much as those of the treasury benches, contribute to the democratic education of the people as much as to the governance of the state. The opposition must always remember that it

will one day be called upon to sit on the treasury benches and shoulder the responsibilities of government. In a true democracy, a political minority status is never a permanent status, unlike a religious or racial or linguistic minority status. A political minority party today may become a majority party in the next election. If it fails to attain that status, it is not due to any external factors, but only due to defects in its policy and programme or organization and leadership. Occasional reshuffling of the legislatures resulting in changes in the relative strength of government and opposition parties is healthy for a democracy. This is what is provided for in our five-year general elections, the freedom and fairness of which need to be zealously ensured by the party in power and jealously guarded by the citizens and the opposition.

Democratic Tolerance and Our Political Parties

In democratic politics, the struggle of the political parties is directed to the one end of winning the allegiance of the people to their respective ideologies and programmes. The people are the true judges of the parties and their programmes; as such, they are the true leaders; political leaders are their servants; not euphemistically, but in a real sense. The end and aim of politics in a democracy, therefore, is the education of the citizen in the intelligent and free choosing of his 'leaders' and replacing them when they prove inadequate to the nation's tasks. This is the true test of the sovereignty of the citizen in a democracy. He is sovereign and subject in one. The state in a democracy is not something apart from, or sitting over, the citizen. It is only the collective will of its citizens.

Tolerance in Our National Tradition

India, as I said earlier, has a long tradition of tolerance, which was created early in our history by our philosophy, and fostered by our religion and our political state in subsequent periods. Great and world-moving spiritual leaders like Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Śaṅkara, and Aśoka in the past powerfully influenced millions of people, resorting entirely to the democratic methods of peaceful persuasion backed by rational appeal and sterling character. In our own time, we saw the reinforcing of this tradition and method in Swami Vivekananda. We had the benefit of its successful application in the socio-political field by Gandhiji.

Conclusion

Let us hope that the impending general election—the fourth such experience for our people since our independence—will strengthen our

infant democracy by instilling a measure of self-confidence and social responsibility into our citizens, enabling the nation to tackle and solve its accumulated and mounting problems. These are best achieved by open discussion and free debate. That is the way to build the future of our ancient nation on adamantine foundations. Hence the importance of Conventions such as these; and I am glad to be one of its participants.

INDIA, JAPAN AND WORLD PEACE

IN his book *The Impact of Science on Society,* the eminent British philosopher Bertrand Russell refers to the tragedy of the contemporary world in these words:

'Broadly speaking we are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends. Given sufficient folly as to ends, every increase in the skill required to achieve them is to the bad. The human race has survived hitherto owing to ignorance and incompetence; but given knowledge and competence combined with folly, there can be no certainty of survival. Knowledge is power, but it is power for evil just as much as for good. It follows that, *unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge,* increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.' (Italics not author's).

Modern Science and Modern Man

The last three hundred years of human history has rushed human civilization through the epochs of steam and electricity to that of nuclear power. The human mind, disciplined in the methods of science, has gained increasing knowledge of the mysteries of nature and control over its powers. The extent and range of this new source of power is revealed by the famous Einsteinian formula for nuclear energy: $E=MC^2$, which means that the energy contained in a piece of matter is equal to its mass multiplied by the square of the speed of light. This enormous energy which nature had hidden in the recesses of matter all these millions of years has now yielded its secrets to man.

But just when power has begun to come into his hands in abundance, man has begun to become uncertain about himself and his future. The scientists of the nineteenth century were moved by a passion for the alleviation of human misery and enhancement of human happiness and welfare through the advancement of science and technology. Undoubt-

edly, a part of the fruits of science is being invested in the enhancement of human life. But the rest of it is being invested, and invested with increasing earnestness of folly, in preparations for the destruction of human civilization itself. This is the tragedy of modern civilization, the combination of enormous power and stupendous folly, as Bertrand Russell expresses it. There is evidence of a spirit of heartlessness, absence of compassion, or, what Harvard University Professor Dr. Sorokin calls, altruism, in modern civilization, which has knowledge and power, but not wisdom. This wisdom is the product of knowledge and power chastened and purified by compassion and the sense of human responsibility.

India's Unique Tradition of Peace

If the voice of India speaks the language of peace and human fellowship today, it is because of that blending of compassion and human responsibility in her age-old culture and philosophy. It is, accordingly, not a voice of weakness but of strength. In her 5,000 or more years of history, India has passed through every gamut of human experience, prosperity and adversity, victory and defeat, freedom and subjection, high-mindedness and small-mindedness. Her great thinkers had churned the butter of wisdom out of the milk of human experience and imparted to its culture certain eternal values, the values of peace and gentleness, humanism and fellowship, tolerance and universality. Kṛṣṇa (about 1400 B.C.) taught the wonderful doctrine of fearless gentleness in the *Gītā* (XII.15): 'He is my dear devotee who is fearless himself and also a source of fearlessness to the world at large.' This virtue of fearless gentleness found glorious expressions in later ages in a succession of teachers and exemplars from Buddha in the sixth century B.C. to Gandhi in the twentieth century A.D. It also found a unique expression in political and state policy in the Emperor Aśoka of the third century B.C. This great Emperor, after gaining a resounding victory in a war against one of the states of India, the Kaliṅgas, was moved by compassion when he learned of the enormous sufferings inflicted by the war. He then and there renounced war as an instrument of state policy. Himself the ruler of a vast and powerful kingdom, he befriended his neighbouring states and peoples through an active foreign policy of peace and interchange of culture and thought, and inscribed the principles of this unique foreign policy on rocks and pillars of his vast dominions. The Indian mind got a rare gift in peace and tolerance from this emperor, as it had earlier received from the great spiritual leaders that had preceded him. The sum total of all this national education has been a complete absence of the aggressive spirit in India's long history. India has invaded no foreign country, never drenched her hand in foreign blood, nor enriched herself by exploiting other nations. Her

international contacts have moved through the silent channels of culture and commerce, and never through the turbulent storms of violence and war. It is this heritage—ancient, dynamic, and pervasive—that gives authenticity to India's voice on behalf of peace and tolerance among nations today. As such, it is not a freakish product of the modern Indian mind or of its great Prime Minister, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru.

India's Synthesis of Science and Religion

India's philosophy has no fear of science or of advancing thought. It knows that the scientific discipline can and should be applied not only to understand and control the processes and powers of external physical nature, but also of the internal nature of man. The first is being wonderfully achieved by modern science and technology; but this achievement can never in itself confer happiness or a sense of fulfilment *directly* on man; it can at best create only conditions for his happiness. This happiness and fulfilment itself is the product of another discipline and technique which is religion, not as understood in its credal or dogmatic aspects, but in its essential aspect of spiritual striving and realization. Western civilization has ignored the importance of this discipline, due largely to local historic circumstances. But both these disciplines of science and religion are complementary and not exclusive, according to Indian philosophy; the science of external nature cannot conflict with the science of internal nature, when both are identical disciplines though with different subject matters. Their aims also are identical—the enrichment of human life through increasing knowledge and control of nature and life. The modern world is groping towards this great consummation—the synthesis of the greatest values of the human heritage, science and religion, or the science of physical nature and the science of man. This is the only way by which man's increase of knowledge can be made to be matched by increase in his wisdom, as demanded by Bertrand Russell, so that happiness shall be his lot and not sorrow.

