

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA VIDYALAYA P. O.

COIMBATORE-641020, S. INDIA.

First Edition - March 1964
Second Edition - December 1971
Third Edition - August 1974

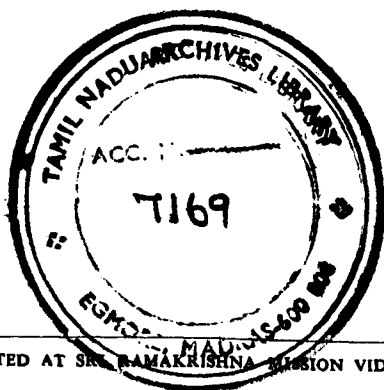
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1. ADVAITA ASHRAMA,
5, Delhi Entally Road,
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2. SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
Mylapore, Madras-4. (S. India)

N74

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PRINTED AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA PRESS.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	
1. Swami Vivekananda—The Great Teacher	... 1
2. Life of Swami Vivekananda	... 6
3. His Message	... 17
4. His Mission	... 23
5. The Aims of Education	... 28
6. Education in Ancient India	... 33
7. A Positive Approach to Education	... 41
8. The Role of the Teacher	... 47
9. The Qualities of the Disciple	... 52
10. Concentration—The Only Method of Education	... 58
11. Learning to Think	... 64
12. Education for Character	... 68
13. Cultivation of the Mind	... 75
14. Brahmacharya	... 82
15. Power of Love	... 88
16. The Influence of the Family	... 95
17. As a Man Thinketh	... 101
18. Ways of Mind Control	... 107
19. Sublimation of the Mind	... 114
20. Sublimation Through Work	... 120
21. Take Care of the Means	... 126
22. Do Your Duty	... 132

23. Sublimation Through Love	...	138
24. Development of Personality	...	143
25. Sublimation Through Control of the Mind		
	(RAJA YOGA) ...	150
26. Sublimation Through Knowledge	(JNANA YOGA) ...	158
27. Ideals of Indian Womanhood	...	170
28. Education of Women	...	178
29. Education of the Masses	...	184
30. Education for National Service	...	190
31. Education for National Integration	...	199
32. Education for International Understanding	...	210
33. Religious Education	...	217
34. Spiritual Training	...	223
35. Methods of Teaching Spiritual Values	...	229
36. Developing Spiritual Values in Elementary School Children	...	234
37. Developing Spiritual Values in Secondary Schools	...	242
38. Developing Spiritual Values in Higher Education	...	248
39. Call to Youth	...	253
40. Make Me a Man	...	261
41. In His Footsteps	...	269
Bibliography	...	275
Glossary	...	278
Index	...	289

PREFACE

Swami Vivekananda belongs to the class of prophets, who appear on our planet from time to time to deliver a much needed message to humanity. He was not a classroom teacher, but was one of the great teachers of mankind like Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and Gandhi, whose teachings contained the principles and philosophy, which are the basis of all good educational systems. This volume is a humble effort to spotlight some of these principles and tries to bring out the message of Swami Vivekananda in Education. In doing so, I have tried as far as possible to use the words of the Swami, for it is well-nigh impossible to portray his fire, enthusiasm and grandeur in any words other than his own.

He had a personality which was unequalled in his time. Those who met him in the United States said of him that he had the scholarship of the University President, the dignity of the archbishop and the guilelessness of the child. As Romain Rolland has said: "He had an olive complexion, a full face, vast forehead, strong jaw, a pair of magnificent eyes, large, dark and rather prominent, with heavy lids, whose shape recalled the classic comparison to a lotus petal. But his pre-eminent characteristic was kingliness. He was a born king and nobody ever came near him either in India or America without paying homage to his majesty. The thought of this warrior prophet of India left a deep mark upon the United States."¹

Swami Vivekananda's concept of education is as broad based as life. It is not utilitarian being not confined only to bread winning. It is not merely national, as it transcends the narrowness of geographical boundaries. He wanted the use of technology for eradicating the poverty of the masses. He wanted the development of a strong and healthy body. But both these were not ends in themselves but the means for a higher life, leading to spiritual blessedness.

In 1942 while I was put in prison in the freedom movement I compiled a book on Education from the words of Swami

1. ROMAIN ROLLAND-Life of Vivekananda & Universal Gospel. PP. 5-6.

Vivekananda. The book has been very well received and has gone into many editions and translated into many languages. It was later enlarged in 1957. When the birth-Centenary of the Swami was drawing near, we thought it will be a good way of celebrating his centenary, if we can bring out a book on His philosophy of education. This book is being thus published as the Swami Vivekananda Centenary publication of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore.

His main message was strength. He considered that weakness was the source of all sin. He wanted everybody to be strong and manly. He wanted an education, which would be man making. He wanted the development of both the intellect and the emotions. It is indeed hard to bring out this much-needed message in our educational system. This book tries to point out as to how Swami Vivekananda considered it may be done.

I am very grateful to Swami Vimalanandaji, who was kind enough to go through the manuscript and make many valuable suggestions. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, Principal, Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College, was generous in giving her time amidst her busy academic work, to go through the book in detail and make many suggestions. Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon and Swami Swahananda have also gone through the pages. Sri M. Feroze, Lecturer, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Teachers College, Coimbatore went through the manuscript and prepared the index and the glossary. I am very grateful to all these friends, who have helped to make the book good and useful.

An undertaking like this involves great study, erudition and profundity of thought. I am painfully aware that I am lacking in all these qualifications. The writing of this brochure has been a great blessing to me, as otherwise I may not have had the opportunity of going through afresh the great writings of Swami Vivekananda and give further thinking to the educational aspects of his message. I shall be amply rewarded if those who are interested in education can share these blessings through these pages.

Sri Ramakrishna
Mission Vidyalaya,
Coimbatore.
27-10-1963

15 p. is an attempt.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

We are glad we are able to bring out a second edition of this book. An exposition of Swami Vivekananda's views on education is an exposition of the Philosophy of Indian Education imbedded in its scriptures and the teachings of its saints and sages. The first edition has been well received and so a second edition is being brought out.

In this revised edition the chapter on his life has been revised and three new chapters on Education for National Integration, Education for International Understanding and Education for National Service have been added and the Index and Bibliography revised. We hope this new edition will be more useful to all students of Indian education.

We are very grateful to Prof. K. Swaminathan, Editor, Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi (Govt. of India) for his very useful suggestions and corrections and Prof. H. Visvesvaran, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Teacher's College and many other friends who have helped in this work.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission
Vidyalaya
2-1-1972

15 p. is an attempt.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—THE GREAT TEACHER

Swami Vivekananda was the brightest star in the Indian firmament at the end of the nineteenth century. The light that he emitted gave enlightenment to millions of men and women, and it will continue to guide millions more in the ages to come not only in India but throughout the world.

Swami Vivekananda possessed a wonderful personality. His fine physique, the deep peace in his eyes—the outcome of many years of intense spiritual striving—the purity of his life, his unique powers of expression and his all-embracing love which transcended the barriers of caste, creed, language, nationality and race—all these made him a rare teacher. He swayed his audience, whether it was a small class in a private house, or a vast concourse at a public meeting. While his personality towered above all others, he encouraged his disciples to be independent and not to accept anything from him unless they were convinced. He often recalled his own relationship with Sri Ramakrishna, whom he had first approached with scepticism; “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.”

The Swami was not a mere preacher. As sister Nivedita has said, one could feel that here was one who had realised in his own life all the truths about which he was talking. While



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

giving his message, he took his stand on all that was noblest and best, as may be seen from the examples and illustrations he gave. Once his audience in England was for the most part composed of fashionable young mothers. He spoke of their terror and flight, if a tiger should suddenly appear before them in the street. "But suppose," he said with a sudden change of tone, "suppose there was a baby in the path of the tiger, where would your place be then? At his mouth—any one of you—I am sure of it."

Long, continuous and rigorous sadhana—spiritual practice—was the source of the Swami's tremendous power. In order to concentrate the mind, it is first of all necessary to forget the body. It is for this purpose that asceticism is practised and austerities undertaken. Like a skilled rider touching the reins, or a great musician running his fingers over the keys, he loved to feel again and again the reponse of his body to his will and his own command over his instrument. It is not easy to realise the severity of the practices by which such a power of self-control was developed, or the number of hours spent in worship and meditation, fasting and sleepless effort. There were weeks and months when except for a bare half hour all the time was devoted to spiritual practices. "When he sits down to meditate," said one of his *guruhais* (brother disciples), "it is not ten minutes before he becomes insensitive, though his body may become black with mosquitoes".

All religions—Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or Muslim—have emphasized the need for simplicity and austerity in life. Swami Vivekananda gave a positive meaning to this teaching. He pointed out that renunciation consisted in giving up the lower life for the higher, that all worthwhile achievements had been the result of sustained and determined effort. It was through determined effort that Stephenson could invent the steam engine, medical men were able to find cures for many human ills, and scientists made the discoveries they did. The difference between their efforts and the efforts of religious men is that, while the former are directed towards limited objectives, the latter are

directed towards the achievement of the supreme goal. Above all, Swami Vivekananda preached that character, and character alone is the test of real religion. "What the world wants," he said in one of his letters, "is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning selfless love. That love will make every word tell like a thunderbolt."¹

The other source of Swami Vivekananda's power lay in his great love for his people and his country. While he did not attempt to gloss over the evils in the Indian society, condemning them in the strongest terms, he could not bear if anybody abused, cursed or slandered Indians. His condemnation was born out of supreme love. Every inch of India was holy ground—*Punya Bhumi*—to him. He looked upon his people, degraded as they were, as descendents of *rishis** and saints, who could yet get back to their ancient glory. We get an inkling of his fiery love for and dedication to his motherland in one of his addresses in Madras. He said:

"The national ship, my countrymen, my friends, my children—this national ship has been ferrying millions and millions of souls across the waters of life. For scores of shining centuries it has been plying across this water, and through its agency, millions of souls have been taken to the other shore, to blessedness. But today, perhaps through your own fault, this boat has become a little damaged, has sprung a leak, and would you therefore curse it? Is it fit that you stand up and pronounce malediction upon it, one that has done more work than any other thing in the world? If there are holes in this national ship, this society of ours, we are its children. Let us go and stop the holes. Let us gladly do it with our hearts' blood, and if we cannot, then let us die. We will make a plug of our brains and put it into the ship, but condemn it, never! Say not one harsh word against this society. I love it for its past greatness I love you all because you are the children of God, and because

¹ *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 320—21.

* This and the other words in italics are under the glossary

you are the children of our glorious forefathers. How then can I curse you! Never. All blessings be upon you! I have come to you, my children, to tell you all my plans. If you hear them I am ready to work with you. But if you will not listen to them, and even kick me out of India, I will come back and tell you that we are all sinking! I am come now to sit in your midst and, if we are to sink, let us all sink together, but never let curses rise to our lips.¹

Swami Vivekananda's love for his country did not emanate from narrow nationalism, blinding him to the greatness of other nations and what we need to learn from them. He exhorted his friends and *gurubhais* to go out of India and see other countries and cultures and learn from them to improve our own. "With all my love for India and with all my patriotism, I cannot but think that we have to learn many things from other nations. As Manu says, 'Receive good knowledge even from the low-born and even from the man of lowest birth, learn by service the road to heaven.' We therefore, must be ready to learn lessons from anyone who can teach. At the same time we must not forget that we have also to teach a great lesson to the world."²

The great lessons that India has to give to the world according to the Swami, were spirituality and religion. By religion, he did not mean the doctrine about manners, customs and social well-being, which have been built through the centuries and have lost their meaning and significance in course of time, but the essentials and underlying principles of religion. Society may change and with it the ways of social life and habits. But in the midst of these changes persist some immutable principles, which are founded upon universal laws, namely, the nature of man, the nature of the soul and the nature of God. Religion should not mean mere talking or preaching, but 'being and becoming'. As such it becomes the source of supreme strength.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* - Vol. III, p. 272.
2. *Ibid.*

In fact, Swami Vivekananda gave a new and original definition of religion when he said that he was an atheist who did not believe in himself. But this belief is not a selfish faith, it means faith in all. Faith also means love. 'Love for your self means love for all men, love for your neighbours, transcending all the artificial divisions of race, clime and nationality.'

To achieve such faith and love, he preached the need for strength, as only a strong man can love and give up his little self to work and live for others. He condemned all weakness as sin and the source of all evil thoughts and actions. He exhorted all men and women to give up weakness, in whatever form it might be. He proclaimed that strength was religion and weakness was sin. Therefore, to him education lay not in stuffing the mind with information, but in training in strength. He wanted what he called 'man-making' education, which meant not only physical strength with muscles of iron and nerves of steel, but the cultivation of gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries of the universe and accomplish its purpose, even if it meant facing untold tribulations and death.

Thus in his brief span of life he shook India and the world. It is a century since he was born, and sixty years since he shed off the mortal coil, and yet his message and words are as fresh and refreshing as the evening breeze. Silent, unperceived and yet omnipotent, his teachings have had a tremendous impact upon human thought.

In the pages that follow we shall try to set down a few facts concerning his life, his message and mission, and his philosophy of education.

II LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Naren, as Swami Vivekananda was affectionately called while young, was born on Monday, January 12, 1863 in a prominent family in Calcutta. His grandfather Durga Charan Datta renounced the world at twenty-five, after his son was born. His father Viswanatha Datta was a scholar, well versed in English and Persian, and generous to a fault. His mother Bhuvaneswari Devi was a devout woman steeped in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. It is said that Naren was born in answer to her prayers to Lord Shiva at Banaras. It was at her knees that young Naren heard the stories from the epics.

From the very early days Naren gave evidence of qualities which distinguished him later. He was always drawn to wandering sadhus and mendicants to whom he would give away everything he had. He was popular among his companions and was always their leader. He was also mischievous and naughty and his mother had no end of trouble in managing him. When he became unmanageable his mother used to put him under the tap and turn the water on and that seems always to have brought him round. He had many pets, among which were the family cow, birds and monkeys. He had a zest for sports. When he played, he played furiously without caring for any physical hurts. He was dauntless and free from superstitions. There was a gymnasium in which he and his friends learned fencing, wrestling, lathi and other sports. He was also an excellent cook.

In addition to these attainments, he was very studious and always stood first in his class. After completing school, he joined the Presidency College and later the Scottish Missionary College. His Principal said of him: "I have travelled far and wide, but I have never yet come across a lad of his talents and abilities."

Naren was deeply spiritual and used to meditate for long periods. It is said that one day, when he was meditating with one of his friends, a snake crawled towards him. The other boy was frightened and ran away but Naren, immersed in meditation, was not even aware of the approach of the reptile.

The family had a cart driver who used to tell Naren stories from the *puranas*. The stories told of saints and sages and the greatness and glory of a pure and chaste life. One day Naren heard the cart driver vehemently denouncing married life. This made a profound impression on young Naren. "If marriage is so bad what has a God to do with it?" said the surprised boy to himself. From that time he gave up his worship of Sita and Rama and took to the worship of Shiva, who is a symbol of *tapasya*.

As he read books on philosophy and his intellectual horizon expanded, he began to question orthodox beliefs. His mind wanted proofs of Divine existence. He went to Keshab Chandra Sen, the famous Brahmo Samaj leader of his time, but was not satisfied. He went to Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and asked him whether he had seen God. The Maharshi was taken aback at the directness of the question. Though he could not satisfy Naren, he appreciated the deep spiritual earnestness of the boy. One day Dr. Hastie, his principal, was taking a class on Wordsworth and found it difficult to explain the ecstasy of the poet. He said that those who wanted ocular proof of spiritual ecstasy might go and see for themselves Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. That is how Naren first heard of Sri Ramakrishna, meeting whom was to change the entire course of his life.

The historic meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda which took place in 1881 is one of the most exciting

episodes in spiritual history. He first met the Master at a friend's house in Calcutta, where he sang a few songs before him. He was then invited to visit the Master at Dakshineswar. At Dakshineswar, he saw Sri Ramakrishna in *samadhi* and experienced the blissful calm which he radiated. Naren then put him the same direct question he had asked Debendranath Tagore, "Sir, have you seen God?" Pat came the reply. "Yes, my boy, I have seen Him." Naren asked, "Can you show Him to me?" Sri Ramakrishna replied, "Yes, my boy, I can show Him to you." Thus began a relationship, which was to result in the giving of a new message in religion to the world.

While Naren was engaged in spiritual pursuits another incident happened, which was to affect him deeply. His father died suddenly. As he had been very generous in spending, he left nothing behind him for the maintenance of the family. As the eldest son in the family that responsibility devolved on Naren. Many who had protested themselves his friends in prosperity, now deserted him at the hour of need. He tried hard to get a job but failed. There were days when the family had nothing to eat. He was so exasperated that one day he went to Dakshineswar and poured out his misery to Sri Ramakrishna. The latter heard him patiently and suggested to him to pray to the Divine Mother in the Dakshineswar temple to bless him with material wealth. Naren went to the temple of the Divine Mother and meditated and came back. Sri Ramakrishna asked Naren whether he had asked for what he had wanted. Naren said that in the Divine presence he could not bring himself to ask for material favours. Sri Ramakrishna chided him and sent him again twice, but the result was the same. The thoughts of Naren were so elevated that he could not ask for earthly boons. Sri Ramakrishna was greatly pleased and blessed that his family would never lack the means for honest living.

After this, the future Swami Vivekananda gave himself up wholly to spiritual practices. Once he went to the Master and said that he craved for the highest spiritual experience: meeting God face to face and immersing himself in the Divine. Sri

Ramakrishna gave it to him one evening. As Naren was meditating, he lost all body-consciousness and his mind lost itself in the supra-conscious state, the state of *nirvikalpa samadhi*. Referring to this, Sri Ramakrishna said afterwards, "I have prayed that the Divine Mother may keep this realisation of the Absolute until, Naren has finished giving his message to the world."

One day, somewhere around 1884, Sri Ramakrishna was seated in his room at Dakshineswar, surrounded by his disciples, Naren being one of them. The conversation was on the Bhakti cult. The Master was saying that, that cult enjoined on its followers the practice of three things, namely, relish for the name of God, compassion for all living creatures and service to the devotees of the Lord. Hardly had he uttered these words when he fell into *samadhi*. After a while, when consciousness returned to him he was muttering to himself: "Compassion for creatures! Thou fool—an insignificant being on earth, who art thou to show compassion? It is not compassion for others, but service to man, recognising in him the veritable manifestation of God." Naren heard it and a new light illumined his mind. "What a wonderful message is contained in these simple words of the Master," he said, "How beautifully has the Master reconciled the ideal of *Bhakti* (Devotion) with the knowledge of *advaita* (non-dualism), I have understood from these words of wisdom that the ideal of *Vedanta* lived by the recluse outside the pale of society can be practised even from the hearth and home and applied in our daily life. Whatever may be the avocation of a man, let him understand and realise that it is God alone who has manifested Himself as the world and created beings. It is He who has become all the diverse creatures and objects of our love, and yet He is beyond all these."

Such realisation of Divinity in humanity leaves no room for egotism. By realising it, a man ceases to envy or 'pity' any other being. Service of man, knowing him to be the manifestation of God, purifies the heart; such an aspirant realises himself as part and parcel of God. Later he proclaimed this great ideal

of service, based on knowledge, which he had received as a sacred legacy from his Master.

In August 1886, the Master passed away, leaving his disciples forlorn. It was Naren who dragged them out of their depression and inspired them to return to the Baranagore Ashrama, which became the beginning of the Sri Ramakrishna math and mission. It was here they performed the Vraja Homam and formally took vows of sanyas, of celibacy and poverty, and dedicated their lives to the realisation of God. After considerable *tapas*, one by one they wanted to pursue the wandering life, according to the tradition of monks, begging their food and not staying anywhere.

During his wanderings in Alwar, the Swami had a very interesting discussion with Maharaja Mangal Singh. The Maharaja said, "I have no faith in idol worship. I cannot worship wood, earth, stone or metal, like other people." The Swami looked round and saw a picture of the Maharaja hanging on the wall. He asked for it to be given to him. Holding it in his hand, the Swami asked the Maharaja's courtiers, "Whose picture is this?" One of them answered, "It is the likeness of our Maharaja". A moment later, those present trembled with fear when they heard the Swami commanding the courtier to spit on it. They cried out in fear and bewilderment, "What! Swamiji! What are you asking us to do? This is the likeness of our Maharaja. How can we do such a thing?" "But surely," said the Swami, "the Maharaja is not present in this photograph. This is only a piece of paper. It does not contain his bones, flesh and blood; it does not speak or behave or move in any way as does the Maharaja. And yet all of you refuse to spit on it, because you see in this photo the shadow of the Maharaja's form. In spitting upon the photo, you feel that you will be insulting your master, the prince himself. Thus it is with the devotees who worship stone and metal images of gods and goddesses. It is because an image brings to their minds their *Ishta Daevata* (chosen deity), or some special form or attribute of divinity that

people worship God in an image. They do not worship the stone or the metal as such. Everyone, O Maharaja, is worshipping the one God who is the Supreme Spirit."¹

The Swami wandered throughout the length and breadth of India, mostly on foot, and saw for himself the condition of the country. For nearly fourteen years, he travelled from place to place many times, facing starvation, not knowing where he would get his next meal. Meagrely clothed, he lived in places where the thermometer registered thirty degrees below zero. In some places he received a royal welcome from Princes and in some others he was treated with scant courtesy and ridiculed. But he went on, indifferent alike to praise and blame, as he has himself sung in his song of the Sanyasin :

"Heed then no more, how body lives or goes,
Its task is done. Let Karma float it down;
Let one put garlands on, another kick
This frame, say naught.

Have thou no home. What home can hold thee, friend!
The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed, and food
What chance may bring; well cooked or ill, judge not.

Few may know the Truth. The rest will hate
And scoff at thee, great one; but pay no heed;
Go thou the free, from place to place, and help
Them out of darkness, Maya's veil."^{*}

Thus he went throughout the country, from the snowclad Amarnath in the North to the warm South, and saw the pitiable condition into which the people had sunk. In Ramnad he met the Sethupathi Raj of Ramnad, who became one of his very warm admirers. When he reached the southern-most extremity of India, Cape Comorin, he worshipped at the Mother's temple and retired

¹ *A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda*, pp. 34-35.

^{*} *Song of the Sanyasin: Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. IV. pp. 329-330.

to a rock which was separate from the mainland, farther south of the Cape. The ocean tossed and stormed on all sides; but in his mind there was even a greater tempest. Sitting on the last rock of India, her whole history came before his mind's eye. He meditated on the glorious past of the country, the time when she produced the noblest and the greatest thoughts which the human mind could conceive, namely the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the *Thirukkural*, when wise men from all over the world came to India to learn the highest truths; the later days when India degenerated and lost her freedom, the Mohammedan invasions, the desecration and destruction of temples, the more recent foreign domination by the West, and the present deplorable position of the people. Tears flowed from his eyes. When he thought how the children of the rishis had become next door neighbours to beasts, his heart wept. Agony wrung his soul when he saw how the very persons who should have been their guardians and teachers were ill-treating the down-trodden millions and how the autocracy of priesthood, the despotism of caste, and the resulting division in society had caused the downfall of India. Out of this great feeling for the masses, his heart went out in prayer to the great Mother of the universe for the regeneration of our country and humanity. This was a turning point in the history of Indian culture and society. To commemorate this historic event a beautiful temple has been built on the very rock on which he meditated.

From that moment, he dedicated his life to the service of the country and the people, particularly to those who were poor and down-trodden. To him religion was no longer a matter of personal realisation of God, but the realisation of God in all living beings through service to them. Worship was no mere rites and ceremonial offerings in the temples, but service of mankind and alleviation of human suffering.

It was during these wanderings that he heard about the Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago in 1893. His friends and admirers, pressed him to go to America to participate in it. But he hesitated; for he wanted to know the Divine will.

Twice his admirers and students in Madras collected funds for the purpose and twice he had them distributed among the poor. He prayed to the Master for guidance. One night as he lay in his bed half asleep, the command came to him. The Swami saw the figure of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, walking into the waters of the sea beckoning him to follow. He construed it as the command of the Master to go to the Parliament of Religions and, after getting the blessings of the Holy Mother, prepared to leave India.

When he arrived in the United States of America, he was told that every delegate to the Parliament of Religions had to produce certificates from authorised bodies that he was an accredited representative of his religion. But he had no certificate from anybody and it looked as if he would not be allowed to attend the meeting and his coming to America was in vain. Then, while travelling he met Prof. Wright in a train and they started talking. Noticing Swami Vivekananda's sparkling intelligence and spiritual fervour, the professor remarked, "To demand a certificate from you is like asking the sun for its title to shine." He then gave a letter of introduction to the Chairman of the Parliament of Religions.

Then the Swami heard that the meeting of the Parliament of Religions had been postponed. In the meantime his money was exhausted. He did not know what to do. Then by chance he became acquainted with some people—these were later to become his ardent disciples who, attracted by his purity and spiritual demeanour invited him to their home. At last the meeting of the Parliament of Religions was drawing near and he left for Chicago where it was to be held. It was dark when he reached Chicago and he did not know the way. In bitter cold, he slept on a hay-stack that night. When he got up in the morning he did not know where to go. Then a most surprising thing happened. The door of the house opposite opened and a lady by name Mrs. Hale came out and asked whether he had come to attend the Parliament of Religions. On his saying yes, she took him into the house and accommodated him.

Sri Ramakrishna had said that once Naren became aware of who he was, he would not remain long in this world. Someone humorously asked whether he knew who he was, and he replied "Yes I know." A few days before his samadhi he had invited a few of his disciples. To one of these, Sister Nivedita, he insisted on serving the meal himself. Sister Nivedita protested, "Swami, it is I who should be serving you." Swami Vivekananda answered, "Did not Jesus wash the feet of his disciples?"

On the day of the mahasamadhi itself, his actions were deliberate and significant. He went into the Shrine and meditated for full three hours. After the meditation, while walking about in the courtyard, he was heard muttering to himself "Many more Vivekanandas will come." He then held his last class for the Brahmacharis. To Swami Premananda, one of his brother disciples, he explained his plans, as though he was giving his last instructions. A few days earlier he had pointed out the place where he wanted his body to be cremated. At the place there now stands a temple built in his memory. As the evening came, his mind became more and more withdrawn. After meditating and praying for about an hour, he lay down in bed. Then came two deep breaths—that was all. The Swamiji had given up his body, as it were, by an act of will and entered into mahasamadhi.

Swami Vivekananda is no more with us in body, but his spirit and his message continue to inspire us. That message is as much for the World as for India and will continue to inspire millions of people for ages to come.

That message, if it can be put in a few words, is: Renounce the lower pleasures; Realise your Divine nature and dedicate yourself to the service of God in the form of the poor and the downtrodden. Awake, Arise and Stop not till the goal is reached!

III HIS MESSAGE

Swami Vivekananda had a message for India and the world. His message to India was meant to introduce life into her people, to give vigour to their national life, to shake them out of their age-long lethargy and to make them conscious of their great destiny of their land. He was not superficial in the diagnosis of her ills, but went into the causes which were eating into her vitals and which led to her downfall.

He found that the main cause of India's fall was the neglect of the masses. Owing to a thousand years of tyranny of kings, priests and the higher castes, the people had become very weak. First of all was the physical weakness, which the Swami considered was the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. The first message, therefore, which Swami Vivekananda gave was to give up this terrible, soul-killing weakness. "Religion will come afterwards," he said. "Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the *Gita*. These are bold words, but I have to say them, for I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have gained a little experience. You will understand the *Gita* better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the *Upanishads* better and the glory of the *Atman* when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men."

1. T. S. Avinashilingam and K. Swaminathan, (1958): *World Teachers on Education*, Coimbatore, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya. p. 137.

The great success that attended Swami Vivekananda in the Parliament of Religions is well known. It is part of history and need not be recapitulated here. The Parliament consisted of the most distinguished men representing all the great religions of the World. Most of them were celebrities, while he was not known at all. Even the previous night he had to sleep on a hay-stack. At last, when he was asked to speak, his face glowed with fire. Uttering silent prayer to Goddess Saraswati, he began his address with the words, "Sisters and Brothers of America". The effect was electric. The whole assembly was caught up by a wave of enthusiasm. Everyone was cheering. In a few words, he gave his great message of the Harmony of Religions. From that day he became the favourite speaker in the Parliament of Religions. The newspapers paid him glorious tributes. Thousands waited for hours to hear him speak. He was invited by the highest in the land and treated royally.

But in that hour of glory, when any other person might have been elated by success, the Swami felt very diffident. That night he could not sleep. His mind and thoughts were with the poor and the hunger-stricken millions of India. The pillow became wet with his tears. At length, 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? When millions in India die for want of a handful of rice, here they spend millions! Who will raise the masses of India? Who will give them bread? O Mother! Show me the way to help them!" This feeling further strengthened his resolve to serve his countrymen.

When, after his great success in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and his triumphal march from one city to another in the United States of America, he returned to India he received an ovation and welcome of which even emperors would be proud. He became the symbol of the glory that was India's spirituality. In Madras the enthusiasm was so great that particularly, the students unharnessed the horse of his carriage and pulled it

themselves. In Calcutta, his home town, he was given a hero's welcome. Millions of people throughout the country heard him and worshipped him. The speeches he gave during those days, published under the title *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* are a glorious piece of literature. Such was the charm and force of these lectures that Romain Rolland, the great French savant, on reading them thirty years later was moved to write: "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."¹

His bold spiritual message inspired millions of people and attracted many disciples in the East and West. Some of the most important western disciples were Sister Nivedita from England, who dedicated her whole life for the service of the poor and down-trodden in India and Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, who were largely responsible for the founding of the monastery at Mayavati in the Himalayas. Sister Nivedita will be long remembered for her services during the outbreak of plague in Calcutta, where the grateful people have constructed a school for girls in her name.

The Swami established a *math* in Belur near Calcutta to train young men in the great ideals of renunciation and dedicated service. This became the centre of all his activities and later the headquarters of the mighty organisation now known as the Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Under the strain of incessant work Swami Vivekananda became weak. His last two months were full of indications that his sojourn on the earth was about to end. The Swami himself had said that he would not live to complete forty years of his life.

¹ *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 162.

He knew that no improvement was possible on an empty stomach, and that India was faced with the problem of starvation. No results may be expected from lecturing to people who are poor and hungry. He said that the first step in raising India, even spiritually, was to destroy her abject poverty. He did not believe in a religion which could not give bread in this life, but promised eternal bliss in heaven. If India was to be raised, the poor should have food; education must be spread and the tyranny of priest-craft removed. Therefore, he wanted first of all to remove the evils of poverty and hunger. Otherwise, he said, lectures and classes, however good, would be of no benefit.

His great message was one of strength and faith. He proclaimed: "Infinite strength is religion. Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. All sins and all evil can be summed up in that one word: Weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil-doing. It is weakness that is the source of all selfishness. It is weakness that makes men injure others. Tell the truth boldly. All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls. 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. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating. Go back to your *Upanishads*, the shining, strengthening, bright philosophy. Take up this philosophy. The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the *Upanishads* are before you. Take them up, live up to them and the salvation of India will be at hand."¹

"What we want is *shraddha* (faith in oneself). 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 *shraddha* and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is the *Shraddha*.

1. T. S. Avinashilingam and K. Swaminathan, *op cit.*, pp. 136—37.

My Master used to say, he who thinks himself weak will become weak, and that is true. This *shraddha* must enter into you. Whatever material power you see manifested in the western races is the out-come of this *Shraddha* because they believe in their muscles. If you believe in your spirit, how much more will it work: Believe in that Infinite Soul, the Infinite Power, which your books and sages preach. That *Atman* which nothing can destroy, in its Infinite Power is only waiting to be called out. It has only to come out and manifest itself. Therefore, this *shraddha* is what I want, and what all of us here want, this faith in ourselves. 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 *shraddha*, and everything else is bound to follow."¹

He spoke of the urgent need for India to assimilate the spirit of modern science, develop technical efficiency and practical skills and through these build up a healthy and progressive body-politic. Education, according to him should be a blend of *Vedanta* and modern science. Spirituality, he said, must continue to remain the central theme of Indian life. He found no conflict between material well-being and spiritual welfare, both of which he united into a comprehensive spiritual life. He expounded the scope and content of this spirituality, welding *Vedanta* with modern science in the following well known testament of faith: "Each soul is potentially divine, having within it all power and perfection."

Born out of this principle of divinity in every individual was his great message of work as worship. At a time when men avoided society and work in their search for God, and sought the solitude of the caves and the forests, the Swami's message came with significant originality. He said. "Where are you going to seek God? Is not God present in the living beings around you? God has come in the shape of the poor and the miserable, the sick

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* — Vol. VIII, pp 319-20.

and the lowly, the suffering and the downtrodden. Serve them sincerely and with humility. Work for them, and that will be the real worship of God."

His message in the field of education was unique in that it was based on the divinity of the human soul. He believed that all souls are potentially divine and that education should be the manifestation of the divinity already in man. The duty of the teacher is to help in the manifestation of this divinity by positive help, encouragement, and his own example. He said: "The light divine is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron; no gleam of light can shine through it; gradually by purity and unselfishness we can make the obscuring medium less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent as glass."

He found also that religion had degenerated into mere ceremonial and meaningless ritual. Memorising of scriptures, wearing of caste marks, and observance of obsolete social taboos has come to be taken as religion. Mere argumentation without understanding, empty talk without the will to practice, and quoting scriptures without acting on them in daily life had become the way. Thus, while people talked about spirituality, superstitions, fears and selfishness ruled. Swami Vivekananda boldly declared that all these were not religion. He said that religion was not frothy talk, but progress, development and realisation. He thus gave a new and revolutionary meaning to religion. He said that he who did not believe in himself was an atheist. He declared from the housetops that all our age-old superstitions which had weakened and degraded us, all the social customs and caste restrictions that had made us narrow-minded and weak, by whatever names called, should be given up. Real religion should be purifying, invigorating and strength-giving.

While his share in the regeneration of our motherland has been great, while his contribution towards laying the foundations for a free and great India has been truly immense, it should not be forgotten that he also gave another great and

abiding message to the world. It was a spiritual message delivered to a world which was deeply in need of it; namely, the message of the harmony of all religions.

The Swami recognised that all the different religions in the world fulfilled the need of humanity. Religions were different according to the conditions of their votaries, their way of life, past history and tradition. But today when distance has been annihilated, when barriers between nations are vanishing and countries are daily coming closer to each other, the external forms of religion which tend to divide, have to give place to its fundamentals which tend to unite. Pleading for the acceptance of all religions, he said:

"You know that there are various grades of minds. You may be a matter-of-fact, common-sense rationalist; you do not care for forms and ceremonies, you want intellectual, hard-ringing facts, and they alone will satisfy you. Then there are the Puritans, the Mohammedans, who will not allow a picture or a statue in their place of worship. There is another man who is more artistic. He wants a great deal of art, beauty of lines and curves, the colours, flowers, forms; he wants candles, lights, and all the insignia and paraphernalia of ritual, that he may see God. His mind takes God in those forms, as yours takes Him through the intellect. Then there is the devotional man, whose soul is crying for God. He has no other idea but to worship God, and to praise Him. Then again, there is the philosopher, standing outside all these, mocking at them. He thinks, 'What nonsense they are! What ideas about God!'

"They may laugh at each other, but each one has a place in this world. All these various minds, all these various types are necessary. If ever there is going to be an ideal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's heart to the worshipper; to the ritualist, it will give all that the most marvellous symbolism

can convey; to the poet, it will give as much of heart as he can take in the other things besides. To make such a broad religion, we shall have to go back to the time when religions began and take them all in.”¹

In a world where wars have been fought in the name of religion, where the greatest cruelties such as that of the inquisition have been perpetrated in the name of religion, where nations have been the victims of internecine feuds, the Swami's message of harmony of religions came as a balm to soothe the hearts of men. It is in consonance with the progress of the scientific spirit which takes the basic motives, urges and ambitions of humanity as being the same all over the world. It has also laid the foundation for the respect of all religions which is the need of the twentieth century.

IV HIS MISSION

The Swami was keenly aware of the tremendous amount of work that had to be done in India and abroad. India had to be resuscitated and rebuilt. A new, strong, virile, independent India, taking its stand on love, unselfishness and service had to rise on the ashes of its immediate past of slavery and poverty. While material wealth was necessary, he regarded the human element as far more important. This is clear from the letter he wrote to his Madras friends from Yokohama, Japan while on his way to America as early as July, 1893. “India” he wrote wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men. How many men, unselfish, thorough-going men is Madras now ready 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, and enlightenment to the people at large.” After reaching the United States, he wrote again in the same strain: “A hundred thousand men and women, fortified with the eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, the fallen and the downtrodden, who 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 and the gospel of equality are necessary.”¹

In his whirlwind tour through the country after his return from America he expatiated upon the same theme.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. II. p. 371

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. V. pp. 8 & 12.

His experience had made his visions clearer. He saw with the eyes of a prophet that what India needed was not dogma and doctrines but men. On April 6, 1897 he wrote; "We have brains but no hands. We have the doctrine of *Vedanta*, but we have not the power to reduce it into practice. In our books, there is the great doctrine of universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish work of the most exalted type was preached, but in practice, we are awfully cruel and heartless and unable to think of anything else besides our own mass-of-flesh bodies. India will awake again only if anyone could love with all his heart the people of the country, bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, downtrodden, overstarved quarrelsome and envious. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of their countrymen."¹

The great mission that he set before himself was to train such men, men of purity, strength and sacrifice. They were to be trained to lead a life of dedication and service. That was the origin of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Shortly after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, a monastic order was organised by his *Sanyasin* disciples led by Swami Vivekananda. Its objective was to train monks for the teaching of the universal, non-sectarian principles of religion exemplified in the Master's life and to carry on missionary and philanthropic work with the assistance of lay disciples, looking upon all as the manifestation of the divine, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. Begun in 1897 as the Ramakrishna Mission Association, it was registered in 1909 as the Ramakrishna Mission under act XXI of 1860. The early history of the original founders in Baranagore and Alam Bazaar *maths* is an inspiring one. For many days they did not have anything to eat and had only

tattered clothes to wear. There was only one presentable piece of cloth which was the common property and which was hung up on a string so that whosoever had to go out could wear it. A mat on the floor was their only bed even in the bitterest cold.

Immersed in the thought of God, they did not care what befell them physically. Their austerity was of the highest type and a joyous and creative one. They lived many weeks and months without knowing from where their next meal would come. Only their devotion to the Master and their love for their leader and brother-disciples kept them together.

After the return of Swami Vivekananda from America, events took a brighter turn. The recognition accorded to him in the West brought with it a great deal of admiration and following in India. Under the inspiration of the Swami, many young men gave up their worldly life and dedicated themselves to purity and continence, and joined the organisation. The life at the *Math* in those days was really hard. But under the guidance of the direct disciples of the Master, the young men were spurred on to undergo great sacrifices and sufferings. The work thus spread throughout the country and abroad.

The ideal of the Mission was to train a body of dedicated workers who, while disciplining themselves for spiritual advancement, would strive for the good of the world by looking upon their work as worship. Explaining this idea of work as worship, Swami Vivekananda said, "All the work you do is subjective and is done for your own benefit. God has not fallen into a ditch for you and me to help him out by building a hospital or something of that sort. He allows you to work. He allows you to exercise your muscles in this great gymnasium, not in order to help him but that you may help yourself. Do you think even an ant will die for want of your help? Most arrant blasphemy. The world does not need you at all. The world goes on, you are like a drop in the ocean. A leaf does not move, the wind does not blow without Him. Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* — Vol. V. p 96.

“Cut out this word ‘help’ from your mind. You cannot help; it is blaspheming. You are here yourself at His pleasure. You worship! When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. We are allowed to worship Him. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe, and then will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work.”¹

This new attitude gave a new content to the concept of monasticism and monastic life, which is one of the main contributions of Swami Vivekananda and The Ramakrishna Mission to modern Indian life. Previously monks and *sanyasins* cut themselves away from society, retired to forests or caves and carried on their religious practices, rejecting the world as sin. But with this new revolutionary doctrine, the old cloistered monasticism gave place to a new method of spiritual life, namely that of service to the poor, the sick, the down-trodden and the untouchable, looking upon them as representatives of the Divine. With such an attitude, work became worship and service became spiritual *sadhana*. All work done with the idea of getting a return hinders spiritual progress and in the end brings misery. When we do work as worship, we give up all the fruits of work unto the Lord. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man. In fact such service will help him to become free from bondage. Thus we see in the various parts of India today workers of the Ramakrishna Mission deeply involved in service of various kinds, running schools and colleges, conducting dispensaries and hospitals, organising relief work during plague, cholera, famine, earthquake and other emergencies with the basic idea that they are serving the Lord in the form of the poor and the distressed in various shapes.

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission are by no means limited to the centres they have established all over the world. In fact, they represent a spiritual movement, which covers a field much vaster than the physical limits of those centres.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. V. pp 172-73.

The significance of their spiritual message is greater than what we can perceive at the present day. When the world is daily becoming smaller due to the inventions of science, the narrow barriers imposed on our minds and thoughts by the earlier generations have been shaken. The need of the hour, therefore is a universal message, which can have an appeal for all countries and nationalities, for men and women of all creeds and races. What is required is a new faith which will synthesise all the existing faiths, and a breadth of outlook which will accommodate the spiritual experiences and aspirations of all religions. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda came to fulfil that need. As Mr. Christopher Isherwood has stated, “Spiritual Truth is eternal, but it has to be restated and redemonstrated in human life, in order that it may solve the varying problems of each succeeding epoch. Ramakrishna’s teaching is our modern Gospel. He lived and taught for us; not for the men of two thousand years age..... Sri Ramakrishna is the first teacher to deliver a message consciously addressed both to the East and the West, as two separate though interrelated cultures. Swami Vivekananda carried his message to America and Europe, but he made no attempt to convert the western peoples away from Christianity to a cult of Ramakrishna but made them understand their own religion better. This wise policy is being followed by the centres he founded in the West.”¹

It is very difficult indeed to measure the scope and strength of this new spiritual force. We are much too near the source to appreciate and evaluate it. The full effect of that force will be known only when the movement has flowered and grown to its maximum stature in the course of the centuries.

It is our proud privilege to live at a time when the message is fresh and can be had from the direct disciples of the Master or from those who have been near and dear to them. Let us open our hearts and minds to receive this great spiritual message. Let us dive deep into this eternal wisdom and be blessed by it.

1. Introduction to the *History of the Ramakrishna Mission*.

V THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

Under the present-day educational system, boys and girls go to schools and colleges, to follow a syllabus which has been set for them. The teachers prepare lessons based on the prescribed syllabus and convey to the pupils all the information they have gathered. Many times what is conveyed is not based on understanding born out of experience or assimilation. The students consequently learn certain facts only for the purpose of passing their examinations. The result is the information is not digested in their minds and their lives do not reflect any evidence of their learning. Even in the study of practical sciences such as health, hygiene, dietetics, nutrition and electricity, there is rarely any correlation between learning and daily living. All progressive thinkers and educationists have rightly condemned this type of education.

While acquisition of knowledge is important, the moulding of our lives on sound lines is a more important purpose of education. Man has created new horizons for himself through expanding the fields of knowledge. Those who have contributed to the widening of his horizon have been men of character and strength, men who could face odds and difficulties, and dare dangers and sufferings for the ideal for which they lived. The quintessence of all education should be to produce such men. This is what Swami Vivekananda called, 'Man-making education.' "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and

runs riot there, undigested all your life," He said, "We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the rishis.

"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 the 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 men grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean meeting death face to face. It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want."¹

Man does not consist of muscles alone. There have been and there are even today animals which are stronger and have more physical daring than man. He can never equal the massive physical strength of the elephant or the ferocious courage of the lion. But the reason for man's conquest over nature and the animal kingdom as indicated by his conquest of

1. *Education* by Swami Vivekananda, pp 7-8.

speed and space, is his tremendous will. Those who have shaped the world have not only been men with muscles of iron and nerves of steel, but of tremendous will which nothing can resist.

The development of the body and the will by themselves will not suffice. We have seen in history and epics men who were giants in strength of mind and will, but who were the cause of untold miseries to thousands of people. Men like *Ravana* or *Hiranya* had conquered the then known world, but their might became a tyranny and a curse. In our own days, Hitler is an example of what arrogant might could be. Such men have proved to be the curse of the world. They did not have the social purpose in their lives; consequently their ego, inflated with success caused endless suffering to millions of people. Therefore, what is required, is not only physical strength and tremendous will, but the development of the heart, which will feel for the people, the poor, the sick and the downtrodden, and will devote all its strength and might in their service.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed the same view when he quoted Professor Huxley in defining Education. "That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease, and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of, whose intellect is a clear, cold, logical engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order,.....whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature.....whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience, who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature."¹

Swami Vivekananda also laid great emphasis on education of the heart. He said: "We may be the most intellectual people the world ever saw and yet we may not come to God at all. It

1. T. S. Avinashilingam and K. Swaminathan, *World Teachers on Education*, p. 169.

is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. Always cultivate the heart. Through the heart the Lord speaks."¹

While Swami Vivekananda was rooted in the past, and deeply immersed in the great cultural heritage of ancient India, he also looked far into the future. His contact with the West, his knowledge of the progress of science and technology, and above all his own scientific outlook, gave him an insight into the shape of things to come. He recognised the importance of technology for destroying the poverty of India, giving work to her people and providing food for her hungry millions. He stressed again and again that neither religion nor spirituality could be preached to a hungry or weak people. Therefore the first thing to be done was to provide food for their stomachs. For that he preached that we should learn from the West the technical and scientific advances, and better methods of organisation and work.²

Earning a livelihood may be the beginning of life, but it cannot be the end. An education which helps one only to earn one's bread is not of great value. Education should have higher objectives than mere physical existence. The kite and the vulture may fly very high in the sky, but all the time their eyes remain fixed on charnel-houses in search of putrified carcasses. Even so are the learned men if their minds are always occupied with their own selfish material advancement. Our scriptures therefore describe two kinds of knowledge. The one aims at attaining knowledge of matter such as science, technology and medicine. The other goes beyond matter and aims at obtaining knowledge of the unity of life, universal love, and eternal joy born out of that experience. One who wants to attain this higher knowledge must have tremendous strength and persistence to pursue it.

In life there are many problems. Every one of us has many situations to face and decisions to make in our daily life, indivi-

1. T. S. Avinashilingam and K. Swaminathan, *World Teachers on Education*, p. 139.

2. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* — Vol. I, p. 411.

three-fold filament of *Munja*, a kind of grass, as the emblem of his vow to keep his body, mind and speech in control.”¹

Spread throughout the country, there were many such schools which became centres of life as well as learning. In these ancient seats of learning there was no divorce between theory and practice and between thought and action. Education meant the development of all the faculties, and included within its purview the totality of interests which make up the life of man, and not merely the intellectual pursuits. Education was learning not only the contents of the sacred lore, but also the methods of living and self-culture embodied therein. Thus the ancient centres of education were also the centres of life and reflected all that was best and highest in the community. Unlike the modern schools which are detached from the community, these schools were colonies in which were focussed the intellect, talent, and the culture of the community. They represented the highest level of life of the times.

¶ The *Upanishads* give us an inkling of the methods used for instruction in the ancient schools in India which were usually in the form of dialogues of the Socratic type. The pupils were encouraged to ask questions and the teacher explained at length the subjects. In these discourses were found many of the teaching techniques familiar to us, such as apt illustrations, stories, parables, discussions and assignments. The use of discussion as a method of study led to the development of the science of logic. The discourses also gave scope for the students to think. The need for introspection and contemplation has been emphasised in the *Upanishads* in many places. Each student was expected to go outside the town or village until the roofs are no longer to be seen to contemplate the implications of the lessons he was learning. In addition to contemplation, self-study was also encouraged.

1. *Education* by Swami Vivekananda, pp. 30-31.

The teachers used self-experience as a method of teaching. One such instance is found in *Chhandogya Upanishad* where Svetaketu's father was teaching his son how the mind and its faculties depended for their functioning upon the body and how the psychological conditions were bound up with the physiological. He put his son through a course of actual fasting so that he might achieve a direct perception of that truth by his own experience.

The same *Upanishad* gives the following instance, by which the idea of the unmanifested and the manifested was sought to be explained.

The teacher told his disciple :

‘Bring a fruit of that *Nyagrodha* (Banyan) tree.’ The disciple brought it: ‘Here it is sir.’ ‘Break it,’ ‘It is broken, Sir.’ ‘What dost thou see there?’ ‘These extremely small seeds, Sir.’ Break one of these, my dear.’ ‘It is broken, Sir.’ ‘What dost thou see there?’ ‘Nothing, Sir.’

The teacher said, ‘My dear, the subtle essence which thou dost not see, it is from that subtle essence that this large *Nyagrodha* tree grows up.

‘That which is this subtle essence, in that has all this (universe) its Self; That is the Truth; That is the *Atman*; That thou art, O Svetaketu.’

‘Explain this to me further, Sir.’

‘So be it, my dear.’

‘Having put this salt in water, come to me in the morning.’ He did so. The father said to him: ‘Bring the salt, my dear, which you put in the water, last night.’ Having looked for it the disciple found it not, as it had dissolved away.

‘My child, taste it from the surface; how is it?’ ‘It is saltish.’ ‘Taste it from the middle; how is it?’ ‘It is saltish.’ ‘Taste it from the bottom; how is it?’ ‘It is saltish.’ ‘Now throw the salt

dually and collectively. Sometimes, there are crises which will have to be met. They may be small or great. They may be in the form of danger in the battle-field, temptations in office, or tragedies in personal life. The strong man faces and triumphs over them, while the coward tries to avoid them or succumbs to them. No problems have ever been solved by avoiding or trying to escape from them. People who avoid problems, instead of solving them, are overcome by them. Manliness consists in looking problems squarely in the face, analysing them in their various aspects, and acting in the best manner possible. Prejudices, partialities, fears, weakness or hatred, do not affect strong men. In any crisis, as Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, "Yield not to unmanliness. Such a course is good neither for this world nor for the next. It is unmanly, disgraceful and contrary to the attainment of heaven."¹ The creation of such manliness and strength should be the aim of education.

While information on the arts and sciences is important and has its own place in education, while imparting of skills and technology is also important in training men and women, the basic value of education rests in the laying of the foundations of strength, confidence and character in pupils. As Sri Ramakrishna said in his own unique way, "You may add zeros without number interminably, but they will have no value. But the moment you put one before it, they all become very much alive and get tremendous importance." Even so, the cultivation of strength, confidence and capacity to uphold, strive for, and achieve higher things in life should be the aim of any educational system according to Swami Vivekananda.

VI EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

"My idea of education is *Gurugriha-vasa*. Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education. One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. In our country the imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of *tyagis*," said Swami Vivekananda.

"The old system of education in India was very different from the modern system," he continued. "The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it; therefore, knowledge should be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without any fees and not only so, most of them gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers, kings of the realm and the wealthy families made large endowments to them and they, in their turn had to maintain their students. There were institutions, small and large, sometimes consisting of a few hundred students. Many of them consisted of the family of the teachers and the students who lived with them as part of the family. The disciple used to go to the hermitage of the *Guru*, fuel in hand, and the *Guru* after ascertaining his competence, would teach him the vedas, fastening round his waist the

1. *Bhagavad Gita* — II, 2-3.

water away and come to me,' said the father.' He did so (saying to himself.) 'The salt (I put into the water, though melted and invisible,) 'exists for ever. Then the father said to him, 'Here also, forsooth, thou dost not, my dear, perceive the pure Being; but there it is indeed.'¹

At a time when printing had not been invented, every thing had to be written on palmyra leaves. Books were rare. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that the lessons had to be memorised. It is amazing to see how much the capacity for memorizing had developed in ancient India. Through memory, men became walking libraries. To facilitate the preservation and continuation of the large number of works on many important topics, each of them was committed to the care of particular families. The numbers of these families considered it their duty to study and memorise them. In later days, when many of these books on leaves were either destroyed or they disappeared, research scholars collected them from the concerned families and compared and published them. That is how the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and other great works have become available in book form in modern times.

While learning by memory was an important aspect of education, it will be a mistake to assume that all education was mere memorising. The subject matter was critically studied in those ancient schools. Students were encouraged to ask questions. Group discussions were arranged. Learned men met in *parishads* or conferences and discussed various aspects of learning. Above all, it was impressed on the students, that it was by their own effort, *shraddha* and continuous application that lasting knowledge could be acquired.

While the necessity for self-study was emphasised to a considerable degree, the need for a proper teacher at every stage of learning was recognised. It has been said again and again

1. *Chhandogya Upanishad*—VI—XI, 1-3, translated in *World teachers on Education* (pp. 24-26) by T. S. Avinashilingam and K. Swaminathan.

in the *Upanishads* that except through the teacher, there was no access to education. Similarly, the *Mundaka-Upanishad* says, "Let him who wants education, take fuel in his hands (symbol of humility and earnestness) and approach a *Guru* who is learned. Not by self-study alone is the *atman* realised, not by mental power, not by information."

Certain moral and mental qualities were insisted upon as essential for eligibility for studentship. Learning was regarded as a process of discipline which could not operate successfully except upon suitable material i. e., unless one was qualified to receive it. It was considered that learning could not benefit any student, unless he fulfilled the following prerequisites, namely desire to learn, receiving the lessons daily, understanding them, retaining them in memory, reflecting on them, exercising of judgement or discrimination and lastly, the most important of all, love of truth.

The ancient schools consisted of students from all levels of economic and social status. Princes and nobles, merchants and poor students were part of them. Neither wealth nor social status would qualify a student for being accepted unless he had the requisite qualities necessary for being a disciple. The poor indigent students were accepted freely by the masters, if they had the desire and devotion to learn. Once admitted to the school, the prince and the poor moved with absolute equality within the school precincts, each being respected on his own merit. We all know the story of *Kuchela* and *Sri Krishna*. One was the son of a poor priest and the other was the son of a chief and destined to be a king, but yet both studied equally under the same teacher and lived as equals without any distinction.

All the students did the household duties allotted to them. The dress prescribed for all was the same. In one of the *Upanishads* it has been said that the prince of Banaras who was sent to Taxila for his studies was given by his royal father only a pair of sandals, a sunshade of leaves, minimum clothes and a thousand pieces of money as his teacher's fees. Thus the prince entered the school as a poor boy, divested of all riches.

This maintained the democratic spirit in the school and contributed towards the high quality of training in these institutions.

Nor was the rigidity of caste observed in these schools. The story of Satyakama found in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* illustrates this fact. Satyakama addressed his mother Jabala: 'Mother, I wish to lead the life of a *brahmachari* (student), of what lineage am I?'

She said to him: 'I do not know, my child, of what lineage thou art. In my youth, when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee. So I do not know of what lineage thou art. But I am Jabala by name, and thou art Satyakama by name; so mention thyself as Satyakama Jabala.'

Having gone to *Gautama*, a great teacher of those days, Satyakama said, 'I wish to become a *brahmachari* (student) under you, Sir; may I approach You?'

He said to him: "Of what lineage art thou, my child?" He replied. "Sir, I do not know of what lineage I am; I asked my mother, and she replied: 'In my youth, when I had to move about much as a servant, I conceived thee, so I do not know of what lineage thou art: but I am Jabala by name, and thou art Satyakama.' Therefore I am Satyakama Jabala."

Gautama then said: 'None but a Brahmin could thus speak out. Fetch the fuel (for sacrifice), my child; I shall initiate thee (into *brahmacharya*); for thou didst, not swerve from truth.'

As Rabindranath Tagore has said, these *Ashram* schools or *Tapovans*, as they were called, were neither schools nor monasteries in the modern sense of the word. 'They consisted of homes, where, with their families lived men whose object was to see the world in God and to realise their own lives in Him. Though they lived outside society, yet they were to society what the sun is to the planets, the centre from which it received its life and light. And here boys grew up in an intimate vision of

1. *Chhandogya Upanishad* — IV — ix 1-3.

eternal life before they were thought fit to enter the state of the householder. Thus in ancient India the school was there, where there was life itself. There the students were brought up, not in the academic atmosphere of scholarship and learning but in the atmosphere of living aspiration. They took the cattle for pasture, collected firewood, gathered fruit, cultivated kindness to all creatures and grew in their spirit with their own teachers' spiritual growth."

High ideals were held up before the students, and the emphasis was on practising those high ideals in daily life. The teachers did not ask their students to follow them blindly. It was specifically laid down that only the good of the teacher was to be taken and his weaknesses should be rejected. These ideas have been brought out in beautiful verse, in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, in what seems to be one of the convocation addresses given to the students when they were about to depart to their homes after the completion of their study. Their recitation in original has a grandeur and loftiness even today. Given below are the verses in translation.

Speak the truth; practise social ethics (*dharma*); neglect not the (continued) pursuit of knowledge (*Veda*); offer to your teacher the gift to his liking, and break not the tradition of your ancestry.

Swerve not from the truth, nor from social ethics (*dharma*), nor from propriety (*kushala*). Never neglect your material welfare; abandon not the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge (*Veda*); forget not your debt to the gods, and the spirits of your ancestors.

See God in your mother, in your father, in your teacher and in your guest.

Do blameless acts; never any others. Imitate us, your teachers, only in what is good in our conduct, and not in others. Offer seat and refresh duly every teacher more eminent than we.

Make gifts in full sincerity, never insincerely; give according to your means, with modesty, in fear and with friendly feeling.

Now, should there arise an occasion for any doubt as to a course of action or a line of conduct, follow the example of wise teachers who are unbiased, competent, independent and gentle, and who strive for righteousness.

And now with regard to those who are falsely accused of a crime; follow the example of those wise teachers present, who are unbiased, competent, independent and gentle, and who strive after righteousness.

This is the direction, this is the advice, this is the import of the *Vedas*, this is the (divine) commandment. This must be meditated upon. Verily, this must also be lived.¹

VII A POSITIVE APPROACH TO EDUCATION

In teaching children or in dealing with adults, we should have a positive approach, an approach which is based on the dignity of and faith in the human personality. Swami Vivekananda said: "We should give positive ideas. Negative thoughts only weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their children to read and write, telling them that they will never learn anything and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to them and encourage them they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and arts, in everything we must point out the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions but the way in which they will be able to do these things better. The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. Past lives have moulded our tendencies, and so mould the pupil according to his tendencies. Take every one where he stands and push him forward. We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would encourage even those whom we considered worthless and change the very course of their lives thereby. He never destroyed a single man's special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up."¹

1. Taittiriya Upanishad — I — XI, 1-4.

1. *Education*, pp. 4-5.

People do not usually have the patience to make a positive approach. Even mothers with all their love often take to negative ways which are not good for their children. When children are naughty, weeping or have temper tantrums, mothers try to frighten them into silence by telling them that ghosts will devour them. When they wish to prevent children from going into the dark, instead of telling them the real reasons that there may be dirt, insects or vipers, they tell them about devils or spirits. Frightening seems to be a short cut towards achieving restraint, while persuasion is a long process which requires considerable patience.

Equally undesirable is the inducement of discipline through fear of punishment. Swami Vivekananda used to say, man has received only a coating of civilization; scratch him, the barbarian comes out. Most of our morality is the policeman's morality, namely, observed not out of conviction but out of fear of the policeman, the law and the jail. Children from early days should be intellectually convinced of the reasons for moral behaviour, and also of the harm which will come to themselves and the community by the transgression of social laws. Born out of conviction, discipline will be from within and will stand for all time and under all circumstances. Such discipline will give our boys strength to stand up against evil and build them into mighty men and women with ability to create a better world for the future.

Our young men should also be trained in breadth of outlook. Prejudices due to caste, religion and nationality warp a nation's mind. Therefore the future citizens of the nation need to be brought up in an atmosphere free from prejudices which prevent fair thinking and obstruct good judgement by filling the mind with wrong, unproved assumptions. Often, we find men and women of one community or race discussing patronisingly members of other communities or thinking low of cultures and languages other than their own. There are good and bad people in every community and there are good and bad points in every culture. It may be that some are placed in a better position than others. For that they should express gratitude to the Lord, and show sympathy

towards others rather than be proud. Good culture demands extending compassion and understanding towards the less fortunate and the lowly. Our schools should train the young in these positive qualities.

The most fruitful approach to life is to have faith and confidence in one's own ability and work. Let every young man and woman be instilled with the great manly thought that he or she is the master of his or her destiny. Hard, intelligent, continuous and co-operative work is the gateway to all greatness. When we read the lives of men and women who have contributed towards the progress of the human race, we find that they were all indomitable workers, who had refused to accept defeat. As Edison, the inventor of electric light said, all men of genius are made of ninety per cent perspiration and only ten per cent inspiration. It is necessary that our minds are trained to follow this royal road to success. Any other way is fraught with failure and disappointment in the long run. Therefore let us cultivate faith in hard systematic work.

No great work has ever been done by mere individual effort. All achievement—physical or spiritual—has been the result of the co-operation of thousands of people. The great edifices which are standing as monuments of our past culture such as the grand temple of Madurai, the St. Peters Cathedral at Rome and the Taj Mahal at Agra are the result of the co-ordinated effort of thousands of people for many years. Even in modern times our great anicuts, dams, bridges and shipyards, achievements of atomic power, conquest of the air, and other scientific inventions have for their basis the co-operative endeavour of millions of people of all grades and kinds. In the modern age, ability to organise and work together is absolutely necessary for success. Therefore it is necessary to inculcate in our children co-operative habits and respect for the human personality.

A positive approach has been found effective also in many social or religious movements; whenever good reforms are forced upon people they have not met with success. History is

full of examples. Such an undoubtedly good reform as prohibition has not been effective because it had to be forced by law on an unprepared people. On the other hand, speaking about the religious reformers in India, Swami Vivekananda said: "Have you read the history of India, of Ramanuja, of Shankara, of Dadu, who were all great preachers, one following the other, a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude? Did not Ramanuja feel for the lower classes? Did he not try to admit even Mohammedans to his own fold? Did not Nanak confer with Hindus and Mohammedans, and try to bring about a new state of things? Their work is still going on. The difference is this; they had no curses on their lips as modern reformers have; their lips pronounced only blessings. They never condemned. They looked back and they said, 'What you have done is good, but, my brothers, let us do better.' They did not say, 'You have been wicked, now let us be good.' They said, 'You have been good but let us be better. That makes a whole world of difference.'"¹

In the cultivation of these positive qualities, the co-operation of three agencies plays a vital role, namely, the family, the school and the community. In the family, first come the mother and the father. The child gets his first ideas and attitudes from them. If both of them stress the same qualities and kinds behaviour, the child gets the strength to follow them without doubt or confusion.

While the influence of the parents is supreme during childhood, as the child advances he is open to the influence of the school, the teacher and his school-mates. The teacher holds a dominant position since he contributes substantially towards the creation of the atmosphere in the school. Therefore all philosophers of education lay the greatest stress on the good teacher. The teacher should emphasise by precept as well as by his own conduct the value of the positive qualities of love, co-operation, hard work and faith.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* — Vol. III, p. 219.

In this connection it may be pointed out that what distinguishes a very good from a very poor teacher is the nature of the responses that they make to the efforts of their pupils. The superior teachers nod approval, speak encouragingly, and in general react positively. The poor ones, on the other hand, are inclined to be negative in their reactions, deprecating their pupil's efforts, scolding them and finding fault with their work. It has been proved through modern educational research that commendation is more effective than fault-finding in inducing learning. Given below is the result of an experiment.

The experiment consisted of having groups of pupils working on tasks when praised, scolded, and neither praised nor scolded. The pupils of fourth and sixth grades were divided into four groups—a controlled, a praised, a reprovved, and an ignored group. Over a period of 5 days, they worked on addition problems of six three-place numbers. The pupils of the controlled group were kept in a separate room, but those of the praised, reprovved and ignored groups were given the assignment in the same room. The members of the praised group were commended individually in the presence of the reprovved and ignored groups for their effort and achievement. They were also urged to further improve their records. The members of the reprovved group were scolded for their carelessness, poor work, and failure to show progress. The members of the 'ignored' group were ignored. At the end of the experimental period it was found that the achievement of the control group, which was kept in a separate room was practically nil. Apparently, these pupils did their work with no increase or decrease in enthusiasm. The ignored group showed a little improvement at first, but the effect of witnessing approval and disapproval rather dissipated that improvement. The initial improvement of the praised and reprovved groups was the same. The effects of scolding soon wore off in the latter, whereas in the case of the praised group the trend was toward a slow but steadily increasing achievement after the first initial spurt.¹

1. Sorenson, H., *Psychology in Education*, University of Kentucky. pp. 436-37.

This should not, however mean that reproofs and expressions of displeasure at the wrong performance of children have no value. An occasional scolding and reprimand stimulate a desirable response. But to have a good effect, reproof should also have a positive background of love and affection. In dealing with individuals, groups of children, adolescents and adults, or large masses of people, sympathy and understanding that produce a community of thought are necessary for fruitful action.

VIII THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

While self-effort in study was considered absolutely essential for progress in education, the importance of securing a good teacher and guide has been emphasised over and over again in our ancient literature. The exhortation to the outgoing students in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* shows how the students were asked to regard the teacher as the representation of the Divine along with the mother and the father. The teacher was to be held in very high respect by his disciples. For without this respect, reverence and obedience, the process of learning would not be possible. But this did not mean that independence of thought and action was suppressed. Students were encouraged to ask questions freely and think for themselves. Instances of students not satisfied with a particular teacher going in search of better and more competent preceptors were many.

High qualities were expected of the teacher. Modern books on education describe some specific qualities that a teacher must possess to be successful in his profession. He must know his subject well, he must know how to teach effectively and he must have genuine love for his pupils. This implies that he must be learning continuously, to be up-to-date in his field of knowledge. Such a man should really love his subject; for without love, he cannot go deep into it or enjoy learning it. He must also love his pupils and be devoted to them. Without love one cannot give of his best to his pupils. It is only through love, affection

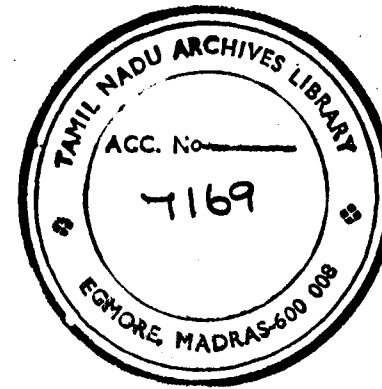
men from far off countries came to her facing tremendous difficulties, it was because there were masters who regarded the pursuit of knowledge and truth as the greatest thing in their lives. They were not only eminent intellectually but were also spiritual lamps, which kindled the light in other souls.

Swami Vivekananda describing the qualities of a good teacher says: "In regard to the teacher, we must see that he knows the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, Vedas and Korans; but they are all only words, syntax, etymology, philology - the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true teacher. The second condition necessary for the teacher is sinlessness. The question is often asked; 'Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher?' This is not right. The sine qua non of acquiring truth for one's self, or for imparting it to others, is purity of heart and soul. He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words. The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something and not one of mere stimulation of intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore, the teacher must be pure. The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior or selfish motive, for money, name or fame. His work must be simply out of love, out of pure love, for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or name, will immediately destroy the conveying medium.

"The teacher must throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never teach well. Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better, but do not destroy what he has. The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a

thousand persons at a moment's notice. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else."¹

If India is to rise again and become the queen amongst nations, men and women must become devoted to learning and spiritual life. Our teachers should not only be intellectual giants, but spiritual lamps. Their lives should be examples of the great truths they preach.



1. *Education*, pp. 31-32, 38.

and regard that the teacher can understand the needs of the pupils and find ways of fulfilling them. In addition, a good teacher must have a good memory, personality, determination, will power, persuasive ability, tact and understanding of the ways of the young. All these have been prescribed as the essential qualities of a teacher in our ancient books also. Furthermore, it has been emphasised that the teacher must be a good example to his wards. He should live in his daily life what he preaches.

There were also regulations prescribing rules for the teacher's relationship with his pupils. The teacher should love the pupil as his own son. He should teach him the sacred science with whole-hearted attention, without withholding from him any part there of. He has been described as leading the pupil from the darkness of ignorance to the light of learning. A teacher who neglects the instruction of his pupil ceases to be his teacher. While the student should serve the teacher in all possible ways, it is incumbent on the teacher to see that he does not give him such work as will interfere with his studies. Although it is the duty of the pupil to render services to the teacher, the teacher must be careful to see that the pupil is not exploited for selfish purposes to the detriment of his studies. Such services are meant as much for the pupil's own moral improvement as for the economic advantage of the teacher.

There were many celebrated teachers who devoted their whole time to learning. Hiuen Tsang, who, facing tremendous hardships, came to India in the seventh century A. D. from China to study and learn, and who lived for sixteen years in this country, has given us an account of the system of education prevailing then. "There are men who, fond of the refinements of learning, are content in seclusion, leading lives of continence. These come and go outside the world, and promenade through life away from human affairs. Though they are not moved by honours or reproach, their fame is spread far. The rulers treating them with ceremony and respect cannot make them come to court. As the state holds men of learning and genius in esteem, and the people

respect those who have high intelligence, the honours and praises of such men are conspicuously abundant. The attentions, private and official, paid to them are very considerable. Forgetting fatigue, they expatiate in the arts and science; seeking for wisdom while relying on perfect virtue they count not 1,000 lea a long journey. Though their families be in affluent circumstances, such men make up their minds to be like vagrants, and get their food by begging as they go about. With them there is honour in knowing truth (in having wisdom) and there is no disgrace in being destitute."

"The highest aim of a school of learning", Hiuen Tsang continues, "is to produce in its alumni an absorbing love of learning for its own sake. The ancient Hindu schools developed learning as the mastering passion, subduing all other passions of the human heart and compelling the consecration of their entire life." The second feature noticed by Hiuen Tsang was the universal honour paid to learning by the kings and the public at large. "The honour was paid because it was not sought. This meant that the learned men combined intellectual superiority with moral. In their sincere and earnest quest of learning they renounced everything that might interfere with it, not merely goods and chattels, but even the tender ties of domestic love." Thirdly, "These votaries of learning left the world to give the law unto the world. They left society only to qualify themselves for serving it better as teachers and preachers lecturing and travelling throughout the country, without knowing any fatigue and thus aiding in the spread of learning and public instruction."¹

The teacher is the pivot on which any educational system revolves. The best scheme of education can become bad, if the teachers handling it are bad. The quality of any educational system depends in a large measure on securing well-educated and well-equipped teachers, steeped in learning, strong in character, with high ideals, and devoted to the spread of knowledge. If ancient India was a great seat of pilgrimage and learning and

1. Mookerji, R.K., *Ancient Indian Education*, pp. 506-7.

IX THE QUALITIES OF THE DISCIPLE

In ancient India, as high standards of life were expected of the teachers, equally high standards of life were expected of the pupils. The term used for the pupil was *brahmachari*. The brahmachari after his initiation into a new life, had to undergo a twofold course of discipline, physical and spiritual. The former consisted in wearing *kusa* grass and deerskin, collecting fuel, tending the household fire, and begging for food. In modern language it means an active life, in which the pupil does all physical duties allotted to him in the school with absolute obedience and devotion to his teacher. Without such faith in the teacher, no education will be effective.

Spiritual discipline included meditation and prayers, control of the senses, practice of austerities and living a dedicated life. The pupil was to serve the teacher by collecting firewood from the forest, cleaning the altar and fetching water. He must rise before sunrise, bathe early in the morning, perform his morning devotions without fail and meditate in a holy and sequestered place. He must avoid idle disputes, gossiping, back-biting, lying, luxuries such as perfumes, garlands, and sleeping during day time. He must be free from sexual desire, anger, envy and covetousness. He must be forgiving, untiring in fulfilling his duties, modest, self-confident and devoid of pride. These desirable qualities of a good disciple have been described by

Swami Vivekananda in clear terms, namely—selflessness, self-control, endurance, desire for freedom and faith in the teacher. These qualities have been explained below in the Swami's own words.

Selflessness: It is not easy to be a disciple. The first condition is that the student who wants to know the truth must give up all desire for gain. What we see is not truth as long as any desire creeps into our minds. So long as there is in the heart the least desire for the world, truth will not come, the rich understand truth much less than the poor. The rich man has no time to think of anything beyond his wealth and power, his comforts and indulgences, I do not trust the man who never weeps; he has a big block of granite where his heart should be. Therefore, knowing what prosperity means and what happiness means, one should give up these and seek to know the truth and truth alone. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our, highest ideal, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. Self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you; but if restrained, it will result in development of power.

Self-control: The second condition is that a disciple must be able to control the internal and external senses. By hard practice he has to arrive at the stage where he can assert his mind against the commands of nature. He should be able, to say to his mind, 'I order you, do not see or hear this or that. Next the mind must be made to quiet down. It is rushing about. Just as I sit down to meditate, all the vilest subjects in the world come up. The whole thing is nauseating. Why should the mind think thoughts I do not want it to think? I am as it were a slave to the mind. No spiritual knowledge is possible so long as the mind is restless and out of control. The disciple has to learn to control the mind.

Endurance: Also, the disciple must have great power of endurance. You find the mind behaves well when everything is going well with you. But if something goes wrong, your mind loses its balance. That is not good. Bear all evils and misery without murmur or hurt, without one thought of unhappiness, resistance, remedy or retaliation. That is true endurance. When Sri Ramakrishna fell ill, a Brahmin suggested to him that he apply his tremendous mental power to cure himself; he said that if Sri Ramakrishna would only concentrate his mind on the diseased part of the body, it would heal. Sri Ramakrishna answered, 'What! Bring down the mind that I have given to God to this little body'. He refused to think of body and illness. His mind was continually conscious of God; it was dedicated to Him utterly. He would not use it for any other purpose. Remember also the man on the Cross. He pitied those who crucified him. He endured every humiliation and suffering. He took the burden of all upon himself: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Such is true endurance.

Desire for Freedom. The next condition the disciple must fulfil is to conceive an extreme desire to be free. No one is desiring anything beyond the body. What is the world but a combination of stomach and sex? Look at millions of men and women—that is what they are living for. Take these away from them and they will find their lives empty, meaningless and intolerable. Such are we. And such is our mind; it is continually hankering for ways and means to satisfy the hunger of the stomach and sex. These desires of the body bring only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. It is like drinking a cup of which the surface layer is nectar, while underneath all is poison. But we still hanker for all these things. Renunciation of the senses and desires is the only way out of this misery. If you want to be spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world—this nonsense of the senses. There is only one real desire; to know what is true, to be spiritual. No more materialism, no more of this egoism. If a man's hands

and feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his power to throw it off. When one has that restless desire to throw off this burning world, then the time will have come for one to glimpse the Divine truth.

Our sole concern should be to know the highest truth. Our goal is the loftiest. Let us worship the spirit in spirit, standing on spirit. Let the foundation be spirit; the middle, spirit; the culmination, spirit. Stand thou in the spirit: that is the goal. We know we cannot reach it yet. Never mind. Do not despair, and do not drag the ideal down. The important thing is the less you think of the body, of yourself as matter, as dead, dull insentient matter, and the more think of yourself as the shining immortal spirit, the more eager you will be to be absolutely free of matter, body and senses.

Faith in the Teacher: Without faith, humility, submission and veneration in our hearts towards the teacher, there cannot be any growth in us. In those countries which have neglected to keep up this kind of relation, the teacher has become a mere lecturer, expecting his five dollars and the person taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teacher's words and each going his own way after this much is done. But too much faith in personality has a tendency to produce weakness and idolatry. Worship your guru as God, but do not obey him blindly. Love him all you will, but think for yourself."¹

Swami Vivekananda thus showed that the ideal of education was the development of the personality of the student through the development of his character. He stressed again and again that the achievement of this great end called for purity and discipline. "Neither the mere study of the *Vedas* nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor imposed restraint will ever procure merit in a man, whose heart is contaminated by sensuality."² One who hankers after

1. *Education*, pp. 32-37.

2. *World Teachers on Education*, pp. 169-170.

petty joys and pleasures of the senses, can rarely cultivate the concentration necessary for the attainment of depth, in any sphere of knowledge. Mahatma Gandhi also gave the same message to the students of our times: "Purity of personal life is the one indispensable condition. All the great religions of the world, however much they may differ, are absolutely one on this fundamental thing that no man or woman with an impure heart can possibly appear before the Great White Throne. All our learning or recitation of the Vedas, correct knowledge of Sanskrit, Latin and Greek will avail us nothing if they do not enable us to cultivate absolute purity of heart."¹

There is an interesting story commonly told about a student. In the ancient *ashrama* schools, the students lived with the families of the teachers and prosecuted their studies. They considered the guru as the head and the father, and the *guru-patni* (wife) the mother of the school family. They all lived, worked, ate and studied together. While the teacher taught, the mother of the house cooked and served food and looked after the students. One day while the food was being served, one of the students exclaimed, 'Mother, the food today tastes bitter; have you served neem oil?' The mother, at once looked up and said, 'Yes my son, I had served you neem oil; I shall now serve you ghee.' The student ate and went away for his studies. When the evening came, the guru sent for that pupil, received him well, asked him to sit, and told him that his study was now completed and he could return home. The student was surprised, for he knew that he had to study much more to complete his course. Therefore he protested. Then the teacher said: 'Yes my son, it is true that there is much more to study. But one's study has to be terminated when one loses one's capacity to study. One has capacity for study so long as one's mind can concentrate, without being diverted by the pleasures of the senses. But when one's mind loses that concentration due to other distractions, one has lost the capacity to learn. All these years you were served neem

oil, but you did not notice it, as your mind was bent on your studies. But now your mind is after the pleasure of the senses. Your study has to be terminated!' This story illustrates the importance given to the control of the senses in our ancient system of education.

These attainments may well be beyond the large majority of our students. But no great achievement will ever be possible without the concentration of mind and effort. In our daily experience we find that people who dissipate their thought seldom attain depth or eminence in any walk of life. On the other hand, people who avoid dissipation achieve high objectives. Men and women who have attained eminence in the various professions, such as teachers, doctors, scientists, engineers, agriculturists and others have not been endowed with any extraordinary intelligence. Born with ordinary capacities they developed their talents to great dimensions through effort and concentration. By constant practice, they trained their minds for greater achievements.

1. *World Teachers on education*, p. 171.

X CONCENTRATION — THE ONLY METHOD OF EDUCATION

A great deal has been written on methods of teaching in our schools and colleges. The activity method, the project method, individual attention, relating teaching to pupils' experiences, use of audio-visual aids such as the cinema, drama, radio and television and a variety of similar devices have been recommended by eminent teachers and academicians. The basic objective of using all these methods is to create interest in the pupil, so that he is able to concentrate his mind on the subject of his study. But in practice, in many cases this basic objective has been forgotten and these methods themselves have been adopted as the objectives. Swami Vivekananda went to the root of things, when he said that the cultivation of concentration by which the mind could be trained was of the utmost importance. For the trained mind has tremendous strength. It can throw light on the most difficult and intricate problems. Swami Vivekananda says:

"There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration. The very essence of education is concentration of mind. From the lowest man to the highest *Yogi* all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the powers of his mind and

brings them into one focus; and he throws them on the objects through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case: with the professor in his chair, the student with his book and with every man who is working to know.

"The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration will black the shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light.

"Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being and therefore he is constantly committing blunders. The trained man or mind never makes a mistake. The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind upon anything for a long time. Herein is the difference between men and the animals—this difference in their power of concentration. This also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration.

"All success in any line of work is the result of this. High achievements in arts, music etc., are the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants, not our masters. The Greeks applied their concentration to the external world and the result was perfection in art, literature etc. The Hindu concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of Yoga. The world is ready to give up its secrets if only we know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration.

"The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. In the present state of our body we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. As soon as I try to call on my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one subject of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in Raja yoga. The practice of meditation leads to mental concentration.

"To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument, collect facts at will."¹

There are two types of concentration exemplified in the lives of great men all over the world. One is concentration of mind on a certain problem or a certain subject. Until that problem is solved, the mind is not allowed to wander or rest on any other matter. Such people think of nothing else during that period. They do not even care for food, drink or sleep. For the time being, nothing else matters to them. Days and weeks pass, but they are not conscious of the passing of time, being immersed in the object of their study or investigation. The great scientists and philosophers of the world come under this category. Edison who discovered electric light would shut himself up in his laboratory for days together; would not go to sleep for many nights; and would forget to eat on many occasions. Not only did he not go out, but he did not allow his co-workers also to go out, until the work they had taken up had been completed. One day while Newton who enunciated the law of gravity, was at work, his food was brought and left on the table. A visitor who had come to see him, after waiting for a

1. *Education*, pp. 9-12.

long time became hungry and ate that food. Newton remembered about his food long after the evening and opened the doors. He found the plate empty. He chided himself, thinking that he had eaten and yet had forgotten it and then went back to his work.

The Curies, who discovered radium, had no money, no laboratory and no help, but they carried on their research in an old miserable dilapidated building which nobody else wanted. It had only an earthen floor, the light-roof let in sun and rain. The furnishings were kitchen tables, a black-board and kitchen stove. Sometimes Madame Curie passed the whole day stirring the boiling mass with an iron handle nearly as big as herself. In the evenings she was broken with fatigue. And yet, they were so lost in their work that in after life when they were famous throughout the world Madame Curie declared that in that cottage and amidst those hardships the best and happiest years of their life were spent. James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine was so much absorbed in his work and thoughts that he bolted himself in his workshop for many days and he was considered insane. History abounds in such stories of scientists all over the world. Concentration in their work gave them tremendous power. It gave them tireless energy, which made them transcend the need for sleep and rest. It also gave them intellectual zest and strength to solve the difficult problems they had undertaken.

The second form of concentration is greater still. It is the concentration that characterizes prophets of all ages in their lives to deliver their message to the world.