A healthy manipulation of political policies of nations can help to avert an imminent war by postponing it; this itself is a great gain in the present-day world; and India's political policies have this short-term aim before them. This short-term objective has found eloquent expression in the principle of 'Pañcaśīla' or 'co-existence'. But this can provide only a breathing time which should be utilized to eradicate the schism in the soul of modern man through a synthesis of the total heritage of mankind. India hopes to contribute substantially to this consummation in her own silent way through the new spiritual forces released in her being by Ramakrishna (1836-1886) and Vivekananda

(1863-1902). Vivekananda, who is acclaimed as the most important single architect of modern India, expounded this Indian synthesis of all knowledge in a compressed statement of five propositions (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p. 124):

1. Each soul is potentially Divine.

2. The goal (of life) is to manifest this Divine within by controlling nature external (by science) and internal (by religion).

3. Do this either by (dedicated) work, or worship, or psychic (mental) control, or philosophy—by one or more or all of these, and Be Free.

4. This is the whole of Religion.

5. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals or books, temples or forms are but secondary details.

Touching on the possible contribution of the Indian spirit to human welfare, the American author, Will Durant, writes in his *Story of Civilization* (Vol. I, 1935, p. 6.33) :

'It is true that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent to us such questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in the future...Perhaps in return for conquest, arrogance, and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the calm of the understanding spirit and a unifying, pacifying love for all living things.'

The West: Pre-War and Post-War

Post-war Japan is confronted with the problem of reassessing her position in the world community and her contribution to the world at large. One of the most difficult choices for emerging nations, as for individuals, is how to invest their surplus psychic energies. From the fifteenth century onwards, Europe started investing her surplus energies not only in the constructive fields of science and humanism but also in the destructive field of collisions with weaker nations, which took the form of imperialism, colonialism, and war. The latter brought sufferings to its victims; but it recoiled on the European nations themselves eventually. The two world wars have acted as boomerangs of such a policy. Europe has recognized the folly of such a policy and has retraced her steps to a great extent, partly no doubt under the pressure of the rising tide of freedom movements in the subject countries. She has also joined the commendable international movements of industrial and economic assistance to backward countries. This policy of help and co-operation among nations in the economic fields holds great promise for the world's future; this is being reinforced by the activities of the UNESCO in the educational and cultural fields. The

U.N.O. itself, in spite of occasional vacillations and fumblings, is contributing to the preservation of world peace by the checking of aggressive nations, as was demonstrated during the Suez crisis.

There is thus a vast creative field in the international political, economic, educational, and cultural spheres in which a dynamic nation can invest its surplus energies for the good of mankind as a whole.

Japan: Pre-War and Post-War

Japan's sudden emergence as a modern nation at the end of the last century was a source of great inspiration to modern India. But India as a whole watched with dismay and sorrow Japan's following in the footsteps of the imperialist and colonialist nations of the West. This was a tragedy of the first magnitude. India long ago recognized an inherent beauty and goodness in the soul of the Japanese human landscape. Japan's imperialist policies and wars had marred this inherent beauty of its soul. In this beautiful country inhabited by an intelligent and gifted people who love beauty, order, courtesy, and good manners, the mood of chauvinistic pride, violence, and war was an utterly unnatural intruder. During its brief intrusion into the national mind, it did havoc on its neighbours, and finally, on Japan itself. This small interlude of toying with man's uglier tendencies and its aftermath can be looked upon as a brief worth-while experience if there emerges out of it a positive national force for peace and co-operation in the world. Let atom-bombed Hiroshima be the symbol of this national resolve; let the deeply touching inscription on its Peace Memorial Grave, 'Rest here in peace: for never again will we repeat the mistake', be inscribed in the hearts of our children of every generation dedicating them to peace, tolerance, and co-operation.

A Glorious Role for Post-War Japan

This is the path of glory for Japan today; and it is an undying glory unlike the glory of violence and war. India chose the path of this glory long long ago and has dedicated herself to it with a fresh determination on her emergence from political subjection eleven years ago. The glories and victories of peace are greater and purer than those of war. There are enough sufferings in the world as it is; why should a nation, through its policies and actions, add to it? Today, the greatness of a people or a nation will be measured by the contribution it makes to reduce sufferings and tensions and enhance happiness and peace among mankind. This is a road on which India and Japan, both youthful and dynamic, can march together, along with other nations similarly resolved, creating a mighty bulwark of peace and fellowship in the modern world.

THE LEGACY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

IT is, indeed, a happy occasion for us all this evening to gather here in this Math premises in order to remember the greatness of Mahatma Gandhi and to pay our respectful homage to him. It is now sixteen days since he passed away; these have been days of national and international mourning. Never before in history has the death of an individual evoked human sorrow on so vast a scale. From the response that Gandhiji's passing away has evoked from millions and millions of people in India and abroad, we can have an idea of the great thirst in the hearts of men and women today for the universal and abiding spiritual and moral values which the great martyr strove so successfully to express in his fully lived life of 79 years. This form of universal appreciation of the nobility of Mahatma Gandhi's life and character strengthens us in our faith that the heart of man is sound and that it can stand up against the creeping cynicism of the age and greet, in hopeful joy, greatness which is fundamental and benevolence which is universal.

Mourning to be Followed by Serious Thinking

The nation has mourned and, while mourning, has also done a certain amount of heart-searching. The truly great, benefit the world as much by their death as by their life. The death of Gandhiji has produced a wave of revulsion against the communal poison which was creeping relentlessly into the Indian body-politic and has roused the nation—now divided into India and Pakistan—to a sense of its duty and responsibility. There is urgent need for re-thinking on the part of our people and for assessing the nature and scope of the great legacy bequeathed to us by our departed leader. It is time that we gather up our shattered thoughts and judgements and view the pressing national problems in the light of the ideals and visions of that personality which

has passed over to the other side of existence. The days of mourning are over; the days of serious endeavour—individual and collective—are to begin from now on.

The Tragedy: A Dismal Appraisal

In the course of the last few days, several leaders have expressed in their speeches their feeling that it is a shame to the whole nation that one of their kind should have done the nefarious act of assassinating a person of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi. Some have even gone as far as to say that this guilt will remain to shame India and Indians till eternity. This view, I hold, is a case of 'sorrow-shattered judgement' as the *Gītā* puts it. It is one way of looking at the problem—the pathetic and depressing way. It focusses our attention on the narrowest range of facts and draws a lesson of unrelieved national guilt and shame. I should like to present before you today another way of looking at the problem, viz. taking the widest range of facts into consideration and drawing a lesson of hope and cheer for the present and faith and courage for the future.

There is no denying the fact that the manner and circumstances of Gandhiji's death make of it an unparalleled tragedy. Even natural death in his case would have been a national calamity. The extraordinary measure of tragedy in this case proceeds from the anomaly and unnaturalness of that death—the death, at the hands of an assassin, of one who was an embodiment of gentleness and love, and who had no enemies. In all such cases the assassin strives to play the part of the hero; but in this case, the entire episode, beginning with the arrival of the gentle and harmless Gandhiji, unprotected, at the prayer ground, and moving to its climax in the stepping forward of the assassin and his firing, at point-blank range, while feigning to bow down in salute, reveals it as the meanest and most cowardly among the assassinations of world history. Leaders, well-protected by the military and the police, and shielded by every conceivable precautionary measure, have yet been assassinated in various parts of the world by reckless individuals. Any person, however protected he may be, can be assaulted, insulted, or killed by another who is so determined. There is, therefore, nothing very extraordinary or special about the circumstance of one Godse assassinating a person like Mahatma Gandhi, who was, though fearless, childlike and approachable by all.

The Tragedy: A Hopeful Appraisal

But there is one important feature of this tragedy which gives us cause for hope; this relates to the public reaction to the tragedy.