The great Sankaracharya had finished the study of all the then known scriptures at sixteen years of age and set out into the wide world to establish Vedanta. At a time when there was no faster conveyance than one's own feet, and when there were numerous kingdoms and forests abounding in wild animals to cross, he reached the farthest boundaries of India and established his four *maths*, Badrinath in the Himalayas in the North, Sringeri

in the South, Dwaraka in the west, and Puri in the East. All this he accomplished before he was thirty-two years of age. Jesus Christ had achieved his spiritual heights and gave his message of peace and love before he was thirty-three. The strength of His message was so great that it has endured even after two thousand years. Buddha was deeply affected by the misery of human life, and in the attempt to find a way out, renounced his kingdom, loving wife, child and all that was happy and pleasant, and took upon himself untold austerities. At last when he sat under the *Bodhi* tree in Gaya to concentrate his mind on the Supreme he said to himself: "Let death come immediately or when it likes, let all the miseries or sufferings of the world come upon me, but yet I shall not rise until I get light." It is dedication, fastidiousness and concentration that gave great power and strength to his message of love and service that even today after two thousand and five hundred years, millions of people draw solace and strength from his words.

So was Sri Ramakrishna in the modern age. He came at a time when science had made tremendous discoveries and when people had lost faith in the life of the spirit. Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Christ lived many thousands of years ago and their life history has been lost in the mist of time. But Sri Ramakrishna belongs to our own age and time. He practised the teaching of all the great prophets of the world-Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed-and proved through his own life and experience the truth of their teachings and that all of them led to the same goal. In the brief span of fifty years he relived the spiritual experience of the whole human race and inspired faith in an unbelieving world.

Concentration of mind is the secret of the source of power of the scientists who probe the external world and of the prophets who probe the inner world of the spirit. Stuffing the mind with certain facts and figures is not education. Development of the personality of the child, so that each boy and girl can reach the

highest level of attainment in his and her own life, according to his or her own genius is the end of all education. To achieve this end, it is necessary that we must develop in each the instrument and the means of that attainment. Cultivation of an undistracted mind resulting in single-minded concentration is the surest instrument for the attainment of this end.

XI LEARNING TO THINK

The educated man is expected to have a thinking mind. He must be able to relate the knowledge which he has gained from his books to his work. The knowledge of many educated men however is fragmentary which they are not able to relate to their work. A person might have studied nutrition, but when he prepares his own food, he is not able to relate his knowledge of nutrition to the correction of his food habits. He might have studied higher mathematics, but is not able to apply it to the building of his own house. Such knowledge does not make a person truly educated. On the other hand, in an educated individual the knowledge of the subjects studied become assimilated with his thinking process so that when he is confronted with problems, the knowledge he has acquired finds natural application in their solution.

Education thus is the process by which man acquires the ability to think. But unfortunately in the modern age when knowledge has widened its frontiers, education has come to mean amassing of information and facts, to the detriment of the power to think.

Swami Vivekananda has constantly emphasised that education should teach man to think independently. He asked, "Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees—is this education?"¹

1. *Education*, p. 6.

Gandhiji also stressed the importance of the power of thinking when he said, "Pupils should discriminate between what should be received and what should be rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on taking in indiscriminately, we would be no better than machines. We are thinking, knowing beings and we must learn to distinguish between truth and untruth, sweet from bitter language, clean from unclean thoughts and things."¹

What then is the meaning of learning to think? The thinking man is not obsessed with the bits of information which he has gathered here and there, but has a comprehensive understanding of the problem. He sees the relationship of the various parts of the problem and can correlate the past and the future. He applies his knowledge to existing life situations. He perceives the laws behind the common-place everyday occurrences. Such have been the great scientists and philosophers. The apple falling from the tree must have been seen by countless men and women who thought nothing about it. But Newton had the capacity to think and could infer a law of nature behind the fall of the apple.

The thinking man is free from prejudices and has an open mind. Customs and traditions often make us blind to anything good in ways of life other than our own. Superstitions are of many kinds. Those with which we are most familiar are connected with social customs and religious habits. When Swami Vivekananda was walking in the Chicago fair, one man pulled out his turban violently from behind. Swamiji turned back and asked him what he wanted. The man was abashed and ashamed when he found that Swamiji could talk in English, and exclaimed, 'Why do you wear this strange dress?' That was not a bad man; he was educated and good by common standards, but his thinking and tolerance limited strictly to his own way of dress and therefore he could not see any good in any other manner of attire. In the same way, some vegetarians cannot think well of those who

1. *World Teachers on Education*, p. 174

eat meat, although they themselves may be cruel in their own daily life. There are others who think that their language holds a monopoly of the highest culture and the greatest thoughts of the world.

Like religious superstitions, there are scientific superstitions also. "There are priests who take up religious work as their speciality; so also there are priests of physical law, the scientists. As soon as a great scientific name, like Darwin or Huxley, is cited we follow blindly. It is the fashion of the day. Ninety-nine per cent of what we can call scientific knowledge is mere theories. And many of them are no better than the old superstitions of ghosts with many heads and hands. True science asks us to be cautious. Just as we should be careful with the priests, so should we be with the scientists. Begin with disbelief.. Analyse, test, prove everything and then take."¹

Scientists have also endorsed Swamiji's views: "Facts of science are seldom the final truth. New experience, additional data as evidence, constantly change them. The facts of yesterday are outmoded today. They are replaced by generalizations that conform to the latest bodies of findings."² This is vividly illustrated in the realm of social science, where concepts and attitudes towards strangers of other countries and races are changing constantly in the light of closer contacts. Those who were regarded as barbarians a generation ago, are now our neighbours, and friends, and may even become members of our family. In natural sciences, basic concepts such as space, time and distance are also constantly reappearing with new connotations.

Therefore a thinking man, a man with a scientific outlook, should always have an open mind and be free to perceive new aspects of truth not perceived before, and should have the strength and clarity to sift them, distinguish the essential from the superficial, and come to proper conclusions. The essential quality of a scientific mind is to think dispassionately, without prejudices

of any kind, unaffected by its own attachments, biases, likes or dislikes. Such a mind has the courage to face the truth, whatever the consequences. It does not start out to prove or disprove any preconceived notion, but dares to search out for the truth and accept it, regardless of the results. This also means eternal patience and perseverance, so that the study is complete from every point of view. The thinking mind does not look only at the surface effect but goes deep into the underlying cause. Such a mind does not discard the thoughts of others, but weighs and accepts them from whatever source, if found correct, even at personal risk.

The search for truth requires rare courage and strength. Those who are after mere material wealth and power can hardly ever have that strength. History is full of examples of men like Socrates who offered themselves as sacrifices in the pursuit of truth. In our own lifetime we have the example of Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated by one of his own people, for whose freedom and welfare he had worked all his life, simply because, he dared to proclaim his love and sympathy for the Muslims. There are numerous cases of scientists who had used their own bodies in experiments and in that attempt sacrificed their lives.

Learning to think is not a matter only of intellectual practice, it is also one of moral conviction and courage to stand by and follow it at all risks. Our education, if it is to be real, should infuse in our young men and women the courage to think independently, understand clearly, and act courageously. The greatness of the educational system of any country will be measured by the number of such thinking men and women it produces.

1. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda—Vol. II, p. 28.

2. Frederic L. Whitney, *Elements of Research*, p. 10.

XII EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER

Swami Vivekananda has said: "The character of any man is the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character. We are what our thoughts have made us. Each thought is a little hammer blow on our minds, manufacturing out of it what we want it to be. Words are secondary but thoughts live, they travel far."¹

In shaping our minds, good and evil have equal share. In moulding character, misery and hardship have been greater teachers than happiness. Studying the great personages that the world has produced, we find that sufferings and disappointments have taught more than joys; poverty has given more strength than wealth. Blows and trials have brought out the inner fire much more than praise. Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, people tend to become soft and weak. When affliction assails the heart, when the storm of sorrow rages all round, when it seems as if light would be seen no more, and when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of the great spiritual tempest, that the light within shines forth.

Comparing the mind to a lake, Swamiji said that every ripple, every wave that rises there, when subsiding, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark with the possibility of that mark

1. *Education*, p. 15.

coming out again in the future. Likewise every deed we do, every movement we make every thought we think, leaves an impression on the mind such that when even it is not obvious on the surface, it is sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are at any moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. Each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. When good impressions prevail, the character becomes good and when bad impressions dominate, the character becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts and commits bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions, and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. These bad impressions are always working in his character. The sum total of these impressions creates a strong motive power for doing bad deeds. The man ultimately becomes a tool in the hands of his impressions.

A worldly man accustomed to materialistic thoughts and surroundings cannot live long in an atmosphere of purity and renunciation without a feeling of restlessness and discomfort. To illustrate this, Sri Ramakrishna gives a beautiful parable. A group of fisherwomen, who were on their way home from a distant market were overtaken by a heavy hail-storm at nightfall, and were compelled to take shelter in a florist's cottage nearby. Their kindly host allowed them to sleep that night in a room where he had kept some baskets of sweet-smelling flowers for supplying to his customers the next day. The atmosphere of the room, filled with the fragrance of flowers, was too strange for those fisherwomen, and they could not, therefore, get even a wink of sleep. At last one of them suggested a remedy. "Let us sprinkle," she said, "a little water on our empty fish baskets and place them close to our noses. That will keep this disturbing smell of flowers from spoiling our sleep." They all did so and soon began to snore. Such, therefore, is the power of habit.

When a large body of impressions is left on the mind, they coalesce and become a habit. There is a saying that "Habit is

second nature." Habit becomes so strong in some men that they cannot change it in spite of their great efforts. Therefore everything we are is the result of habit. That gives us hope because, if it is only habit, we can make it and unmake it at any time. The only remedy for bad habits is forming other opposite habits. All the bad habits can be controlled by good habits. Let us go on doing good deeds and thinking holy thoughts continuously. That is the only way to suppress base impressions. We should never think any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be chastened by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits and repeated habits alone can reform character.

If a man thinks good thoughts and does good work, the sum total of the impressions left on the mind will be good. They will force him to do good in spite of himself. When a man has done much good work and has many good thoughts, there will be an irresistible urge in him to do good. Even if he wishes to do evil, his mind will not allow him to do so. Such a man will be completely under the influence of good tendencies. Under such circumstances, a man's good character is said to have been established. If we really want to judge the character of a man, let us look not at his great performances. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is really great whose character is always the same wherever he may be.

The man established in character is one who does not commit sin even when he is alone, when no man observes him, because he knows that God sees him even then. He who can resist the temptations of a young and seductive woman in a lonely forest, where he is unobserved by human eye, through the thought that God sees him and who through such realisation will not even cast an immoral glance at her, such an individual is truly religious. He who finds a bag full of gold in a lonely and uninhabited house, and resists the temptation to appropriate it, he is the truly religious and spiritual man.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, "fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality and character. Readers of the Gita are aware that fearlessness heads the list of the divine attributes enumerated in the 16th chapter. Whether this is due to the exigencies of meter or whether the pride of place has been deliberately yielded to fearlessness is more than I can say. In my opinion however, fearlessness fully deserves the first rank assigned to it there. Fearlessness is the *sine qua non* for the growth of the other noble qualities. How can one seek truth or cherish love without fearlessness? 'The path of Hari (the lord) is the path of the brave, not of cowards.' The brave are those armed with fearlessness.

"Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realised the supreme, as it implies complete freedom from delusions. But one can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour. As for the internal foes, we must ever walk in their fear. We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger and the like. External fears cease of their own accord, when once we have conquered these traitors within the camp. All fears revolve round the body as the centre and would therefore disappear as soon as one got rid of the attachment for the body. Fear has no place in our hearts when we have shaken off the attachment for wealth, for family and for the body. '*Tena tvaksena bhunjithah*' is a noble commandment. The wealth, the family and the body will be there, just the same; we have only to change our attitude to them. All these are not ours, but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. The *Upanishads* therefore direct us to give up attachment for things. That is to say, we must be interested in them not as proprietors, but as trustees."¹

The man really established in character has been described in the *Bhagavad Gita*. "When a man completely casts away all the desires of the mind, satisfied in the self alone by the self, then is he said to be one of steady wisdom. He whose mind is not

1. *World Teachers on Education*, pp. 186-87.

shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness, who has become free from affection, fear and wrath, is indeed the sage of steady wisdom. He who is everywhere unattached, not pleased at receiving good nor vexed at evil, his wisdom is fixed. Also if, like the tortoise drawing in its limbs, he can completely withdraw the senses from their objects, then his wisdom becomes steady. The self-controlled man, moving among objects with senses under restraint, and free from attraction and aversion, attains to tranquillity. In tranquillity, all sorrow is destroyed. For the intellect of him who is tranquil-minded, is soon established in firmness. No knowledge (of the self) has the unsteady. Nor has he meditation. To the unmeditative there is no peace. And how can one without peace have happiness? For, the mind which follows in the wake of the wandering senses carries away his discrimination as a wind (carries away from its course) a boat on the waters. Therefore, his knowledge is steady, whose senses are completely restrained from their objects. That man who lives devoid of longing, abandoning all desires, without the sense of 'I' and 'mine' he attains peace. This is to have one's being in *Brahman*. None, attaining to this, becomes deluded. Being established therein, even at the end of life, a man attains oneness with *Brahman*."¹

Buddha describes the man established in character as follows:

"He who imbibes the *Dharma* abides in happiness with mind pacified; the wise man ever delights in the *Dharma* revealed by the wise.

"As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, even so the wise are not ruffled by praise or blame.

"Just as a lake, deep, clear and still, even so on hearing the teachings, the wise become exceedingly peaceful.

"He who is friendly amongst the hostile, who is peaceful amongst the violent, who is unattached amongst the attached, him I call a man of knowledge.

1. *Bhagavad Gita* — II, pp. 54-72.

In whom lust, hatred, pride and detraction are fallen off like a mustard seed from the point of a needle, he who utters gentle, instructive, true words, who gives offence to none, him I call a man of knowledge.

"He who has no desires, whether of this world or of the next who is desireless and emancipated, he who has no longing, who through knowledge is free from doubts, who has plunged into the Deathless (*Nirvana*), him I call a man of knowledge.

"He who has transcended both good and bad and the ties as well, who is sorrowless, stainless, and pure, and he who is spotless, who is pure, serene, and still, who has destroyed craving for becoming, him I call a man of knowledge.

"He whose senses are subdued, like steeds well-trained by a charioteer, he whose pride is destroyed and is free from the corruptions, such steadfast ones even the gods hold dear.

"Calm is the mind, calm is the speech, and action, and right knowledge of him who is wholly freed, perfectly peaceful, and who is such a stable one.

"Whether in village or in forest, in vale or on hill, wherever he dwells, delightful, indeed, is that spot."¹

These indeed are very high ideals. But they are of no use unless they are followed in our daily lives. In the first half of this century, Mahatma Gandhi had raised our country to such heights of character and dedication, that thousands of men and women under his inspiring leadership gave up material comforts, sacrificed their wealth, courted imprisonment and faced untold sufferings, lathi blows and in some cases even cannon fire. In those few decades, the moral awareness and sensitivity and the spirit of sacrifice of the people had become so great that people all over the world were filled with admiration. For the first time in the history of the world, it was proved that a country's freedom could be won without violence, through moral and spiritual means.

1. *World Teachers on Education*. pp. 68, 72 & 73.

After winning freedom the scramble for power made the pendulum swing to the other end, with the result that our national character, our standards of social conduct and administration cannot now be considered very high. There is adulteration in almost all our foodstuffs and even in medicine. People are not wanting, who will take selfish advantage of the miseries of others such as while providing relief for refugees. It is not necessary to enumerate further ways in which the moral tone of the nation has deteriorated. Suffice that it has become urgent to stem this tide of deterioration if we are to continue to live as a great nation. In this great and vital task the political leadership of the country has a great responsibility. So has the intelligentsia. Our educational system must be geared to the task as training our boys and girls to resist deterioration in our national character.

High ideals of national life must be held up before our boys and girls. They must be reminded of their duties to the country. This is all the more necessary today when education has come virtually to be interpreted as a means to earning bread. Bread-winning may be necessary, but it is not the supreme end of life. Our educational system should have in it also the elements to inspire higher and nobler qualities in addition to being a means to livelihood. In this age of science and material power, thinkers in education have all agreed on the need for the cultivation of character, since power, unless properly directed, may lead to hatred, jealousy and conflict. Hence there is the need for evolving a system of education which would mould character and further spiritual qualities.

XIII CULTIVATION OF THE MIND

Since mind is a source of great power, it is important to know something about its nature. Mind has been compared to an iceberg. What is seen above the sea of an iceberg is not the whole iceberg. It is only a small part of it. The larger part is under the water and therefore invisible. Even so the case with mind. The conscious part which is what the ordinary man knows is only a small portion of the mind, while the sub-conscious part which is submerged constitutes the larger portion, and which controls and directs our actions, feelings and tendencies. There is also the super-conscious state which only great men attain.

Swami Vivekananda compared human mind to a ball which is constantly being hit. All the hits leave their marks on the ball. Even so is man conditioned by his past experiences. He is exposed to a variety of influences, some of which emanate from the environment around him, while others are due to the interaction with other individuals in the course of collective living. Through collective living, which involves a large variety of experiences such as those with the family, state, nationality and occupation, influences are accumulated and transferred from person to person, and generation to generation. All the experiences involving our interaction in society shape our minds. In the family one is father, mother, sister, son or daughter. When one goes out of the home, one plays the role one's occupation demands—one is doctor, teacher, engineer, farmer, businessman or

government servant. In these roles, one's duties are different from those in the family. In the same way, we have different responsibilities in the religious and political spheres. Everyone of us has as many acts of duties to perform as there are organised groups with which we are connected, and they in their turn influence our actions. The ideologies, behavioural patterns and cultural norms of the groups with which we live and move become for the major part, our own. The individual obtains his religion, morals, sense of aesthetics, language and patterns of behaviour, largely from the society in which he lives through its system of education and cultural mores.

The influences of the various roles which a man performs are not always mutually consistent with each other. Many times they are contradictory. For example, in war, States conscript men to shoot men of the enemy State, contrary to the behests of religion which says, "Do not kill, but love thy enemy." Consequently, there arises in the mind a conflict between patriotism and religion. In paying taxes or black marketing, there is a conflict between one's duty to the state and one's duty of catering to the family. In the exercise of our political rights, when a man who is not in our party is more competent and honest, our loyalty becomes divided. Thus in the discharge of our duties to the state, religion, the family or to the group, there is scope for a good deal of conflict. A person whose mind is split under such conflicts is like a house divided against itself. He becomes weak, indecisive, ineffective and poorly integrated. He cannot command much strength.

While it is true that an individual gets the major part of his culture from the group to which he belongs, it is also true that he has the freedom to accept or reject its influence. This explains why persons in the same group or even in the same family are different from each other. No one is entirely passive. Each follows in varying degrees the ways which appeal to him most.

In spite of the freedom to choose, however, most people follow the general codes of behaviour prescribed and followed in their own society. This is because they feel safe with the crowd and are content to be led. Only a few rise higher than the group.

Whatever the external influences, each man shapes his own destiny by the way he reacts to them. Swamiji illustrates the result of various influences on the human mind through the example of pearls. A grain of sand enters the shell of a pearl oyster and causes an irritation at the site. The oyster's body reacts towards the irritation and covers the little particle with its own secretion which crystallises into a pearl. The whole universe is like that. What we get from the external world is simply the blow. To be conscious of that blow we need to react, and as soon as we react, we project a portion of our own mind towards the blow. The extent and nature of the projection of the mind determines the consequences. Therefore, when we command and control the mind, we control also the external world.

Our scriptures have explained the nature of the mind and how difficult it is to control it. The mind has been compared to a maddened monkey. There was a monkey, restless by nature, as all monkeys are. It got drunk with wine, which made him still more restless. Then a scorpion stung him, which made the position worse. Then a demon entered the monkey. What language can describe the restlessness of that monkey? The human mind is like that monkey incessantly active by nature. It then becomes drunk with the wine of many desires. After desires take possession of the mind, comes the sting of the scorpion of jealousy, and last of all the demon of pride. How hard it is to control such a restless mind!

Yet it is not impossible to control the mind. With effort this can be accomplished. It is comparatively easy to observe facts in the external world, for many instruments have been invented for that purpose, but there are no such instruments to help us in the internal world. Swami Vivekananda has said: "It is

easy to concentrate the mind on external things as the mind naturally goes outwards; but not so in the case of religion, psychology or metaphysics, where the subject and object are one. The object is internal, the mind itself is the object; and it is necessary to study the mind through the mind studying mind. The power of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest places reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun, this concentrated mind penetrates its own innermost secrets. We will perceive for ourselves whether we have souls, whether life is impermanent or of eternity, whether there is a God in the universe or not. They will all be revealed to us. That revelation forms the basis of religion."

It is unfortunate that of all fields of human endeavour, the study of the inner nature of man has remained comparatively inadequate. In consequence of the unprecedented and extraordinary development of methods of research during the last two centuries knowledge of external world has far outstripped the knowledge of the world inside. Notwithstanding our recent findings that psychic disharmonies inflict much greater and deeper harm on human beings than bodily injuries, the study of the body and physical factors have received considerably more attention than the study of the mind. Children and adults are trained from very early days in bodily exercises. No real health is possible without the training of the mind as well. In recent times, bodily diseases have been controlled but mental maladjustments and the consequent bodily and social sufferings have considerably increased. This has necessitated a fresh effort for the cultivation of the mind.

While man is influenced by his family and surroundings, these influence him only to the extent he allows them to influence him. It is commonly thought that circumstances make a man, and that opportunities make him great or small. This may be true of the generality of men. But those who are strong make their own destinies. With a well-directed will and clarity of mind, man can shape his circumstances, create opportunities, and

convert them to serve his purposes in life. For directing one's mind, two conditions are necessary; First, one must be clear as to what one wants to become, or what one wants to make of oneself. This vision must be before one's mind throughout all circumstances. Secondly, having attained clarity on the purpose of one's life, one must pursue it with vigour till the goal is reached. A sincere aspirant will reject everything, whatever may be its appeal, if it is not consistent with the pursuit of his ideals.

A steady mind is absolutely necessary for progress and success in life. One should not pay attention to what others say or do, but move on steadily towards one's objective unaffected by praise or blame. One should not be cowed down by opposition, dangers or sufferings, nor allow oneself to be diverted away from the chosen path. To such a person sufferings have been of greater value than successes in the moulding of his character. Any one can be a hero when everything around him goes on smoothly, but he alone is the true hero who can stand firmly on his feet, even when the whole world goes against him. As Swami Vivekananda has said, one must be bold enough to face everything in order to serve the ideal. Truth can never be realised by weak minds.

Sri Ramakrishna has said that iron must be heated again and again and hammered a hundred times before it becomes steel. Sugar must be boiled well over a burning fire to give good syrup. As long as there is dirt and impurity in it, it will smoke and simmer. But when all the impurity is cast out, there is neither smoke nor sound, only delicious crystalline syrup. Then, whether liquid or solid, it becomes the delight of men and gods. Such is the manner of a man of established mind.

In every man's life there may come moments of weakness when everything appears gloomy and hard. But no true character is ever formed without passing through such stages. Those who seek truth and aspire to follow great ideals must be brave and patient. The world is full of temptations and pitfalls.

Therefore one must be watchful. Thieves cannot enter a house where the occupants are wide awake; even so with aspirants who are careful and steadfast. They cannot be affected by external circumstances. Nothing can divert them from their path, if they stand fearlessly with determination, strength and purity of purpose. One who wants to be fearless, must learn to give up petty selfishness and have faith in the Lord.

Purity and unselfishness are inseparable. Through unselfish service the heart becomes pure. Purity is real strength, and makes one fearless and cheerful. A pure man has nothing to be afraid of. To practise purity, one must first learn to control the senses and keep one's mind fixed on the ideal. The mind that yields to the senses loses all its wisdom. Only through constant control of the senses, can we keep the vision of truth and find true peace. When the mind becomes pure, we get the vision of our true self or the ideal. Our heart is like a mirror. As long as it is covered with the dust of impurity, it cannot reflect the true self. Hence purification of the heart is most essential for spiritual attainment. Swami Paramananda declares: "Purification of the heart is indeed the essence of all religions. The observance of outer cleanliness without inner cleanliness can never bring a sense of purity. So we should not make too much of external practices, but keep our mind always in a pure environment, think always holy thoughts and seek holy company. Then purity will shine in our heart. Above all, give up all egotism. There is no greater impurity than this. Nothing else so quickly covers the mirror of the heart with the dust of delusion and selfishness."¹

The company of the holy and wise is one of the important factors conducive to purity. As Sri Ramakrishna has said, even moist wood placed upon a fire soon becomes dry and finally begins to burn. Similarly the society of the pious, drives away the moisture of greed and lust from the hearts of even worldly persons. Their experiences are of great help to a spiritual aspirant. When you visit a new place, if you have a good guide, you will be

1. Swami Paramananda's *Path of Devotion*.

able to see within a short time all that is worth seeing there; also you will be saved from the dangers and difficulties into which strangers are likely to fall. Similarly from the company of advanced souls, one will gather many valuable hints and the struggle will be simplified.

Swami Brahmananda has said in his *Eternal Companion*: "A man may have the grace of his Guru, the grace of God and His devotees, but without the grace of his own mind, he comes to ruin." This means that all efforts are of no avail unless a man strives whole-heartedly. He must have great *shraddha* and practise spiritual life with continence and purity. He must avoid bad company, give up going after petty pleasures, and regulate his food. He should not waste his time in needless talk on the good and bad qualities of others. He must meditate regularly and continuously for many years. The real peasant does not give up tilling the soil though it may not rain for twelve years, but a merchant who has recently taken to agriculture is discouraged by a single season of drought. Even so, the true believer is never discouraged even if he fails to realise God in spite of long devotion. He must have faith in himself and his cause and pursue it till the very end, whatever the difficulties may be.

All the great prophets of the world have delivered this message of hope to humanity, namely, that a cultured and cultivated mind is the greatest asset to man. Such a mind transcends petty troubles, turmoils and temptations of life, and attains the strength to peep into eternity and enables one to live a life of joy and bliss. They have further proclaimed, that any one can reach this stage, provided he chooses the right path and puts in the requisite effort. Thus every man can make his own destiny.

XIV BRAHMACHARYA

"Brahmacharya is chastity in thought, word and deed, always and in all conditions," said Swami Vivekananda, "the chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The Spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power."¹

Man has many desires. His energies are spent in trying to satisfy them. Unless these energies are concentrated in a particular direction, nothing worth while can be achieved. A scientist cannot discover scientific truth unless he concentrates his faculties on it, and in that process forgets his other desires. Even so a painter, artist or sculptor can never produce anything worth while unless and until he brings to bear his whole mind on the work, and in that process he forgets everything else. The canalizing of physical and psychic energies towards the achievement of the highest goal is '*Brahmacharya*'. Since, of all the desires that waste life, sex is the most consuming, brahmacharya has come to mean continence and control of the sex desires.

This restraint that is required of a *brahmachari* is by no means limited to the body alone. It has to be observed in mind, speech and body. As the *Gita* has said, one who controls the body but indulges or harbours sensual feelings mentally is a hypocrite. The body follows the mind and so it is the mind that should be controlled. Therefore *brahmacharya* is not merely a restraint over sexual desires. It comprises turning away from all sensual pleasures, hearing words which incite passion, seeing exciting sights, tasting stimulating food etc. A *brahmachari* curbs not only his sexual but also other urges. Those who aspire to be celibates have to renounce ease and find joy in austere living. They should be in the world but not of it. Their food, their work, their hours of business, their recreations, their reading and their way of life must be different from the generality of men.

Preservation of health and vitality is impossible without pure air, clean water and wholesome food. Even more important than these are pure thoughts. So vital is the relationship between health and moral living that one can never be perfectly healthy without leading a clean and pure life. Medical men tell us that the really healthy people are those who are restrained in their habits. Those who do not follow any restraints are generally sick. *Brahmacharya* thus serves as the basis of a strong and healthy life.

Control of the palate is closely connected with *brahmacharya*. Observance of celibacy becomes easy when one acquires mastery over taste. The story of how Chaitanya's purity was tested when he went to his guru by a lump of sugar being placed on his tongue may be recalled here. His control of the senses was so great that not a grain of the sugar dissolved. Then the guru pronounced him to be a true *brahmachari*. Food must be taken not for satisfying the taste, but to fulfil the nutritional requirements of the body. Taking any food merely for its enjoyment is not scientifically sound. It is equally wrong to take too large quantities of food. One should eat in order to live and work, but not to please the palate.

1. Complete works of Swami Vivekananda — Vol. I, pp. 190 & 263.

Mahatma Gandhi with his long experiences of *brahmacharya* has said: "My experience is that one who has not mastered taste cannot control animal passion either. It is no easy task to conquer the palate. But conquest of passion is bound up with conquest of the palate. One of the means of controlling taste is to give up spices and condiments altogether, or as far as possible. Another and a more effective means is always to cultivate a feeling that we eat just in order to sustain the body and never for taste. We take in air not for taste, but for life. Just as we take water to quench our thirst, in the same way should we take food only to satisfy hunger."

"But our most powerful ally in conquering animal passion is *Ramanama* or some similar *mantra*. One may repeat any *mantra* one pleases. I have suggested *Ramanama* as I have been familiar with it since childhood and as it is my constant support in my struggles. One must be completely absorbed in whatever *mantra* one selects. One should not mind if other thoughts disturb one during the *japa*. I am confident that one who goes on with the *japa* in faith will conquer in the end. The *mantra* becomes one's staff of life and carries one through every ordeal. One should not seek worldly profit from such sacred *mantras*. The characteristic power of these *mantras* lies in their standing guard over personal purity, and every diligent seeker will realise this at once. It should, however, be remembered that the *mantra* is not to be repeated parrot-like. One should pour one's soul into it. We must repeat them intelligently in the hope of driving out undesirable thoughts and with full faith in the power of mantras to assist us to do so."

Gandhiji has given practical hints to those who aspire to lead a life of purity and self-restraint. He has advised that such aspirants should regulate the society in which they move, the kind of books they choose to read and the type of recreation they seek. They must seek the company of people who have similar ideals, avoid passion-breeding literature, and also the kind of pictures that are usually exhibited in cinemas and theatres. They must

take brisk exercise in the morning and evening, participate in games and cultivate the habit of going to bed early and rising early. Above all, meditation in morning, evening and before going to bed should be kept up. Just as our daily bath cleanses our body, the daily meditation cleanses our mind. "Remember," he added, "that man is a representative of God, and should serve all that live and thus express God's dignity and love. Let service be your sole joy and you will need no other enjoyment in life."¹

All the prophets and sages of the world throughout the centuries have uniformly emphasised the need for purity and continence as the sine qua non for a spiritual life. Purity involves restraint in speech and living a life of love, unselfishness and service. As Christ has said: "Not that goes into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adultery, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, these are the things that defileth a man."²

Gautama Buddha has said: "One should give up anger, one should abandon pride, one should overcome all failures. Conquer anger by love; conquer evil by good; conquer the stingy by giving; conquer the liar by truth. One should guard against misdeeds caused by speech. One should guard against misdeeds caused by mind. By degrees, a wise man little by little from time to time, should remove his own impurities, as a smith removes the dross from silver. As rust, sprung from iron, eats itself away, even so, his own deeds lead the transgressor to states of woe. There is no fire like lust, no grip like hate and there is no net like delusion."³

Sri Ramakrishna has shown through a parable how only a *brahmachari* can be really independent and happy. "In former days, the priests of the temple of Govindaji in Jaipur never

1. Mahatma Gandhi's Conquest of self, Bombay, Thacker & Co., Limited, pp. 7-8; 83-84.
2. World Teachers on Education, p. 84.
3. Ibid. p. 70-72.

married. Then they were supremely potent with the strength of the self. Once the king sent for them, but they did not go. They said, 'Ask the king to come to us.' But afterwards they began to marry and then there was no necessity for the king to send for them. They of their own accord would go to the king and say, "Maharaj, we have come to bless you. Here we have brought flowers from the shrine for you. Please accept them." For they were now compelled to do so. What could the poor fellows do? One day they had to build their houses; another day they had to perform the Annaprasana ceremony (giving the first morsel of cooked rice to a child) of their sons, still another day they had to marry their daughters, and so on. All these kept them in constant need of money."¹

Once Swami Turiananda asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Sir, how can we free ourselves completely from lust?" Sri Ramakrishna replied: "Lust is only one manifestation of the vital force inherent in man. To try to destroy this force is futile. To condemn it as evil is absurd. It should be redirected towards God." On another occasion Swami Turiananda told Sri Ramakrishna that he had a horror of women. Sri Ramakrishna chided him and said: "You must never look down on women. They are manifestations of the divine mother. Bow down before them with reverence. That is the only way to avoid becoming sensually ensnared by them."

Swami Vivekananda has emphasised that unless one practises absolute continence, one cannot comprehend the subtle truths of spirituality. One who practises continence attains power and joy. Such a man is calm and happy. What he touches becomes sacred and where he stands becomes holy ground. Whether in village or forest, in vale or hill, wherever he dwells, delightful indeed is that spot. Swami Vivekananda was positive that India will arise and get back to her pristine glory only if at least a few thousands

of men and women take the vow of absolute purity and dedicate themselves to the service of the country. We offer only the best fruits to God, fruits that are not used by men or birds. Neither will we offer to God fruits which have been spoiled. Even so those who want to serve the Great mother should be pure, selfless and free from all taints. Out of such men and women will come such power as will move the world.

1. *World Teachers on Education*, pp. 98 - 99.

XV POWER OF LOVE

Love is perhaps the greatest motive force in human life. As Swami Vivekananda has said, "What is it that makes atoms unite with atoms, molecules with molecules, and causes planets to fly towards each other? What is it that attracts man to man, man to woman, woman to man, and animals to animals, drawing the whole universe, as it were, towards one centre? It is what is called love. Its manifestation is from the lowest atom to the highest beings omnipotent, all-pervading. It is love that manifests itself as attraction in the sentient and the insentient, in the particular and in the universal. It is the one motive power that is in the universe. Under the impetus of that love, Christ gives his life for humanity, Buddha even for an animal, the mother for the child, the husband for the wife."¹

In his beautiful book "Ways and Powers of love", Pitrim A. Sorokin says "Unselfish love has enormous creative and therapeutic potentialities, far greater than most people think. Love is a life giving force, necessary for physical, mental, and moral health. Altruistic persons live longer than egoistic individuals. Children deprived of love tend to become vitally, morally, and socially defective. Love is the most powerful antidote against criminal, morbid, and suicidal tendencies; against hate, fear, and psycho neurrosis. It is an indispensable condition for deep and lasting happiness. It is goodness and freedom at their loftiest. It is the finest and most powerful educational force

for the ennoblement of humanity. Only the power of unbounded love practised in regard to all human beings can defeat the forces of interhuman strife, and can prevent the pending examination of man by man on this planet. Without love, no armament, no war, no diplomatic machinations, no coercive police force, no school education, no economic or political measures, not even hydrogen bombs can prevent the pending catastrophe. Only love can accomplish this miracle, provided however, we know well the nature of love and the efficient ways of its production, accumulation, and use."¹

Love is the elixir of life. It has been found to have power even to cure physical and mental disorders. One who has hatred in his mind not only loses his mind, but also undermines his health and life. On the other hand, love, sympathy, and friendship not only contribute towards building one's peace of mind, but also create a balanced outlook. A man who develops these qualities will acquire serenity, joy and peace in spite of all external circumstances.

"Motherly love is a vital necessity for the growth of children. Deprived of warm love they get sick and die as quickly as they sicken and die because of infection, hunger or improper diet. One of the latest studies along this line is that of Rene A. Spitz. He reported and filmed the death of thirtyfour foundlings in a foundling home. They had all the necessities and care in the foundling home except motherly love. Its lack was sufficient to cause their deaths. The whole process of the withering of their vitality was filmed by Dr. Spitz, and can be seen and followed by the film's onlooker. After three months of separation from their parents the babies lost appetite, could not sleep, and became shrunken, whimpering, and trembling. After an additional two months they began to look like idiots. Twenty-seven foundlings died in their first year of life., seven in the second. Twenty-one lived longer, but "were so altered that thereafter they could be classified only as 'idiots'."

1. Pitrim A. Sorokin. (1957) *The Ways and Power of Love*. Boston (USA): The Peacon Press. p. 62.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II, p. 50.

"The therapeutic power of love is especially important in preventing and healing mental and moral disturbances. Love in both forms of loving and being loved—is the most important condition for newly born babies to grow into morally and mentally sound human beings. Love not only cures and revitalizes the individual's mind and organism; it proves itself to be the decisive factor of vital, mental, moral and social well-being and growth of an individual.....To love and be loved turns out to be the most important "Vitamin", indispensable for the sound growth of an individual and a happy course of human life."¹

An illuminating experience is related by Dr. Fritz Tallbot, who visited the Children's clinic in Dusseldorf, Germany, some 50 years ago. Dr. Tallbot noticed a fat old woman wandering about the ward with a baby on her hip. Inquiring of the chief of the clinic, he was told, "Oh, that's Old Amma. Whenever we have a baby for whom everything we could do has failed, we turn it over to Old Amma. She is always successful." Gradually it began to be recognised that it was the lack of love experience the emotional deprivation, the absence of mothering, that were causing the tragic ill effects in foundling institutions.²

Love also furnishes a dynamic driving force to individuals and communities. The mother is prepared to undergo any amount of suffering for the sake of her children, because of her love of them. Numerous men and women have faced physical sufferings, prison or bullet in the struggle for national freedom, because of their love of their country. Socrates took poison for his love of truth. Millions have faced torture and death, because of their love of their religion. The greatest works in music, painting and sculpture have been produced not for money or fear, but due to the abundance of love. Love has something divine in it which raises the person who gives, and the one that receives. *Thirukkural* says that without love the human mind will be poor and be like a desert in which no plant, bush or tree will grow.

1. *The Ways and Power of Love* — pp. 77 - 79.

2. *Readers' Digest* — June 1963, p. 131.

As Swami Vivekananda has pointed out in his *Bhakti Yoga*: "Real love has the following three characteristics—the first test of love is that it knows no bargaining. So long as you see a man love another only to get something from him, you know that that is not love; it is shopkeeping. Wherever there is any question of buying and selling, it is not love. So, when a man prays to God, 'Give me this, and give me that', it is not love. How can it be? I offer you a prayer, and you give me something in return; that is what it is, mere shopkeeping. He illustrates this by the following story:

"A certain emperor went for a hunt in a forest. There he happened to meet a sage. He had a little conversation with him and became so pleased with him that he asked him to accept a present. 'No,' said the sage, 'I am perfectly satisfied with my condition; these trees give me enough fruit to eat; these beautiful pure streams supply me with all the water I want; I sleep in these caves. What do I care for your presents, though you be an emperor?' The emperor said, 'Just to purify me, to gratify me, take some present and come with me into the city.' At last the sage consented to go with the emperor, and he was taken into the emperor's palace, where there were gold, jewellery, marble, and other wonderful articles. Wealth and power were manifest everywhere. The emperor asked the sage to wait a minute, while he repeated his prayer, and he went into a corner and began to pray, 'Lord, give me more wealth, more children, more territory.' In the meanwhile the sage got up and began to walk away. The emperor saw him going and went after him. 'Stay, Sir, you did not take my present and are going away.' The sage turned to him and said, "O, king, I do not beg of beggars. What can you give? You have been begging yourself all the time." Love is always the giver, and never the taker. The child of God says: 'If God wants, I give Him my everything, but I do not want anything of Him. I want nothing in this universe. I love Him, because I want to love Him, and ask no favour in return. Who cares whether God is almighty or not? I do not want any power

from Him nor any manifestation of His power. Sufficient for me that He is the God of love. I ask no more questions. I have no more requests.'

"The second test of love is that it knows no fear. So long as a man thinks of God as a Being sitting above the clouds, with rewards in one hand and punishment in the other, there can be no love. Can you frighten one into love? Does the lamb love the lion?, the mouse, the cat?, the slave, the master? Slaves some times simulate love, but is not real love. Do you ever see love in fear? With love never comes fear. A man risks his body, wealth and everything for the woman he loves, even as a mother for her child. Intense love conquers all their fears. So also in the love of God. Who cares whether God is a rewarder or a punisher? That is not the thought of a lover. Think of a judge when he comes home—what does his wife see in him? Not a judge, or a rewarder or punisher, but her husband, her love. What do his children see in him? Their loving father, not the punisher or rewarder. So the children of God never see in Him a punisher or a rewarder. It is only people who have never tasted love that fear and quake. Cast off all fear. Some men, even the most intellectual, are low spiritually, and these ideas may be of help only to them.

"The third is a still higher test. Love is always the highest ideal. When one has passed through the first two stages, when one has thrown off all shopkeeping, and cast off all fear, one then begins to realise that love was always the highest ideal. How many times in this world do we not see a beautiful woman loving an ugly man and a handsome man an ugly woman! Lookers-on see only the ugly man or the ugly woman, but not so the lover; to the lover the beloved is the most beautiful being who ever existed. How is it? The woman who loves the ugly takes, as it were, the ideal of beauty which is in her own mind and projects it on her object of love, and what she worships and loves is not the ugly man, but her own ideal. That man is, as it were, only the suggestion, and upon that suggestion she throws her own ideal,

and covers it, and it becomes her object of worship. This applies in every case where there is love. Many of us may have very ordinary looking brothers or sisters; yet the very idea of their being our brothers or sisters makes them beautiful to us."¹

"Love never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us. Selfish work is slave's work; and that is the test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction."²

Pure love has tremendous power. It affects not only men but also animals. It is said that when Chaitanya used to pass through thick forests filled with wild animals, he used to sing his songs immersed in love and ecstasy, and even the wild beasts in the forests lost their wildness and danced with him. There are numerous instances from all over the world when men and women with purity and unselfish love have conquered initial opposition and hatred, and captured the hearts and minds of those very people who opposed them. There can be none without the feeling of love, for without it, man will become dead, insentient matter. As mentioned in *Thirukkural* — "There is life, only when there is love. Verily is he a mere bundle of bones, clad with skin, who has not drunk from the springs of love."