I would like to lay particular emphasis on this point which, I fear, has been somewhat overlooked in the general sorrow of the hour. The universal condemnation of the assassination, and the expression of spontaneous loyalty by millions and millions of people in this country and abroad to the person of the great leader, and their resolve to follow his lead, constitute an invaluable legacy of hope and cheer left to humanity by Gandhiji, through his fruitful life crowned by an equally fruitful death. The steadying influence of that final service of his is already becoming visible on the tortured mind and face of our nation.

The Tragedy: Jesus Versus Gandhi

The world honoured, respected, and loved Gandhiji in his lifetime; it honours, respects and loves him today, after his death, a thousand times more. This is a rare phenomenon in history; in fact, we have hardly a parallel instance. Those who spoke in terms of national guilt may have had in mind the crucifixion of Jesus. In the case of Jesus, apart from his eleven disciples, almost all of whom denied their master at the moment of crisis, and a handful of devotees who clung fast to him throughout, all else around him considered him a weak, undesirable person and an impostor, deserving of that sad end; there were only a handful of people to mourn his death, but that too privately. But that has not detracted from the greatness of Jesus or the truth of his message, or from the fruitfulness, to be realized later, of that supreme tragedy at Calvary. But in the case of Gandhiji, barring the members of a small unworthy gang who seem to have planned the nefarious act before, and appreciated it after, the entire world of man, both inside India and outside, mourns his loss as a personal bereavement and as a human calamity. Not only that; the Indian nation gave a royal send-off to the mortal remains of the great 'Father of the Nation'.

The New Testament gospels depict the moving scenes of the Christ tragedy in the last chapters. The tragedy begins with the arrest of Jesus by the Roman soldiers with the help of one of his own disciples, Judas, and then moves onward with deepening intensity. Jesus is insulted, slapped, made to carry his own cross, and crowned with a crown of thorns. The drama becomes pathetic when his own disciples, out of selfish fear, deny and forsake him at the moment of crisis; gloom and despair descend on the handful of the faithful when the tragedy reaches its climax at Calvary. It will be fruitful to compare this with the present tragedy; here we find everything reversed from the beginning to the end. And after the tragedy, the affirmations of loyalty have become tumultuous; and gloom and despair have descended, not on the multitudes of the faithful whose only share is sorrow at the bereave-

ment, but on the foolish few who constitute the misguided group of murderers. Even those who were critical and doubtful about some of his recent policies have become, after the tragedy, deeply affected by the personality of Gandhiji and the strength it has been to the national cause. The entire nation is thus with Gandhiji today in a much more real sense than what we can say regarding any other political leader of the world, past or present.

Gandhiji: His Character and Personality

Some of the great ideals which he has placed before the people through his impassioned utterances and flaming example will be of great service to the nation in the coming decades. It is necessary for us to focus our attention on those leading ideas of Mahatmaji. It will be extremely difficult for anyone to exhaustively expound the entire gamut of his ideas, educational, religious, social and political, in the course of even a series of lectures, not to speak of one. My purpose, however, this evening is to present before you a picture of the character and personality which was Gandhiji, to delineate the quality of that greatness which as a physical presence is no more, but as a spiritual force is immortal, and to discuss briefly the lessons which that greatness holds for the men and women of this age.

Among contemporary leaders of people, Gandhiji stands alone in his eminence and uniqueness. His is the staggering example of a leader who practised what he professed, and gave out to the people only what he had tested in his own life, whether it be in the fields of politics or economics, religion or personal morality. This makes it extremely difficult to place him under any of the existing categories of political or social greatness. Every great leader has certain definite lines of burning convictions and passionate pursuits and he concentrates on those lines, sometimes even with fanatic zeal, to the exclusion of every other interest; and he leads the people along those particular lines; and there it ends. We had, and we always have, such leaders in all parts of the world. In the case of Gandhiji, it is difficult to specify where his interests end. It is obvious that the political freedom of India was one of his chief interests. But he passionately worked to increase the moral stature of the Indian people and to better their material conditions; he struggled with a singular passion to wipe away the stain of long-standing social injustice on the body-politic, to give cheer to the oppressed, and redeem the lowly and the lost; he endeavoured to impart to the nation the inspiration of a religion of divine love and human service; he successfully worked out programmes intended to instil courage and dignity in the two neglected sections of Indian society, namely, women and the masses; he readily responded to individual appeals for help, advice,

and guidance in the fields of life ranging from personal, moral, and spiritual problems, to dietetics and health, care of the infant and the village cattle, down to the problems of the profitable utilization of human refuse and dead cattle. In all this we can, if we closely study his moods and ways, detect one overriding concern to which all other concerns are subsidiary and convergent; and that is the human concern—the welfare and happiness of man and his moral and spiritual growth and development.

A True Leader of Men

Thus every aspect of human betterment, every problem touching human welfare, whether in the field of politics or sociology, economics or religion, in every walk of life, commanded his attention and active interest. He owed allegiance to a philosophy and outlook that expresses itself in a multi-sided approach to the many-sided problems of life; this makes him, strictly speaking, not a mere individual but a universal personality.

So far as India is concerned, in the context of her political struggles and social aspirations, Gandhiji stands as a symbol, as an archetypal man. To every one of our problems in these fields, we have seen him responding with a readiness, as if he and the national environment were fused into one. This type of identification with the achievements and sufferings of a struggling nation of 400 million people is what makes him a leader of a unique type, a true representative of the ideals and aspirations of the people whom he leads, without being led by their passing whims and moods, as is the case with most leaders of the world —a unique leader of a struggling people. That is why if ever the word 'leader' can be truly applied to any contemporary personality, it is to Gandhiji and Gandhiji alone in all that plenitude of meaning. Other leaders are more led than leading.

Relevance of His Message of Love and Service

Gandhiji is the example of a leader who is not guided by the passing moods and passions of the populace, but who turns and guides these in the direction of the vision of human excellence that he has experienced for himself. His stress on truth and non-violence is the only beacon light in a world enveloped in the darkness of selfishness and exploitation, hatred and violence. He alone could look calmly and compassionately into the blood-shot eyes of contemporary man. Modern world conditions engendered by science and technology call for the transformation of energies of hatred and violence, competition and strife, into the moral forces of co-operation and service, love and peace. The moral education of modern man, in step with his intellectual attain-

ments and technical achievements, is the most urgent task facing humanity today. In India itself, as also in Pakistan, the urgent task is the stilling of communal passions and the channelling of their energies into the moral field of collective human welfare. The stress on love and service may sound unrealistic in the present national context of suspicion and hatred in the wake of political partition. But in human relations, hatred and destruction can never be a long-term measure. After short spells, it has to be transformed into, and yield place to, love and construction.

Conclusion

By holding high this banner of love and service through thick and thin in the midst of his socio-political programmes and activities, and the banner of truth and non-violence in his personal life, Gandhiji has left an imperishable legacy which, as years pass, humanity in India and elsewhere will recognize as the only values capable of expressing the dignity and worth of man, as the only hope of civilization and progress, and as the only guarantee of the march of man everywhere to all-round growth and fulfilment.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE

THE Indian renaissance was nearly a hundred years old when Jawaharlal Nehru entered the field of Indian political life in the second decade of this century. And he was in the thick of it for half a century. It is interesting to study how he viewed this national renaissance and what impact he had on it.

India in the Early Nineteenth Century

The seed-time of this renaissance was the nineteenth century. It was occasioned by the impact of the dynamic and modern culture of the West on the ancient but weakened culture of India. The strength of the ancient Indian culture lay in the sphere of spirituality and philosophy; it was extremely weak in the positive sciences and in the socio-political fields. The glorious vision of the inherent divinity of man and his capacity for limitless development, bequeathed by her philosophers and sages, emphasizing the inherent worth and dignity of man, had failed to become incorporated into the political and social consciousness of her people. The Indian body-politic, accordingly, had been vitiated by social inequality and injustice to an amazing extent, and by every conceivable form of exploitation of the many by the few. This had reduced the status and stature of man in India to a deplorable extent. It had weakened the national life, which had accordingly become steeped in narrow attitudes, foolish superstitions, and cheap and easy mysticisms. The vision of the universal and the human in the national heritage lay submerged in this muddy pool.

The Modern Renaissance in India

The culture of the modern West that came to India in the wake of the British subjection and through the English language represented,

on the other hand, the spirit of manliness and of socio-political strength, arising from scientific and technological advancements. The contact of such a powerful culture could easily have spelt death to the decadent Indian culture; some contemporary western thinkers had predicted it, and some others had even hoped for it; but exactly the opposite happened. Instead of dying, India burst forth in a renaissance of her ageless spirit. This was obviously because there was a close kinship between the inner core of the two legacies, which Indian renaissance was to make explicit in Swami Vivekananda seven decades later. The renaissance was sponsored and nourished in the early nineteenth century by the great Raja Rammohun Roy who strove to inject the modern progressive spirit into his nation and who represented within himself a fine synthesis of the East and the West.

In his *Discovery of India* (p. 342), Jawaharlal Nehru refers to this renaissance ferment of the nineteenth century in these words:

'The impact of western culture on India was the impact of a dynamic society, of a "modern" consciousness, on a static society wedded to medieval habits of thought which, however sophisticated and advanced in its own way, could not progress because of its inherent limitations....Change came to India because of this impact of the West, but it came almost in spite of the British in India. They succeeded in slowing down the pace of that change to such an extent that even today the transition is far from complete.'

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and the Spiritual Revolution

Towards the end of the century, this renaissance found its most authentic voice in two great personalities, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

Sri Ramakrishna represented the undying spirit of India; in his deep spirituality, broad human sympathies, universal toleration, and love and concern for man, immortal India rediscovered herself. And in his great disciple, Vivekananda, this rediscovery became blended with the spirit of the modern age. In Ramakrishna and Vivekananda the renaissance movement, which had proceeded haltingly during the preceding seven decades, became a powerful flood destined to fertilize all aspects of Indian life, as also of humanity abroad. Dealing with Vivekananda's contribution, Jawaharlal Nehru says in his *Discovery of India* (pp. 400-402):

'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present....Wherever he went, he created a minor sensation not only by his presence, but by what he said and how he said it.... He wanted to combine western progress with India's spiritual background. "Make a European society with India's religion." "Become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the

very backbone in religious culture and instincts."...Vivekananda spoke of many things, but the one constant refrain of his speech and writing was *abhay*—be fearless, be strong.'

On the impact of Vivekananda on Indian renaissance, Romain Rolland says in his *Life of Vivekananda* (p. 376):

'So India was hauled out of the shifting sands of barren speculation wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hand of one of her own *sannyāsins*; and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action.'

Dealing with the same subject, Jawaharlal Nehru says in his lecture on *Ramakrishna and Vivekananda* (pp. 6-7):

'He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India; and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly, he has powerfully influenced the India of today.'

The direction that Vivekananda gave to the renaissance was towards man-making, nation-building, and international unity. Its national objectives were, to quote his own words (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 64).

'...to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large, and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers.'

Gandhiji and the Political Revolution

Immediately after Vivekananda, India saw his ideas and spirit entering the national movement, with the result that the renaissance progressively entered its dynamic phase of collective action by organized masses, first, through the revolt of Bengal, and, later, through the movement of Tilak, and finally, through Gandhiji, when, in the words of Rolland quoted above, 'the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action.'

Jawaharlal Nehru's own contributions to the Indian renaissance began with his Prime Ministership of free India. But the pre-independence national movement did not remain unaffected by him, even though it was then under the effective stewardship of Gandhiji. The objectives and policies of the Congress since 1928 unmistakably bear the impress of Jawaharlal's mind; his touch tended to make them more and more radical politically and economically. He also made the Indian national revolution aligned with the liberation struggles of other Afro-Asian nations. His own voluminous literary contributions, some of them of

rare grace and charm, also helped to educate the national mind on the lines of his own political ideas and social vision.

Jawaharlal Nehru as Pilot of Free India

The supreme opportunity to translate his ideas and visions into social realities came to him when he became the first Prime Minister of a divided but free India in 1947. Soon after independence, the nation, under his guidance, achieved the first political objective of the renaissance by giving to itself a Constitution, with an inspiring preamble and high directive principles, and proclaiming India a sovereign democratic secular republic.

The seventeen years of his stewardship saw the steady progress of India on many fronts. All aspects of Indian life bore his enlivening touch. Free India has extended all help to promote literature and the fine arts which have accordingly flourished, and which bid fair to surpass, in the years to come, its own glorious past achievements. He placed democratic socialism as the guiding principle of the state. India's infant parliamentary democracy attained maturity and strength through his wise handling of parliamentary affairs. Its stability has stood the test of three general elections based on adult franchise; it has successfully stood a more severe test involved in the present transition of national leadership at the death of Jawaharlal himself. Through his vigorous policy of planned industrialization and economic development, aided by scientific research through a chain of national laboratories and the nation-wide community project movement, Jawaharlal Nehru has laid firm foundations for the achievement of another important objective of the Indian renaissance, namely, the economic and social redemption of the Indian masses. By his policy of non-alignment and active support to the United Nations Organization, he has not only helped to reduce international tensions, but also helped to project an image of India abroad as a creative force for peace and international fellowship, thus achieving a third important political objective of the Indian renaissance.

Conclusion

No student of Indian history can fail to discern the spiritual continuity of her modern renaissance from Rammohun and Vivekananda to Gandhi and Nehru. The political contributions of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru have helped to clothe the modern Indian renaissance in flesh and blood and to put India on the road to the development of a body-politic worthy of her undying spirit. Every socio-political ideology of the future in India cannot escape being conditioned and controlled by the fundamentals of this Gandhi-Nehru contribution.

AN APPROACH TO LEPROSY CONTROL IN INDIA

WE are meeting here to celebrate not only the World Leprosy Day, but also to remember with reverence Mahatma Gandhi with whose death anniversary this World Leprosy Day is associated, in view of the abiding interest that Gandhiji took in the cause of the eradication of leprosy. This Day is observed to focus national attention on the problem of this disease which has been affecting our national body-politic for all these thousands of years.

Introductory

My interest in the field of leprosy work started during the thirteen years when I was in Delhi as Secretary of the local Ramakrishna Mission. It is true, as Dr. P. Sen remarked earlier, that while I was the head of the Ramakrishna Mission in Karachi from 1942 to 1948, I visited the leprosy clinic and hospital at nearby Mangho Pir, of which he was then the Superintendent. But my interest did not arise in a big way then. But in Delhi, some social workers happened to take me to a big leprosy patients' settlement in the Yamuna Bazar area on the banks of the Yamuna in the very heart of the city of Delhi. And I was simply appalled to see eight to nine hundred leprosy patients—men, women, and children, all making their living by begging—living in such insanitary conditions unfit for even pigs and other animals. I was amazed that in the very heart of the capital of India, with its municipal corporation, state Government, and the Government of India, this kind of thing could go on. So I decided to bring this appalling condition to the attention of the general public and the authorities concerned; and I hit upon a plan. It was this: We used to have a programme of

feeding the poor at the Ramakrishna Mission during the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna; about two to three thousand people used to be fed in the compound of the Mission—mostly sweepers and some beggars. But that year I decided to shift the venue and scope of the poor feeding to the leprosy patients' settlement. We organized our Sri Ramakrishna Birthday celebration in the settlement with bhajans, lectures, a film show, and the distribution of clothes to all the patients, especially the women and the children. A few municipal commissioners responded to our invitation and attended the function, as also a few citizens. It was an impressive function and a report of it appeared in the newspapers. This helped to draw the attention of the Corporation and the state administration to the appalling conditions in which such a large number of leprosy patients were living in the very heart of Delhi.