While all people have the divine quality of love, most limit it to their own families, kith and kin. To some, it may become wider and coterminous with their caste, community, land or language. The greatest are those, who transcend all these limitations and make their love coincide with all life. Such are the great sages and prophets who have appeared in the world from time to time. Even as physical energy can be produced by

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. II, pp. 47.

2. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. I, p. 55.

organised and continued effort, this spiritual energy of love can be produced by deliberately planned, constant and continued effort. The lives of the Buddha and Christ, of Saints like St. Francis of Assisi and Mahatma Gandhi are proofs, if proof were necessary, that by sustained and life-long effort, the highest pinnacle of love can be attained by all men and women provided, they put forth the necessary effort.

Till now the quality of love has not been scientifically studied. But with the increased mental illnesses, which the present industrial age has brought to humanity, these studies assume a new interest. Recent investigations have proved beyond all doubt that love is the most important life-building experience in human beings. Besides, genuine love has a discipline of its own, a discipline which can never harm but can always benefit both the giver and the receiver and for which there is no substitute.

XVI THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY

The family is the first organised unit in any society. Not only does it give security to every child that is born, but also sees to its physical and psychological protection. The most impressionable part of the life of the child is spent with the father and the mother and it is no wonder that in a large measure, the child is influenced by them. The attitudes and behaviour of most children therefore reflect their experiences in their family. The ways in which the parents behave with each other, the children with the parents, and the relatives with each other, impress the child. From these he develops his patterns of social norms such as politeness and respect for others, honesty and truthfulness. The home is the world in which the child grows into an adult. It is the place where men learn good and bad habits, to work with and respect people, to take care of the family and do his duty to the community. The memories of our sweet or bitter relationships in the family last till the end of our lives. As a Tamil proverb says "The habits of the cradle last till the grave."

In the family itself, the mother exercises the most important influence on the child, and then the father. The child gets his first love and security from the mother. He is loved, fed, clothed and caressed by the mother. The mother protects and brings up the child at great sacrifice to herself, sometimes undergoing even great risk. Like food and rest the mother's love has been found to be an essential necessity for the proper growth of the child.

As Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has mentioned in her book—“The ‘home,’ in Indian philosophy, is identified with the woman of the house. Womanhood in India has always been placed in an exalted position indeed deified. The divine aspect of God, known as Shakti, is thought to be the energy behind God Shiva and the sustaining power of His Shivahood. In the female aspect of God, it is significant to note that it is the ‘Mother’ who gives up her life in order to bring new life, who gives birth, who rears, who brings up, who nurses, who takes care of, who loves in spite of faults, and is worshipped as the goddess.”

Thirukkural, one of the greatest ethical codes written in Tamil about 2,000 years back, which has inspired and given strength to millions of men and women throughout the ages, points out the role of women thus:

“If the mistress of the house possesses the qualities of a true life-partner, there is nothing that will be wanted in that house...”

If the woman of the house does not have these qualities possession of everything else will not be of much avail...

She is a true life companion, who is equal to the task of the household's and who adjusts herself to the husband's resources...

It is essential for happiness in family life that culturally and economically the wife should fall in line with the family of her adoption...

Of all her qualities, her purity, chastity and unstinted devotion to her husband are of the greatest value...

Such purity is not attained by physical restrictions placed upon her, but by her own conscience, sense of purity and devotion...

There is no greater blessing or strength in life than such a wife. Such a man will walk erect and with strength.”¹

1. Rajammal P. Devadas, *Teaching Home Science*. New Delhi: All India Council of Secondary Education, pp. 3—4.

Swami Vivekananda has repeatedly stressed the importance of the role of the family in the development of the nation. He has pointed out how almost all the saints and sages have been born in devoted families, in which the father and mother were themselves pure and spiritual. Children imbibe the habits and manners of the parents. They also inherit in a great measure the thoughts and tendencies of parents. In this connection he has often told the story of Queen Madalassa, whose name is mentioned in the *puranas*. As soon as Queen Madalassa delivered a child, she put her baby in the cradle with her own hands, and as the cradle rocked to and fro, she sang “Thou art the pure one, the stainless, the sinless and mighty one, the great one. Thou art not touched by the petty things of this world, but thou art the eternal spirit.” She sang such songs and gave noble thoughts to the child continuously and consistently. Her child absorbed them, developed faith in those ideals, and in order to realise them rejected the kingdom and went into the forests to strive for them. Thus the first born went, then the second, and the third. When the people saw this, they got worried as they wanted at least one of them to become a king to protect the people. And so they went to the queen and begged her to give them a son who would become a king. She agreed, and when the next child was born, she put him into the cradle and sang—“You are mighty and strong of body and mind, and you are born to give your life for the service of your people.” It is said that this prince grew into a strong man, strong in body and mind, and ruled wisely over his people.

This story emphasises the great influence the mother has over her child. History is full of such examples of men and women who were inspired while young by their mothers to do great deeds. The life of Shivaji is one such example in recent times. The life of Swami Vivekananda is another. The life of Gandhi also reveals the formative influence of his mother in shaping his life. He has described in his own words how his mother took from him three vows—not to drink, gamble, or go after women when he left for England, and how the thoughts of his mother served to protect him.

Studies on delinquent and criminally-minded children and teenagers have confirmed that more delinquents and criminals come from discordant and broken homes than from harmonious families. This discordant families literally "manufacture" a large number of human beings who are egotistic and neurotic and hostile towards others.

Pitrim A. Sorokin in his *Ways and Power of Love* has mentioned the result of studies on the influence of the family and parental affection on childhood. "Of 484 Harvard and Radcliffe students who describe their childhood as happy, 72·8 per cent ascribe it to the family, parents' love and care, loving and loved sibling, and harmonious and good family organization. The same study disclosed that of the students who had, had a happy childhood, 67 percent view the world and human nature affectionately and kindly, while only 50 percent of the students who had an unhappy childhood due largely to broken homes, have harmonious attitude towards their fellow-men. A recent study of some 500 American Good Neighbours—persons who are somewhat above the average in their unselfish activities—shows that 70·6 per cent of them had a very happy and 18 per cent a fairly happy childhood, due mainly 'to understanding and loving parents' (42 per cent of the reasons), to 'love and respect in home' (32 per cent), 'being kept busy with useful and interesting activities in the family' (14 per cent). Only 6 and 17 per cent (in two groups) mentioned an incompatibility of their parents, zero per cent in one group, and 7 per cent in another report some troubles of delinquency."¹

One of the many effects of the modern industrial age is the disintegration of families all over the world. This is true in India also, where the joint family system is gradually breaking up in many parts of the country. Nevertheless, the family still continues to remain the most efficient agency for inculcating the most intense, individual affection among its members. The members of one's family are still the dearest and nearest to a

man. It is good that this is so, for investigations have proved that a mother's love is a necessary and essential condition for the well-being of the infant. Children who have not had their mother's love generally become anxious, aggressive, apathetic and develop into warped personalities. The security, a child receives from the warmth of his parents' affection fulfils a basic requirement for his normal growth. Without such affection, children have been observed to develop serious sickness in spite of all material comforts.

Our holy books have repeatedly emphasised the need for good family life for the proper upbringing of children. It is unfortunate that this is not often remembered in the present age of hurry and stress. In their effort to earn more and more money, men leave home early in the morning and return late at night with the result that children do not even see their father on most days in the week. The situation becomes worse when both the father and the mother go to work. In today's world where simplicity of life is giving place to the enlargement of one's needs for higher standards of life, many mothers are also forced to seek employment outside the home, leaving their children in the creches or with others. In the well-to-do communities, many mothers who are economically prosperous engage themselves in social activities leaving their children with their servants, little realising that their first service to society is the proper upbringing of their own children, and giving the necessary time for that purpose.

If we want our children to grow into strong, healthy and good citizens, it is necessary that the parents themselves should follow ways of good life and high ideals. Educationists, especially those who are running residential institutions, are familiar with parents coming to them for admission of their children, saying that they want the children to grow without bad habits such as smoking, going to movies and using abusive language. On investigation it has been often found that in such cases often the parents themselves are addicted to smoking, going to movies and using

1. *Ways & Power of Love*, p. 197.

bad words. In such cases, any amount of discipline will not convince the children that their habits are bad since they see their own parents indulging in them. They may be weaned from them while they are in the institution, but that restraint will not be real or lasting. The moment that environment is removed they may indulge in the old habits perhaps in a greater measure.

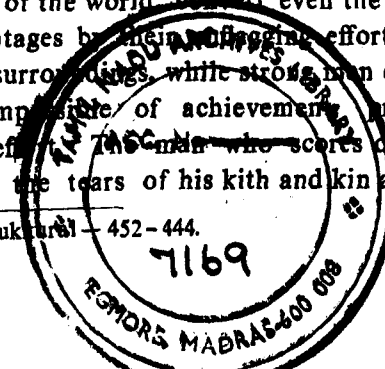
Our children are our greatest treasure. If we are convinced about this, we should so pattern our ways in our daily life, that we will be good examples for them. That way, we will not only help our children to grow well, happy, contented and confident, but we will be laying the foundations for our own happiness in the future, and the well-being of our great country. While the school, community, religious institution and the state also exert their influence in various ways, the home and the family continue to exercise the largest influence on our young. Hence the need for building our homes in such a manner as to provide for the best up-bringing of our children. This will certainly mean that the father, the mother and the other members of the family should constantly follow a disciplined life. This we owe to our future generations. We will be amply rewarded for it by the joy and fulfilment that we will receive when we see them grow in strength and goodness.

XVII AS A MAN THINKETH...

We have seen how potent is the influence of the family in the formation of character. Next to that of the family is the influence of friends, relations and society. While the influence of the family is great while young, the influence of one's associates is more powerful as one grows older. As said in *Thirukkural*, "Water gets the quality of the soil through which it flows, even so man shapes himself according to the persons with whom he associates. Whatever be a man's feelings, he will be judged by the quality of his friends as one's purity of thought and deed depends upon the company one keeps. Therefore, there is nothing so good as good company and nothing so ruinous as evil company."¹

However man is not a helpless creature, to be shaped in any manner by the influences of circumstances. Nature has endowed him with an indomitable will, which can help him to triumph over well nigh impossible situations and difficulties. While the lesser men succumb to circumstances, the stronger men, the heroes of the world, convert even the most adverse situations into advantages by their unflinching effort. Weak men are ruled by their surroundings, while strong men create them. "There is nothing impossible of achievement, provided one puts the requisite effort." The man who scores delights and works hard, wipes out the tears of his kith and kin and stands as a tower of

1. *Thirukkural* - 452 - 444.



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strength. Industry brings wealth, sloth poverty. To have fought and lost is no disgrace. To sit idle without putting up manly effort is vile reproach. Dauntless courage and untiring effort can win even against inexorable fate. Despair seizes not the man of unconquerable will even amidst his worst difficulties."¹ History is replete with instances of men and women, who started their lives under the worst disadvantages that man can suffer such as poverty, ill-health and ignorance, but who conquered these disadvantages by their effort and achieved greatest positions in life.

We make our own destiny. As Swami Vivekanda proclaimed: "The cause of all apparent evil is in ourselves. Do not blame any supernatural being. Neither be hopeless or despondent, nor think that we are in a place from which we can never escape unless someone comes and gives a helping hand. We are like silk-worms. We make the thread out of our own substance and spin the cocoon, and in course of time are imprisoned inside. This network of karma we have woven around ourselves. And in our ignorance we feel as if we are bound, and weep and wail for help. But help does not come from without; it comes from within ourselves. You may cry to all the Gods of the universe. I cried for years and in the end I found that I was helped. But help came from within. And I had to undo what I had done by mistake. I had to cut the net which I had thrown around myself. I have committed many mistakes in my life. But mark you, without those mistakes, I should not be what I am to-day. I do not mean that you are to go home and wilfully commit mistakes; but do not mope because of the mistakes you have committed.

"If you go home and sit in sack-cloth and ashes, and weep your lives out, because you took certain false steps, it will not help you, but will weaken you all the more. If this room is full of darkness for thousands of years and you come in and begin

1. *Thirukkural* — 611-29, 591-3 as translated in *World Teachers on Education*

to weep and wail, will the darkness vanish? Strike a match and light comes in a moment. What good will it do to think all your lives, 'Oh I have done evil; I have made many mistakes.' It requires no ghost to tell us that. Bring in the light and evil goes in a moment. Build up your character and manifest your real nature, the Effulgent, the Resplendent, the Ever-pure and call it up in every one you see."¹

It will be good to recall here the story of Harold Russel, a sergeant of paratroopers who in the last world war lost both his hands and became a cripple for life. He became despondent and terrified at the idea of going through with steel hooks instead of hands, dreaded the thought of leaving the hospital some day and going out among people again. He did not care much, whether he lived or died. One day Charley McGonegal, who had lost his own hands in world war I, visited Russel in the hospital. He made the injured paratrooper see that the first and the greatest obstacle he had to overcome was himself. He must conquer his bitterness and fear. He must become reconciled to his loss and adjust himself to it. There was a quotation from Emerson that had always helped him—perhaps it would help young Russel, too: "For everything you have missed, you have gained something else."

But when the Major told Russel that he would soon be well and be going home, he was filled with panic and doubt again. How would he manage—how would he get along? He was distressed at the thought of venturing "outside" and being on his own, mingling with people. "There's one thing you ought to keep in mind." The Major said, "You are not crippled, but only handicapped." He went to the hospital library and looked up the two words. Crippled meant, "disabled, incapable of proper or effective action. Handicapped meant, "any disadvantage or hindrance making success in an undertaking more difficult." Then he still had a chance. He could still make a success! It would

1. *Education*, pp. 18-20.

be tougher to win, but he would win. That was the important thing. That was what he must keep thinking about; that was what Charley McGonegal had told him. From then on, he forced himself to keep those two thoughts uppermost in his mind. He was not crippled; he was only handicapped. And for everything he missed, he gained something else.

It was wonderful what a difference this new mental attitude made. He stopped thinking about his loss and concentrated on what he had left. He stopped fighting his handlessness and accepted it, began thinking and planning for the future. Slowly but surely Harold Russel fought his way back from bleak despair to radiant triumph and victory. He was selected to play a leading role in "The Best Years of Our Lives" and made a sensational success. He won two of Hollywood's prized Academy Awards. He wrote his autobiography and was as successful an author as an actor.¹

Coming to my own experience, I know of two friends, one of whom was attacked by virulent leprosy and was seriously laid up by that fell disease. His fingers were eaten up and everybody wondered whether he would recover. By sheer will, perseverance and positive thinking and treatment, he not only recovered, but became one of the great educationists of our times, establishing in his name a variety of institutions of the highest grade. The other by some disease, became suddenly blind. No treatment was of any avail. Everybody pitied him. But he rejected their pity. He did not develop any self-pity. When he found that no doctor could help him, he accepted the loss of his eyes and built his life on it. Today he continues to be one of the biggest merchants of his town, dealing with scores of people everyday and a trade worth millions of rupees. He wears black glasses, and so no one will guess that he is blind during discussions with him. In *Thirukkural*, it has been said, that one need not be ashamed of any defect in the body, but one need be ashamed

1. Watson, L. E. *Light From Many Lamps*, pp. 89-90.

only of want of effort. All these instances only prove that whatever difficulties come, their sting can be removed and overcome by right thinking and sustained effort.

James Allen, in his beautiful book *As A Man Thinketh* has developed this thought: A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the sum total of all his thoughts. As the plant springs from, and could not be without the seed, so every act of a man springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them... Act is the blossom of thought; and joy and suffering are its fruits; thus does a man gather the sweet and bitter fruits of his own husbandry. A man's mind may be likened to a garden which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected it must and will, bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed-seeds will fall therein and will continue to produce their kind.

Man is moved hither and thither by circumstances, so long as he believes himself to be the creature of outside conditions. But when he realizes that he has the power and strength to shape his own life, he develops powers till then unknown to himself and discovers that he can be master of circumstances instead of being their victim. He will find that as he alters his thoughts towards things and other people, they, in their turn, will alter towards him. If one radically alters one's thoughts, one will be astonished to see the transformation they will effect in the material conditions of one's life. Men do not attract that which they want, but that which they are—each one of us is the divinity that shapes our ends. All that a man achieves or fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts. A man can rise, conquer, and achieve only by lifting up his thoughts. He remains weak, abject and miserable by refusing to lift up his thoughts.¹

If we analyse further, we will find that all the actions we see in the world, all the movements in human society and all the

1. James Allen, *As A Man Thinketh*.

works around us are simply the display of thought, the manifestation of the will of man. Machines, instruments, ships, atomic bombs and all the rest are manifestation of man's thoughts and will. The great men of the world have been tremendous workers, with wills powerful enough to overturn the world, which they got by persistent work. Our achievements therefore, depend on our own efforts. The greater the ideal the greater will have to be the effort, and longer the period of the struggle. Nobody can get anything for nothing. We will have to pay the proper price. For the same reason no one need despair, for everyone has within him the capacity to make the necessary effort if only he has the will and determination to put his shoulders to the wheel and concentrate his thoughts and work.

It is not externals that matter, but what one really thinks. Sri Ramakrishna has told a beautiful parable to illustrate this truth: There was a sadhu living near a prostitute's house. Every day he used to go to her house and remonstrate with her and she used to bow down humbly before the sadhu and decry her own life. Both of them died on the same day. When the emissaries of death came, the sadhu's soul was taken to hell and the woman's soul to heaven. The sadhu protested, and asked the reason for this strange judgement, to which the God of Death replied, "You were always thinking of that woman and her evil ways and thus made yourself impure in your thoughts, but that woman was always thinking of the sadhu in you and therefore was thinking good thoughts, though her body was involved in sin."

We are what our thoughts are—"Thoughts live, they travel far, and so take care of what you think."

XVIII WAYS OF MIND CONTROL

From the beginning of time man has tried various ways of controlling his mind. One method has been extreme mortification of the body. This is based on the belief that the flesh and its drives are the greatest enemies of man and his higher self; therefore, all the needs of the organism must be denied fulfilment and its lusts suppressed. The mortification of the body is of different forms. One is the violent suppression of the sex impulse in all possible ways and weakening it through fasting and strenuous physical work. The second form is avoiding sex by fleeing from it. A third form is imposing upon the body all sorts of pains such as prolonged immersion in cold water or snow, exposure to extreme climatic conditions and opening the veins to shed blood. Yet another form is violent denial to the body of anything that gives sensual pleasure and imposing upon it all kinds of pains and hardships such as denial of the comfort of cleanliness by subjecting to dust and dirt, besmearing and wearing either nothing or dirty rags.

Another kind of body-torture may be the denial of sleeping in comfortable conditions. Most of the followers of this method practise regularly sleeplessness for many days and nights and reduce the period of sleep to an unbelievable minimum. They also practise sleeping on hard rocks, or on the ground without any bed, pillow, blanket or even cover. Some even try sleeping on

boards studded with sharp nails or covered by sharp stones or thorns. Some others do not stretch the body fully but keep it in a painful posture.

Next come the practices of denying to the sense organs of the body and the nervous system, anything that may give pleasure and exposing them to the objects, actions, thoughts and force which give them pain. Viewing skulls, coffins and other symbols of death, and avoiding pleasant sight, sound, fragrance, or other pleasure-giving stimuli are a few of the hundreds of ways which have been used for this purpose.

On examining the results of these various kinds of extreme mortification of the body, it has been found that they do not serve the purpose for which they were undertaken. Firstly, those who had adopted them had not always come out of these mortifications with purified minds. Secondly, it has been found that such ascetics had actually become inordinately proud and egoistic, instead of being filled with love, sympathy and consideration for others, which are the real outcome of a spiritual life. Buddha first followed these severe asceticisms, but found later that such practices did not help spiritual pursuits. He came to the conclusion that self-torture did not kill selfish personal aims nor did it efface the ego.

The reason for the failure of these practices in achieving their objective is not far to seek. These practices are based on the assumption that it is the senses of the body that perceive. Many ascetics in the East and the West have confessed after many years of asceticism that in spite of such practices, impurity had not been taken off from their minds and the sex urge had not been obliterated. This proves that the evil is not in the senses. The senses cannot perceive by themselves. They are but instruments of the mind. For example, a person is reading a book at a railway station. The book is so interesting that all his thoughts are on it. Many trains come and go, thousands of people move about making tremendous noise. But he is not affected. The ear is there transmitting all the noises, but the sounds do not register in

his mind as it is not prepared to receive them. Taking another instance, some one goes to receive an old friend at the railway station. He may see thousands of people but does not notice them. He hurries along until he sees the person whom he came to meet. Not that his eyes did not record other sights, but his mind was not interested in those other sights and therefore those impressions did not exist for him.

Swami Vivekananda and his brother-disciples used to meditate under the Panchavati in Dakshineswar at the behest of the Master. Many could not meditate because of the terrible nuisance of mosquitoes for which Calcutta and its suburbs are still well known. Some could cover themselves with clothes and meditate for a little time. But Swamiji used to lose himself in meditation for hours together as soon as he sat down. Those who saw him in those times say that he was covered by millions of mosquitoes sucking his blood. But that did not disturb him, because his mind was elsewhere on a higher spiritual plane.

When Swami Turiananda, had to be operated upon for a carbuncle, the doctor suggested the use of chloroform. But the Swami said that it was not necessary. He directed his mind on God. Immediately his body became senseless and the doctor went through his operation without chloroform. In our own time, we have heard from eye witnesses how Ramana Maharshi underwent a major operation without anaesthesia. It was not that the mosquitoes did not bite Swami Vivekananda, or the operation was not painful to Swami Turiananda or Ramana Maharshi, but as their minds were not attached to senses, the senses were powerless to carry the impressions of pain to the mind.

Buddha and many other prophets and saints also found that mere torturing of the body in many cases had been found to result in adverse reactions. Therefore the middle path has been advocated, avoiding both the extremes of pleasure and pain. As the *Gita* has pointed out, "Success in yoga is not for him who

vulgar guards of the palace did not take any notice of him. After that, suddenly the ministers of the king and all the big officials came and received him with great honours. They conducted him into splendid rooms, gave him the most fragrant baths and wonderful dresses, kept him there in all kinds of luxury for eight days. The serene face of Shuka did not change even to the smallest extent by the change in the treatment accorded to him; he was the same in the midst of this luxury as when waiting at the gate. Then he was brought before the king. The king was on his throne. Music was played. Dancing and other amusements were going on. The king then gave him a cup of milk, full to the brim, and asked him to go seven times round the hall without spilling even a drop. The boy took the cup and proceeded in the midst of the attraction of the music and the beautiful faces. As desired by the king, seven times did he go round, and not a drop of milk was spilt. The boy's mind could not be attracted by anything in the world. And when he brought the cup to the king, the king said to him. "What your father has taught you, and what you have learned yourself, I can only repeat. You have known the Truth."

Thus the man who has practised control over himself cannot be acted upon by anything outside. There is no more slavery for him. His mind had become free. The attainment of this attitude of mind is not easy. It requires a tremendous, consistent, continuous and concentrated effort. One who is devoted to spiritual life and wants to attain the godly state must cultivate the qualities necessary for a divine life. As mentioned in the *Gita*, they are—"Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga; alms-giving, control of the senses, yajna, reading of the shastras, austerity, uprightness, non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquility, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride."¹ For the cultivation of these

qualities, unswerving faith is necessary, along with faith in God. One should cultivate the company of sincere aspirants and avoid the company of men of little faith. Meditation and contemplation are essential aids for a godly life. Above all, whole-hearted perseverance is necessary. One can attain these ideals only through constant and determined endeavour.

1. *Bhagavad Gita*—XVI, 1-3.

eats too much or too little or who sleeps too much or too little." The Hindu scriptures have advocated control of the senses. But control did not mean torturing the body or denial of its needs, but self-restraint in order to facilitate the realisation of love for God and his fellow-men. The scriptures have also declared that the human body is the temple of God and through this body alone the Supreme can be attained, and therefore the body must be kept healthy, pure and clean.

It has also been made clear beyond doubt that absolute purity, *brahmacharya*, is the core of spiritual life. This purity cannot be attained through torture of the body. It can be attained only by cultivating certain positive attitudes of love and service. The qualities to be cultivated for this purpose are deep devotion towards higher ideals, irrevocable determination to give up lust, consecration of energy and activities for a high purpose, regulation of the persons we meet and move with, the society we work in, the books we read and the food we eat. All these should help in the leading of higher and unselfish lives. This will mean avoiding loose talk, loose society, passion-breeding novels, stories, newspapers or cinemas. They will help in controlling the senses of sight, hearing and other sense organs as Gandhiji said, "not hearing, seeing or speaking anything vile or obscene." Sri Ramakrishna put this idea in his inimitable way when he said, "Where there is kama (desire) there cannot be Rama (God)," thereby indicating that absolute purity is the sine qua non of all spiritual life. This will also mean cultivation of good habits such as going to bed early and rising early, eating only to satisfy hunger and not for taste, fasting, and above all daily prayers in the morning, evening and before going to bed.

It is interesting to note how the great saints of the East and the West have thought alike in this matter. St. Benedict in his *Instruments of Good work* has prescribed vegetarian food, moderation in drinking, clothing and sleeping for the monks. Food should be taken only twice a day with two cooked dishes as he considered that nothing is more contrary to the Christian

spirit than gluttony. Moderate fasting was also recommended, especially during Lent and similar seasons. He prescribed minimum clothes and bedding for the monks, which would not be too comfortable, with the idea of restraining bodily needs without any torture or indulgence.

Swami Vivekananda hit the nail on the head when he said that all these restraints were certainly good for leading a spiritual life, but these by themselves did not constitute spirituality. A man may give up living in houses he may give up wearing fine clothes, he may give up eating good food or he may go into the desert, but such a man may have the greatest attachment to his small possessions. Have we not heard the story that in the Ashram where Janaka and others were studying, when the fire broke out, Janaka had everything at stake, but he was detached, while others, who had only their rags to lose ran helter-skelter.

It will be good to recall here the story of Shuka mentioned by Swami Vivekananda in his *Karma Yoga*. There was a great sage in India called Vyasa, who was the author of the Vedanta aphorisms. He was a holy man. His father had tried to become a perfect man but failed. His grand father had also tried and failed. While Vyasa himself did not succeed, his son, Shuka was born perfect. Vyasa taught his son wisdom and the knowledge of truth. He then sent him to the court of King Janaka who was a great king and called Janaka Videha. Videha means "without a body" i. e., who has transcended the body. Although a king, he had entirely forgotten that he had a body; he felt that he was a spirit all the time. This boy Shuka was sent to be taught by him. The king knew that Vyasa's son was coming to him to learn wisdom, so he made certain arrangements beforehand. And when the boy presented himself at the gates of the palace, the guards took no notice of him whatsoever. They only gave him a seat, and he sat there for three days and nights, nobody speaking to him, nobody asking him who he was and whence he came. He was the son of a very great sage, his father was honoured by the whole country, and he himself was a respected person; yet the low,

XIX SUBLIMATION OF THE MIND

Sublimation is the process by which individuals redirect their natural impulses, desires and emotions into higher thinking. When activities are raised from lower to higher levels of integration and when there is harmony in that process; the resulting behaviour is sublimation. Educationists are familiar with the process, as through which undesirable traits of children are transformed into desirable qualities. Thus a child who is destructively active may be directed along constructive workmanship. Thus the force of jealousy towards a person may be channelled towards self improvement. Sports activities have been generally recognised as a way in which boys and girls can be trained to respect the law and work in team with others, giving greater importance to the group rather than to themselves.

There is another kind of sublimation which is called spiritual conversion. It is manifested through a sudden change of heart and emotional regeneration, affecting vitally the outlook, inner adjustments and habits of life of an individual. This may be born out of a revelation by some words, sight or experience. Its psychological effect is resolution of conflict in the individual concerned, giving rise to singleness of devotion and surrender of self to a higher cause. There have been many cases in the history of all religions, when men who had been immoral had suddenly changed the course of their lives on the inspiration received by some chance word or experience. A few such instances are given below:

There was a young man in a certain village. He fell in love with a prostitute in another village. There was a big river between the two villages. He used to go to that girl every day crossing the river in a ferry-boat. One day he had to perform the obsequies of his father and so, although he was longing, almost dying to see the girl, he could not do so as the ceremonies had to be performed. He was fretting and fuming. At last the ceremony ended. The night came and with the night, a tremendous howling storm rose. Rain poured in torrents and the river was lashed into gigantic waves. It became very dangerous to cross. Yet he went to the bank of the river. There was no ferry boat. The ferrymen were afraid to cross; but the boy's heart was mad with love for the girl, so he would go. There was a log floating down. With the help of that log, he crossed the river and got to the other side, dragged the log up, threw it on the bank and went to the house of his beloved. The doors were closed. He knocked at the door, but the wind was howling, and nobody could hear him. So he went round the walls, and found at last what he thought to be a rope hanging from the wall. He clutched it, saying to himself, "Oh my love has left a rope for me to climb." By the help of that rope he climbed over the wall, got to the other side, missed his footing, and fell down. The noise roused the inmates of the house. The girl came out and found the man there in a faint. She revived him, and noticing that he was smelling very unpleasantly, she said, "What is the matter with you? Why this stench on your body? How did you come into the house?" He said, "Why, did not my love put that rope there?" She smiled and said, "What, love? We are for money, and do you think that I let down a rope for you, fool that you are? How did you cross the river?" "Why, I got hold of a log of wood." "Let us go and see," said the girl. The rope was a cobra, a tremendously poisonous serpent, whose least touch meant death. It had its head in a hole, and was getting in when the man caught hold of its tail which he thought was a rope. The madness of Love made him do it. When the serpent has its head in its hole and its body out and you catch hold of it, it will not let its head come out, so the man climbed up by it, but the force of the pull killed the

serpent. "Where did you get the log?" "It was floating down the river". The log was a festering dead body; the stream had washed it down and he took it for a log which explained why he had such an unpleasant odour. The woman looked at him and said, "I never believed in love; we never do; but if this is not love, the Lord have mercy on me. But, my friend, why do you give that heart to a woman like me? Why do you not give it to God? You will be perfect."

It was a thunderbolt to the man. He got a glimpse of the beyond for a moment. "Is there a God?" "Yes, yes, my friend, there is," said the woman. The man walked out and went into a forest and began to weep and pray. "I want Thee, Oh Lord! This tide of my love cannot find a receptacle in little human beings. I want to love where this mighty river of my love can go, the ocean of love; this tremendous rushing river of my love cannot be contained in little pools, it wants the infinite Ocean. Thou art that; come Thou to me." He later on became a great saint. His name was Vilva Mangala.

Here is another account of the life of a saint in South India called Pattinathar. He was a merchant prince, did huge business and owned many ships which carried cargo to the ends of the world, which brought millions and millions. He was involved in his trade day and night and had no time for any other thought. One day a box was handed over to him as a gift by a wayside fakir. He was curious to know what was inside the box. When he opened it there was a smaller box within it, yet another smaller one in it and so on. In the last box, there was a broken needle in a tattered cloth with the saying, "Even a broken needle will not come with you when you die." This made a lightning impression on him. He suddenly became aware of the unreality of this world, its wealth and fame. It dawned on him that all the wealth he was earning would not be of any use, when he died. Along with it came the thought that he was wasting his life on useless matters. Rejecting this unreal world to strive after the eternal reality

the universe, namely, God, struck him as the only worth-while thing to do. With the dawn of this light, he left his house, family, friends and wealth, became a mendicant in search of God and knowledge. After great striving and privations, he became one of the greatest saints of his time.

The life of St. Francis of Assisi is familiar throughout Christendom. His father was a merchant and in his youth he was not free from weaknesses. He was the recognised leader of the young men of the town. One day he gave a banquet to his friends and after that they went forth into the streets, with Francis as their leader. After a time they missed him and on searching for him, found him in a trance, a permanently altered man. The determining episode of his life followed soon after. He had a special horror of lepers and was passing by one of them. But immediately a heroic act of self-conquest overcame him and he returned, gave the leper all his money and kissed his hands. From that day he gave himself up to the service of the lepers. One day during mass, the following words of the Gospel came to him as a call: "The kingdom of God is at hand, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers. Freely have you received, freely give. Carry neither gold nor silver nor money in your girdles, nor bag nor two coats, nor sandals or staff, for the workman is worthy of his hire". The rest of his life was spent in abject poverty and service to the poor and the lepers. He loved all creatures and called them brothers and sisters. In his last illness he was cauterized. When he saw the burning iron he addressed it as "brother fire." He became a mystic irradiated with the love of God and endowed with the spirit of prayer to an extraordinary degree.

The question may be asked, how do these persons get this extraordinary singleness of purpose and strength to follow their ideal. Swami Vivekananda gives the answer in an illuminating manner by the following parable: "Suppose there is a thief in a room and somehow he comes to know that there is a vast mass of gold in the next room and that there is only a thin partition between the two rooms. What would be the condition of that

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. I, 1962, pp. 485—87.

thief? He would be sleepless, he would not be able to sleep or do anything. His whole mind will be on getting that gold. In the same way, as soon as a man is sure that there is a much higher life than that which he is leading here, as soon as he feels sure that the senses are not all, that this limited material body is nothing, compared to the immortal, eternal, undying bliss of the self, he becomes mad until he finds out that bliss for himself. This madness, this thirst is called awakening, conversion or sublimation."¹

While the urge for higher knowledge can come by a chance word, sight, thought or incident as may be seen in the lives of many saints in all nations of the world, the attainment of higher knowledge and the sublimation of hearts and minds have been achieved only through strenuous striving, which are familiar to those who have studied the lives of these Saints. This awakening to higher knowledge means giving up the self by identifying with a larger entity, which has been named variously as God, Providence, Almighty or Divine. In all the great and integrated lives we see how a thought occurred and led to a master passion which claimed the best in them, unifying and heightening all their powers. Such a thought redeems us from an empty wasted life, and leads us to a higher world of spiritual satisfaction and power.

The greatest sublimation in man is probably brought about through love. By love is not meant sensual emotion or mercenary motive. Love is not an affair of the senses. It is an expression of the soul. Its creative breath goes forth and renews the face of the earth. More than any other agency, it is love which has spiritualized man. Through it, we touch another world of higher reality where all is exalted and poignant, where joy is ineffable and unearthly. Even the highest sublimation which results in the realisation of one's spiritual unity with the cosmic spirit, can be attained by every man, woman and child if only they want

it sufficiently and strive for it. As proclaimed by Swami Vivekananda, "Each soul is potentially divine. Manifest this divinity either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy by one or more or all of these and be free."

Thus this great sublimation of the human mind, can be attained through selfless work, (*Karma-yoga*), through love (*Bhakti-yoga*) through spiritual contemplation (*Raja-yoga*) and through knowledge. (*gnana-yoga*). In the following chapters, we can read the inspiring words of the great Swami as to how it can be done.

1. *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II. p. 46.

XX SUBLIMATION THROUGH WORK

Man is active by nature. He must be doing some work or other, physical or mental. Every work that he does, every movement of his body, every thought that he thinks, leaves an impression on his mind. Sometimes he is conscious of those impressions and at other times they may exert a semi-conscious influence.

The question then arises which of these actions are good, and which are bad? No action is wholly good or bad. As Swami Vivekananda has said, we cannot draw a line of demarcation and say this action is entirely good, and this is entirely evil. There is no action which does not bear good and evil fruits at the same time. To take an example: One may deliver a good lecture and may be considered to be doing good that way, but at the same time he is perhaps killing thousands of microbes in the atmosphere. If we analyse our evil actions, we may find that some good possibly results from them somewhere. Therefore, there cannot be any action which is perfectly pure or wholly impure, taking purity and impurity to mean non-injury and injury.

Therefore let us not delude ourselves into thinking that we are helping the world by doing good. When we serve, let us remember, while it is apparently to help the world, it is really to help ourselves. The desire to do good is the highest motive power in man if only we have the proper attitude for service. Let us not stand on a high pedestal and take a few pies and give them

to a poor man in a patronising manner. On the other hand, let us be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by helping him we are able to help ourselves. It is not the receiver that is blessed but the giver. We ought to be thankful that we are allowed to exercise our spirit of charity and compassion, and thus become pure and unselfish.

Swami Vivekananda has said: "Let us give up the vain talk of doing good to the world. It is not waiting for your or my or anybody's help. Yet we must work and constantly do good, because it is a blessing to ourselves. That is the only way we can reach perfection. None whom we have helped has ever owed anything to us; we owe everything to him, because he has allowed us to exercise our charity on him. It is entirely wrong to think that we have done, or can do, good to the world, or to think that we have helped such and such people. It is a foolish thought and it is such foolish thoughts that bring misery. We think that we have helped some man and expect him to thank us and because he does not, we get disappointed and unhappiness comes to us. Why should we expect anything in return for what we do? Be grateful to the man you help, think of him as God. Is it not a great privilege to be allowed to worship God by helping our fellow-men? If we are really unattached, we should escape all the pain of vain expectation, and would cheerfully do good work in the world.

Therefore, be 'unattached'; let things work; let brain centres work; work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible. This world is not our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing. Remember that the whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature. The very reason of nature's existence is for the education of the soul; it has no other meaning; it is there because the soul must have knowledge, and through knowledge free itself. If we remember this always, we shall never be attached to nature; we shall know that nature is a

book in which we are to read, and that when we have gained the required knowledge, the book is of no more value to us. Instead of that thinking however, we are identifying ourselves with nature; we are thinking that the soul is for nature, that the spirit is for the flesh. We are continuously making this mistake; we are regarding nature as ourselves and are becoming attached to it; and as soon as this attachment comes, it binds us down and makes us work not with freedom but like slaves.

The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but not do slave's work. Ninety-nine percent of mankind work like slaves, and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! Work through love! The word 'love' is very difficult to understand; love never comes until there is freedom. No true love is possible in the slave. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our work is not true work. This is true of work done for relatives and friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is slave's work; and here is a test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no lack of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Therefore, true love can never react so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a man loves a woman; he wishes to have her all to himself and feels extremely jealous about her every movement; he wants her to sit near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not love; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love. It cannot be love, because it is painful; if she does not do what he wants, it brings him pain. With love there is no painful reaction; love only brings a reaction of bliss; if it does not, it is not love; it is mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the universe, in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be unattached.

If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment working as master of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. There are two things which guide the conduct of men: might and mercy. The exercise of might is invariably the exercise of selfishness. All men and women try to make the most of whatever power or advantage they have. Mercy is heaven itself; to be good, we have all to be merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. All thoughts of obtaining return for the work we do, hinders our spiritual progress; nay, in the end it brings misery. There is another way in which this idea of mercy and selfless charity can be put into practice: that is, by looking upon work as 'worship'. Here we give up all the fruits of our work unto the Lord, and worshipping Him thus, we have no right to expect anything from mankind for the work we do. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man by giving rise to attachment to results. The unselfish and unattached man may live in the very heart of a crowded and sinful city; he will not be touched by sin.

This world's wheel within wheel is a terrible mechanism; if we put our hands in it, as soon as we are caught we are gone. We all think that when we have done a certain duty, we shall be at rest; but before we have done a part of that duty, another is already in waiting. We are all being dragged along by this mighty complex world-machine. There are only two ways to get out of it; one is to give up all concern with the machine, to let it go and stand aside, to give up our desires. That is very easy to say, but is almost impossible to do. The other way is to plunge into the world and learn the secret of work, and that is the way of *Karma-yoga*. Do not fly away from the wheels of the world-machine, but stand inside it and learn the secret of work.

We have seen that work is a part of nature's foundation and goes on endlessly. Those who believe in God understand this better, because they know that God is not such an incapable being as will need our help. Although this universe will go on always our goal is freedom, our goal is unselfishness; and according to

Karma-yoga, that goal is to be reached through work. All ideas of making the world perfectly happy, may be good as motive powers for fanatics; but we must know that fanaticism brings forth as much evil as good. The *Karma-yogi* asks, why do you require any motive to work other than the inborn love of freedom. Be beyond the common wordly motives. "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." Man can train himself to know and to practise that, says the *Karma-yogi*. When the idea of doing good becomes a part of his very being, then he will not seek for any motive outside. Let us do good because it is good to do good: he who does good work even in order to get to heaven binds himself down, says the *Karma-yogi*. Any work that is done with even the least selfish motive instead of making us free, forges on one more chain on our feet.

So the only way is to give up all the fruits of work, to be un-attached to them. Know that this world is not we, nor are we this world; that we are not the body; but we are the Self, eternally at rest and at peace. Why should we be bound by anything? It is very good to say that we should be perfectly non-attached, but what is the way to do it? Every good work we do without any ulterior motive instead of forging a new chain, will break one of the links in the existing chain. Every good thought that we send to the world without thinking of any return, will be stored up there and break one link in the chain, and make us purer and purer, until we become the purest of mortals.

There was one man who actually carried this teaching of *Karma-yoga* 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, namely, heaven or a good life after death. 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 truth." He was, in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives and what man worked more than he? There is not in history one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character with such high philosophy and 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-yogi*, acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to be the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul-power that has ever been manifested. 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 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.¹

1. *Karma Yoga* by Swami Vivekananda.

XXI TAKE CARE OF THE MEANS

"One of the greatest lessons I have learned in my life," declared Swami Vivekananda, "is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He was a great man from whom I learned it, and his own life was a practical demonstration of this great principle, and it appears to me that all the secret of success is there; to pay as much attention to the means as to the end." One of the defects in our lives is that we are so much drawn to the ideal and the goal is so enchanting and alluring in our mental horizon, that we lose sight of the means.

Whenever failure comes, if it is analysed critically, in ninety-nine percent of cases, it would be because we did not pay attention to the means. We do not sufficiently understand that it is the cause that produces the effect. The effect cannot come by itself. Unless the cause is sufficiently strong and powerful, the proper effect will not be produced. Once the ideal is chosen and the means determined, we may almost lose sight of the ideal, because we are sure to achieve it, when the means are perfected. When the means are all right, the consequence merely follows. When the cause is there, the effect is bound to come. Proper attention to the finishing, strengthening of the means, is what is needed. The means are the cause: attention to the means therefore, is the great secret of work.

In our lives, often the greatest cause of sorrow is this: we take up something, put our whole energy to it and find,

perhaps, that we have failed. We know that our continuing to cling to it can only bring us misery, still, we cannot tear ourselves away from it. We find ourselves in the position of the bee which came to suck honey and got its feet stuck and could not extricate itself. This is the fact of existence. We came here to suck honey, and we find our hands and feet stuck. We came to catch and are ourselves caught. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. This goes on all the time. We are being worked upon by other minds, while we struggle to work on other minds. We want to enjoy the pleasures of life; and the pleasures eat into our vitals. We want to get everything from nature, but we find in the long run that nature takes away everything from us. The reason for this, is that we are too attached to the work we do and to its consequences. Therefore, says the *Gita*: Work constantly; work, but be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much coveted however great the pangs of misery reserve the power to leave it whenever you want.

Swami Vivekananda has said: "Attachment and our sense of possession are the sources of all our pleasures. We are attached to our friends, we are attached to our intellectual and spiritual work; we are attached to external objects to get pleasure from them. What else brings misery but this very attachment? We have to detach ourselves to earn joy. If only we had power to detach ourselves at will, there would not be any misery. That man alone will be able to get the best of nature who, having the power of attaching himself to a thing with all his energy, has also the power to detach himself when he should do so. There must be as much power of attachment as that of detachment. There are men who are never attached by anything. They can never love, they are hard-hearted and apathetic; they escape most of the miseries of life. They are like the wall; the wall never feels misery, the wall never loves, is never hurt; but it is only a wall, after all. Surely it is better to be attached and caught than be a

to return blow for blow, cheating for cheating, lie for lie, to hit back with all our might. Then it requires a super-divine power not to hit back, to keep control, to be unattached.

"Such control is very difficult, but we can overcome the difficulty by constant practice. We must learn that nothing can happen to us, unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. No disease can come to me unless the body is ready; it does not depend on the germs alone, but upon a certain pre-disposition which is already in the body. We get only that for which we are fitted. Let us understand that never is misery undeserved. There never has been a blow undeserved; there never has been an evil for which we did not pave the way with our own hands. We ought to know that. Let us analyse ourselves and we will find that every blow we have received, came because we have prepared ourselves for it. We did half and the external world did the other half; that is how the blow came. At the same time, from this very analysis, will come a note of hope, namely "I have no control of the external world, but that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is under my control. If the two together are required to make a failure, if the two together are necessary to give me a blow, I will not contribute the one which is in my keeping; how then can the blow come? If I get real control of myself, the blow will never come."¹

We get only what we desire. It is a lie when we say, the world is bad but we are good. It can never be so. It is a terrible lie we tell ourselves. This is the first lesson to learn; be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon anyone outside, but be a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself. You will find that to be always true. Get hold of yourself.

We are to take care of ourselves—that much we can do. Let us perfect the means; the end will take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect.

¹ *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II, p. 1-9.*

wall. Therefore the man who never loves, who is hard and stony escaping most of the miseries of life escapes also its joys. That is a callous state. That is weakness, that is death. We do not want that. We not only want the mighty power of love, the mighty power of attachment, the power of throwing our whole soul upon a single object, losing ourselves and letting ourselves be annihilated, as it were, for other souls, but along with it, the power to detach ourselves and be unaffected by the consequences. The perfect man can put his whole soul upon that one point of love, yet he is unattached. How comes this to happen?

We are all beggars because we always beg for things, comforts and the like. We are all traders, for whatever we do, we want a return. We are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we are traders in religion. Alas! We are also traders in love. If you come to trade, if it is a question of give-and-take, if it is a question of buy-and-sell, abide by the laws of buying and selling. There is a bad time and there is a good time; there is a rise, and a fall in prices; always you expect the blow to come. This is buying and selling, giving and taking. In this process of working we get caught, not by what we give, but by what we expect. We get misery in return for our love; not from the fact that we love, but from the fact that we want love in return. There is no misery where there is no desire. Desire is the basis of all misery. Desires are bound by the laws of success and failure. Desires must bring misery, when we fail to get what we desire.

The great secret of true success and happiness is not to expect anything in return. That man who asks for no return that perfectly unselfish man is the most successful. It seems to be a paradox. Do we not know that every man who is unselfish in life gets cheated, gets hurt? Apparently, yes. "Christ was unselfish, and yet he was crucified". True, but we know that His unselfishness is the reason, the cause of a great victory, the crowning of millions of lives with the blessings of true success.

Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have; it will come back to you—but do not think of that now. It will come back multiplied a thousandfold—but the attention must not be on that. Yet we must have the power to give; give, and there it ends. We should learn that the whole of life is giving. Nature will force us to give. So let us give willingly. Sooner or later we will have to give up. We come into life to accumulate. With clenched hands, we want to take. But nature puts a hand on our throat and makes our hands open. Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment one says, 'I will not,' the blow comes; and he is hurt. None is there but will be compelled, in the long run to give up everything. And the more one struggles against this law, the more miserable one feels. It is because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable. The frost is gone, but we get heat in return. The sun is taking up water from the ocean, to return it in showers. You are a machine for taking and giving; you take in order to give. Ask, therefore, nothing in return, but the more you give, the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air. If you closed all the doors and every aperture, that which is within, will remain, but that which is outside will never come in and that which is within will stagnate, degenerate, and become poisoned. A river is continuously emptying itself into the ocean and is continuously being filled up again. Bar not exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

"Be, therefore, not a beggar; be unattached. This is the most difficult task of life! You do not calculate the dangers on the path. Even by intellectually recognising the difficulties, we do not know them really until we feel them. From a distance we may get a general view of park. We feel and really know it only when we are in it. Even if every attempt of ours is a failure, and we bleed and are torn asunder, yet, through all this, we have to preserve our heart—then we must assert our God-head in the midst of all these difficulties. Nature wants us to react,

XXII DO YOUR DUTY

To do one's duty properly, it is necessary to know what one's duty is. The idea of duty may be different in different communities and it may also change according to situations. To the Mohammedan what is written in the Koran, is duty; the Hindu considers that what is written in the *Vedas* is his duty; and the Christian regards as his duty what is written in the Bible. The idea of duty also varies according to different states in life, in different historical periods and different nations. What may be the duty of the child may not be the duty of the father. Thus considered going to school is the duty of the boy or girl, but it ceases to be a duty when he or she gets employed. Performance of *yagnas* and sacrifices was considered a duty in the vedic times; but today the notion of *yajnas* has completely changed. Only service of the poor, the downtrodden and the sick are now considered *yajna*. The conception of obligatory actions, also conditions differ from country to country. Therefore, it is impossible to define clearly the term 'duty'. We can only get an idea of it through its practice. Duty as commonly understood everywhere is in following the dictates of one's conscience.

But what is it that makes an act a duty? If a non-Hindu has beef placed before him but does not eat it even to save his own life and does not give it to save the life of another man, he is bound to feel that he has not done his duty. On the other hand, if a Hindu dares to eat that beef or to give it to another Hindu,

he is equally sure to feel that he too has not done his duty; each one's training and education makes him feel that way. Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he will feel sorry for it, conscious of having done wrong. But if the same man, as a soldier kills not one but a thousands in a war, he will feel gratified and think that he has done his duty wonderfully well. Thus to give an objective definition of duty is well-nigh impossible. But duty can be defined from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go Godward is a good action, and doing it is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to degrade and brutalise us. It is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kinds of tendencies in relation to persons of all sorts and in all conditions. There is, however, one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind in all ages, sects and countries, and that has been summed up in the saying "Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin".

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, reference had been made to duties based on birth and position in life. Birth and position in society largely determine the mental and moral attitude of individuals towards the various activities of life. It is therefore our duty to do that work which will exalt and ennoble us in accordance with the ideas and activities of the society in which we are born. But it must be remembered that the same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and countries. Ignorance of this is the main cause of hatred of one nation towards another. A westerner thinks that whatever he does in accordance with the customs of his country is the best for all people, and that whoever does not follow his customs must be doing wrong. The Indian may think that his are the only right customs and the best in the world, and whosoever does not follow them must be a bad man. This is the cause of our pride and prejudices towards other people.

We ought to try to see the duty of others through their own eyes and never judge the customs of other people by our own

standards. No one is the standard of the universe. All of us have to accommodate ourselves to the world. Environments change the nature of our duties, and doing the duty which is ours at any particular time is the best thing we can do in this world. Let us do that duty which is ours by birth; and when we have done that, let us do the duty which is ours by our position in life and in society.

But greater than this is when there is no selfish motive in prompt performance of duty. It is work through the sense of duty that leads us to work unselfishly. When work becomes worship, then will work be done for its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be in the form of ethics or of love, is the same, namely, the attenuating of the lower self, so that the real higher self may shine forth; lessening the frittering away of energies on the lower plane of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher plane. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires which performance of duty requires. By so limiting selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the divine nature of man.

Duty is seldom sweet. As Swami Vivekananda said, "Only when love greases its wheels, it runs smoothly; otherwise it is a continuous friction. How else could parents do their duties to their children, husbands to their wives and vice versa? We meet with cases of friction every day in our lives. Duty is sweet only through love, and love shines in freedom alone. It is not freedom, if one is a slave to the senses, to anger, to jealousies and a hundred other petty things that occur every day in human life. In all these little roughnesses that we meet in life, the highest expression of freedom is to forbear.

"The only way to rise above these frictions, is by doing the duty immediately before us, and thus be gathering strength and to go on until we reach the highest state. This can be illustrated by a beautiful story. A young *sanyasin* went to a forest; there he meditated, worshipped and practised *yoga* for a long time. After years of hard work and practice, one day he was sitting under a

tree, when some dry leaves fell upon his head. He looked up and saw a crow and a crane fighting on the top of the tree, which made him very angry. He said, 'What! Dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!' With these words, as he angrily glanced at them, a flash of fire went out of his head—such was the *yogi's* power—and burnt the birds to ashes. He was very glad, almost overjoyed at this development of power, that he could burn the crow and the crane just by a look. After some time, he went to the town to beg his bread. He stood at a door and said, 'Mother, give me food.' A voice came from inside the house, 'Wait a little, my son.' The young *yogi* thought, 'You wretched woman, how dare you make me wait. You do not know my power yet.' While he was thinking thus, the voice came again: 'Boy, don't be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crow nor crane.' He was astonished; still he had to wait. At last the woman came, and he fell at her feet and said, 'Mother how did you know that?' She said: 'My boy, I do not know your *yoga* or your practice. I am an ordinary woman. I made you wait because my husband is ill, and I was nursing him. All my life I have struggled to do my duty. When I was unmarried, I did my duty to my parents; now that I am married, I do my duty to my husband; that is all the *yoga* I practise. But by doing my duty I have become illumined; that I could read your thoughts and know what you had done in the forest.' According to the Hindu code of ethics, man has various kind of duties, namely the duty towards one's family and ancestors, duty towards guests and God, duties towards society and mankind. Every cultured and educated man is expected to perform to the best of his ability, all these duties in his daily life.

"The worker who is attached to results grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot. The unattached worker finds all duties equally good, and forms efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality can be killed, and the freedom of the soul attained. Our duties are determined by our deserts. Competition rouses envy and kill the kindness of heart. To the grumbler all duties are distasteful; nothing will

ever satisfy him, and his whole life is doomed to prove a failure. Let us work on fulfilling, as we go on whatever happens to be our duty, and by being ever ready to put our shoulders to the wheel. Then surely shall we see the light!"¹

By controlling one's selfish desires and interests in the constant performance of one's duty there comes a stage when one ceases to think about one's own self. Swamiji has illustrated this by a beautiful story. "After the battle of Kurukshetra the five *Pandava* brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice, the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose, half of whose body was golden, and the other half brown; and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, 'you are all liars; this is no sacrifice'. What! they exclaimed, 'Do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and every one became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed!' But the mongoose said, 'There was once a little village, and in it dwelt a poor Brahmin with his wife, his son and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts made to them, for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three-year famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat, there was a knock at the door. The father opened it, and there stood a guest. Now, in India a guest is a sacred person; he is God for the time being, and must be treated as such. So the poor Brahmin said, 'Come in, Sir; you are welcome.' He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger.' Then the wife said to her

husband, 'Give him my share,' but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.' Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, 'Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfil his obligations.' The guest ate that, but remained still unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor, and when I rolled my body on them, half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is not a sacrifice."

The fundamental basis of all morality and religion and their very perfection is complete self-abnegation, i. e., readiness to sacrifice mind, body and everything for another being. This is the highest result of doing work. Such a man, even though he has not studied anything or believed in a personal God has reached the same stage, which the man of religion has come through his prayer or the philosopher through his knowledge. Mankind will always stand in awe and reverence before the man who is ready to sacrifice himself for others.

1. *Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. I, pp. 68-69.

XXIII SUBLIMATION THROUGH LOVE

Of all the forces that have motivated human mind to action, love is perhaps the greatest. Selfishness, enjoyment, amassing of wealth, jealousy, fear and hatred have also moved men and women towards action. But these have not been strong enough motivations to achieve great purpose in life. Emperors and kings employed artists and sculptors to build palaces and museums in their names. They made painters paint their figures and authors write their lives and induced poets to immortalize them through their poems. While their vanities had been satisfied, it was for posterity to judge the excellence or otherwise of those paintings, sculptures, books or songs. If we examine the work of artists, poets and sculptors, we will find that it is not the works which glorified kings and emperors, or were created for love of wealth or love of woman, or from fear that were recognised as the finest and greatest works of art; but only those which had been produced out of the fullness of heart, and inspired by love of God. Thus we see that the paintings and scriptures of Michelangelo in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, continue to be the greatest in Christendom and the sculptures in the Temples of India continue to inspire and enlighten millions of people through thousands of years. The Bible, the Gita, the Koran, and others are still the most widely read books in the world. The songs of Thygaraja in Telugu, Thevaram in Tamil, Tulasidas *Ramayana* in Hindi and the devotional lyrics in all languages are the most

inspiring literature of humanity. This only proves that it is the higher appeal of devotion to God that has been the motive power for drawing out the best in man.

Love given to God is called '*bhakti*' and the path of *bhakti* is called '*Bhakti yoga*'. *Bhakti Yoga* is the science of higher love. It shows us how to direct, control and manage love and how to obtain the highest and most glorious results therefrom. In the *Bhakti Yoga*, as Swami Vivekananda has said, the essential secret is to know that the various passions, feelings and emotions in the human heart are not wrong in themselves, but that they only have to be carefully controlled, sublimated and directed until they acquire excellence. The highest direction is that which takes us towards God; every other direction is lower.

To the vast majority of mankind, the body is everything; the body is their universe and bodily enjoyment their be all and end all. We manage to maintain our bodies more or less satisfactorily for longer or shorter lengths of time. Nevertheless our bodies have to go; there is no permanence about them. Blessed are they whose bodies get destroyed in the service of others. The sages always hold ready their wealth, and even their life for the service of others. In this world, only one thing is certain, and that is death. It is far better that this body dies in a good cause than in a bad one. We may drag on our life for fifty years or a hundred years, but after that, what happens? Everything that is the result of combination of matter must get dissolved and die. The body is a combination of various elements and particles of matter. There must come a time for it to be decomposed. In this evanescent world, where everything ultimately falls to pieces, we must make the best use of the time we have, and the best use of life is to hold it at the service of humanity.

We have to begin by loving God first. Everything is His and He is my Lover; I love Him,' says the *bhakta*. In this way everything becomes sacred to the *bhakta*, because all things are His. All are His children, His body, His manifestation. How

then may we hurt anyone? How then may we not love anyone? With the love of God will come the love of everyone in the universe. The nearer we approach towards God, the more do we begin to see that all things are in Him. When the soul succeeds in appropriating the bliss of this supreme love, it also begins to see Him in everything. Our heart thus becomes an eternal fountain of love. When we reach even higher states of love, all the little differences between the things of the world are entirely lost. Man is seen no more as man, but only as God, an animal is seen no more as an animal, but as God; even the tiger is no more a tiger, but a manifestation of God. Thus, in this intense state of *bhakti*, worship is offered to everyone, to every life and to every being.

Love manifests itself first through reverence. Why do people show reverence to temples and holy places? Because He is worshipped there and His presence is associated with such places. Why do people in every country pay respect to teachers of religion, because all such teachers preach the Lord. At bottom, reverence comes out of love. Then comes *priti*, pleasure in God. Ordinary men take immense pleasure in the objects of the sense. Hanuman, the great devotee of Rama prayed that he might be endowed with undying love of God. Ordinary men seek love in sense pleasures. The *bhakta* wants always to think about God. The next is *viraha*, intense misery due to separation from the beloved. This state of mind makes the *bhakta* feel disturbed in the presence of anything other than his beloved i.e. God. A still higher stage is reached when life itself is maintained for the sake of the beloved, when life is considered worth living, only on account of that love. Life is sweet only because of the thought of the beloved. Even in earthly love, the lover thinks that everything belonging to his beloved is sacred and dear to him. He loves even a piece of cloth belonging to the darling of his heart. In the same way when a person loves the Lord, the whole universe becomes dear to him because it is all His.

Swami Vivekananda has pointed out that kind of intense, all-absorbing love results in a feeling of perfect self-surrender, to the Lord. Then the loving soul is able to say, if

pain comes, 'Welcome pain!' If misery comes, 'Welcome misery!' If death comes, such a *bhakta* will welcome it with a smile. The *bhakta* in this state of perfect resignation, arising out of intense love to God and all that are His, ceases to distinguish between pleasure and pain in so far as they affect him. He does not know what it is to complain of pain or misery; and this kind of uncomplaining resignation to the will of God, who is all love, is indeed a worthier acquisition than all the glory of grand and heroic performances.

As mentioned before, real love does not bargain, nor does it ask for any reward. Love is always for love's sake. The *bhakta* loves because he cannot help loving. When you see a beautiful scenery and fall in love with it you do not demand anything by way of favour from the scenery; nor does the scenery demand anything from you. Yet the vision thereof brings you to a blissful state of mind; it tones down the friction in your soul; it makes you calm, almost raises you, for the time being, beyond your mortal nature, and places you in a condition of quiet ecstasy.

To the devotees God is not a far-off being full in His own glory and standing at a distance. He is an intensely human being full of personal love and affection. Saints and devotees have woven intimate relationship with God. It may be the relationship of service as in the case of Mahavir, or of a friend as in the case of Arjuna. Many, especially mothers have worshipped and loved God like a child. Other devotees have cultivated the sweet-heart relationship with God as between a lover and his beloved. When the highest love is reached philosophy is thrown away and one forgets oneself in the madness of God-love. Then the devotee says, "Lord I do not want wealth, friends, beauty, learning or even freedom. Let me be born again and again to love you." The *bhakta* does not care for anything except love. The world may call him mad, but he answers: "The whole world is a lunatic asylum. Some are mad after worldly love, some after

name and fame, some after money and some after salvation and going to heaven. In this big lunatic asylum, I am also mad after God and I think my madness after all is the best." When a man has this love in him, he becomes eternally blessed, eternally happy. He is transfigured by this light of love and he realises at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that love, the lover and the beloved are one.¹

XXIV DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

What is personality? When we say a man has a good personality, the first thing that comes to the mind is his physical appearance. While physical appearance gives the first impression, it is not everything. Some of the greatest personalities of the world, who have wielded tremendous power over millions of men, have not had a very prepossessing appearance. Napoleon was of less than average height. Abraham Lincoln was by no means a beautiful person. Gandhiji, who before our own eyes commanded the worshipful reverence of millions of people did not have an outstanding physique. Milton was blind. Tamerlane was lame and Roosevelt a cripple. History is full of examples of women who were not very beautiful but yet commanded the loyalties of men and affected the lives of thousands of people for good or evil. Personality, thus, is something beyond the body. It is a combination of many qualities. Strength, courage, firmness, ability to inspire people are some of the qualities common to all men and women of outstanding personalities. Personality is the sum total of all biological and acquired dispositions, impulses, tendencies and instincts of the individual. "It is the total quality of an individual's behaviour, as it is revealed in his habits, thought and expression, attitudes and interests, his manner of acting and his personal philosophy of life."¹

1. *Bhakti Yoga* - by Swami Vivekananda, pp. 114, 115, 116.

1. Woodworth and Marquis, - *Psychology* p. 87

Swami Vivekananda has explained the various factors which go to develop a balanced personality. He says: "The world is one of influence. Part of our energy is used in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is, day and night, being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on, all around us. Now, to take a concrete example: a man comes, you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful and he speaks to you by the hour, but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged and ungrammatical, but all the same he makes an immense impression. Many of us have had such experiences. Therefore, it is evident that words alone cannot always produce any impression. Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism, of the man, that is what goes out and impresses you.

"Coming to the great leaders of mankind, it was their personality that counted. Take all the great authors of the past and the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many thoughts have they thought! Take all the writings that have been left to us by the past leaders of mankind; take each one of their books and appraise them. The real thoughts, new and genuine, that have been thought in this world up to this time, amount to only a handful. Read in their books the thoughts they have left for us. The authors do not appear to be giants to us, and yet we know that they were great giants in their days. What made them so? Not simply the thoughts they thought, neither the books they wrote, nor the speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone, that is their personality. As already pointed out the personality of the man makes the major influence, while his intellect and words come next. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us.

The ideal of all education, all training, should be manmaking, namely, the development of the personality of the man. But

instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What is the use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, through his magic as it were, his fellow-beings is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work.

"No physical law that we know of explains personality development. How can we explain it by chemical and physical knowledge? Can the proportion of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon or the placement of many molecules in different position, or the number of cells, etc., ever explain this mysterious personality? Yet we see, it is the real man; and it is that man that lives and moves and works, it is that man that influences and moves his fellowbeing, his intellect, books and works are but traces left behind. Compare the great teachers of religion with the great philosophers. The philosophers scarcely influenced anybody's inner man, and yet they wrote most marvellous books. The religious teachers, on the other hand, moved countries in their life time. The difference was made by personality. In the philosopher, it is a faint personality that influences; in the great prophets, it is a tremendous personality. In the former we touch the intellect, in the latter, we touch life. In the one case, it is simply a chemical process, putting certain chemical ingredients together which may gradually combine and under proper circumstances bring out a flash of light or may fail. In the other, it is like a torch that goes round quickly lighting others.

"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. Let us 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. We know that we can hasten these processes, if we are 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 know that we can help the growth of trees. Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we can help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are all the time hastening the growth of things by artificial means. If so 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 the growth in individuals? We can. Can we put a limit to the hastening? We cannot say how 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. 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.

"All the great Incarnations and Prophets are such men; they reach 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 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; in that way we can hasten our growth and hasten our development. We can become perfect, even in this life. The science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real end.

The science of *Raja Yoga* claims that it has discovered the laws which develop personality and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality. This is the secret of all education. This has a universal application. In the life of the house-holder, in the life of poor, the rich, the man of business, the spiritual man, in every one's life, the strengthening of personality is a great thing. There are laws, very fine, which are behind the physical laws, as we know. That is to say, there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence, the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer; the finest is what we call spirit; the grossest, the body. And just as it is here, in the microcosm, it is exactly the same in the macrocosm. The universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God.

"We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine, not in the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his muscles swell, and all over his body we see signs of exertion and we think the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-like things, the nerves, which bring power to the muscles; the moment one of these threads is cut off from reaching the muscles, they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power from something finer still, thought, and so on. So, it is the fine that is really the seat of power. Of course we can see the movements in the gross; but when fine movements take place, we cannot see them. When a gross thing moves, we catch it, and thus we naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the fine perhaps because the movement is so intense, that we cannot perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped to get hold of these finer forces which are the cause of the expression, the expression itself will be under control. There is a little bubble coming from the bottom of a lake; we do not see it coming all the time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface; so we can perceive thoughts only

after they develop a great deal, or after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no control over our actions, over our thoughts. But how can we have it? If we can get control over the fine movements, if we can get hold of thought at the root, before it has become thought, before it has become action, then it would be possible for us to control the whole. If there is a method by which we can analyse, investigate, understand and finally grapple with these finer powers, the finer causes then alone is it possible to have control over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every mind.

“The utility of *Raja Yoga* is to bring out the perfect man and not let him wait and wait for ages just a play-thing in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift wood carried by the waves and tossed about in the ocean. This science wants man to be strong, to take the work in his own hands, instead of leaving it to the hands of nature and get beyond this little life. But like all great achievements, this requires tremendous effort. How many years do we take to learn engineering? What amount of attention does business require! Even if the father, mother, wife or child dies, business cannot stop! Even if the heart is breaking we still have to go to our place of business. If this is what ordinary business requires, this science will require even greater application.

“Most of the other sciences deal with things that do not move, they are fixed. You can analyse the chair. The chair does not fly from you. But this science deals with the mind, which moves all the time. The moment you want to study, it slips. The mind is now in one mood, and the next moment it is different, changing all the time. In the midst of all this change, it has to be studied, understood, grasped and controlled. Therefore, it is no

wonder so few succeed in it. As in business all may not make a fortune, but everyone can make something; so also in the study of this science, each one can get a glimpse which will convince him of the truth and of the fact that there have been men, who have realised it fully.”¹

Raja Yoga and its various processes are dealt with in the next chapter.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. II pp. 13-23

XXV SUBLIMATION THROUGH CONTROL OF THE MIND

RAJA YOGA

Hindu philosophy believes that every soul is potentially divine and the goal of human life is to manifest this divinity. As Swami Vivekananda has said, religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man. This is done by controlling nature, external and internal, resulting in the sublimation of the human mind. Patanjali's yoga aphorisms are the earliest known work on *Raja Yoga*. This was written by *Patanjali* about two thousand years before Christ and belongs to the age of the *Upanishads*. Though many books have appeared later on the subject, Patanjali's yoga *sutras* continue to be the highest authority on the subject. This chapter deals with *Raja yoga* as interpreted by Swami Vivekananda.

Raja Yoga is the science through which we can attain great power and the immortal bliss that goes with it. This science puts before humanity, practical methods of attaining this state. Every science must have its own method of investigation. If you want to become an astronomer, and sit down and cry, "Astronomy!" "Astronomy!", you will never become one. If you want to be an astronomer, you must go to an observatory, take a telescope, study the stars and the planets, and then you will become an astronomer. I could preach to you thousands of sermons, but they would not make you religious until you have

practised the method. Only after practising it honestly, if we do not find the higher truth, we shall have the right to say there is no higher truth; we must work faithfully.

We do not know much about our own bodies. At best we can take a dead body and cut it in pieces; and there are some who can take a live animal and cut it in pieces in order to see what is inside the body. We know very little about them. Why is this? Because our attention is not discriminating enough to catch the very fine process that are going on within. We can know of them only when the mind becomes more subtle and enters deeper into the body, into the *prana*, the most obvious manifestation of which, is the breath. Then, along with the breath we can slowly enter the body, which will enable us to find out about the subtle forces, the nerve currents, which are flowing throughout the body. As soon as we perceive and learn to feel them, we shall begin to get control over them and over the body. The mind is also set in motion by these different nerve currents; so at last, we shall reach the state of perfect control over the body and the mind making both our servants.

According to *Raja Yoga*, power is in the subtle and through the subtle, everything else can be acquired. Swami Vivekananda illustrates this with a beautiful story. There was once a minister to a great king. He fell into disgrace. The king, as a punishment, ordered him to be shut up on the top of a very high tower. This was done, and the minister was left there to perish. The minister had a faithful wife, however, who came to the tower at night and called her husband to know what she could do to help him. He told her to return to the tower the following night and bring with her a long rope, some stout twine, packthread, silken thread, a beetle, and a little honey. Wondering much the good wife obeyed her husband and brought him the desired articles. The husband directed her to attach the silken thread firmly to the beetle, then to smear its horns with a drop of honey and to set it free on the wall of the tower with its head pointing upward. She obeyed all these instructions and the beetle started on its long

journey. Smelling the honey ahead, it slowly crept onward in the hope of reaching the honey, until at last it reached the top of the tower, when the minister grasped the beetle and got possession of the silk thread. He then told his wife to tie at the other end the packthread, and after he had drawn up the packthread, he repeated the process with the stout twine, and lastly with the rope. The rest was easy. The minister descended from the tower by means of the rope and made his escape.

In this body of ours, the breath motion is the silken thread; by laying hold of and learning to control it, we grasp the packthread of the nerve currents, and from these the stout twine of our thoughts, controlling which we reach freedom.

To achieve results in the science of *Raja Yoga*, as in other, practice is absolutely necessary. You may sit and listen or read about it all the time, but if you do not practise it you will not get one step further. Simply listening to explanations and theories will not do. We will never understand it except through experience. There are several obstructions to practise. The first obstruction is an unhealthy body. Therefore, we have to keep the body in good health and eat only what is good and healthy. The second obstruction is doubt. Therefore, we must pursue it with persistence and faith and will.

There are eight steps in *Raja Yoga* and these steps are explained below in Swami Vivekananda's words: The first is practice of *Yama* which includes non-killing, truthfulness non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving of any gifts. Next is *Niyama* meaning thereby cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study and self-surrender to God. Then come *Asana*, or posture; *Pranayama*, or control of prana; *Pratyahara*, or withdrawal of the senses from their objects; *Dharana*, of fixing the mind on a spot; *Dhyana*, or meditation; and *Samadhi* or super-consciousness.

Yama and *Niyama* are moral training; without these as the basis, no practice of yoga will succeed. As these become established, the yogi will begin to realise the fruits of his practice.

A yogi must not think of injuring anyone, by thought, word or deed. The yogis claim that, of all the energies that are in the human body, the highest is what they call *Ojas*. *Ojas* is said to be stored up in the brain, and the more *Ojas* in a man's head, the more powerful he is. One man may speak beautiful language and express beautiful thoughts, but they do not impress people. Another man speaks neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of *Ojas*.

In every man there is more or less of this *Ojas* stored up. Yogis say that that part of the human energy which is expressed through sexual action and sexual thought, when checked and controlled, easily becomes changed into *Ojas*. It is only the chaste man or woman, who can make the *Ojas* and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. If one is unchaste, spirituality goes away; one loses mental vigor and moral stamina. That is why, in all the major religious orders in the world absolute chastity is insisted upon. That is why orders as monks came into existence, eschewing marriage. There must be perfect chastity in thought, word and deed. Without it, the practice of yoga is dangerous and may lead to insanity.

Next to *Yama* and *Niyama* is *Asana* or posture. A series of exercises, physical and mental, is to be gone through every day until certain higher states are reached. Therefore, it is quite necessary that we should find a posture which we can keep long for a time. That posture which is the easiest for one should be chosen. For thinking, a certain posture may be very easy for one man, while for another, it may be very difficult. The main part of the activity will lie along the spinal column, so that the one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the three parts—the chest, the neck and the head—in a straight line. Let the whole weight of the body be supported by the ribs, and then you can have an easy, natural posture with the spine straight. Sit upright; the body must be kept straight. The spinal cord although not attached to the

vertebral column is yet inside of it. If you sit crookedly you disturb this spinal cord; so let it be free. Any time that you sit crookedly and try to meditate, you do yourself an injury.

We next come to *Pranayama*, control of breathing. One may ask what has that to do with concentrating the powers of the mind? Breath is like the flywheel of this machine, the body. In a big engine you find the flywheel first moving, and that motion is then conveyed to the rest of the machinery until the most delicate and finest mechanism in the machine is in motion. The breath is that flywheel supplying and regulating the motive power to everything in the body.

Dealing with exercises in pranayama, the first step according to the yogis, is to control the action of the lungs. What we want to do in breathing is to feel the finer motions that are going on in the body. Our minds have got externalised and have lost sight of the fine motions inside. If we can begin to feel them, we can control them. The nerve currents go all over the body, bringing life and vitality to every muscle; but we do not feel them. The yogi says we shall be able to do so by controlling the actions of the lungs. When we have done that for a sufficiently long time, we shall be able to control the finer emotions.

The first lesson in pranayama is to breathe in a measured way, in and out. That will harmonise the bodily system. When you have practised this for some time you will do well to join to it the repetition of some word as *Om*, or any other sacred word. Let the word flow in and out with the breath, rhythmically, harmoniously, and you will find the whole body becoming rhythmical. Then you will learn what rest is. Compared with it, sleep is no rest. Once this rest comes, the most tired nerves will be calmed down and you will find that you have never before experienced such rest.

The next step is *Pratyahara*. He who has succeeded in attaching or detaching his mind to or from objects at will has succeeded in *pratyahara*, which means, 'gathering towards.'

checking the out-going powers of the mind, freeing it from the thralldom of the senses. When we can do this, we shall really have character. Then we shall have taken a long step towards freedom; before that we are mere machines.

After you have practised *pratyahara* for a time, take the next step the *Dharana*, holding the mind to certain points. What is meant by holding the mind to certain points? Forcing the mind to feel certain parts of the body to the exclusion of others. For instance, try to feel only the hand, to the exclusion other parts of the body. When the *chitta*, or mind-stuff, is confined and limited to a certain place, it is *Dharana*. Along with *Dharana*, which is of various sorts, it is better to have a little play of the imagination. For instance, the mind should be made to think of one point in the heart. That is difficult; an easier way is to imagine a lotus there, a lotus full of effulgent light. Put the mind there. Or think of the lotus in the brain, as full of light.

After *Pratyahara* and *Dharana*, comes *Dhyana*, meditation. The meditative state is the highest state of existence. So long as there is desire, no real happiness can come. It is only the contemplative, dispassionate study of objects that brings to us real enjoyment and happiness. It is only to the soul that has attained the contemplative state that the world really becomes beautiful. To him who desires nothing, the manifold changes of nature are one panorama of beauty and sublimity. When, by previous preparation, the mind becomes strong and controlled, and has the power of finer perception, it should be employed in meditation. The meditation must begin with gross objects and slowly rise higher and higher, until it becomes objectless. The mind should first be employed in perceiving the external causes of sensations, then the internal motions, and then its own reactions. The mind will then acquire the power of perceiving subtle bodies and forms. When it succeeds in perceiving the motions inside the mind, it will gain the control of all mental waves, in itself, or in others, even before they have translated themselves into physical energy. And when the yogi is able to perceive these mental reactions, he

will have acquired knowledge of everything. Then will he have seen the very foundations of his mind which will be under his perfect control.

At this stage, different powers will come to the yogi; if he yields to the temptations of any of these, the road to his further progress will be barred. But if he is strong enough to reject these miraculous powers, he will attain the goal of yoga, the complete suppression of the waves in the ocean of his mind. Then the glory of the soul, undisturbed by the distractions of the mind or motions of the body, will shine forth in its full effulgence; and the yogi will find himself as he is, as he always was, the essence of knowledge, the Immortal, and the all pervading. This stage is the final stage called *Samadhi*.

The study of *Raja Yoga* takes a long time and constant practice. It would be better for aspirants who are anxious to follow this Yoga to have a room for this practice alone. Do not sleep in that room; it must be kept holy. You must not enter the room until you have bathed and are perfectly clean in body and mind. Place some flowers in that room always—they are the best surroundings for a yogi and pictures that are pleasing. Burn incense morning and evening. Have no quarrelling or anger or unholy thought in that room. Only allow those persons who are of the same thought as you, to enter it. Then gradually there will be an atmosphere of holiness in the room, so that when you are sorrowful, or doubtful, or when your mind is disturbed, the very entering into that room will make you calm. To create such an atmosphere was the idea behind temples and churches. In some temples and churches you will find it even now. By creating holy vibrations in a place, it can become and remain holy.

Sit in a straight posture, and the first thing to do is to send a current of holy thought to all creation. Mentally repeat: 'Let all beings be happy; let all beings be blissful.' Do so to the east, south, north, and west. The more you do that, the better you will feel yourself. You will find at last that the easiest way to make

ourselves healthy is to see that others are healthy, and the easiest way to make ourselves happy is to see that others are happy. Those who believe in God should pray not for money, health, or heaven but for knowledge and light; every other prayer is selfish. Then the next thing to do is to think of your own body, and see that it is strong and healthy. Freedom is never to be reached by the weak. Throw away all weakness. Tell your body that it is strong, tell your mind that it is strong, and have unbounded faith and hope in yourself. These are the steps in *Raja Yoga* through which man can control the mind; through its control, attain the highest bliss.

Those who want to be yogis must once for all give up merely nibbling at things. Take up one idea, make that one idea your life. Think of it, dream of it, and live on it. Let the brain, muscles, nerves and every part of the body be full of that idea. Just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success and this is the way spiritual giants are produced.

XXVI SUBLIMATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

JNANA YOGA

There is an interesting story in the Mahabharata. Yudhishtira was asked a question, 'What is the strangest thing in the world?' He replied, 'We see around us people dying every day, yet we think we are permanent.' This is indeed an astounding fact. We think we are eternal. The question arises whether we are just matter and dissolve with death or is there something in us which is permanent and is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed? Our bodies change, our minds change, our intellect improves. But inspite of this change we have a feeling of continuity and permanance. What is it that gives this idea of permanence? These are the problems with which *Jnana Yoga* deals.

Swami Vivekananda wanted religious beliefs also to pass the test of reason and experience. In an age of science and reason, it is necessary to present them in a form which will be acceptable to rational men and women. He has emphasized this point in all his speeches and writings and that is why his message has had such acceptance among thinking minds both in the East and the West. The vigour, strength and clarity with which he gave his message is rarely to be found elsewhere. Here are his own words on how one can obtain spiritual sublimation through reasonable knowledge:

"Man is always looking forward. He wants to know where he goes after the dissolution of his body. Various theories have been propounded, system after system has been brought forward, to suggest explanations. I shall try to place before you the sum and substance of the enquiries in this line that have been made in India. I shall try to harmonise the various thoughts on the subject, as they have come up from time to time among Indian philosophers. I shall try to harmonise the psychologists and the metaphysicians, and if possible, I shall harmonise them with modern scientific thinkers also.

"The one theme of the Vedanta philosophy is the search after unity. "What is that, by knowing which everything else is to be known?" That is the one theme. "As through the knowledge of one lump of clay all that is of clay is known, so, what is that, by knowing which this whole universe itself will be known?" That is the one search. The whole of this universe, according to the Hindu philosophers, can be resolved into one material, which they call *Akasha*. Everything that we see around us, feel, touch and taste, is simply a differentiated manifestation of this *Akasha*. It is all-pervading, fine. All that we call solids, liquids or gases, figures, forms, or bodies, the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars—everything is composed of this *Akasha*.

"What force is it which acts upon this *Akasha* and manufactures this universe out of it? Along with *Akasha* exists universal power; all that is power in the universe, manifesting as force or attraction—nay, even as thought is but a different manifestation of that one power which the Hindus call *Prana*. This *Prana*, acting on *Akasha*, is creating the whole of this universe. In the beginning of a cycle, this *Prana* as it were, sleeps in the infinite ocean of *Akasha*. It existed motionless in the beginning. Then arises motion in this ocean of *Akasha* by the action of *Prana*, and as the *Prana*, begins to move, to vibrate, out of the ocean come the various celestial systems, suns, moons, stars, the earth, human beings, animals, plants, and the manifestations of all the various

forces and phenomenon. Every manifestation of power, therefore, according to them, is this Prana. Every material manifestation is Akasha.

"Yet, this analysis is only partial. This much has been known even to modern physical science. Beyond that the research of physical science cannot reach. But the enquiry does not stop in consequence. We have not yet found that one, by knowing which everything else will be known. The next step is to resolve this *Akasha* and the *Prana* into their origin. Both can be resolved in the still higher entity which is called mind. It is out of mind, the *Mahat*, the universally existing thought-power, that these two have been produced. Thought is a still finer manifestation of being than either *Akasha* or *Prana*. It is thought that splits itself into these two. The universal thought existed in the beginning, and that manifested, changed, evolved itself into these two, *Akasha* and *Prana* and by the combination of these two, the whole universe has been produced.