But the problem that confronted us was that something had to be done to the people of the settlement immediately then and there till the government or the corporation began to take interest in the matter. So I requested the women devotees of the Mission, who had earlier formed themselves into a Sarada Mahila Samiti and were doing silent devoted social service work in the Lady Hardinge Hospital and in other fields, to do something immediately to relieve the suffering of these leprosy patients. And I was extremely happy and encouraged when I found instantaneous and enthusiastic response from the members of the Samiti and also from their husbands, some of whom were big officers of the Union Government; very soon they started an organization under the name 'Kuṣṭha Rogī Sevā Samiti' which immediately set to work to serve the patients of the settlement.

It was a great delight to me to see our women entering this field of human service in a spirit of real dedication, and extending the scope of their mother-heart to enfold in its loving concern a section of humanity who had been so long neglected and looked down upon by the society. That was the most heartening sight for me in Delhi. It has never happened before in Indian history. Men and women in other countries had done and are doing such work; but we had not. The first thing the Samiti did was to start a maternity clinic within the settlement. Many of its women inmates used to have their delivery just in the open on the road-side; the women members of the Samiti set up a maternity tent and began personally attending to the maternity cases and the care of the new-born children. It was found that even hospital or private nurses showed disinclination to work among the leprosy patients. The members of the Samiti got the services of a few devoted specialists to attend to more serious cases and occasionally

arranged to send a case or two to Vellore for special treatment, or arranged to procure artificial limbs for them. Apart from attending maternity cases, the women members of the Samiti did other services including bandaging the patients' wounds, arranging for their diet etc. They also worked hard to draw the attention of the state government to the appalling conditions in the settlement; the state government realised that it was not proper to allow such a settlement to continue there. In due course the government shifted the settlement to a better planned colony in Shahdara across the Yamuna, four miles away from Delhi.

There also the Samiti continued its beneficent work, especially in the new hostel for the children who had been separated from their parents to avoid contagion. The Mission's annual Sri Ramakrishna Birthday poor feeding programme continued in the new colony and is still continuing there.

Getting inspired by the ideal of manliness and self-help, a group of patients left the settlement in Shahdara, under the leadership of one or two educated and talented patients, and established a 'Nava Nirmān Samāj Sevak Saṅgh' in the district of Dhulia, Maharashtra State (Hanuman Tekkadee, P.O. Morana), for the service of fellow leprosy patients, adopting for its motto: 'Leprosy eradication through self-help.'

These experiences, and the stimulus I received from the devoted services of the members of the Samiti, helped to strengthen my interest in the cause of leprosy relief. Since then, wherever I go in our country, I avail myself of opportunities to visit leprosy relief institutions and do whatever I can in my personal capacity to serve this cause.

Inter-Human Concern: A New Lesson

My own work has been precisely in the field which we have been discussing here—to remove public prejudices against this disease and its victims and help to develop a little more understanding, human understanding, of the patient and his problems. That is what we urgently need in India. Even the workers in the field of leprosy relief need what Dr. Sen has referred to as proper *motivation*. There is need to stress the importance of motivation in all fields of social service generally, and in this field particularly. And the greatest motivation is the urge to restore to our humanity their own humanness, their own sense of being men and women. And that requires the development of a new outlook throughout India and that should be the fundamental basis of Indian education today. We study so many subjects—physics, che-

mistry, mathematics, and so on. But the most important subject is the assimilation of the spirit of citizenship by our people. As citizens of free India, each one of us has a citizenship responsibility towards the people of India. This basic attitude and outlook, and the activities proceeding from it, are largely absent in many of our people.

I personally feel that we shall be able to solve all our national problems when our men and women realise that they have a responsibility to their fellow human beings. This is a new lesson we have yet to learn. Mostly, our sense of responsibility is of an elementary nature; it finds expression in little acts of charity to our suffering fellowmen, more often motivated by the desire to get rid of the problem from before our eyes than to make sure that some real good comes to the recipient! We have not developed the social motivation to pursue the problem to the end. The beggar has come before me, I throw some coins to him, he may or may not be satisfied, but I am satisfied that he is gone and that I have done a good turn. But if I was motivated by a genuine human concern, if I had reacted to the problem not as an individual but as a citizen, my pattern of behaviour would be different. I would pursue the problem and marshall the social forces effectively so as to solve it and prevent it from raising its head again. We are essentially a charitable people; we have a fund of goodness in our hearts; but these values function in a static way. There is need to make these national traits dynamic, by infusing into them a social urge and an abiding human concern.

The example of the western nations and the example of a country like Japan can be sources of inspiration to us in this vital field. For, that social urge and abiding human concern are the characteristics of the people of these countries. They do not believe that it is just the duty of the government to take care of the lowly and the afflicted. They do not rest content by passing it on as someone else's duty. They are taught to view it as *their* duty, their duty as citizens to their own suffering fellow citizens. They think that as citizens they have a responsibility to them and they render it cheerfully and willingly according to their capacities.

When such an attitude is widely diffused in a people, even the state becomes more socially responsive, as its employees also have the citizenship consciousness infused in them by their national educational system. It is the characteristic of all free nations that its citizens serve the cause of their unfortunate fellow citizens cheerfully and willingly whether as government servants, social workers in the field, or as private citizens extending sympathy and financial support according to means. If one

cannot actively work in the field, he or she extends all sympathy to the cause and helps it with whatever money he or she can spare. This is the fruit of an efficient system of national education, in which the youth of the nation is inspired with a sense of national responsibility, with a sense of *involvement* in the manifold problems of the nation. *It is this kind of interpenetration of social feeling in the outlook and activities of our people that we need to bring about, so that we may develop the requisite character-energy to eradicate our manifold social problems and bring health and cheer to our ancient society.*

Changing People's Attitude to Leprosy: A Scientific Approach

We have an army of doctors working in the field of general medical relief; the members of this army should take upon themselves the national work of educating the people in scientific and humane attitudes towards leprosy and its victims. I am glad to learn from the speech of Dr. S. Roy Chowdhury on behalf of the Indian Medical Association a while ago that the Association is willing to undertake this. If its members undertake this responsibility, it will go a long way in the eradication of this kind of disease, not so much by actual medical treatment, but by changing the attitude of the people who come to them. Medical science tells us today that leprosy is curable if treated in its early stages. But patients suppress the disease for fear of social opprobrium and do not come to receive treatment till the disease reaches an advanced stage when it is difficult to cure. It is here that changing the people's unscientific attitude to the disease becomes a powerful factor in its eradication. People have to be taught to look upon leprosy like any other disease of the body; they must be told the truth that all leprosy cases are not contagious; they have to be educated at what stages they are contagious and at what stages they are not.

If the patient knows that he will not be looked down upon as a leper by society, he will be inclined to resort to treatment in the early stage itself. The concept of leprosy as a mere disease like other ailments of the human system, that it carries no special stigma, and that it can be cured—this scientific attitude to leprosy needs to be spread widely among our people through every channel of social communication. This scientific view is also the human view of the problem, and it is here that the medical profession can really help in removing the prejudices and false notions of the people with respect to this particular malady and immensely help in its early eradication from our motherland.

Tackling Ignorance, Prejudice, and Fear

On the subject of every disease, our society had harboured many false notions due to our widespread ignorance and superstition. Saying

good-bye to our earlier scientific attitudes, we had cultivated the magical attitudes to diseases and ailments of the body and mind. From ignorance was born superstition; and from both arose fear and prejudice, which eventually became the source of harshness and inhumanity towards people suffering from diseases like leprosy, tuberculosis, and insanity. Knowledge destroys fear and prejudice; it helps one to retain one's sense of human concern for victims of disease, physical or mental, and even for victims of criminal or sinful tendencies. This is the fruit of the scientific attitude which our nation is slowly learning to acquire; and we have to intensify the process in every sphere of our national life. That we are gaining in this battle for sanity and humanism is seen in the change in our attitude to tuberculosis. Till a few years ago, it also carried a social stigma and was the focus of fear and prejudice. Reference has already been made by the previous speakers to the sanity we have recently gained in our attitude to this disease. I remember an incident in this connexion. The Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, was conducting a T.B. clinic in Daryaganj; when it was started in 1933, it was the first of its kind in the capital. When, a few years later, we shifted it to its own spacious and well-equipped premises in Karolbag, with a Home Treatment section also attached to it, several neighbours became frightened and upset. Protest petitions began to reach Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the then Union Health Minister, demanding the removal of the Mission's T.B. clinic from the locality which, the petitioners represented, was a congested area and hence liable to be adversely affected by the presence of the clinic in their midst.

She used to send such petitions to me for suitable reply informing me at the same time that the government's policy was to run a few such clinics in populated areas for the convenience of the people themselves. I sent suitable replies in all such cases conveying the modern attitude to that disease and its treatment. The opposition died down in course of time; and today I am sure that, with respect to T.B., people will clamour for a clinic to be established in their respective areas. A little more sane and humane attitude has been achieved with respect to that disease. Hence we are winning in our battle for its eradication.

In this way, all aspects of human suffering, which we had previously approached from the point of view of magic and fear, can be successfully tackled by spreading a scientific and humane outlook among our people. This education of our vast population is the responsibility and privilege of every educated citizen and not only of the Government of India or of the Government of West Bengal or of other states. And the medical profession has a special responsibility in this matter. For it is in closest touch with suffering humanity. Its members must

shoulder their full responsibility as citizens of free India and function effectively not only in the curative field but also in the preventive field of national health and well-being.

Motivation for Work

The greatest motivation for work today in the social field is this urge to ensure the dignity, happiness, and welfare of millions of one's fellowmen who have been neglected by our society for centuries. This kind of going *out of oneself* to sympathise with and serve another is the mark of the ethical attitude; it is the chief characteristic of the citizen, who is defined as a free and responsible personality in a free society. It is training in this sense of inward freedom and responsibility that imparts energy and character-efficiency to man and makes him capable of facing and solving his problems, personal and social. This is what Vivekananda called *manliness;* and he wanted our nation to go in for a 'man-making education' and a 'man-making religion'. That education is still far away for most of our people. Hence our nation today presents a picture of problems overwhelming man and not man overcoming his problems. This has to be reversed. *Build up the man,* exhorts Vivekananda. Let him gain faith in himself; out of this will come strength and fearlessness, social feeling and national efficiency. *It will destroy the disease of fatalism and resignation to evil, which is a disease more deadly than T.B. or leprosy.* It will ignite the *promethean* spark in our youths and make them capable of manfully facing the challenge of problems. Every boy or girl so educated will consider every social problem a challenge to his or her manhood or womanhood. *This concept of man, who is made in the heroic mould, and who manfully faces all problems, overcomes them, and creates a pattern of excellence around himself or herself, should inspire our youth today.* It is thus that we can fulfil the demands of citizenship of our sovereign democratic republic.

Man's Being Flowing into his Function

Let me repeat, we are essentially citizens of free India. That is the primary inalienable personality of every one of us. Unfortunately, most of us have not grasped the significance of this basic value; that explains our littleness in spite of our nation becoming free. When we speak of a doctor, for example, we think of one engaged in the medical profession. That is how most doctors also think of themselves. So is the case with most of our engineers or lawyers or administrators or other functionaries of society. They identify themselves almost entirely with their profession. This is what makes for the dwarfing of the personality. On the other hand, if a doctor considers himself primarily as

a citizen of India and secondarily as a doctor, what increase in stature he attains! He is essentially a free and responsible citizen performing the useful social function of a doctor. *This immediately makes him greater than his function and converts his function into a socially useful service.* His enriched being flows into his social function, to enrich it and elevate it. The same applies to the nurse, the engineer, the administrator, the sweeper, the industrialist, the factory worker, the prime minister, or even the simple housewife. Through this awareness, man is restored to his true dignity, to his true spiritual stature; and the work he does becomes an outflow of his inner sense of enrichment; it becomes not mere work or profession, but *service,* elevating both the one who serves and the society which is served. Work done in a spirit of service creates a bond of equality and fellowship between man and man in a society.

This is basic fundamental education on which alone we can raise the structure of any professional education. Men and women in other countries are imbued with this basic citizenship awareness which explains the high quality, in human terms, apart from the merely technical, of their professional services to society. The sooner we learn to take pride in being free and responsible men and women before calling ourselves doctors or lawyers or other social functionaries, the better for us and for our nation. *The latter way is like pouring water on the twigs and leaves, while the former way is like pouring water at the roots by which alone is the whole tree watered, the whole personality nourished.*

The Challenge before Us

It is not money that matters, but man. This is the message of all heroic ages of history. *Our people must get that heroic touch today.* Everyday we discuss the problems of our nation; but when looked at closely, they all boil down to one single problem, namely, the problem of man, the problem arising from man devaluing himself, losing faith in himself. We devalued man long before we devalued our rupee. In a letter from U.S.A., Swami Vivekananda said over seventy years ago:

> 'None lives, my boy, except he who lives for others; the rest are more dead than alive.'

Such spiritually dead people are plenty in our country. They are not concerned with what happens to other people. This has been responsible for most of our social ailments and evils in India. *Until we learn to fear spiritual death more than physical death, there is no hope*

for us. And so, in another letter, Swami Vivekananda wrote (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, Eighth Edition, p. 58):

'Him I call a *mahātman* whose heart bleeds for the poor; otherwise he is a *durātman.*'

He wrote it long before Mahatma Gandhi became known as the *mahātmā.* But that cap fitted this great man so well, for he was one whose heart really bled for the poor, for the suffering, including patients suffering from leprosy. It is therefore most appropriate that the day of Gandhiji's death anniversary, namely, 30 January, is chosen to be the day to remind the people of India of their responsibility to their fellow-citizens suffering from leprosy. Our state of West Bengal is one of the regions where leprosy is a serious social challenge. We have to shoulder the responsibility to eradicate the disease from the whole state; this can be done and this *must be done.* This determination makes the modern outlook which is also the mark of our own ancient spiritual outlook, which verse forty-one of the second chapter of the *Gītā* characterises as the *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi.* They both seek to make man greater than his problems. We must work with the heroic dictum: I shall either find a way or *make* one. I am sure that if workers in the field of leprosy-control develop this manly attitude and work under the guidance of this manly philosophy, they will do much more than what they do today. *But that demands that they treat it not as a profession but as a mission.* If the young and the old from the West come to serve our country in various fields with a sense of mission, how much more we, the citizens of India, should develop this spirit and attitude of a missionary in ourselves? If today we invite people from the West to come and help in the eradication of leprosy from our state of West Bengal, I am sure that hundreds of men and women will come and work devotedly in the field and achieve their objective, because they are imbued with this missionary spirit arising from their deep human concern. Why not then our people, our educated citizens, come forward in hundreds to serve the cause of their own nation with a sense of dedicated efficiency? *Once this philosophy grips us, we shall find a creative channel for the free flow of our surplus resources in intelligence, time, money, and energy for the all-round growth and development of our people.*