We next come to psychology. The eyes and nose are not the senses of sight and smell. They are but the instruments and behind them are the organs. With every sense we have, there is first the external instrument in the physical body; behind that, in the same physical body, there is the organ; yet these are not sufficient. Suppose I am talking to you, and you are listening to me with close attention. Something happens, say, a bell rings; you will not, perhaps, hear the bell. The pulsations of that sound came to your ear, struck the tympanum, the impression was carried by the nerve into the brain; if the whole process was complete upto carrying the impulse to the brain, why did you not hear? Something else was wanting; the mind was not attached to the organ. When the mind detaches itself from the organ, the organ may bring any news to it, but the mind will not receive it. When it is attached itself to the organ, then it is possible for the mind to receive the news. Yet, even that does not complete the whole. The instruments may bring the sensation from outside, the organs may carry it inside, the mind may attach itself to the

organ, and yet the perception may not be complete. One more factor is necessary; there must be a reaction within. With this reaction comes knowledge. That which is outside sends, as it were, the current of news into my brain. My mind takes it up, and presents it to the intellect, which groups it in relation to pre-received impressions and sends a current of reaction, and with that reaction comes perception. The state of mind which reacts is called *Buddhi*, the intellect.

"Yet, even this does not complete the whole. One step more is required. Suppose here is a camera and there is a sheet of cloth, and I try to throw a picture on that sheet. What am I to do? I am to guide various rays of light through the camera to fall upon the sheet and become grouped there. Something is necessary to have the picture thrown upon. That something must be stationary, because the rays of light which I throw on it are moving, and these moving rays of light, must be gathered, unified, co-ordinated, and completed upon something which is stationary. Similar is the case with the sensations which these organs of ours are carrying inside and presenting to the mind and which the mind in its turn is presenting to the intellect. This process will not be complete unless there is something permanent in the background upon which the picture, may be formed, upon which we may unify all the different impressions. Similarly what is it that gives unity to the changing whole of our being? What is it upon which all our different impressions are pieced together, upon which the perceptions, as it were come together, reside, and form a united whole? We have found that to serve this end there must be something, and we also see that something must be relatively to the body and mind, motionless. The sheet of cloth upon which the projector throws the picture is, relatively to the rays of light, motionless, else there will be no picture. This something upon which the mind is painting all these pictures, this something upon which our sensations, carried by the mind and intellect, are placed and grouped and formed into a unity, is what is called the soul of man.

"We come next to the other aspect of philosophy. There are Buddhists who deny the whole theory of the soul that I have just now been propounding. "What need is there," says the Buddhist, "to assume something as the substratum, as the background of this body and mind? Why admit a third substance beyond this organism, composed of mind and body, a third substance called the soul?" These arguments are very powerful. Their reasoning is very strong. Body is the name of a stream of matter continuously changing. Mind is the name of a stream of consciousness or thought, continuously changing. What produces the apparent unity between these two? Take, for instance, a lighted torch and whirl it rapidly before you. You see a circle of fire. The circle does not really exist, but because the torch is continually moving, it leaves the appearance of a circle. So there is no unity in this life, it is mass of matter continually rushing down, and whole of this matter you may call one unity, but no more. So is mind; each thought is separate from every other thought; it is only the rushing current that leaves behind the illusion of unity; there is no need of a third substance. This universal phenomenon of body and mind is all that really is; do not posit something behind it. You will find that this Buddhist thought has been taken up by certain sects and schools in modern times. Thus we find these two opinions. One is that there is something behind both body and mind, which is an unchangeable and immovable substance; and the other is, that there is no such thing as immovability or unchangeability in the universe; it is all change and nothing but change. The solution of this difference comes in the next step of thought.

"It says we cannot conceive change without there being something unchangeable. We can only conceive of anything that is changeable, by knowing something which is less changeable, and this also must appear more changeable in comparison with something else which is less changeable and so on, until we are bound to admit that there must be something which never changes at all. The whole of this manifestation must have been in a state of non-manifestation, calm and silent, being the balance of opposing

forces, when no force operated, because force acts when a disturbance of the equilibrium comes in. This universe is ever hurrying on to return to that state of equilibrium again. When the dualists claim that there is something which does not change, they are perfectly right, but their analysis that it is an underlying something which is neither the body nor the mind, something separate from both, is wrong. So far as the Buddhists say that the whole universe is a mass of change, they are perfectly right. So long as I am separate from the universe, so long as I stand back and look at something before me, so long as there are two things—the looker-on and the thing looked-upon, it will appear always that the universe is one of change, continuously changing all the time. But the reality is that there is both change and changelessness in this universe. It is not that the soul and the mind and the body are three separate existences, for the organism made of these three is really one. It is the same thing which appears as the body, as the mind, and as the thing beyond mind and body, but it is not at the same time all these. He who sees the body does not see the mind; even he who sees the mind does not see that which he calls the soul; and he who sees the soul, for him the body and mind have vanished. He who sees only motion never sees absolute calm, and he who sees absolute calm for him motion has vanished. A rope is taken for a snake. He who sees the rope as the snake, for him the rope has vanished, and when the delusion ceases and he looks at the rope, the snake has vanished.

"In the darkness, one sees something like a snake. Immediately he is afraid. But when he brings light, he finds it is only a rope and is pacified. But what has been perceived later as a harmless rope, was to the same person a terrible thing namely a snake. Before knowing the real fact, he perceived it only as the snake, but after knowledge, the snake has entirely disappeared and he sees only the rope. *Thirumular* has said the same thing in another way. There are all kinds of dolls made in wood, elephants, horses etc. When children come and see them, they see them as elephants and horses and play with them as such. But when a carpenter sees them as various kinds of wood from which they are

made, he sees only the wood and not the forms. Sri Ramakrishna used to say- various forms like birds and animals are made from sugar. For children they are so many forms. The forms are real to them. But when we begin to eat, there is no more the idea of the form. We see them only as sugar. Even so, in ordinary existence man perceives the body and mind separately, but if one perceives their basic unity, he will not see them as different, but the same in different forms.

"There is then but one all comprehending existence, and that one appears as manifold. This self, or substance is all that exists in the universe. That Self, or Substance, or Soul is, in the language of non-dualism, the *Brahman*, appearing to be manifold by the interposition of name and form. Look at the waves in the sea. Not one wave is really different from the sea, but what makes the wave apparently different? name and form; the form of the wave and the name which we give to it. This is what makes it different from the sea. When the name and form go, it is the same sea. Who can make any real difference between the wave and the sea? So this whole universe is that one Unit Existence; name and form have created all these various differences. As when the sun shines upon millions of globules of water, upon each particle is seen a most perfect representation of the sun, so the one Soul, the one Self, the one Existence of the universe, being reflected on all these numerous globules of varying names and forms, appears to be various. But it is in reality only one. When discrimination comes and man finds there are not two but one, he finds that he is himself this universe.

"There is, therefore, but one *Atman*, one self, eternally pure, eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged, it has never changed; and all these various changes in the universe are but appearances in that one Self. Upon it, name and form have painted all these dreams. According to the *Advaita* philosophy, this *Maya* or ignorance-or name and form, or, as it has been called in Europe, "time space, and causality"—is the reason for our seeing the manifoldness of the universe; in substance, this universe is one.

So long only as any one thinks that there are two ultimate realities, he is mistaken. When he comes to know that there is but one, he is right.

"This is what is being proved to us everyday, on the physical plane, on the mental plane, and also on the spiritual plane. Today it has been demonstrated that you and I, the sun, the moon, and the stars are but the different names of different spots in the same ocean of matter, and that this matter is continuously changing in its configuration. The particle of the energy that was in the sun several months ago may be in the human being now; tomorrow it may be in an animal, the day after tomorrow it may be in a plant. It is ever coming and going. It is all one, unbroken, infinite mass of matter, only differentiated by names and forms. One point is called the sun; another the moon, another the star, another man, another animal; another plant; and so on. And all these names are fictitious; they have no reality, because the whole is a continuously changing mass of matter. This very same universe, from another standpoint, is an ocean of thought, where each one of us is a point called a particular mind. You are a mind, I am a mind, everyone is a mind, and the very same universe viewed from the standpoint of knowledge, when the eyes have been cleared of delusions, when the mind has become pure, appears to be the unbroken absolute Being, the ever pure, the unchangeable, the immortal.

"How is it that the whole world believes in going to heaven, and in dying and being born? I am studying a book, page after page is being read and turned over. Another page comes and is turned over. Who changes? Who comes and goes? Not I, but the book. This whole nature is a book before the soul, chapter after chapter is being read and turned over, and every now and then a scene opens. That is read and turned over. A fresh one comes, but the soul is ever the same eternal. It is nature that is changing, not the soul of man. This never changes. Birth and death are in nature, not in you. Yet the ignorant are deluded; just as we under delusion think that the sun is moving and not the earth, in

exactly the same way we think that we are dying, and not nature. These are all, therefore, hallucinations. Just as it is a hallucination when we think that the fields are moving and not the railway train, exactly in the same manner is the hallucination of birth and death. When men are in a certain frame of mind, they see this very existence as the earth, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and all those who are in the same state of mind see the same things.

"Between you and me there may be millions of beings on different planes of existence. They will never see us, nor we them; we only see those who are in the same state of mind and on the same plane with us. Those musical instruments respond which have the same attunement of vibration, as it were; if the state of vibration which they call "man—vibration", should be changed, no longer would men be seen here; the whole "man-universe" would vanish, and instead of that, other scenery would come before us, perhaps gods and the god—universe, or perhaps, for the wicked man, devils and the diabolic world; but all would be only different views of the one universe. It is this universe which, from the human plane, is seen as the earth, the sun, the moon the stars, and all such things it is this very universe which, seen from the plane of wickedness, appears as a place of punishment. And this very universe is seen as heaven by those who want to see it as heaven.

"In worshipping God, we have been always worshipping our own hidden Self. The worst lie that you ever tell yourself is that you were born a sinner or a wicked man. He alone is a sinner who sees a sinner in another man. Suppose there is a baby here, and you place a bag of gold on the table. Suppose a robber comes and takes the gold away. To the baby it is all the same; because there is no robber inside, there is no robber outside. To sinners and vile men, there is vileness outside, but not to good men. So the wicked see this universe as hell, and the partially good see it as heaven, while the perfect beings realise it as God Himself. Then alone the veil falls from the eyes, and the man, purified and cleansed, finds his whole vision changed. Then all

delusions cease, all miseries vanish, all fears come to an end for ever. Birth goes away and with it death; pains fly, and with them fly away pleasures; earths vanish, and with them vanish heavens; bodies vanish, and with them vanishes the mind also. For that man, the whole universe disappears, as it were. This searching moving, continuous struggle of forces stops for ever, and that which was manifesting itself as force and matter, as struggles of nature, as nature itself, as heaven and earth and plants and animals, and men and angels, all that becomes transfigured into one infinite, unbreakable, unchangeable existence, and the knowing man finds that he is one with that existence. Even as clouds of various colours come before the sky, remain there for a second and then vanish away, even so before this soul are all these visions coming, of earths and heavens, of the moon and the gods, of pleasures and pains: but they all pass away leaving the one infinite, blue, unchangeable sky. The sky never changes; it is the clouds that change. It is a mistake to think, that the sky is changed. It is a mistake to think that we are impure, that we are limited, that we are separate. The real man is the one Unit Existence.

"The man who has in this life attained to this state, for whom, for a minute at least, the ordinary vision of the world has changed and the reality has been apparent, he is called the "Living Free" (Jeevan mukta). This is the goal of the Vedantin, to attain freedom while living.

"Once in Western India, I was travelling in the desert country on the coast of the Indian ocean. For days and days, I used to travel on foot through the desert, but to my surprise, I saw every day beautiful lakes, with trees all around them, and the shadow of the trees upside down and vibrating there. "How wonderful it looks and they call this a desert country", I said to myself. Nearly a month I travelled, seeing these wonderful lakes and trees and plants. One day I was very thirsty and wanted to have a drink of water, so I started to go to one of these clear, beautiful lakes, and as I approached, it vanished. And with a flash it came to my brain, " This is the mirage about which I have

read all my life," and with that same also, the idea that throughout the whole of this month, every day, I had been seeing the mirage and had not known it. The next morning I began my march. There was again the lake, but with it came also the idea it was the mirage and not a true lake. So it is with this universe. We are all travelling in this mirage of the world day after day, month after month, year after year, not knowing that it is a mirage. One day it will break up, but it will come back again; the body has to remain under the power of past *Karma*, and so the mirage will come back but not with the same power. Under the influence of the new knowledge the strength of *Karma* will be broken, its poison will be lost. It becomes transformed, for along with it there comes the idea that we know it now, that sharp distinction between the reality and the mirage has been known.

"Such men think that all the world is my country, the whole universe is mine, because I have clothed myself with it as my body. But we see that there are some people in this world who are ready to assert these doctrines, and at the same time do things which we should call filthy; and if we ask them why they do so, they tell us that it is our delusion and that they can do nothing wrong. What is the test by which they are to be judged? The test is here. Though evil and good are both conditioned manifestations of the soul, yet evil is the most external coating and good is the nearer coating of the real man, the Self. And unless a man cuts through the layer of evil he cannot reach the layer of good, and unless he has passed through both the layers of good and evil he cannot reach the Self. He reaches the Self; what then remains attached to him? A little *Karma*, a little bit of the momentum of past life, but it is all good momentum. Until the bad momentum is entirely worked out and past impurities are entirely burned, it is impossible for any man to see and realise truth. So, what is left attached to the man who has reached the Self and seen the truth is the remnant of the good impressions of past life, the good momentum. Even if he lives in the body and works incessantly, he works only to do good; his lips speak only benediction to all; his hands do only good work; his mind can only think good

thoughts; his presence is a blessing wherever he goes. He is himself a living blessing. Such a man will, by his very presence change even the most wicked persons into saints. Even if he does not speak, his very presence will be a blessing to mankind."

One who attains sublimation through such reasoning and knowledge is called *Jnana Yogi*. It is not mere thinking but being and becoming. It requires a tremendous will to become a *Jnana Yogi*. As the *Bhakti Yogi* works his way to complete oneness with the Supreme through love and devotion, so the *Jnana Yogi* forces his way to realisation of God by the power of pure reason and knowledge. He must be fearless. He must have the strength to go on and fearlessly follow his reason to the farthest limit.

XXVII IDEALS OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD

Swami Vivekananda wanted the highest education to be imparted to Indian women in every sphere. But he was very definite and clear about one matter that it should not be at the cost of purity. He wished our women to become intellectual, but he was emphatic that intellectuality was not the highest good; morality and spirituality were the qualities for which we should strive.

In the West, women have much greater freedom than in India. Swami Vivekananda expressed unqualified admiration for them in one of his letters. "How pure and chaste they are," he said. "They are free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school and college, earn money and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to do devote themselves to doing good to the poor." He wanted Indian girls to be brought up in the same way.

Purity is the source of all power. Pure women have faced all difficulties, with the spirit of dedication and have even met death face to face, with courage and success. The history of India as well as its mythology are full of accounts of brave women who resisted at great cost all temptations and turmoils to uphold their purity. The memories of such women are enshrined in our minds, and they will continue to inspire our children for centuries to come. Sita and Savitri are two such examples and here is what Swamiji said about them.

"Rama and Sita are the ideals of the Indian nation. All children, especially girls, worship Sita. The height of a woman's ambition is to be like Sita, the pure, the devoted, the all-suffering. When you study these characters, you can at once find out how different is the ideal in India from that of the West. Sita stands as the ideal of suffering. The West says, "Show your power by doing." India says, "Show your power by suffering." The West has solved the problem of how much a man can have. India has solved the problem of how little a man can have. Sita is typical of India, the idealised India. The question is not whether she ever lived, whether the story is history or not, we know that the ideal is there. There is no other story that has so permeated the whole nation, which has so entered into its very life, and has so mingled in every drop of blood of the race, as this ideal of Sita. Sita is the name in India for everything that is good, pure and holy; everything that in woman we call womanly. If a priest has to bless a woman he says, "Be like Sita." If he blesses a child, he says, "Be Sita!" They are children of Sita, and are struggling to be Sita, the patient, the all-suffering, the ever-faithful, the ever-pure wife. Through all the suffering she experiences, there is no harsh word against Rama. Think of the terrible injustice of her being exiled to the forest! But Sita knows no bitterness. That is, again, the Indian ideal. Says the ancient Buddha: "When a man hurts you, and you turn back to hurt him, that would not cure the first injury; it would only create in the world more wickedness." Sita was a true Indian by nature; she never returned injury.

"You may exhaust the literature of the world, what is past, before finding another Sita. Sita is unique. There may have been several Ramas, perhaps, but never more than one Sita! 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 Sita; 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 Aryavarta. There she will always be, this glorious Sita, purer than itself, all patience, and all suffering. She who

suffered that life of suffering without a murmur, she the ever-chaste and ever-pure wife, she the ideal of the people, the great Sita, our national God she must always remain. All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish for ever, but so long as there will be five Hindus living, there will be the story of Sita present. Sita has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is in the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of Sita. Any attempt to modernise our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure, as we see every day. The women of India must grow and develop, in the foot-prints of Sita, and that is the only way."

There is another ideal that has stood before the minds of Indian women throughout the centuries. That is Savitri, one who won over even death by her purity and love. Here is her story:

"There was a king called Ashvapathi. The king had a daughter who was so good and beautiful that she was called Savitri, which is the name of a sacred prayer of the Hindus. When Savitri came of age, her father asked her to choose a husband for herself. These ancient Indian princesses were very independent and chose their own princely suitors. Savitri consented and travelled to distant regions, in a golden chariot, with her guards and aged courtiers to whom her father had entrusted her stopping at different courts, and seeing different princes, but not one of them could win the heart of Savitri. They came at last to a holy hermitage.

"Now it happened that there was a king, Dyumatsena, who had been defeated by his enemies, and was deprived of his kingdom, he was struck with age and had lost his sight. This poor, old blind king, with his queen and his son, took refuge in the forest and passed his life in rigid penance. His boy's name was Satyavan. When Savitri came to this hermitage and saw Satyavan, the hermit's son, her heart was conquered. She had escaped all the princes of the palaces and the courts but here in the forest-refuge of king Dyumatsena his son, Satyavan, stole her heart.

"When Savitri returned to her father's house, he asked her, Savitri, dear daughter, speak. Did you see anybody whom you would like to marry? Then softly with blushes, said Savitri, 'yes, father.' 'What is the name of the prince?' 'He is no prince but the son of the king Dyumatsena who has lost his kingdom, a prince without any patrimony, who lives a monastic life, the life of a sanyasin in a forest, collecting roots and herbs helping and feeding his old father and mother, who live in a cottage.'

On hearing this, the father consulted the sage Narada, who happened to be then present there, and he declared it was the most ill-omened choice that was ever made. The king then asked him to explain why it was so. And Narada said, 'Within twelve months from this time the young man will die.' Then the king startled with terror, spoke. 'Savitri, this young man is going to die in twelve months, and you will become a widow: think of that! Desist from your choice, my child, you shall never be married to a short-lived and ill-fated bridegroom.' 'Never mind, father; do not ask me to marry another person and sacrifice the chastity of my mind, for I love and have accepted in my mind that good and brave Satyavan only as my husband. A maiden chooses only once, and she never departs from her truth.' When the king found that Savitri was resolute in mind and heart, he complied. Then Savitri married prince Satyavan, and quietly went from the palace of her father into the forest, to live with her chosen husband and help her husband's parents.

"Though Savitri knew the exact date when Satyavan was to die, she kept it hidden from him. Daily he went into the depths of the forest, collected fruits and flowers, gathered faggots, and then came back to the cottage, and she cooked meals and helped the old people. Thus their lives went on until the fatal day came near, only three short days remained. Savitri took a severe vow of three nights' penance and holy fast, and kept her hard vigil. She spent sorrowful and sleepless nights with fervent prayers and unseen tears till the dreaded morning dawned. That day Savitri could not bear to have him out of her sight even for a moment.

Sri Saradamani Devi, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, 'Holy Mother' as she is reverentially called, lived before our own eyes. The house in which she lived, the clothes that she wore, the vessels that she used and the people with whom she lived and moved, all these can be seen even now. She came of a very poor family and was unlettered. But yet, out of her purity, dedication and devotion, under the guidance of her master, she blossomed forth as one of the finest flowers of womanhood. Her heart and love expanded to cover all men and women who came to her from whatever country or language. Here is what Sister *Nivedita* said about her:

"To me it has always appeared that the Holy Mother is the 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 wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of the 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 a 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 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. The novice whom she may condemn for many years to beg his bread, will leave the place within the hour. He who has transgressed her code of delicacy and honour, will never enter her presence again.

And yet, she is, 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."¹

Her life, lived in the full light of the present times, has been an example of pure motherliness. She is in fact an embodiment of the cosmic principle of motherhood, wherein humanity and divinity meet. Man's highest conception of God can only be in terms of what is noblest in his nature. Therefore, motherhood, which marks the highest in love, forgiveness, selflessness and service has been held as the perfect symbol of divinity. In the modern age the Holy Mother is perhaps the most illustrious example of these qualities.

1. Sister Nivedita, *The Master I saw Him*—PP. 142—44.

She begged permission from his parents to accompany her husband when he went to gather the usual herbs and fuel, and gaining their consent, she went. Suddenly in faltering accents, he complained to his wife of feeling faint, "My head is dizzy, and my senses reel, dear Savitri, I feel sleep stealing over me; let me rest beside thee for a while." In fear and trembling she replied, 'Come, lay your head upon my lap, my dearest lord.' And he laid his burning head in the lap of his wife and ere long sighed and expired. Claspings him, her eyes flowing with tears, there she sat in the lonesome forest until the emissaries of Death approached, to take away the soul of Satyavan. But they could not come near the place where Savitri sat with the dead body of her husband, his head resting in her lap. There was a Zone of fire surrounding her, because of her purity and not one of the emissaries of Death could come within it. They all fell back from it, returned to the King Yama, the God of Death, and told him why they could not obtain the soul of this man.

"Then came Yama himself, the God of Death, who judges after a man has died, whether he is to be punished or rewarded. He could go inside that charmed circle, as he was a God. When he came to Savitri, he said, 'Daughter, give up this dead body, for know death is the fate of mortals, and death is the fate of all men.' Telling this, Yama drew the soul out. Yama having possessed himself of the soul of the young man proceeded on his way. Before he had gone far, he heard footfalls upon the dry leaves. He turned back, 'Savitri, daughter, why are you following me? This is the fate of all mortals.' 'I am not following thee, father,' replied Savitri, 'but this is also the fate of woman; she follows where her love takes her, and the eternal law separates not loving man and faithful wife.' Then said the God of Death, 'Ask for any boon, except the life of your husband.' 'If thou art pleased to grant a boon, O Lord of Death, I ask that my father-in-law may be cured of his blindness and made happy.' 'Let thy pious wish be granted, dutiful daughter.' Then the King of Death travelled on with the soul of Satyavan. Again the same footfall was heard from behind. He looked around. 'Savitri, my daughter

you are still following me'. 'Yes, my father; I cannot help doing so; I am trying all the time to go back, but the mind goes after my husband, and the body follows. The soul has already gone, for in that soul is also mine; and when you take the soul, the body follows, does it not?' 'Pleased am I with your words, fair Savitri, ask yet another boon of me, but it must not be the life of your husband.' 'Let my father-in-law regain his lost wealth and kingdom, father, if thou art pleased to grant another supplication.' "Loving daughter," Yama answered, "this boon I now bestow; but return home, for living mortals cannot go with King Yama." And then Yama pursued his way. But Savitri, meek and faithful, still followed her departed husband. Yama again turned back, 'Noble Savitri, follow not in hopeless woe.' 'I cannot choose but follow where thou takest my beloved one.' 'Then suppose, Savitri, that your husband was a sinner and has to go to hell. In that case does Savitri go with the one she loves?' 'Glad am I to follow where he goes, be it life or death, heaven or hell,' said the loving wife. 'Blessed are your words' my child, pleased am I with you, ask yet another boon, but the dead come not to life again.' Since you so permit me, then, let the imperial line of my father-in-law be not destroyed; let this kingdom descend to Satyavan's son.' And then the God of Death smiled. 'My daughter, thou shalt live again. He shall live to be a father, and thy children also shall reign in due course. Return home. Love has conquered death! Woman never loved like thee; and thou art the proof, that even I, the God of Death, am powerless against the power of the true love that abideth.'"

Sita and Savitri, though they lived in the ancient past, represent the thought and ideals which have been respected by Indian men and women throughout the centuries. In our own times there has been one who was born in our own times and whose purity, all embracing love and dedication have been so outstanding that they inspire faith even in sceptical minds.

XXVIII EDUCATION OF WOMEN

The home is the world in which the child grows into adulthood. It is the place where man learns to work with and respect people, to take care of his family and do his duty by the community. It is in the home that man acquires the spiritual qualities such as sacrifice, brotherhood, love, charity, patience and good human relationships. The home has been the nucleus for a country's growth and for promoting its ideals, welfare and progress and transmitting cultural traditions in society from the beginning of civilization. The highest aspirations of the human mind have developed in happy and well-run homes. In India, the home is regarded as the temple, where the mother is the presiding goddess.

The home in India is identified with the woman of the house. Home is really another name for the woman-the mother and the wife. Womanhood in India has always been placed in an exalted position. God is worshipped as mother who gives up her life in order to bring forth new life, rears and nurses it and loves it in spite of all its faults. The quality of love is to give while selfishness always demands. The more we love, the less we think of ourselves. It is the glory of the Indian mother and wife that she is prepared to sacrifice even her last bit for the benefit of her children and husband. It is therefore, said in the Hindu scriptures that women should be worshipped as symbols of divinity.

From very ancient times, our scriptures have emphasized the important place that women have in the shaping of human destiny. From the Vedic times to a thousand years back, women in India were free, educated and respected. The *Upanishads* contain references to women like Maitreyi, Gargi and others who attained the highest standard of learning and challenged men of scholarly repute. They were not only well versed in religion and the arts, but also in other skills. The three boons that Kaikeyi got from Dasaratha, she had earned as a reward for her having driven his chariot while in battle.

The restrictions on women began with the Muslim invasions, from which time, their status gradually dwindled until they became the slaves of men which fact contributed not a little to our national degradation. Swami Vivekananda traced the downfall of India to the continued neglect of her women and her masses. He considered ill-treatment of women and oppression of the poor as the two great evils eating into the vitals of our nation. In one of his letters from America, he speaks in great pain of the tyranny-mental, moral, and physical-that has reduced our women to the level of mere beasts of burden.

Therefore Swami Vivekananda summed up the solutions to the national problems in India in two words: Uplift of women and the masses. The first condition of growth, according to him, was freedom. Social tyranny which denied liberty to these two major elements in the nation should give place to freedom. Therefore emancipation of women and uplift of the masses formed the two most important items in Swami Vivekananda's programme of national regeneration. He exhorted men as well as women to rise above sex distinctions which were based on the body, to the perception of the *atman*-the sexless Self-which is the reality behind all living beings. True emancipation for women as well as for men, could come only through an intensification of spiritual awareness. "He would never tolerate," said Sister

Nivedita "any scheme of life and policy that tended to bind tighter on mind and soul the fetters of the body."¹

The ideal woman in India, the Swami said, was the mother, the mother first, and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the Indian mind motherhood. God is called Mother. In the West, the idea of womanhood is associated with that of the wife. In the Western home, the wife rules. In an Indian home, the mother rules. Comparing the two relationships, the Swami said, "If a Westerner asks 'what is an Indian woman as wife?' the Indian replies, 'Where is the Western woman as mother? Where is she, the all-glorious, who kept me in her body for nine months? Where is she, who would give me twenty times her life if I had need? Where is she, whose love never dies, however wicked, however vile I am? Woman is not to be coupled with the physical body only. The Hindu mind fears all those ideas which say that the flesh must cling unto the flesh. No, no! Mother! The name has been called holy once and for ever, for what name is there which no lust can ever approach, no carnality can ever come near, than the one word mother?' That is the ideal in India."²

Motherhood means tremendous responsibility. Why is the mother to be worshipped so much? Because it is she who creates the physical and mental make up of the child in a large measure. "Go to a hundred thousand colleges, read a million books, associated with all the learned men of the world—better off you are when born with the right stamp. Education and all other things come afterwards. Born unhealthy, how many drug stores, swallowed wholesale, will keep you well all through your life? Why should mother be worshipped? Because she made herself pure, she underwent harsh penances sometimes to keep herself as pure as purity can be. For what brings forth the child is the holiest symbol of God himself. She was a saint to bring me into the world; she kept her body pure, her mind pure, her food pure,

her clothes pure, her imagination pure, for years, because I would be born. Therefore, she deserves worship. Still on the sacred soil of India, the land of *Sita* and *Savitri*, women may be found with such character, such spirit of service, such affection, compassion contentment and reverence, as cannot be found anywhere else in the world."¹

All great nations have become great because they have shown respect for women. That country and that nation which does not respect women has never become great, nor will it ever in future. Manu says, "Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not respected, there all work and efforts come to naught." The real *Shakti* worshipper is he who sees in women the manifestation of shakti. The principal reason why our race has so degenerated is that we have lost our respect for these living images of Shakti. There is no hope for that family or that country where they are neglected.

With the great responsibilities women have to shoulder and the many problems they are expected to solve they need education. Manu enjoins that daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as sons. As sons should be married after they have lived as brahmacharis upto their thirtieth year, so daughters also should observe *brahmacharya* and be educated. But what has been actually happening in our country? They have all the time been brought up in a state of helplessness and dependence on others; and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the approach of the slightest mishap or danger. Women must be put in the position to solve their problems in their own way. Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.

Swami Vivekananda wanted women's education to be developed and spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character and observance of the vows of celibacy—these should be

1. Sister Nivedita—*Master I saw him*, p.286

2. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. III, pp. 57-58.

1. Swami Vivekananda—*'Our Women'*, pp. 19-24.

the primary concern. Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is in their heritage. That ideal within them should be strengthened above everything else so that they may develop strong character, by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married or single, they will acquire fearlessness and would give up their lives rather than flinch from the ideal.

Considering the needs of the age, Swami Vivekananda considered it imperative to train at least some women in the ideals of renunciation and life-long virginity. Our motherland requires for her well-being that at least some of her children become pure-souled *brahmacharis* and *brahmacharinis*. Even if one woman attains spiritual realisation, then by the radiance of her personality, thousands of women would be inspired and awakened to Truth. He wanted such *brahmacharinis* of education and character to take-up the task of teaching. In villages and towns they must open centres and strive for the spread of women's education.

In regard to the content of women's education Swamiji commended: "History and *Puranas*, house-keeping and the arts, the duties of home life and the principles that make for the development of character, have to be taught. Other matters such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work and upbringing of children will also be taught. *Japa*, worship and meditation shall form an indispensable part of their teaching. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day, it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. How grand was the Queen of Jhansi! So shall we bring to the need of India great fearless women, women worthy to continue the traditions of Sanghamitha, Lila, Ahalya Bai, and Mira Bai-woman fit to be mothers of heroes, because they are pure and fearless, strong with the strength that comes out of touching the feet of God. We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish themselves. It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men

are born. If the women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country; then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country."¹

Till the beginning of the present century the content of education at all levels was almost the same for boys and girls. Early in this century thinkers on education began to see that the different duties that women have to perform in the home and outside demanded a distinct type of education for them. This led to the evolution and development of a new subject called Home Science which lays emphasis on the utilisation of modern scientific knowledge in daily living, such as nutrition, better up-bringing of children, home nursing, health and household management, care of clothing and human relationships. Swami Vivekananda had emphasised as early as in the end of the last century these very same elements in women's education, with inculcation of spiritual values as the foundation.

XXIX EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

In the course of its long history, India has produced outstanding men and women. Buddha and Asoka in ancient days and Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi in our own times are some of them. She has never lacked great leaders. But what we have been lacking, specially in recent times are knowledge and strength and character in the large masses of our people. That the strength of a chain is that of its weakest link can well be applied to the strength of a people or a nation. Hundreds of years of poverty and starvation, foreign domination, division of our society into thousands of castes and communities, a social life in which millions of men and women were condemned to servitude, squalor, dirt and ignorance, have sapped the strength of our people and made them lose their zest for life. What is necessary therefore is the raising of the level of the people in general.

Today, more than ever, we have come to realise that individual progress is inextricably linked with the progress of the community. Our health and well being as well as that of our families, depend as much upon the cleanliness and sanitation in our homes, as on the goods we purchase in the market and the quality of drinking water that is supplied to us. Our own mental development as well as that of our children is dependent upon the intellectual level reached by the community. It is not without reason that children from certain sections have a higher level of

attainment. This is mainly due to the higher calibre of the persons they move with. Our social and moral ideas and ideals are largely influenced and regulated by the community of which we form a part. If we are to rise as a nation and be on a par with the progressive countries of the world, the general level of life and thought of our people should rise. In this great task, we must bring to bear sincerity of purpose and humility along with faith and indomitable perseverance. Every worker should consider himself a humble servant of the people. We should not stand on a pedestal, feel superior and treat the poor villagers as of a lower status. That attitude has made all our social work in the villages a failure during the last many decades. We should be grateful for the opportunity to serve. We should work, not with the mere idea of social service of uplifting others, but with the intention of uplifting and purifying ourselves through this service.

Swami Vivekananda in his wanderings saw with his own eyes the misery and poverty of our people and the depth to which they had sunk. His heart bled for them. During his historic meditation on the last rock in the southern tip of India, it pained him to think that the children of rishis and saints should have been reduced to be the next door neighbours to brutes. He considered the poor and the down-trodden as a manifestation of the Divine. "Where will you go and seek to find God?" he asked. "He is there in the poor, the depressed and the lowly. There is no greater worship than to serve them." Let us hear in his own inspiring and soul-stirring words how he felt for the masses and how he wanted to raise them.

"My heart aches to think of the condition of the poor, the low in India. They sink lower and lower every day. They feel the blow showered upon them by a cruel society, but they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. My heart is too full to express my feelings. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor for having been educated at their expense, pays not

the least heed to them. Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well-educated, well fed and well cared for.

"A nation is advanced in proportion to the education and intelligence prevailing among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, it can only be through spreading education among the masses. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their individuality. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and they will then work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas-that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature.

"My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only-hidden as it were in monasteries and forests-to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring these ideas and let them be common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language and this difficulty cannot be removed until if it is possible, the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people, who never had time to study it thoroughly! Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people. Teach the masses in the

vernaculars. Give them ideals; they will get information, but something more will be necessary. Give them culture. Until you can give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised conditions of the masses."

At the same time, Swami Vivekananda wanted Sanskrit education to go along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives prestige, power and strength to the race. Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results; and translated and preached in Pali which was the language of the day. That was grand; he spoke the language of the people and the people understood him. Ideas spread more quickly.

Swami Vivekananda proclaimed: "Remember the nation lives in the cottage. Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, 'O ye Brothers all, arise! awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!' Go and advise them to improve their own condition and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the *shastras* by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the *Brahmins*. Initiate, even down to the *Chandalas*, in these fiery *Mantras*. Also instruct them in simple words about the necessities of life and in trade, commerce, agriculture etc.

"Centuries and centuries, a thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes, kings and foreigners have taken out all their strength. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the *Upanishads* and believe 'I am the soul', 'Me fire cannot burn; Me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent. I am the Omniscient.' These conceptions of the *Vedanta* must come out from the forest and the cave, they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, and 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 their occupation, wherever they may be. How can the fishermen and all these carry out the ideas of the Upanishads? The way has been shown. If the fisherman thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if a student thinks he is the spirit, he will be a better student."

The poverty of the people, said the Swami, was the root cause of all evils in India. "Suppose you open a free school in every village, still it would be no good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living than come to the school. If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to school for education, education should go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing *sanyasis* in our country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps etc., they can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a life-time through books. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature and along with these the profound truths of Religion.

"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 part 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 them. 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."

Swami Vivekananda appealed to the young men and women of India to take up this tremendous task of the uplift of the masses. He considered three things necessary for great achievements. "First, feel from the heart," he said: "Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Are you seized with that one idea and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step.

"You may feel then; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yes, that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right? If your wives and children are against you, if all your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles."

XXX EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

Swami Vivekananda proclaimed: "My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the doors of everybody and then let men and women settle their whole fate."

"Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, 'O ye Brothers, all arise! awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!' Go and advise them how to improve their own condition and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the Shastras, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Also instruct them in simple words about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.'"¹

He wanted his disciples to buy some magic lanterns, maps, globes, chemicals etc. and go to the villages to teach them history, geography and the rudiments of science and impart to them a better understanding of the essentials of religion. He emphasised work and character rather than mere talk and love of publicity. He wrote, "Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor

learning; it is character that can cleave through adamant wall of difficulties."¹ "Do not talk; work, work, work! There is too much talk. Plunge into the force, work and bring the people towards the Lord."¹

Swami Vivekananda had a plan of work for social service for the masses of the country. He was aware of the difficulties of adult education in a poor country. He pointed out that with the present colossal poverty with the majority of people living in squalor, dirt and malnutrition, the first thing to give them was employment and the wherewithal to get at least two square meals a day. He said: "To the poor, providing food is the first step to Godliness." Therefore, adult education should not be merely literacy but must consist in improving the capacity of those taught and the quality of their work in agriculture, industry and in the art of living. Swamiji thus foresaw the need for a functional literacy movement to give a purposive slant to education, so as to raise their capacity for work and achievement. He said:

"Then only will India awake, when hundreds of largehearted men and women giving up all desire of enjoying the luxuries of life, will exert themselves to their utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance. Good motives, sincerity and infinite love can conquer the world. One single soul possessed of these virtues can destroy the dark designs of millions of hypocrites and brutes."²

He however gave one very important advice. "All combined efforts in India sink under the weight of one iniquity, we have not yet developed strict business principles. Business is business in the highest sense, and no friendship-or as it is said 'Dakshanyam'-should be there. One should keep the clearest

1. Letters of Swami Vivekananda, p. 190.

1. Letters of Swami Vivekananda. pp. 195-6.

2. Ibid, pp. 364-5:

account of everything in his charge and never, never apply the funds—to any other use whatsoever—even if one starves the next moment. This is business integrity.”¹

He wanted us to stand on our feet without depending on any foreign help. “Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time for progress has not yet come. With this end you must work...”²

Swami Vivekananda also warned against expecting success too soon. “Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Avoid jealousy and selfishness. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity and your country, and you will move the world. Remember, it is the person, the life, which is the secret of power—nothing else. Jealousy is the bane of all slaves. It is the bane of our nation. Avoid that always.”³

He also warned against partiality and back-biting, and he counselled patience and team-work. “Know partiality to be the chief cause of all evil. That is to say, if you show towards any one more love than towards somebody else, rest assured, you will be sowing the seeds of further troubles. If anybody comes to you to speak ill of any of his brothers, refuse to listen to him in toto. It is a great sin to listen even. In that lies the germ of future troubles.”⁴

“Moreover, bear with everyone’s shortcomings. Forgive offences by the million. And if you love all unselfishly, all will by degrees come to love one another. As soon as they fully understand that the interests of one depend upon those of others, everyone of them will give up jealousy. To do something

1. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda* pp. 336-8.

2. *Ibid*, p. 325.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 307-8

4. *Ibid*, p. 277.

conjointly is not in our very national character. Therefore, you must try to inaugurate that spirit of team work with the utmost care, and wait patiently.”¹

He also wanted us to cultivate the quality of obedience. “He who knows how to obey knows how to command. Learn obedience first. Among these western nations who have 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.”²

“If you want any good to come, just throw your ceremonials overboard and worship the Living God, the Man—God—everything that wears a human form—God in His universal as well as individual aspect. The universal aspect of God means this world, and worshipping it means serving it—this indeed is work, not indulging in ceremonials.”³

In his *Karma Yoga*, Swami Vivekananda has expounded the basic attitudes required of a good social worker. While it is a great privilege for all of us to be allowed to do anything for the world, let us also remember that in helping the world we really help ourselves.

While the world will always continue to be a mixture of good and evil, we should not entertain thoughts of hatred towards anyone. Our duty is to sympathise with the weak and to love even the wrongdoer. The world is a grand moral gymnasium wherein we all have to take exercise so as to become stronger spiritually. Thirdly we should not be fanatics, because fanaticism is opposed to love.⁴

Any work done with the very slightest selfish motive instead of making us free forges one more chain for our feet. So the only way is to give up the fruits of work and be unattached to them.

1. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 277

2. *Ibid*, pp. 265-6

3. *Ibid*, pp. 244-5

4. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 1, p. 83.