The Role of Voluntary Agencies

The citizen should stop considering all such activities as the responsibility of the state only. The state has its responsibility. But the citizen has his as well. And in a democracy it is the citizen that sets the pace for the functioning of even the state. It is the efficiency and

dedication of the average citizen that shapes the pattern of the state and its functioning. We need batches and batches of such sensitive workers in all fields of our national life today. If other fields need this spirit of dedication tenfold, the field of leprosy-control needs it hundredfold, because this problem is more complicated and intractable and the workers need to be sustained and fortified by a greater spiritual dedication and human concern. With such a mood and resolve alone shall we succeed in setting fire to this mountain of national misery and shame which is 'leprosy', within the next few years. We are strengthened in this resolve by our achievements in other similar fields. We have eradicated malaria which was such a scourge not many years ago; we have already got a firm grip on the problem of T.B., the eradication of which is only a question of time. In the list of our national resolve, the next target is leprosy.

I was a member of the panel for Social Welfare for the Fourth Five-Year Plan which discussed the programme of leprosy-control and the removal of beggary during the next five years. The most important problem that cropped up was the creation of channels through which allotted funds could be made to flow to produce tangible and quick results. And it was the unanimous opinion of the panel that voluntary organisations, which command a greater sense of dedication and social motivation than official agencies, were the best agencies for this kind of work. The government should come in only to help them with finance and in other ways. There is plenty of scope for beneficent work by voluntary agencies in our country. What Jesus said, looking around him, applies so aptly to our nation today: 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.'

Conclusion

I hope that our state of West Bengal, which had blazed the trail for India's march to freedom and nationhood, will now show the way to the rest of India to solve the national problems arising from disease, malnutrition, and poverty, all of which find their confluence in the problem posed by leprosy.

INDIA TO LEARN TO GO THE HARD WAY

SINCE the attainment of political Independence in 1947, a new India has come into being, bubbling with new energies and aspirations and engaged in diverse activities in search of their realization.

Modern India: Three Great Achievements

Behind it lies a century of effort and struggle of the modern national renaissance. The first achievement of new India was the framing of a Constitution for itself giving voice and form to its vision of human dignity and equality, and the establishment of a sovereign democratic republican state as the instrument of the national will to translate that vision into reality in the life of a sixth of the human race.

The second achievement is the initiation of a many-sided economic and social development programme through its successive Five Year Plans.

A third achievement is the successful holding of four general elections involving, in the fourth, over 210 million voters, *and giving the Indian people a political education which they did not have during the five thousand years of their history.*

Needed: A Fourth Achievement

Through all these processes, including the slow but steady spread of a common system of education throughout the nation, *new India is evolving into a full-fledged nationality, irrespective of caste, creed, and sex, for the first time in its long history.* This evolution needs for its completion a fourth achievement on the part of its democratic national forces, namely, the adoption of a common national civil code through

democratic consent. The nation has to bend its energies to get this done as soon as possible.

The Uniqueness of Our Social Tensions

These achievements are impressive in themselves. In them we see the stimulus of the new-won freedom helping to compress a century of history into two or three decades. But they are inadequate, when viewed against the background of the long suppressed urges of the people longing for fulfilment. This explains the political and social tensions and turmoils of our nation today. *These are not the signs of national decay but of national health and vigour.* They are, in fact, the challenges of freedom; *freedom has no meaning unless it involves freedom to learn and to experiment, and freedom even to commit blunders in the process.*

We cannot make some other nation's wisdom our own; we have to acquire wisdom ourselves through our own experiences, through our own successes and failures. *All the contemporary developed nations have not started with wisdom but have blundered into whatever wisdom they now possess through the hard way.* Viewed in the perspective of history a hundred years ahead, our post-Independence years up-to-date will appear as the dynamic seedtime of bumper national harvests ahead.

Vivekananda and Our Social Tensions

Some of us may be disturbed by the tumult and tension in our country today and feel even anxious for its future. *Such anxieties can be digested if we can learn to view our national scene through the eyes of far-seeing leaders such as Swami Vivekananda.*

When Swami Vivekananda was returning to India in 1897, to be received as a conquering hero by the people after his four years of successful cultural and spiritual work in the western world, a western fellow-passenger and friend on the ship told him that his country, India, was a highly moral country. He asked her what made her think so. She replied that there was so little crime in India, whereas in England and America there was so much crime. Any patriot will be proud to receive such a tribute to his country from a foreigner; but not Swami Vivekananda. He heaved a little in deep feeling and said, to the amazement of the friend: *I wish it were otherwise with my country. There is no energy in my people even to commit a crime.*

He saw India sunk in the inertia of *tamas:* he wanted his people to shake off their centuries-long *tamas* and develop the energy of *rajas,*

and then raise it to the highest level, the level of *sattwa*. The energy of *rajas* is the energy of awakened humanity; it is the energy behind all social transformation; but, for this, it needs chastening by *sattwa*. Under the touch of *sattwa*, it becomes capable of grasping the nation's problems of poverty, social injustice, and general inefficiency, and taking energetic steps to tackle the same. Without the touch of *sattwa*, *rajasic* energy becomes self-centred and exploitative, unethical and self-cancelling. *Sattwa* channels it into social purposes, raising it in quantity and quality in the process, and divesting it of all fuss and noise. It then becomes the calm, silent, creative energy of man-making and nation-building.

If Swami Vivekananda were to come today to present-day India, he would be happy to witness the enormous energies manifested by his people. He would say to our people: Yes, you are no more under *tamas;* you have woken up from your centuries-long sleep. You have learnt even to commit crimes, you can burn buses and trains and even kill each other. You have captured the energy of *rajas; you have thus taken the first step in man-making and nation-building; but only the first step. You are now to take the second step, namely giving a constructive and creative direction to your energies by channelling them into socially useful goals and purposes. That is man-making education and man-making religion in one.*

Vivekananda and The Spiritual Growth of Man

Herein is found the reaching out of the more palpable physical and intellectual growth of man into an impalpable, yet most significant, dimension of human growth, namely, his spiritual growth. Ancient *Vedanta* and modern biology recognize this as the special line of human evolutionary advance. *The whole nation must educate itself at least in this step, even if most people may be unable to proceed to the further steps of spiritual growth available to every human being.* And Swami Vivekananda would congratulate those patriots and national workers who have educated themselves in this second step and have been in the vanguard of national development. He would tell them to have faith in themselves and inspire it in others. He would re-emphasise the motto he had given: 'Be and make.' Be men yourselves and help others to be men. *In the light of this, the whole of India will become an institution for human growth and fulfilment.* And he would whisper into the ears of one and all in the nation his favourite clarion call: *Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.*

MODERN INDIA AND THE PIONEERING SPIRIT

THIS is my second visit to these Andaman Islands. Last time, I came here in January 1962. I have been fascinated by these Islands ever since I came here in 1962.

The Andamans: Their Uniqueness

This fascination is not only because these Islands are very beatiful, with beautiful landscapes, fine creeks, fine blue seas, and thick jungles, but also because here is an experiment being conducted in clearing jungles, in making new settlements of men and women drawn from the mainland, creating new townships, smiling fields, factories, and households. *Here I see the pioneering spirit, where man's indomitable spirit tries to create a pattern of excellence for himself.* It is because of this that, when I come here, I feel highly stimulated. Perhaps even in the mainland India, thanks to the bubbling energies released by our Independence, there is a spirit of adventure in the air. But that spirit is much more here, because here it is not inhibited by our past traditions of stagnation for centuries; and so here we see the spirit of new India. full of energy, full of vitality.

The Expansive Mind and Mood of Modern India

This is the spirit of the pioneer; and I wish to refer to this particular aspect of the Andamans situation, because it expresses the real spirit of new India. For the last hundred years, India has been experiencing a great mood of expansion. India's expansion is always ideological—cultural, commercial, and spiritual, but it is never aggressive. It never goes out of itself to destroy other people's happiness. And so

this spirit of expansion which we in India are experiencing during the last hundred years is the result of a great renaissance that started sweeping over the country along with its contact with western culture in the last century. Towards the end of that century came the great leader of this renaissance, Swami Vivekananda, who can be considered to be one of the greatest architects of the mind and face of new India. In him India found the spirit of the pioneer, with tremendous courage and adventure, with intense practicality and universal vision. He roused India from the sleep of ages. His first speech after landing on the soil of India in 1897 from his triumphant tour of America and Europe—the very first lecture—contains the spirit of expansion in the mood of new India. Says Swamiji in that lecture in the opening paragraph (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 145-46):

"The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking...India, this motherland of ours....from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.'

This is a powerful sentiment which lies at the back of the expansive mind and mood of modern India, and Swami Vivekananda is the symbol of that expansive India whose energies, long contained within the borders of the country, long unable to cope even with its own problems, today have become released; and they work not only to create a new India, but also to create a new humanity. This spirit of the pioneer, this spirit of courage and adventure, is the spirit that is creating a new India out of the ancient India which we have inherited. It is amazing to see this bubbling energy in the India of today. A nation with a five thousand year-old history is young and vital today; and this youth and vitality is finding expression in a programme of national development, all-round and pervasive, and in a programme of projecting the mind and face of India into the international world. That projection is always on the side of peace, on the side of fellowship, on the side of international co-operation.

Vivekananda on the Primacy of Man Over Money

And so far as India's own frontiers are concerned, the work within India is the creation of a new India, healthy in its body-politic, fused with the spirit of human unity and equality, and making man take strides to solve his own problems on the economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual levels. This is the man-making process which Swami Vivekananda introduced into our country. Make men; money is nothing. 'Where are the men?' asked Swami Vivekananda. In this process, Swamiji's own life gives us the greatest example and inspira-

tion. When he was speaking of his plans for India, in his famous lectures on 'My Plan of Campaign' and 'The Future of India', delivered in Madras, in 1897, Swamiji raised this question. He set forth therein the following as his plans for the development of his country: spread of education, raising the masses, educating the women, bringing the blessings of culture to millions who have been deprived of it for centuries together, and creating a new economic base for the mental life of the people of the country; and he proceeded to say (*ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 303):

> 'This is my plan....You may ask, where is the money to come from?...Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life, I did not know where the next meal would come from; but money and everything I want must come, because they are my slaves, and not I theirs; money and everything else must come. *Must* —that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question.'

This question he asked more than sixty years ago: Where are the men? For it is men that create civilization; it is men that create culture—men who possess the spirit of adventure, the spirit of dedication. It is such men and women that India needs today; and it is such men and women that Swami Vivekananda sought to create out of the age-old people of our country.

Andamans and the Pioneering Spirit

The Andamans represents the spirit of Swami Vivekananda; and the more that spirit is spread in these islands, the more we shall see the flowering of life, of human culture, and civilization in these islands. The spirit which becomes unthwarted by obstacles and difficulties, which no sea or mountain can ever obstruct, the spirit that conquers all difficulties, that *promethean* spark which is the characteristic of all great pioneers—we need to capture that spirit in these islands. People here must realize that the creating of a new society in the jungles of these islands is not done in an easy way; the life of ease and comfort is not for the pioneer. He is like the sapper and miner in an army, creating bridges, constructing roads, so that the army can march from behind. Similarly, in these islands, this is the time, at least for one generation, when the men and women who have settled here must dedicate themselves in the spirit of true pioneers. Facing obstacles, difficulties, taking life as an adventure, never complaining, never grumbling—it is such people that can create a new society, a new culture and civilization, in these beautiful islands.

The Modern West and the Pioneering Spirit

India has long been seeking the life of ease and comfort, and that shows the weakness of the Indian mind during the last few centuries

And Swami Vivekananda warned us: 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death." We have been contracting to a point during the last few centuries; we always sought comfort, and were unwilling to face any difficulty; but that brought us almost face to face with death. Then came our contact with the dynamic western culture, where we see, for the first time, the spirit of man triumphing over ignorance. Science, that tremendous intellectual discipline which unveils the secrets of nature, which brings before man the infinite sources of its power, so that he may compose his own distractions—this is the first expression of the pioneering spirit of the modern western world. Then comes the application of science to the problems of agriculture, of industry, of health, of medicine; thus a whole new civilization, highly technological, deeply imbued with the scientific spirit, developed in the West. India came in touch with this great science, with this great technology, with this great civilization. India was awakened from its sleep of ages; and, through the great instrumentality of the modern renaissance, tried to educate herself in this new spirit. That is the new renaissance now sweeping over the country.

We have seen in European history how a few pioneers went to America from England, settled down on the eastern coast, faced so many privations, so many difficulties, but undaunted, they created a new civilization on the soil of America which is the pride of mankind today. Economically prosperous, industrially advanced, intellectually alert, what a wonderful civilization these pioneers created on the American soil! So also in Australia, and in many other places. Our own history reveals that in ancient times batches of Indians, with this pioneering spirit, with this spirit of adventure, travelled abroad in various South-East Asian countries, and helped to fertilize the lives of the peoples of those countries, creating new cultures and civilizations in the process.

Ancient India and 'Caraiveti, Caraiveti'

That is the spirit of India which we must constantly remember—the spirit of expansion, which we find in a famous statement of the *Yajur-Veda: Caraiveti, Caraiveti*—'March on, march on'. The human spirit marching to conquer the Everest of experience—*that is the spirit of the pioneer.* And I am sure that the people of the Andamans will inspire themselves with this spirit. They will then be able to overcome these little temptations arising from the desire for ease which we had for a few decades. We shall thus become truly worthy of the spirit of modern India, the spirit of progress, the spirit of adventure, the spirit of real striving to create a new pattern of excellence in the life not of a small minority, but of the 450 millions of the citizens of this

country—citizens drawn from the fields and factories, from the tribal areas, from every part of the nation.

This was the legacy of Swami Vivekananda to our nation; and this is the legacy which our country is trying to work out in the Andamans as well as in the mainland. And I hope that the people of these islands will catch this great spirit, a spirit which can really give us infinite strength and courage to face all difficulties and not to grumble at small difficulties here and there. The spirit of grumbling over difficulties is what makes us absolutely weak, and what destroys our efficiency. We shall face these difficulties, we shall face these hardships, but we shall see that a better world is left for our children to come.

Conclusion

That is the spirit of all progressive societies, and I am sure that the people of the Andamans, the new settlers, who are certainly facing certain problems of communication and getting consumer goods etc., which are being tackled day by day with greater and greater success, will overcome these things by imbuing themselves with this spirit of the pioneer. It is man that conquers obstacles; man builds cultures and civilizations; man goes abroad; man goes outside space; that is the unconquerable spirit of man; and Swami Vivekananda is the greatest teacher of this philosophy of manliness. He spoke of the religion of manliness; he spoke of education for manliness. Let this manly spirit pervade these islands—that is my prayer on this occasion, when I am taking leave of the Andamans after a happy seven-day lecture tour during this, my second visit.

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