"The Karma Yogi asks why you require any motive to work other than the inborn love of freedom. Be beyond the common worldly motives. 'To work you have the right; but not to the fruits thereof.' Man can train himself to know and to practise that, says the Karma Yogi. When the idea of doing good becomes a part of his very being, then he will not seek for any motive outside. Let us do good because it is good to do good."¹

"Let me tell you in conclusion a few words about one man who actually carried this teaching of Karma Yoga into practice. That man is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect practice, 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 there is.' 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 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 your 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."²

Swami Vivekananda thus saw the need for a machinery to bring social service to the doors of the poor and the down-trodden. He wanted instruction given in simple language about trade, commerce, agriculture and good living. The knowledge imparted should be functional and calculated to improve the lives of the people.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, 116.
2. *Ibid*, Vol. pp. 117-8

PART II

OBJECTIVES, PROGRAMME AND ORGANISATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE

The Government of India have recently inaugurated a National Service Scheme. This is part of a larger effort to enthuse and train the youth in our schools and colleges. This comprises three wings, namely, Social Service, Military training in the National Cadet Corps and development of Sports, and the student may choose whatever of these appeals to him.

Objectives of Service

The objectives of any such National Service Scheme should be:

1. To encourage students to work with and among the people so as to develop in them a spirit of identification, sympathy and understanding with the poor, down-trodden and under-privileged in the country.
2. To make them increase their knowledge of the real conditions obtaining in our country.
3. To make academic knowledge practical by using it more and more in actual life for service of our people and for solving their problems.
4. To train the youth in democratic leadership through team work, tolerance and understanding.
5. To impart skills in programme development to enable the students to become good and competent organisers.
6. To use life situations and experience for the development of their character and integrity.
7. To train them to keep proper accounts, undertake and discharge responsibilities and develop in them a sense of patriotism and service to the country.

IV. Campaigns as Projects

1. Literacy Campaigns
2. Send the children to School Campaign
3. National Integration Campaign
4. Untouchability Removal Campaign
5. Cleanliness in Slums and Disease Eradication Campaign

It is good to remember some broad principles while organising these projects:

- a) They should meet the genuine need of the community or the particular group which they are meant to serve and their value should be apparent to the community as well as to the workers.
- b) As far as possible, the local community should be given an opportunity to participate in the planning and execution of the work.
- c) They should provide sufficient opportunity for work by the unskilled participants also.
- d) While the manual work should be realistic and strenuous, it should be held within reasonable limits so as to allow adequate room for other aspects of the programme—educational and recreational. Unless the programme is well balanced, it will not be able to sustain the interest of the youths who are likely to be drawn into the scheme.
- e) The leaders and the staff should be given adequate training, theoretical and practical, in the various functions which they will have to perform.

XXXI EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION

India is a vast country with many languages, religions and ways of life. The manner of living, dress, habits and customs have necessarily to be different in the Himalayan region where water freezes in the evening and in the South, where one never feels the severity of cold and all the year round is perpetually summer. Ethnologically, the Indian people are a mixture of several races and groups. As Swami Vivekananda has said: "The problems in India are more complicated, more momentous, than the problems in any other country. Race, religion, language, Government—all these together make a nation. The elements which compose the nations of the world are indeed very few compared to this country. Here have been the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Tartar, the Turk, the Moghul, the European—all the nations of the world, as it were, pouring their blood into this land".¹

And yet, it is amazing to see, a wonderful unity underlies this diversity. Thousands of years of living together has knit us into one vast culture. More than a thousand years ago, Sri Sankara demonstrated the unity of India when he founded his centres of learning in the four corners of India—at Badrinath in the north, at Sringeri in the south, at Dwaraka in the west and at Puri in the east. Even today the priest who does puja in Badrinath is South-Indian from near Cape Comorin, and those who offer worship at Rameswaram are from the North.

1. *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III. p. 286.

We should be clear about the educational goals of the programme. It is the needs of the community and the effort to meet them that give relevance to student activity. To the extent that we take community needs into account we have to impart to students special skills to render the type of services most-needed by the community. We may have to organize short-term courses to equip them with programme skills useful to the community.

At the same time too great an emphasis on service to the community by students may become self-defeating. It may result in the setting up of false criteria for judging the usefulness of student service programmes. In part, at least, this usefulness would lie in what the student himself gains out of his effort to be of service to the community. From this point of view it is essential to select carefully the tasks that are assigned to student groups. They must have the potentiality of enabling a student to benefit by the new skills he has acquired, to derive satisfaction from the achievement of clear though limited goals and from the experience of working with others on projects useful to society. In brief, the programmes and activities that are to be undertaken should be primarily aimed towards giving educational experience to the participating students.

Possible Projects for Service

The Seminar on the National Service Scheme conducted at the Delhi School of Social Work from the 16th to 19th of January, 1970 (pages 42-43 of the Seminar Report) has suggested some broad heads under which service projects may be planned and undertaken.

I Projects in the area of Education

1. Helping younger students with studies
2. Organising science clubs
3. Organising a library and/or a book bank
4. Organising exhibitions
5. Fund raising for educational activities

II. Projects in the area of Recreation

1. Making, renovating, collecting and distributing toys, picture-books etc. to children in institutions, including hospitals.
2. Conducting play groups for children.
3. Organising competitions and contests.
4. Organising students shows as entertainment for handicapped persons in institutions.
5. Organising hobby clubs, crafts training, dramatic groups, clubs, etc.
6. Organising celebrations on an inter-community basis.

III. Projects in the area of Health

A. HOSPITALS

1. Ward-visits, celebration of festivals and national days, recreational programmes for patients.
2. Providing occupational or hobby activity to long term patients.
3. Organising friends-in-need for individual patients.
4. Letter-writing for general ward patients.
5. Out-door patients' guidance service.
6. Organising hospital libraries.

B. OUTSIDE HOSPITALS

1. Help in blood bank work
2. Help in drug bank
3. Help in eye bank
4. Follow-up of patients discharged from hospitals

Even looking at our languages, those who have studied more than one Indian language have been struck by the remarkable fact that almost all sayings and proverbs in one Indian language have their exact counterparts in the other languages of our country. This is true not only of the four Dravidian languages of the South, but of all the languages in India. There is evidence to show that there has been much action and counter-action between the various tongues. Pilgrims, merchants and scholars have travelled freely all over the country, with the result that cultural influences were felt far beyond the region of their origin.

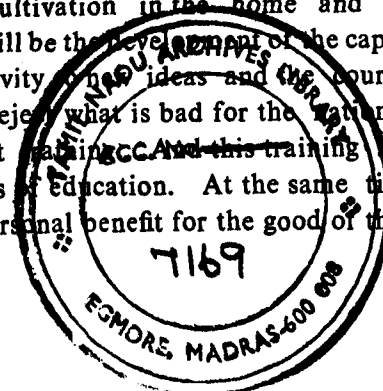
The festivals celebrated in the various parts of India have been another unifying factor. What is celebrated as Durga Puja in Bengal is celebrated as Navarathri in South India; Shivarathri, Ramanavami, Gokulashtami, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Deepavali and several other festivals have been celebrated throughout India for thousands of years. Religious fairs like Kumbha Mela have been periodically held once in twelve years in such far off places as Haridwar, Allahabad, Ujjain and Nasik from very old times, when there was no faster conveyance than one's feet or the bullock-cart. Pilgrim centres as far apart as Kashi and Rameswaram, Dwaraka and Kamakhya, have attracted Pilgrims from every part of India from times immemorial, thus helping in the evolution of a common culture for the whole of India. The modern celebration of Independence Day and Republic Day and Gandhiji's Birthday and Christmas have added to these all-India festivals. Important Muslim festivals are also celebrated throughout the country. Foreign visitors are struck by a common culture which prevails from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin in spite of differences in language, religion and dress.

At the same time in recent times there have also been manifestation of fissiparous tendencies, based mainly on religion and language. One of the fundamental policies of our educational system should be to cultivate the elements of unity, while recognising the importance of developing our various languages and of enabling various religious groups to follow their own

religions freely and without fear of interference. Education should emphasise the fundamental unity of the Indian people which transcends the differences of religion and language and which makes us one people and one nation.

Social and national integration is crucial to the creation of a strong and united nation and education alone can achieve it. Other things may help in varying measures. But a National system of education is the only agency that can reach all the people, all over India living in various conditions of economy. Education as an instrument of national integration has served other countries. There is no doubt this instrument can serve India also, if directed with a clarity of purpose and strength of will in dedicated service. Such a system of national education will have two essential features: First, cultivation of a deep sense of national, social and spiritual values, of the obligations of citizenship, and a growing identification with the nation as a whole, transcending sectional loyalties, and secondly, steady efforts to bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the under-privileged, city and village, the educated and the uneducated through provision of adequate facilities to all for their development.

This will mean that the educational system must make its contribution to the development of habits, attitudes and qualities of democratic citizenship to counteract the fissiparous tendencies which tend to divide the country. Citizenship in a democracy involves the cultivation of many intellectual, social and moral qualities. These qualities do not grow of themselves but by their constant cultivation in the home and the school. The first requisite will be the development of the capacity for clear thinking and receptivity to new ideas and the courage to accept what is good and reject what is bad for the nation. This can come only by constant training and this training should begin from the early stages of education. At the same time we should learn to sacrifice personal benefit for the good of the country. As President



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Kennedy said to the Americans, we should constantly be asking ourselves, not what India can do for us, but what we can do for India.

Now we come to the second aspect, namely, how to organize and administer the system of education, in a manner which will help national integration. The framers of our constitution have gone deeply into this matter and have incorporated wise provisions in this regard. The following are some of the general provisions:

Article 16 (1) of the Indian Constitution says: There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against, in respect of any employment or office under the State.

Article 19 (1) says that all citizens shall have the right

- (a) to freedom of speech and expression;
- (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms;
- (c) to form associations or unions;
- (d) to move freely throughout the territory of India;
- (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India;
- (f) to acquire, hold and dispose of property; and
- (g) to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.

Article 25 (1) gives absolute religious freedom to all its citizens. Subject to public order, morality and health all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.

The following provisions deal directly with Education:

Article 28 (1): No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.

(2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowments or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution.

(3) No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institutions or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.

The provisions have been made not because we are against religion, but to avoid quarrels in the name of religion. But it may be observed that this does not bar the cultivation of moral and spiritual values.

In this connection we should understand that we are a secular democracy and not a theocratic state like Pakistan. In a theocratic state, which has made one religion its basic guiding factor, the people belonging to that religion alone become full citizens of that State, while those belonging to other religions are at best tolerated in a patronising spirit. But in a secular state all are equal. Without secularism, there can't be any real democracy, there cannot be liberty of thought, expression and belief, equality of status, and equal opportunity to all the citizens. Therefore it is that after considerable thought we the Indian people have opted for a secular democracy and equality before law for all citizens to whatever religion, sect or faith they may belong.

It is necessary to understand clearly what we really mean when we say that we are a secular state. Many times the expression has been understood to mean that we stand for irreligion or that we are anti-religious. Nothing is farther from the truth. Secularism does not imply that we have forsworn religion or religious practices. The ideal of secularism is to give up prejudices against others who follow a different religion and extend equal treatment and privileges to followers of all faiths. In a secular state there should be the spirit of true religion and the environment necessary for the development of a cultured and considerate way of life. By declaring India a secular state, the Indian people have by no means rejected the Divine or the relevance of religion to life and enthroned irreligion. We only mean that the state will not identify itself with any particular religious faith; that no person shall suffer any disability or discrimination on account of his religion. All will be free to share to the fullest degree our common national heritage. This is real secularism, which means religious impartiality, and this should play a great role in moulding our national life.

Article 29 (1) says: Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language; script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

(2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 30 (1): All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

(2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

These provisions guarantee that all citizens whatever their caste, creed, religion or language, will be entitled for admission into all educational institutions, and at the same time have the freedom to follow their own religious convictions. Provision has also been made for the protection of the language and culture of the minorities.

These provisions in the constitution should help in our national integration. The National Education Commission (1966) in its report has suggested some important measures to be taken by our Educational system for this purpose:

- (a) introducing a common school system of public education;
- (b) making social and national service an integral part of education at all stages;
- (c) developing all modern Indian languages, and taking necessary steps to enrich Hindi as quickly as possible so that it is able to function effectively as the official language of the Union; and
- (d) promoting national consciousness.

In this connection, it will be good to know what lines our constitution suggests to promote the spread of Hindi and develop its structure and vocabulary. Article 351 of our Constitution states: "It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expression used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages."

In our country today there is deplorable gulf between the poor and the rich, the educated and the uneducated and the intelligentsia and the masses. Apart from economic measures for

abolishing poverty and providing employment they can only be brought together when they can get opportunities for working together. For this purpose the Education Commission has recommended some forms of social and national service. These can be organised either on a part-time basis during the period of education or on a full-time basis as recommended by the National Service Committee. The former has been recommended as more acceptable. These can be organised in two ways, namely, (a) by making participation in community services in schools and colleges a part of our general education or (b) by providing opportunities for participation in programmes of community development or national service.

The adoption and implementation of a proper language policy is a sine qua non for our national integration. In a country like ours, which has fourteen languages recognised in the constitution, the adjustment of linguistic claims presents considerable difficulties. Languages, like religion, is a matter of great emotional attachment and so has to be approached with considerable care. Along with the question of language development are inter-twined the problems of the medium of instruction in schools and colleges and the development of a common link-language for the whole country. These are very important problems and must be satisfactorily solved.

Our Education should concern itself, both in its content and methodology with the promotion of a national consciousness amongst our students in all stages of Education. The deepening of national consciousness can be fostered by two programmes: (1) the understanding of our cultural heritage, and (2) the creation of a strong driving faith in the future. The first would be promoted by a well-organised teaching of the languages and literatures, philosophy, religions and history of India, and by introducing the students to Indian architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance and drama. In addition, it would be desirable to promote greater knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the different parts of India by including their study in the

curricula, by the exchange of teachers wherever possible, by the development of fraternal relations between educational institutions in different parts of the country, and the organisation of holiday camp and summer schools on an inter-State basis designed to break down regional or linguistic barriers. It will also help to establish and maintain all-India institutions which will admit students from different parts of the country. Faith in the future should be strengthened as part of the course in citizenship, by bringing home to students the principles of the Constitution, the great human values laid down in its preamble, and the nature of the democratic and cooperative society which we desire to create.

Swami Vivekananda said : "To the Indian mind there is nothing higher than religious ideals and this is the key-note of Indian life. It is not only true that the ideal of religion is the highest ideal; in the case of India it is the only possible means of work; work in any other line, without first strengthening this could be disastrous. Therefore, the first plank in the making of a future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is this unification of religion."¹ It is necessary that we should understand clearly what he meant by religion.

To him religion was not sectarianism or ceremonial, but living the highest spiritual truths which all religions have preached and which all prophets from time to time have lived. He was against the dead formalities of religion. To him religion was realisation of godliness. He proclaimed: "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. Love for yourself means love for all. It is the great faith that will make the world better. Infinite strength is religion. It is weakness that is the source of all selfishness. It is weakness that

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. III p. 287.

makes man injure others. Realization of God and that we are the spirit will drive out all weakness and give us tremendous strength. And that is real religion"¹.

He continued: "When the life-blood is strong and pure, no disease germ can live in that body. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything will be right. Political, social, any other material defects even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure. To take a simile from modern medicine, we know that there must be two causes to produce a disease, some poisonous germs outside, and the state of the body. Until the body is in a state to admit the germs, until the body is degraded to lower vitality so that the germs may enter and thrive and multiply, there is no power in any germ in the world to produce a disease in the body. In fact, millions of germs are continually passing through everyone's body; but so long as it is vigorous, it is never conscious of them. It is only when the body is weak that these germs take possession of it and produce disease. Just so with the national life. It is when the national body is weak that all sorts of disease germs, in its political state or its social state, in its educational or intellectual state, crowd into the system and produce disease."²

Swami Vivekananda did not believe in the theory that there was a race of mankind in Southern India called Dravidians, entirely differing from another race in Northern India called the Aryans and that the South Indian Brahmins are the only Aryans that came from the North, the other men of Southern India belonging to an entirely different caste and race to those of Southern Indian Brahmins. "This is entirely unfounded," he said, "The only proof of it is, that there is a difference of language between the north and the south. I do not see any other difference. We are so many northern men here, and I ask my European

1. *Education by Swami Vivekananda*—Compiled by Sri T. S. Avinashilingam p. 42.
2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. III p. 288.

friends to pick out the northern and southern men from this assembly. There may have been a Dravidian people who vanished from here, and the few who remained lived in forests and other places; but all are Aryans, the whole of India is Aryan, nothing else."¹

Swami Vivekananda had great faith in education as the lever which will raise the masses and consolidate our nationhood. A nation is advanced, he said, in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the education and intelligence of the land by a handful of men. If we are to rise again we shall have to do so only by spreading education among the masses.

The problem of national integration is essentially one of harmonising differences, of enabling different elements of the population to live peacefully and cooperatively and to utilise their varied gifts for the enrichment of the national life as a whole. We have to cultivate a spirit of large-hearted tolerance, of mutual give-and-take, of appreciation of the ways in which people differ from one another.

The creation of this tolerance for each other, will come only out of the truly religious spirit of love, affection, service and consideration for others. Education to contribute towards national integration should strengthen this spirit of love and service which is the essence of all faiths.

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. III, p. 292

XXXII EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Swami Vivekananda was walking in the Chicago fair one evening wearing the usual dress of an Indian monk with a turban on his head. Suddenly a man, approaching from behind pulled at the turban. Swamiji turned to him and enquired what he wanted. "Why do you wear this horrible dress," said the man. Swamiji remarks that man by himself may not have been a bad man; he might have been a good man in the ordinary sense of the term—a good husband and father. But he could not tolerate a dress other than his own.

An Indian Lady once went to Australia in connection with an international conference. She was put up with a white family. There was a child in the family, a girl of seven or eight years. She looked at the guest and whispered to her mother, "Look at Dr... her hands are brown-how dirty. I won't shake hands with her." The mother had a lot of trouble persuading the child that it was not dirty, but the natural colour of her skin, that there were other parts of the world where people's colour was brown, but that they were clean and good people. That child was not a bad child. Only she did not know people could be brown.

Thousands of Indians have settled in Africa, where in most parts the majority of the population are Negroes. Their colour, manners, customs and food habits are very distinct. Many people look down upon them. They seem to hold that

whatever is different from their own cherished way of life is inferior or bad. That naturally leads to entertaining a low opinion of others. Even when they are loving and considerate, they are patronising. The result is bitterness, enmity and conflict between races.

Europeans coming to India lived in palatial buildings in clean and healthy surroundings and compared the 'native' habitations with their neat and beautiful laid-out neighbourhoods. The only Indians with whom they came in contact were often those who held some sort of employment under them. To the European mind, it was inconceivable that anything good could possibly exist amidst such dirt, slavery and degradation.

"We, on the other hand, see that the Europeans eat without discrimination whatever they get, have no idea of cleanliness as we have, do not observe caste distinctions, freely mix with women, drink wine and shamelessly dance at a ball, men and women held in each other's arms;—and we ask ourselves in amazement; What good can there be in such a nation?"¹

The first step towards international understanding as Swami Vivekananda has explained in his *East and West* is to understand that good qualities are not the privileged monopoly of any nation or people. Secondly each nation has its own *swadharma*, its own culture and tradition. In one nation stress may be on political matters, in another on social achievements. As far as India is concerned religion and spirituality are the base of all our cultural traditions. No nation can give up the basis of its life, its genius, and yet live. If India has survived during the centuries in spite of poverty, slavery and degradation, it is due to the fact that it has not given up its spiritual basis, but still in a large measure clings to the ideals of renunciation and service. It may be that a wave of materialism is sweeping the country today, but this is a temporary phase. For the good of India and the world, this phase must give way to another—the spiritual-inspiring people to pursue the ideals of love, dedication and service.

1. Swami Vivekananda, *The East and West*—p. 3.

As the Swami has pointed out, national boundaries are breaking. Science and technology are daily forging new means of communication. Not only the national boundaries but even the boundaries that separated us from celestial bodies seem to be cracking. In a not too distant future going to the moon will become a routine affair. If the atmosphere in the moon is conducive to human living, colonisation of the moon in the next ten years is a possibility. Michael Collins in his article on the trip to the moon, said that from there the earth looked like a small ball in the sky, even as the moon appears to us, with no evidence of national boundaries.

In the last few decades there has been a marked growth in international organisations. The United Nations is undoubtedly the most significant of them. United Nations Organisations such as UNESCO, FAO., UNICEF and WHO have brought peoples and nations together on common platforms. One of the objectives of the U.N., as stated in its preamble, was 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.'

The Preamble proceeds to state the three further ends of the Organisation which truly endeavour to attack the root causes of the scourge. These are (1) to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small, (2) to establish conditions under which justice add respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained and (3) to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. For the attainment of these ends it expresses the determination of the peoples of U.N. (1) to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, (2) to unite their strength to maintain international peace and security, (3) to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and (4) to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

But it has been our unfortunate experience that the UNO has not succeeded in abolishing war. In the last quarter of a century even after the best efforts of the United Nations, not a year has passed when there was not a war in some part of the world, whether in South East-Asia Vietnam, or South West-Asia-around Palestine, in Congo in Africa or on the Indo-Pakistan border.

Attempts have been made to draw syllabi for teaching International Understanding. As is stated in the Preamble to the UNESCO "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men, that the defences of peace must be constructed". "All great moves forward in the history of mankind have required changes of existing attitudes and states of mind, so that real life can catch up with the creative ideas that underlie our evolution. We have to work towards a world order in which aggressive nationalism and expansionism are banished as a means of promoting or protecting national interests, where fanaticism is no longer necessary to support a different point of view, and where diversity can be preserved without resort to prejudice and hatred."¹

A Committee composed of 14 distinguished scholars and educators, one each from as many countries, was appointed to advise the Director-General of the UNESCO on principles and methods of education for international understanding and cooperation.

They have stated: "It is not easy to find the right kind of education to enable the peoples of the world to understand each other and work together for the common good. Seen globally, the world has shrunk, but the world of each individual has expanded enormously, and this has left him exposed to strains and anxieties that may seriously affect his attitudes towards other men, particularly those beyond his own national borders.

1. *The Role of the United Nations in the maintenance of World Peace.*, pp. 77-78.

"The problems which these new forces, tensions and fears create confront educators, whether of children or adults, with tasks of new quality and magnitude. Not only must people be given a wider variety of new skills, but it must be a conscious aim of education to find ways of carrying over from smaller groups to increasingly larger ones, and finally to the world as a whole, attitudes and values which make for decent living in a complex society. Not least of the problems in this regard is that of the relation between national and international interest and loyalties. It is possible and necessary to teach that loyal citizenship of one's own country is consistent with world-mindedness and that national interests are bound to suffer if international interests are ignored.

"The author of a pamphlet for British teachers, in defining the qualities to be cultivated in members of an integrated co-operative world community, says: 'These qualities are but an extension of those we expect to see in the good national citizen. Among them will be the following: a concern for the welfare of others; willingness to place the common good before one's own immediate interests; the will and courage to cooperate by good means for good ends; receptivity to truth wherever and however it may be revealed; a capacity to think clearly, independently and without prejudice; a capacity to form critical judgements; a quality of mind that is tolerant to honest opinion but intolerant of evil, selfishness and dishonesty in all their forms; readiness to claim no rights for oneself that one is not willing to concede to others; a sense of personal responsibility for the right ordering of community life; respect for persons of every class, race and colour; a quality of imagination that enables a man to assess the results of any action or policy on people far removed from his immediate surroundings.'"¹

While teaching in schools has a definite place in the cultivation of character, it is not enough; breadth of outlook and understanding can come about only through emotional integration,

1. *Education for International Understanding*, pp. 11-12.

through the realization that, though we are different in many ways, we are really one. In this connection I would like to mention here the story of two brothers.

One of them ran away from home while young, joined the army, was stationed in Ladakh for many years, did not return home for a long time and got accustomed to the type of food, drink, dress and language of the region where he was stationed. After many years he wanted to see his own native place. He came but could not recognise any of his relatives, many had passed away, and those who were children had grown into men difficult to recognise. He was hungry and went to a hotel and ordered something to eat. Another man also entered the hotel, who thought this man dirty, rude and uncultured and sat at some distance away. After eating, the man from the army opened his purse to take out change and in that process dropped down something, which fell near the other man's feet. The other man took it up and saw it was a picture of a woman, his own mother. Suddenly he recognised his brother. As soon as the recognition dawned, he lost his prejudice, embraced him, wept in joy to find his long-lost brother. All the prejudice, hatred and contempt vanished when love dawned in his heart. Of course the army man had not changed in any way. He was the same man as he was before. But the feeling of kinship immediately made the change from hatred to love.

Even so, real international understanding can only come through the conviction that we are all brothers, because we are all children of the same being in whatever name and form we may worship it. The great qualities necessary for international understanding can come only through the cultivation of the consciousness of this spiritual unity. Physically we are all different. Identification with the body is selfishness. Consciousness as family, community, caste and nation are but larger manifestations of physical consciousness. Real spiritual consciousness can be achieved only by our transcending this narrow consciousness and perceiving the underlying spiritual unity.

This perception is more than tolerance; it is understanding, consideration for and love, of others; and that is the essence of all religions.

Education for international understanding can therefore be had only through the practical cultivation of these qualities in daily life, through developing an intellectual conviction and emotional feeling that we are all one, brothers of the large human family and children of God.

As Swami Vivekananda has pointed out science 'has demonstrated through physical means the oneness and solidarity of the universe, how physically speaking you and I, the sun, moon and stars are but little waves in the infinite ocean of matter. In the same way in spirit we are all one. The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers, but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and spirituality.'¹ The knowledge and practice of this oneness is the only sure and safe way to international understanding.

XXXIII RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Till the beginning of this century, in many countries education was not wholly secular, but included instruction in the elements of religion. The diversity of religious beliefs and the fanaticism with which they were held caused a great deal of strife and even bloodshed. This made it necessary to avoid teaching religion in schools. The constitution of India has also declared India to be a secular State. It is necessary for us to understand what that really means. When we say that India is a secular State, it does not mean that we as a people reject the reality of the Great Divine or the relevance of religion to life or that we exalt irreligion. This only means that the State will not identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religious group and that no person shall suffer any disability or discrimination because of his or her religion. The spirit of true religion should prevail, and the environment necessary for the development of a cultured and tolerant way of life, in which all religions are respected and allowed to be followed should be promoted.

Therefore, it is necessary that we cultivate a breadth of outlook and reverence towards faiths other than our own. Real spiritual life should mean affection towards all men, women, in fact towards all beings. Tolerance and appreciation of other faiths are the essence of a spiritual life and should be developed from childhood. Courage, strength, and purity in the midst of great temptations and difficulties are the essence of religion.

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* Vol. III. p. 188.

In our *shastras* a clear distinction has been made between two sets of truths. One set is, that which abides for ever, being built on the nature of man and his soul, the soul's relationship to God, and its striving towards perfection. The other is based on local circumstances and environment, social institutions of the period and the manners and customs of the people at that time. The first category of truths is embodied in our scriptures called *Srutis* such as the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*. The second class of facts are in books called *Smritis* and *Puranas*. *Manusmriti* is one such. Our *shastras* are clear that whenever there is a difference between the *Srutis* and the *Smritis*, the latter have to be rejected. A distinction between the essential and the non-essential has thus been made. As time rolls on, more and more of the *smritis* will have to be replaced; thinkers and sages will come, and they will change and guide society along better channels, even as Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi in the modern age have done.

When Swami Vivekananda considered religion as a necessary basis of education, he referred to the essential ingredients of religion, which are common in all the faiths in the world. He said: "Religion is the innermost core of education. I do not mean my own or any one else's opinion about religion, but the eternal principles. First of all we have to introduce the worship of the great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realised the eternal truths are to be followed, Sri Krishna, Mahavira, Sri Ramakrishna and others. Keep aside for the present the Vrindavan aspect of Sri Krishna, and spread far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna roaring out the *Gita* with the voice of a lion, and bring into daily use the worship of *Shakti* - the Divine Mother, the source of all power. We now mostly need the ideal of the hero with the tremendous spirit of *rajas* thrilling through his veins, the hero who will die to know the truth, the hero whose armour is renunciation, whose sword is wisdom. We now want the spirit of the brave warrior in the battlefield."

He wanted the character of Hanuman to be our ideal. At the command of Sri Ramachandra he crossed the ocean! He had

no care for life. He was a perfect master of the senses. Build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that ideal, all the other ideals will be realised. Unquestioning obedience to the *Guru* and strict observance of *Brahmacharya*, this is the secret of success. As Hanuman represents the ideal of service, so does he represent lionine courage, striking the world with awe. He has not the least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama, with a supreme indifference to everything except the service of Rama. Only the carrying out of Sri Rama's behests is the one vow of his life. It is such whole-hearted devotion that is wanted.

"At the present time the worship of the divine play of Sri Krishna with the *Gopis* is not good. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood should be revived. If you can build your character after such an ideal then a thousand others will follow. But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage. Never allow weakness to overtake your mind. Remember Mahavira, remember the Divine Mother and you will see that all weakness, all cowardice will vanish at once."

As mentioned earlier Swami Vivekananda gave a new definition to religion: He is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It is this great faith which will make the world better. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, 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 any other, in the lives of great men and women, it is the faith in themselves. Filled with the consciousness that they were great, they became great.

Strength, strength is what the *Upanishads* disclaim from every page. The *Upanishads* are the only literature in the world, where you find the word 'Abhiih' 'Fearless', used again and again. In no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either

to God or man. The Vision arises in one's mind of the great emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our *sanyasins* in the forest 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 the Emperor standing on his authority as Emperor says, 'I will kill you if you do not come,' and the man laughs and says, 'You never told such as falsehood in your life as you tell just now. Who can kill me? For I am spirit unborn and undying? That is strength!

Swami Vivekananda preached the cultivation of strength. He said: There are thousands to weaken us, and of stories we have had enough. Therefore, my friends, as one of our blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you what we want is strength, strength, every time strength. And the *Upanishads* are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong energised through them. They call with trumpet voice the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watch-words of the *Upanishads*.

"We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we may not understand a word of religion or of God. You cannot hope to make a surgeon by simply giving a few books, You cannot satisfy my curiosity to see a country by showing me a map. Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge. Beyond that, they have no value whatever. Temples and churches, books and forms, are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps. Religion is not in doctrines or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is realization in our life and experience, of the supreme love, which transcends bodily limitations and becomes identified with all humanity."

While the ideas held forth by religion were high and great, Swami Vivekananda pointed out, how in practice, due to narrowness of mind and fanaticism religion had reached very low depths. He exhorted everyone to give up this narrowness and fanaticism and cultivate a universal outlook. As he has said, "the noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard have come from men of the religious plane. At the same time the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men. Each religion brings out its own doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones. Some will even draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human mind called fanaticism. Yet out of this strife and struggle, this hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, there have risen from time to time potent voices proclaiming peace and harmony.

"The time was ripe for one to be born who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God; one who would see God in every being, and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would harmonise all conflicting sects not only in India but also outside India; and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion, into existence. Such a man was born and I had the good fortune to sit at his feet for years. I learned from my Master the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic, but they are but various phases of one eternal religion. Sri Ramakrishna, for that was his name, never spoke a harsh word against any one. So beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought that he belonged to it. He loved every one; to him all religions were true. His whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma."

Appealing for universal toleration Swami Vivekananda said: "Let our watchword then be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy. Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the

past and worship 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 church and kneel before the crucifix. I shall enter Buddhist 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 light which enlightens the heart of everyone.

Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in 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 take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future.”¹

XXXIV SPIRITUAL TRAINING

For spiritual training, Swami Vivekananda considered it important that the teacher should be imbued with spiritual values and should be one who strives to lead a spiritual life. No amount of preaching will impress the students as the example of the teacher will do. He believed in the integrated development of the child's personality and stressed the development of the heart. Since emotions are the motive force in man, he insisted on training the emotions towards a higher goal. He pointed out that it was not at all necessary to be educated and learned to reach spiritual heights. Many prophets who have moved the world have not had even the most rudimentary education. What is required is purity, for as the Bible has said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” A sage once said: “To kill others one must be equipped with swords and shields, but to commit suicide a needle is sufficient; so, to teach others much intellect and training are necessary, but not so for one's own self-illumination.” If one knows all the sciences in the world, but is not pure, that will not help one at all. The pure heart is the best mirror for truth. All disciplines are purification of the heart. As soon as the mind becomes pure, all truths flash upon it in a minute.

Great educationists have from time to time made attempts to impart spiritual training to their pupils. Mahatma Gandhi has given the following account of his experiment at the Tolstoy farm.

1. Swami Vivekananda, *Education*—pp. 38-49.

"The spiritual training of the boys is a much more difficult matter than their physical and mental training. I relied little on religious books for the training of the spirit. Of course I believed that every student should be acquainted with the elements of his own religion and have a general knowledge of his own scriptures, and therefore, I provided for such knowledge as best as I could. But that, to my mind, was part of the intellectual training. Long before I undertook the education of the youngsters of the Tolstoy Farm, I had realised that the training of the spirit was a thing by itself. To develop the spirit is to build character and to enable one to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization. I held that this was an essential part of the training of the young, and that all training without culture of the spirit was of no use, and might be even harmful.

"How then was this spiritual training to be given? I made the children memorize and recite hymns, and read to them from books on moral training. But that was far from satisfying me. As I came to closer contact with them I saw that it was not through books that one could impart training of the spirit. Just as physical training was to be imparted through physical exercise, and intellectual through intellectual exercise, even so the training of the spirit was possible only through the exercise of the spirit. And the exercise of the spirit entirely depended on the life and character of the teacher. The teacher had always to be mindful of his p's and q's whether he was in the midst of his boys or not.

"It is possible for a teacher situated miles away to affect the spirit of the pupils by his way of living. It would be idle for me, if I were a liar, to teach boys to tell the truth. A cowardly teacher would never succeed in making his boys valiant, and a stranger to self-restraint could never teach his pupils the value of self-restraint. I saw, therefore, that I must be an eternal object-lesson to the boys and girls living with me. They thus become my teachers, and I learnt I must be good and live straight if only for their sake. I may say that the increasing discipline and restraint I imposed on myself at the Tolstoy Farm, was mostly due to those wards of mine."¹

1. T. S. Avinashilingam, *Gandhiji's Experiments in Education* pp. 10-11.

Gandhiji has further explained that by spiritual education he meant the education of the heart. He believed that an all-round development of the mind could take place only when it proceeded *pari passu* along with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. This integrated development consists in developing to the highest potentiality of the pupils in all aspects.

In the process of growth, every person is influenced by five groups of factors; the physical factors such as heat, cold, wind and rain; the chemical factors contained in food and drink; the physiological factors of alimentation, intestinal evacuation, sleep, muscular and organic activities, the involuntary effort of the adaptive systems and the conscious effort of manual work and games; the intellectual factors by which the child learns how to live by the use of the senses, memory, judgment etc; and the moral factors or habits of conduct, the most important of which are training of the will, self-control, purity, truthfulness, courage and discrimination between good and evil. The teacher needs to take account of all these five factors in helping his pupils to develop.

It would be easy to expound the laws of conduct and their scientific basis in a series of lessons, as one teaches geography or grammar. But a different method is needed to train children to put those rules into practice. One does not learn to swim by reading a book on swimming, nor does one learn to pilot an aeroplane by merely taking a course in aerodynamics. Only practice will develop the reflexes of mind and body which will make us do the right thing in any emergency. To be perfect, obedience to the laws of conduct should be instinctive. Anyone who has been conditioned from infancy regarding good and evil will experience no difficulty in choosing the good and avoiding the evil. He will recoil from evil as naturally as he recoils from fire. Telling lies will seem to him not merely forbidden but impossible. If such responses are to be developed in the individual there must be an environment where moral precepts are strictly and unfailingly observed. Only example will inculcate the rules of life effectively.

Man has an innate tendency to imitate. The child unconsciously models himself on his companions, teachers and parents: The cinema stars and the real or imaginary people about him have also a great deal of influence on him. The imitative tendency in children produces endless evils when they are exposed to unprincipled people who show no self-control. People can teach only that which they believe, and children are never deceived by hypocrisy. To teach others to behave well, one must first behave well oneself. But unfortunately, we let children witness bad manners, quarrels and selfishness in their families and surroundings. Our social conditions therefore require to be adapted to the needs of education. This demands a drastic recasting of our ways. The type of cinema, radio and literature which children and young people devour these days, needs to be radically improved. It is very necessary also to educate parents and teachers.

For success in spiritual training one must have faith. As Sri Ramakrishna has said: "He who has faith has all and he who lacks it lacks all." A disciple who had firm faith in the infinite power of his *guru* could walk upon a river by simply uttering his name. Seeing this, the *guru* thought, "Well, if there is such power in my mere name, how much greater and more powerful must I be!" The next day the *guru* also tried to walk upon the river uttering 'I', 'I', 'I', but no sooner did he step into the water than he sank and was drowned. Faith can achieve miracles, while vanity or egoism only brings about destruction.

Faith must be accompanied by perseverance. One should think well and choose a path, and having chosen the path, must stick to it, till the goal is reached. Many are the people who get tired and leave off in the middle, without attaining any results.

While purity is the *sine qua non* of a spiritual life, continued continence creates in man tremendous power. Regular worship, constant meditation and company of the pure, the devoted and the wise are great help for a sincere aspirant. God comes not where

timidity, hatred and fear reign. One who spends his time discussing the good and bad qualities of others wastes his own time. An aspirant must be humble. But humility does not mean lowness of spirit. Many make a show of their humility say comparing themselves to an earth-worm grovelling in the dust; in the process they become weak in spirit. Let not despondency enter our hearts, for it is the greatest enemy to progress. No pride is pride which expresses the glory of the soul and no humility is humility which humiliates the self.

Religious and monastic orders have in the past evolved a practical way of life, by which spiritual training can be provided and spiritual growth achieved. They give us a pattern such as described below, which can be adapted in institutions of today.

1. The middle path should be followed, as suggested by the *Bhagavad Gita* and other scriptures. Living conditions should not be luxurious or too painful. There should be simplicity and a certain measure of austerity which will help to develop the will.

2. Food also should not be too rich nor too poor, but nutritious enough for healthy living. Rich condiments and stimulants should be avoided. There must not be too much pandering to the palate. Food must be served and taken at regular intervals, so that the mind should not be after it in between. Food must be clean. The practice of offering it to the Lord before consuming it should be followed.

3. Practice of daily meditation in the morning and evening considerably helps spiritual contemplation. Both these times are considered suitable for meditation. A special hall or shrine for this purpose has been provided by many religious orders, in which the atmosphere will be quiet, pleasant and suitable for thinking about the Lord. It may have flowers, incense sticks and not too bright lights. Images or pictures of Gods and saints may also be put there according to the inclinations of the person or group concerned¹.

1. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* — pp. 418-436.

4. One cannot be involved in meditation throughout the day. Helpful activities such as looking after the garden, serving the poor, cleaning the shrine, teaching children or attending to the sick may also be provided as the case may be. Everyone must be encouraged to contribute his best to community work. Whatever task is undertaken must be done with *Shraddha*. Cultivation of the spirit of obedience to elders and discipline in our daily chores is very very important.

5. Above all, the general atmosphere should be such as will induce thinking of ideas which are conducive to spiritual life. Pictures, books and talks involving sensual thoughts should be avoided.

The steps suggested above are applicable not only to monasteries and *ashramas* but also to all homes where parents want their children to grow up in spiritual qualities. In a later chapter, we shall consider activities which can be organised in schools and colleges to inculcate these values amongst students of various age groups.

XXXV METHODS OF TEACHING SPIRITUAL VALUES

Swami Vivekananda not only preached to large audiences in the East and the West, but also trained a group of disciples who in time became the architects of the vast edifice he established to spread the unique message of His Master throughout the world. He never wished that everything he said should be accepted passively without conviction. He encouraged his disciples to feel free to question him and test him whenever necessary. He himself had tested his Master many times and in different ways before accepting him. Even so he wanted his disciples to get faith born out of conviction.

One of the fundamental principles of education that Swami Vivekananda followed was to look for what was best in every person. He believed that seeing and emphasising the strong points in an individual was the best way of building up that individual. Therefore, he was against all negative attitudes and expressions. The following conversation reported by Sister Nivedita illustrates this principle: 'One day in the course of my voyage to England, when he (the Swami) had been telling me with great delight of the skilled seamanship and exquisite courtesy of the Turks, I drew attention to the astonishing character of his enthusiasm. His mind seemed to turn to the thought of the ship servants, whose child-like devotion to himself had touched him deeply. 'You see, I love our Mohammedans', he said simply, as if accused of a fault. 'Yes!', I said, 'What I want

to understand is this habit of seeing every people from their strongest aspect.' He replied, 'Yes, one must put himself into another man's very soul.'¹ This in short is the essence of all educational methods.

Swami Vivekananda often referred to the work of Emperor Asoka, particularly the following edict. "The King Priyadasi (Asoka), beloved of the Gods, honours all sects, both ascetics and householders; he propitiates them by alms and other gifts, but he attaches less importance to gifts and honours than to the endeavour to promote the essential moral virtues. It is true the prevalence of essential virtues differs in different sects, but there is a basis. That is, gentleness, moderation in language and morality. Thus, one should not exalt one's own sect and decry others, but give them on every occasion the honour they deserve. Striving thus, one promotes the welfare of his own sect while serving the others. Doing otherwise, one not only does not serve his own sect, but does disservice to others. Whosoever, from attachment to his own sect and with a view to promoting it decries others, only deals rude to his own. Hence, concord alone is meritorious, so let all bear and love to bear the beliefs of each others. It is with this purpose that this edict has been inscribed. All people, whatever their position may be, should promote the essential moral doctrines in each and mutual respect for all the other sects. It is with this object that the ministers of religion, the inspectors and other bodies of officers should all work."²

Spiritual qualities should be lived in daily life. Religion is nothing unless it is practised. Qualities such as love, purity and selfless service should become part of our day-to-day activities. The educational system should plan and provide activities which will develop such qualities. Progressive methods of education all over the world aim at making children active participants in the process of learning instead of being passive recipients. With this end in view, various kinds of activities have been devised. Mahatma

1. Nivedita, Sister, *Master as I saw him*,—p. 228.

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. VII, pp. 288-90.

Gandhi considered that education of the body, the intellect and the emotions could be achieved through intelligent and scientific use of handicrafts. Leaders in education in other countries have used a variety of other activities for teaching children. Swami Vivekananda has suggested that our daily duties could become the basis of designing learning activities in the school and the home.

It occurred to Swamiji that the obligatory actions in Hindu life might be used to train our boys and girls in the modern concepts of duty to country and society. He said, "How much we can use for educational purpose the idea of the Five *Yajnas*!" In the Hindu *shastras* it has been said that it is obligatory for every Hindu to do five kinds of duties namely to God, to our ancestors, to the scriptures, to mankind and to the animals. The duty to God can be fulfilled through daily worship and prayer, the duty to our ancestors by doing only such acts, as will uphold their honour, the duty to the scriptures by studying them, knowing their spirit and acting accordingly; the duty to mankind by performance of unselfish service and the duty to the animals by treating them with kindness.

Swami Vivekananda explained that a variety of activities could be organised on the basis of the performance of these duties, through which spiritual values could be imparted to the students. Thus, he said, in the worship of God, there is great scope for a great deal of artistic talent in beautifying the image and the shrine, in making garlands and preparing offerings and distributing them. Out of respect for our ancestors, pride and confidence can be created in our people. Stories of national heroes can be written, and poetry depicting their valour recited. The idea of service to humanity can inspire a number of activities. Service to the animals can be practised through taking care of the cow, the dog, the bull and other numerous animals and birds which serve and are companions to man. Activities on this basis will not only help pupils to be in touch with life, but also be a training for a good life.

The Swami himself had suggested some activities in this direction : A few of these suggestions are : Gather some animals, the cow will make a good beginning. You can also have dogs, cats and birds. Let children have a time for feeding and looking after them. Revive the old arts. Teach the girls artistic cooking and serving. They can practise painting, photography, cutting of designs on paper, gold and silver filigree and embroidery.

Referring to service of humanity he said: A daily worship of the feet of beggars would be wonderful training of heart and head together. On this basis an intelligent teacher can work out myriad kinds of activities which will not only be excellent education but also provide training to our boys and girls.

A few years back a National Seminar on the Place of Spiritual Values in Education was held in the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore in connection with the centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda. It was inaugurated by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the then President of India. Educationists and administrators from all over the country participated in it. The members of this Seminar were divided into committees and worked out details with reference to elementary schools, secondary schools and colleges. They considered at some length present condition in our schools and colleges and how best we could introduce spiritual values in our educational system. The members of the Seminar were of the opinion that this could not be done by allocating a period or two for moral or spiritual instruction. They felt strongly that this could be done only by so organising the work and activities of our schools as to provide the atmosphere and opportunities for the cultivation of spiritual qualities.

The following are the recommendations of the seminar :

1) By spiritual values are meant not the dogmas of any particular religion but qualities which have been accepted as good by all religions and communities such as sacrifice, purity, courage, love, service and consideration for others.

2) Spiritual values cannot be imparted by setting apart any separate time for it in the time table as Moral instruction period. It can be done by so organising the work and activities of our schools as to provide the atmosphere and opportunity for the cultivation of spiritual qualities.

3) The activities in each school should be according to its own traditions and circumstances. But it is generally accepted that giving responsibility to the students in whatever manner possible and trusting them contribute towards cultivation of spiritual values.

4) The example of the teachers is of the greatest importance in inculcating spiritual values. Steps should be taken to cultivate these qualities in our teachers without delay. They should also be trained in organisation of such activities as are suggested in the following pages.

Activities suitable to children at different stages of education namely, the elementary, secondary and colleges worked out by the committees of the Seminar are given in the following pages. The activities listed are only suggestive. It is felt that they can be organised in our schools and colleges.

- f) Visiting temples regularly and participating in worship with devotion.
- g) Singing devotional songs.
- h) Placing on the walls of the classroom pictures of saints.
- i) Celebrating religious festivals with devotion and helping children to understand their significance.
- j) Answering children's questions regarding God patiently and suitably.
- k) Parents and teachers living as examples of devotion to God.
- l) Having regular morning and evening prayers at school.

2. Fearlessness

- a) Encouraging pupils to answer teachers' questions boldly.
- b) Active participation in meetings of literary association and cultural programmes.
- c) Allowing them to point out the mistakes even of elders in a respectful manner.
- d) Not preventing them to go out bravely in darkness.
- e) Telling them not to be afraid of ghosts and fairies.
- f) Encouraging them to help people involved in danger or accidents, bravely and intelligently.
- g) Asking them to raise their doubts boldly in the class and get them cleared.
- h) Creating the necessary atmosphere to maintain unflagging enthusiasm even in the face of defeat.
- i) Telling them to express boldly what they consider right.

- j) Learning to accept deserved punishment calmly, and
- k) Encouraging them not to be afraid of insects and animals.

3. Cleanliness

- a) Impressing upon the students the necessity for cleanliness in all aspects of life; the dangers involved in unclean life.
- b) Narrating to them stories about clean and unclean habits in life.
- c) Inspecting periodically children's hands, legs, teeth, face, dress, books and other articles and giving prizes to clean pupils.
- d) Helping pupils to participate in cleaning activities both in the classroom and outside.
- e) Taking children out on field-trips to clean homes and surroundings and showing their good effects as contrasted with unclean and dirty surroundings and their ill effects.
- f) Showing pictures and filmstrips which emphasise cleanliness.
- g) Teachers giving priority to cleanliness in school and removing dirt wherever found.
- h) Teachers and parents being examples to children in adopting clean habits.

4. Orderliness

- a) Walking properly when going to school and when going from one class to another.
- b) Sitting upright in the classroom.
- c) Keeping everything in the class in order, and being responsible for orderliness in the class and school.

XXXVI SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL VALUES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

The foundation for all spiritual values should be laid when children are young. The attitudes they develop at that impressionable age shape their future life. So those who are responsible for the education of young children should consciously try to inculcate in them proper attitudes and spiritual values.

At the elementary school level spiritual values should mean basic virtues which are the foundation for a spiritual life. Such values should be recognised and efforts should be made to inculcate them in the minds of children. The following are some of the values to be developed in children :

1. Devotion to God.
2. Fearlessness.
3. Cleanliness.
4. Respect for elders.
5. Orderliness.
6. Being conscious of the social needs and identifying with others.
7. Charity.
8. Endurance.
9. Sense of justice.
10. Truth.
11. Respect for others' property.
12. Not harming others.
13. Love for all.

Children cannot acquire these values by direct teaching as in the case of other subjects. These values are caught in an informal atmosphere rather than taught. Children develop some of these values by imitation — imitation of their teachers, parents, friends, and other elders whom they respect; others are learnt by suggestion. While the teacher has an important role in developing these values, the home has a vital place in imparting them. Therefore both teachers and parents should co-operate in their development. There should be periodical meetings of the parents and teachers to discuss the students' development.

These values are learnt through participation in many activities informally. Such activities should be carefully planned in all elementary schools and children urged to participate in them. Some activities and the qualities they develop, are listed below :—

1. Devotion to God

Children need to learn to love God and worship Him out of love. They cannot pray to and worship an unknown, abstract God. God should become a living reality to them, whom they can love and worship, to whom they can offer flowers, fruit or any other good things they have and whose images they can touch, embrace and be with. For inculcating such an attitude the following activities are suggested :—

- a) Telling children about God, how he loves us, how he helps us in times of distress and how we should worship him.
- b) Telling them about saints who have seen God, who have loved God and sacrificed their everything for God.
- c) Encouraging children to read stories and lives of great saints.
- d) Enacting lives and stories of saints in the school.
- e) Taking children to plays and movies which depict lives of saints.

- d) Wearing school uniform on important days.
- e) Standing in queue while waiting for one's turn.
- f) Coming punctually to the class.

5. Respect for elders

- a) Getting up when elders come.
- b) Addressing elders politely as Mother, Sister etc.
- c) Speaking courteously to elders.
- d) Saying *namaste* when elders come home or into class.
- e) Helping parents and other elders at home.
- f) Helping teachers in some activities at school.
- g) Not disturbing elders while they are speaking with others.

6. Being conscious of social needs and identifying with others

- a) Participating in social service activities, cleaning, digging soak-pits in villages etc.
- b) Contributing money or labour for social or national good, eg., contribution to the National Defence Fund, famine relief, flood relief, etc.
- c) Giving service during celebrations of festivals or *melas* in the village.
- d) Helping to clean public places such as temples, schools, public wells, streets, etc.
- e) Participating in the school parliament.
- f) Being a member of the school cabinet and community work group. Working for the welfare of the school community.

7. Sense of Justice

- a) Having student's court at school with students acting as judges.
- b) Listening to and reading stories about great people who acted justly in spite of personal suffering.

- c) Enacting such stories.
- d) Giving responsibility for pupils in settling some of the class disputes.

8. Love of truth

- a) Hearing and representing things factually without exaggeration.
- b) Being responsible for one's faults.
- c) Not copying from others.
- d) Maintaining correct accounts.
- e) Speaking truth even in difficulties.
- f) Reading and hearing stories of truth-loving men such as Harischandra who adhered to truth in spite of great hardships.
- g) Parents and teachers setting good examples.
- h) Avoiding backbiting.

9. Respect for other's property

- a) Not desiring to possess others' belongings.
- b) Not using others' articles, belongings.
- c) Handing over lost property, if found, to the owner.
- d) Having in the school a set up where all lost property when found, can be deposited and returned to the owners.
- e) Honouring students who deposit lost properties.
- f) Arranging honesty shops where students may take the articles and deposit the money in the box kept for the purpose without supervision.

10. Not harming others

- a) Impressing upon pupils the need for being kind towards animals, birds and fellow-beings.

- b) Telling stories or reading stories about people who were kind towards birds, animals and fellow beings.
- c) Discouraging the practice of harming insects, birds and animals.

11. Love

- a) Showing affection to fellow-pupils.
- b) Showing affection to relatives at home and helping them.
- c) Speaking kindly to all people.
- d) Showing affection for the teacher.
- e) Extending love to domestic animals.
- f) Helping fellow-pupils when they need help, both in the class-room and outside.
- g) Cultivating sympathy for the poor.
- h) Helping the poor and the suffering.

These activities help to develop spiritual values in children. The teacher must have sufficient time and freedom to organise these activities. The elementary school curriculum should be more activity-oriented. Basic Education, because of its activity-centeredness affords ample opportunities for imparting these values in children.

The contents of the text-books used in schools should emphasise spiritual values. They should contain stories, songs and essays which explain these values and inspire pupils to possess such values in life.

The teacher plays a vital role in the development of spiritual values in children. His personal life and example are very important. He should have knowledge and ability to organise activities which promote spiritual values in school. He should evaluate the students periodically for growth in these values. Constant vigilance, timely advice and guidance are indispensable.

These are possible only if the teacher has a good academic background and professional training. The elementary school teacher should have at least S. S. L. C. as his minimum qualification. All teacher training institutions should be residential so that the teacher-trainees can live together and experience these values themselves.

Spiritual values form the basis not only for the development of the individual, but also for national character. The Home, the School and the Community should join together in developing these values in children, supplementing each other and working unitedly in this important venture.¹

1. Report of the National Seminar on the Place of Spiritual Values in Education, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore. pp. 159—165.

XXXVII DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL VALUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Developing Spiritual Values in Secondary Schools can be considered under two heads: (a) the organisational pattern and activities which will aid the cultivation of spiritual values and (b) how these values are expressed at the personal, social and national levels.

(b) Organisation and Activities: Many of the spiritual values should be inculcated in the pupils through proper organisation of life in the school. For example, the "house" system is a form of organisation which, if properly utilised, can pay rich dividends. The house system need not be the monopoly of residential schools of the Public School type. This system can be used in ordinary day-schools also which, by and large, provide education to our boys and girls.

The house system divides the school into various batches, each house having a separate name of its choice. Each of them has both a student leader and a staff adviser. Each house is entrusted with some daily responsibilities like keeping the building, and grounds clean, conducting games, taking care of the kitchen-stores, etc. This is done in turn for a week or for a fortnight. These activities train students both in leadership and responsibility. The division in batches can be horizontal or vertical but

care must be taken to see that they are properly balanced not only in number but also as far as possible in abilities and talent. This system has been followed with great benefit in residential schools.

The following are some of the tasks that may be entrusted to them:

- (a) Ringing the bell.
- (b) Preparation for and conduct of the daily assembly.
- (c) Attendance, regularity and punctuality.
- (d) Movement from class to class.
- (e) Dispersal of the class after each session.
- (f) Procurement of necessary equipment for the conduct of the various lessons.
- (g) Maintenance of order between two lessons.
- (h) Cleanliness of the rooms and the compound.
- (i) Supply of drinking water in the classrooms.
- (j) Sanitation of the bath rooms, lavatory and latrines.
- (k) Care of the garden and the play-grounds.
- (l) Receiving parents and helping visitors.

Co-curricular Activities which could be organised by the different Houses are the following:

- (a) Conduct of games, march-past, sports, mass drills and play or youth festivals.
- (b) Music, dancing and dramatics.
- (c) Painting, knitting and stitching.
- (d) Cubbing, scouting, bulbul, guiding, junior Redcross and first-aid activities.
- (e) Club activities such as science club, social studies club and hobbies club.
- (f) Literary activities-Tamil, English and Hindi associations, Celebration of *Valluvar* day, *Kamban* day and *Bharati* day.

- (g) School celebration such as the Independence day, the Republic day, the Sports day and the School day.
- (h) Other celebrations such as the U. N. day, W. H. O. day Wild Life day and Vanamahotsavam.

The groups could be used effectively to assist in the learning of the curricular subjects also. Each squad could be conveniently divided into groups of 4 or 5 pupils each, who must be as far as possible equal in attainments. In each group, there could be a boy good at English, another strong in the regional languages, and another strong in mathematics or science. A pupil is more ready to learn, and get his doubts cleared from his own class-mates or compeers than to approach the teacher. This method of group-study could be utilised during the class hours or during leisure time to give a change to the weaker pupils to come up to the level of the general standard of the class.

1. The group working on the language study, can organise activities such as: dictation, recitation and quoting, writing and reading, and conversational practice. These activities easily lend themselves to group study and lead to accelerated improvement.

2. The non-language subjects of mathematics, science and social studies also lend themselves easily to group study through activities such as quizzes, hobbies, dramatics and problem solving.

3. The inculcation of love for books must be the purpose of secondary education. Library work has been long neglected in our schools. The group work can also promote extra reading. This will lay the foundation for the sound use of the library in the acquisition of further knowledge.

If the group system is to be fully utilised, our conservative ideas of school organisation must undergo a change, rigidity yielding place to flexibility. The furniture in the classroom can be made easily rearrangeable and the teacher must come down from his pedestal and merge himself with the pupils. If we can rise above the ordinary routine of age-old class-room teaching and

try with faith, the group method can help the pupils to imbibe sub-consciously many of the spiritual values at personal, social and national levels.

(b) How these values are expressed at the personal, social and national levels:

The following are only suggestive. It is left to the teacher to develop these ideas in the best manner possible.

1. Faith in God

Personal level: (a) Regularity in individual prayers and meditation, (b) Reading great books.

Social level: (a) Regularity in attending school assembly prayers, (b) Regularity in visiting places of worship. Joining in corporate worship.

National level: (a) Respect for all faiths in the country, (b) Study of different faiths.

2. Respect for individual personality

Personal: Respect for each individual.

Social level: (a) Respect for all the members of the class, family and neighbourhood, (b) Mixing up freely with every group in the school community without any complexes.

National level: (a) Respect for universal brotherhood, (b) Respect for national laws and fulfilling national obligations.

3. Love

Personal level: (a) Kindness and love for all, (b) Sympathy with the suffering, (c) Help to the needy.

Social level: To help cheerfully in the organised social activities of the school.

National level: (a) Love for the country, (b) Love for the downtrodden and poor, (c) To help national campaigns to alleviate sufferings.

4. Integrity

Personal level: (a) To speak truth always, (b) To carry out responsibilities dependably.

Social level: (a) Fulfilling group responsibilities and obligations faithfully, (b) Exposing social-evils such as adulteration.

National level: Integrity with reference to all activities promoting national growth.

5. Dedication and Devotion to work

Personal level: To carry out work whole-heartedly and honestly.

Social level: To carry out group work devotedly.

National level: Devotion to the country.

6. Courage

Personal level: (a) Courage of conviction, (b) Courage in acting according to conviction, (c) Courage to stand up even at personal risk for the right.

Social level: Courage to stand for the accepted social privileges in the school.

National level: (a) Courage to fight for the national cause, (b) Courage to serve in times of national crisis.

7. Self-Control

Personal level: (a) Poise, (b) Not losing temper.

Social level: (a) Maintaining silence during assembly prayers, (b) Maintaining discipline at all times.

National level: Discipline while singing the national anthem and in meetings.

8. Self-reliance

Personal level: Confidence in one's own ability based on sound preparation.

Social level: Confidence in assuming group leadership.
National level: Confidence in the nation's greatness.

9. Steadfastness

Personal level: Successfully completes work undertaken.

Social level: Co-operating with others in completing group work without shirking his share of responsibility.

National level: Steadfast enthusiasm for and participation in national activities undertaken.

10. Respect for public property

Personal: Careful handling of things.

Social level: (a) Careful handling of other's property, (b) Assuming responsibility for the proper care of public property.

National level: (a) Contributing to the preservation of national monuments and property, (b) Proper use of national utilities.

11. Service and sacrifice

Personal level: Willing to forego personal comforts for some higher causes.

Social level: Group sacrifices for the welfare of the community.

National level: Sacrifice for the national cause¹.

¹ Report of the National Seminar on the Place of Spiritual values in Education, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore. pp. 166-170.

XXXVIII DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The students at the higher education level belong to the age group 16-24 and are in the adolescent and post-adolescent period. They undergo a great change in their thinking and emotions and therefore careful guidance is necessary. Emphasis has to be laid on self-discipline and the various means of cultivating it. In planning activities towards this end, there need not be any artificial distinction between curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The committee considered the ways and means of developing spiritual values in college students under the following four heads: i. Teacher, ii. Students, iii. College programmes and iv. College environment.

I. Teacher : It was felt that a training course in imparting spiritual values is very necessary for college teachers. This training must be conducted at educational centres where an earnest and systematic attempt has been made to develop spiritual values among the students. This training should be imparted to all college teachers through a phased programme. It was also felt that after this initial training course periodical re-orientation seminars should be organised, say once in five years. The contents of the course may be :

- (a) Comparative religion and ethics and a study of the scriptures of the various religions.
- (b) Discussion on various problems connected with moral and spiritual values.
- (c) Ways of organising college assemblies.
- (d) Ways of organising social service programmes, youth camps etc.
- (e) Ways of celebrating religious and national festivals, days of philosophers, saints and spiritual leaders of all religions.
- (f) Programmes of keeping class-room and hostel environments clean.
- (g) Preparation of scrap books with pictures and clippings on religion.
- (h) Collection of devotional songs and prayers.
- (i) Ways of planning and presenting cultural programmes, developing moral and spiritual values.
- (j) The psychology of the adolescent and the methods of meeting the psychological needs of the college student.
- (k) Administration of hostel and youth organisations.
- (l) Teaching the various subjects in the college curriculum with a view to stimulating and developing spiritual and moral values in students.

It was felt that regular methods of teaching these subjects just as the training programme of B. T. colleges, need not be included in this course. New ideas and developments in the field of Higher education must be brought to the notice of the trainees. A compilation of relevant reading material should be undertaken. This hand-book must be ready before the training course starts.

Since wardens of hostels can have a great influence on the students, proper training should be given to them. Periodical retreats and seminars for college teachers may be organised so as

to inspire them with higher values of life. One-day conferences of college teachers may be held when talks by persons of various faiths may be arranged. This will help to inculcate respect for all religions among the teachers. They should be helped to develop a sense of mission and look upon their teaching as a significant form of national service so that they do not get easily enamoured of more lucrative jobs and leave the teaching profession.

A source book containing selections from various scriptures and religious books and other writings should be prepared and edited by able authors to serve as a valuable aid to teachers as well as students in their spiritual growth.

To help students develop spiritual values, guidance and counselling are very essential. For this purpose tutorial system should be adopted in all colleges. Each tutor should have from 10 to 15 students as his advisees. Here again some training is necessary for the tutorial advisers. Their duties must be specified and they should be helped in developing skills required in their work as tutors. A cumulative record giving a picture of the personality, background and growth of the student should be maintained by the tutors.

II. Students: The two powerful forces which affect students today are the cinema and politics. The students go to cinemas for these three reasons (i) it is a concrete presentation of life, (ii) it appeals to their sex urge which becomes strong during the adolescent period, and (iii) it is a means of escapism. i. e. What they are not able to get in their real life, they get in cinema in vicarious forms. Therefore, we have to provide alternative means of satisfying these needs. Entertainments of various kinds such as one-act plays may be conducted all the year round so as to keep the students away from the bad influence of the cinemas. Besides students may be taught to discriminate good and bad films and selected good films may be shown in the college itself.

Elections to student-bodies should be conducted in a dignified way avoiding all kinds of propaganda and canvassing which consume much of the students' time and energy and create bitterness and rivalries among them. As far as possible unanimous elections should be encouraged.

The day should start with a common assembly prayer. A thought for the day may be given. Flag-hoisting and singing national anthem should be held once a week preferably on the first day of the week. Students should also take the pledge suggested by the National Integration Committee.

Opportunities for social service should be provided for students both inside and outside the college. For this purpose students may be divided into different service squads in-charge of various services. A district federation of the college social service leagues may be set up for periodical meetings and exchange of experience.

III. College Programme: Elements of comparative religion and ethics should be included in the college programme. They should be helped to acquire a knowledge of the various scriptures. This is not to be a part of the regular course of studies, but through celebration of festivals and periodical talks by persons, well-versed in the various religions and with breadth of outlook.

Celebration of festivals-religious and national can have a great influence on the spiritual growth of students. These days should not be mere holidays. The College community should celebrate these festival days in a planned manner. Students should participate in the planning of these celebrations and in a large measure, conduct the celebration programme, which can include symposiums, special lectures, singing and appropriate cultural activities. The library can prepare a display of books and other reading materials relating to the festival. In this regard, the practical suggestions and illustrations given in the book "Utilising the Festivals for Education" written by Sri T. S. Avinashilingam and published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India will be useful.

Creative activities such as play acting, painting, music, literary composition, art festivals, etc., should be promoted in the college. Cultural programmes should be held every month regularly and not merely on the College Day. Opportunities for productive craft work and useful projects like whitewashing of classrooms and painting of windows may be provided.

Such of the students as are interested in yoga may be helped and encouraged to practise it. Proper guidance in this regard is essential.

Periodical symposiums, seminars, debates etc. on spiritual and allied topics may be organised. Social Service camps should be conducted by the college at least once a year. Guidance should be given to students and staff in proper utilization of vacations. Vocational guidance should be provided to students in choosing fields of specialization as well as jobs which are in keeping with their interest and nature. The freshmen should be oriented to the ideals and programmes of the college at the beginning of the academic year.

IV. College Environment: In the college, physical facilities such as buildings, furniture, equipment etc., should be adequate. Crowded classrooms and dilapidated conditions cannot promote spiritual values. Attractive pictures of great spiritual leaders and saints such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi etc., should grace the various halls and classrooms. Writings of inspiring quotations on blackboards or notice boards can in a silent and unobtrusive way, stimulate the spiritual growth of the students.

A meditation room may be provided in the college or the hostel. In this room there can be select spiritual books and pictures.¹

1. Report of the national Seminar on the Place of Spiritual Values in Education—pp. 171—175.

XXXIX CALL TO YOUTH

Swami Vivekananda had unlimited faith in the youth of India. He had a great vision of India, the great mother waking up from her slumbers and getting on her feet, to become again the queen amongst the nations of the world. Unless the millions of our peoples living in the villages and towns are raised there is no hope for this country. To do this mighty work and to deliver the message of India to the world, he wanted an army of young men and women who would dedicate themselves to this great task.

"Men, men are wanted", he cried, "Strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone." He believed that a hundred such young men could revolutionise the world; these men must have mighty wills, born out of dedication to the service of the nation, which will make them overcome all obstacles. He wanted them to preach to our masses the message of strength and confidence. For centuries the masses of India had not been exposed to the man-making life-giving message of their upanishads. Swamiji wanted them to know about the glories of 'atman' and spiritual life, that even the lowest of the low has the 'atman' within, which never dies and is never born, whom the sword cannot pierce, nor the fire burn, immortal without beginning or end, pure and omnipresent. He wanted them to be inspired with faith, for with faith comes confidence and strength. He wanted education and religion to serve this noble purpose of making everyone strong, daring and imbued with high idealism and dedication.

To achieve this purpose, he wanted to inspire the youth of India. He went all over the country. He addressed vast numbers of people, in Colombo, Madras, Calcutta and numerous other places. His speeches are so direct, forceful and inspiring, that it is impossible to reproduce their effect in any other language than his own!

"Young men of India, my hope is in you. Will you respond to the call of your nation? Each one of you has a glorious future if you dare believe me. Have tremendous faith in yourselves. Have that faith, in yourself, that eternal power is lodged in every soul, and you will revive the whole of India. Aye, we will then go to every country under the sun, and our ideas will before long be a component of the many forces that are working to make up every nation in the world. We must enter into the life of every race in India and abroad; we shall have to work to bring this about. For that, I want young men. "It is the young, the strong, the healthy and of sharp intellect that will reach the Lord", say the Vedas. This is the time to decide your future-while you possess the energy of youth, not when you are worn out and jaded, but in the freshness and vigour of youth. Work; this is the time, for the freshest, the untouched, and unsmelled flowers alone are to be laid at the feet of the Lord, and such He receives. Rouse yourselves therefore, for life is short. There is greater work to be done than aspiring to become lawyers or petty officials or spending your life in internal quarrels and such other things. A far greater work is to sacrifice yourselves for the benefit of your race, for the welfare of humanity. Life is short, but the soul is immortal and eternal and one thing being certain, death, let us take up a great ideal, and give up our whole life to it. Let this be our determination, and may He, the Lord who comes again and again for the salvation of people, may He bless us, and lead us all to the fulfilment of our aims!

"Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us, religion is the main activity along which we

can move. The highest ideal in our Scriptures is the Impersonal, and would to God everyone of us here were high enough to realise that Impersonal ideal; but, as that cannot be, it is absolutely necessary for the vast majority of human beings to have a Personal ideal; and no nation can rise, can become great; can work at all, without enthusiastically coming under the banner of one of these great ideals in life. Political ideas, personages representing political ideals, even social or commercial ideals, would have no power in India. We want spiritual ideals before us, we want enthusiastically to gather round grand spiritual names. Our heroes must be spiritual.

"Such a hero has been given to us in the person of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If this nation wants to rise, it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name. It does not matter who preaches Ramakrishna Paramahansa, whether I, or you, or anybody else. But Him I place before you, and it is for you to judge, and for the good of our race, for the good of our nation, to judge now, what you shall do with this great ideal of life. One thing we are to remember, that it was the purest of all lives that you have ever seen or read of. It is the most marvellous manifestation of Soul-power that you can read of, much less expect to see. Within ten years of his passing away, this power has encircled the globe; that fact is before you. In duty bound therefore for the good of our race, for the good of our religion, I place this great spiritual ideal before you. May He, the Ramakrishna Paramahansa, for the good of our nation, for the welfare of our country, and for the good of humanity, open your hearts, make you true and steady to work for the immense change which must come, whether we exert ourselves or not. For, the work of the Lord does not wait for the likes of you or me. He can raise His workers from the dust by hundreds and by thousands. It is a glory and a privilege that we are allowed to work under Him.

"At the same time, let us not commit the mistake of forcing the highest truths on people who are not ready for them. My method need not be yours. The Sanyasin, as you all know, is

the ideal of Hindu's life. Every Hindu who has tasted the fruits of this world must give up the worldly life in the latter part of his life. The ideal is to give up after seeing and experiencing the vanity of things. Having found out that the heart of the material world is a mere hollow containing only ashes, give it up and go back. The mind is circling forward, as it were, towards the senses, and that mind has to circle backwards. That is the ideal. But the ideal can only be reached after a certain amount of experience. We cannot teach the child the truth of renunciation; the child is a born optimist; his whole life is in his senses; his whole life is one mass of sense-enjoyment. So there are childlike men in every society who require a certain amount of experience, of enjoyment, to see through the vanity of it, and then renunciation will come to them.

"We have to conquer the world. That we have to! India must conquer the world, and nothing less than that is my ideal. It may be very big, it may astonish many of you, but it is so. We must conquer the world or die. There is no other alternative. The sign of life is expansion; we must go out, expand, show life, or degrade, fester, and die. There is no other alternative. Take either of these, either live or die. We all know about the petty jealousies and quarrels that we have in our country. It is the same everywhere. The other nations with their political lives have foreign policies. When they find too much quarrelling at home, they look for somebody abroad to quarrel with, and the quarrel at home stops. We have these quarrels, without any foreign policy to stop them. This must be our eternal foreign policy namely, preaching the truths of our Shastras to the nations of the world. One of the great causes of India's misery and downfall has been that she narrowed herself, went into her shell as the oyster does, and refused to give her jewels and her treasures to the other races of mankind, refused to give life-giving truths to thirsting nations. That has been the one great cause of our downfall, and every one of you know that the little life that you see in India, begins from the day when we broke through the walls of that exclusiveness. Since that day, history in India

has taken another turn, and now it is growing with accelerated motion. If we have had little rivulets in the past, deluges are coming, and none can resist them.

"Therefore we must go out, and the secret of life is to give and take. Are we to take always, to sit at the feet of the Westerners to learn everything, even religion? We can learn mechanism from them. We can learn many other things. But we have to teach them something, and that is our religion, that is our spirituality. For a complete civilization, the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of our race, which, through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast. Little do you know how much of hunger and thirst there is outside of India for these wonderful treasures of our forefathers. We talk here, we quarrel with each other, we laugh at and we ridicule everything sacred, till it has become almost a national vice to ridicule everything holy. Little do we understand the heart-pangs of millions waiting outside the walls, stretching forth their hands for a little sip of that nectar which our forefathers have preserved in this land of India. Therefore we must go out, exchange our spirituality for anything they have to give us. For the marvels of the region of matter, we should give marvels of the spirit. We will not be students always, but teachers also. There cannot be friendship without equality and there cannot be equality when one party is always the teacher and the other party sits always at his feet. If you want to become equal with the Englishman or the American, you will have plenty yet to teach to the world for centuries to come.

"This has to be done. Fire and enthusiasm must be in our blood. Intellect is great indeed, but it stops within certain bounds. It is through the heart, and the heart alone, that inspiration comes. It is through the feelings that the highest secrets are reached, and therefore, the man of feeling has to do this work. Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached. Young men! arise, awake, for the time is propitious. Already everything is

opening out before us. Be bold and fear not. It is only in our scriptures that this adjective is given unto the Lord-Abhih, Abhih. We have to become Abhih, fearless, and our task will be done. Arise, awake for your country needs this tremendous sacrifice.

"It is the young men that should do it. 'The young, the energetic, the strong, the well-built, the intellectual' for them is the task. And we have hundreds and thousands of such young men in India. Arise and awake, the world is calling upon you. Arise, young men, with enthusiasm in your blood. Think not that you are poor, that you have no friends, Aye, whoever saw money make the man? It is man that always makes money. The whole world has been made by the energy of man, by the power of enthusiasm, by the power of faith.

"Those of you who have studied that most beautiful of all the *Upanishads*, the *Katha*, will remember how the king was going to make a great sacrifice, and, instead of giving away things that were of worth, he was giving away cows and horses that were not of any use, and the book says that at that time *Shraddha* entered into the heart of his son *Nachiketa*. I would not translate this word *Shraddha* to you, it would be a mistake; it is a wonderful word to understand, and much depends on it; we will see how it works, for immediately we find *Nachiketa* telling himself, 'I am superior to many, I am inferior to few, but nowhere am I the last, I can also do something.' And this boldness increased, and the boy wanted to solve the problem which was in his mind, the problem of death. The solution could only be got by going to the house of death, and the boy went. There he was, brave *Nachiketa*, waiting at the house of death for three days and obtained what he desired. What we want is this *Shraddha*. 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 *Shraddha* and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this *Shraddha*.

"My Master used to say, he who thinks himself weak will become weak, and that is true. This *Shraddha* must enter into you. Whatever material power you see manifested by the Western races is the outcome of this *Shraddha*, because they believe in their muscles. If you believe in your spirit, how much more will it work. Believe in that Infinite Soul, the Infinite Power, which with a consensus of opinion, your books and sages preach. That *Atman* which nothing can destroy, is infinite power only waiting to be called out. Here is the great difference between all other philosophies, and the Indian philosophy. Whether dualistic, qualified monistic, they all firmly believe that everything is in the soul itself. It has only to come out and manifest itself. Therefore this *Shraddha* is what we want, 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. Be strong and have this *Shraddha*, and everything else is bound to follow.

"The work I have done is little. I sincerely believe that there will be thousands coming up from the ranks to take up the work and carry it further and further, beyond all my most hopeful imagination. I have faith in my country, and especially in the youth of my country. The youth of India have the greatest of all tasks that has ever been placed on the shoulders of young men. I have travelled for the last ten years over the whole of India, and my conviction is, that from the youth will come the power which will raise India once more to her proper spiritual place. Aye, with this immense amount of feeling and enthusiasm in the blood, will come those heroes who will march from one corner of the earth to the other, preaching and teaching eternal spiritual truths of our forefathers.

"Therefore, let me conclude by reminding you once more. Arise, awake, and stop not till the desired end is reached. Be not afraid, for all great power, through the history of humanity, has been with the people. From out of their ranks have come all the

greatest geniuses of the world, and history can only repeat itself. Be not afraid of anything. You will do marvellous work. The moment you fear, you are nobody. It is fear that is the greatest of all superstitions. It is fear that is the cause of our woes, and it is fearlessness that brings heaven even in a moment. Therefore, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

XL MAKE ME A MAN

If the message of Swami Vivekananda can be expressed in one word, it is manliness. He wanted that all of us should shed our weakness and become Men. In a Bengali article published in the *Udbhodan*, he poured out the upsurgings of his heart as follows. Even in the translation, we are able to sense the great spirit behind it. "Forget not," he said, "that your wealth and life are not for sense-pleasure, are not for your individual personal happiness, but that you are born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler and the sweeper, are your flesh and blood, your brothers. Be proud that you are an Indian, and proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every Indian, poor or destitute, is my brother." Proudly proclaim at the top of the voice that the soil of India is your highest heaven, the good of India is your good, and pray day and night, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—Make me a Man!"¹

These words "*make me a man*" are both the prayer and message of Swami Vivekananda to India and the world. Elsewhere he has said, it is man making religion that we want, it is man-making theories that we want and it is man-making education all round that we want.

1. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda—Vol. IV, pp. 412-413

It is for us to analyse and understand what he meant by manliness and man-making education. The first thought that comes to the mind from these words is of physical strength. Swami Vivekananda has emphasised throughout his works, the importance of physical stamina, strength and health. He considered that physical weakness was the main cause of our miseries, the cause of our incapacity to work hard and to work in co-operation with others. We talk of doing many things but never do them. To talk rather than act has become a habit with us. That also is due to want of physical strength. Therefore first of all, our young men must become strong. Religion will come afterwards. It is in this connection that Swami Vivekananda made that famous statement, that we will be nearer to heaven through football than through a mere study of the *Gita*, and that we will understand better, with our biceps, our muscles a little stronger, and that we will understand the mighty genius and strength of Krishna better with a little strong blood in us, that we will understand the upanishads better and the glory of *the atman*, when our body stands firm on our feet and we feel ourselves as men.

Swamiji considered the body, as the basic instrument for all our material and spiritual strivings. Without a strong and healthy physique, no achievement of any kind is possible. It is for this reason that he wanted to banish poverty from this land of ours, for, as he said, religion cannot be preached to an empty stomach. He wanted people to eat good food, work well and maintain perfect health. Even for leading a spiritual life a healthy body is absolutely essential. The body is the temple of the soul and so must be maintained properly.

But at the same time, he pointed out that the body is not everything. Man is something more than the body. If bodily health and strength alone were the consideration, animals would be greater than man for they rarely fall sick. Who can have greater physical strength than the elephant? But yet the elephant has become the servant of man. Man is much more than an animal, for he can face problems and overcome them. He has

the confidence, strength, persistence and resourcefulness to face and overcome them, Swamiji wanted that we should have muscles of iron and nerves of steel. While these are desirable, something more is necessary. All men who have achieved anything worthwhile in their lives have possessed great *shraddha* or force of character. It is only men and women who have possessed this driving force, that have counted in life. As the railway engine pulls forward hundreds of carriages which have no capacity to move by themselves, even so such men move thousands of men and women. As Swami Vivekananda has said, the spider's web with proper velocity can cut through an oak. The spider's web is so thin and so weak that it cannot stand the smallest breeze. Yet it is a scientifically demonstrable fact that when there is force and velocity behind, it acquires the strength of steel and can cut through even a mighty tree. Even so are men of conviction, dedication and force of character, who, though their education and accomplishments are about the same as those of other human beings, develop mighty strength and move thousands of men and women.

Manliness consists in the capacity to face any problems and rise up to any situation. People who run away from problems, have never succeeded in solving any of them. Swamiji gives an anecdote in which this lesson has been forcefully brought out. "Once when I was in Varanasi, I was passing through a place where there was a large tank of water on one side and a high wall on the other. It was situated in a place where there were many monkeys. The monkeys of Varanasi are huge brutes and are sometimes surly. They took it into their heads not to allow me to pass through their street, so they howled and shrieked and clutched at my feet as I passed. As they pressed closer, I began to run, but the faster I ran, the faster came the monkeys and they began to bite at me. It seemed impossible to escape but just then I met a stranger who called out to me, 'Face the brutes.' I turned and faced the monkeys, and they fell back and finally fled."

Like the monkeys, the hardships of life fall back when we cease to flee before them. If we are ever to gain freedom, it must be by conquering nature, never by running away. Cowards never win victories. We have to fight fear and ignorance if we expect them to flee before us.²

It is the glory of man, that while he is born in nature, he can transcend nature. The whole history of human progress and civilization are proof, if proof were needed, that man has the capacity to conquer nature. Time was when man was living more or less like an animal in the forest. His invention of fire was perhaps his first revolutionary discovery. After that he tamed animals, introduced agriculture, which he has improved in the course of centuries, found the use of steam, discovered electricity, and in modern times found in the atom a tremendous source of power. He can now go on the sea and on the air, thus forcing nature one by one to disclose its secrets.

Man is man only so long as he is struggling to rise above nature. Nature is both internal and external. It is very great and grand to conquer external nature, but it is greater and grander still to conquer internal nature. It is grand to know the laws that govern the moon, and the stars, it is infinitely grander to know the laws that govern the passions, the feelings and the will of mankind. This conquering of the inner man, understanding the subtle or the inner self belongs to the field of religion.

The conquest of the inner man is achieved by restraining the senses. Restraint of the senses is an indication of great power. Self-restraint is in fact manifestation of greater power than indulgent action. "A carriage with four horses may rush down a hill, unrestrained or the coachman may curb the horses. Which of these is the greater manifestation of power, to let them go or hold them? Certainly the latter. A cannon ball flying through the air a long distance, falls. Another is cut short in its flight by striking against a wall and the impact generates heat. Similarly all

2. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. I, pp. 337-38

out-going energy following a selfish motive is frittered away. It will not result in development of his power. This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, which makes a Christ or a Buddha".¹

Let us now try to understand what the qualities of the really strong man are. A strong man does not fear anything. Fear is the opposite of strength. If we go into the cause of our fears, we will see that fear is due our attachment to our wealth, relatives, name and fame to and our own bodies. The idea that we may lose them causes fear. The more things we have and the more we are attached to them, the more fear we will have of losing them. In the same way the lesser our attachment to things, the lesser will be our misery. To women eternal patience, love and service are the signs of their strength. But when their chastity is threatened they should resist it even at the cost of their lives.

Along with strength goes humility. Bragging and bullying are not the qualities of strong and confident men. It is their lack of confidence that makes people brag. Whenever one is sure of oneself one ceases to brag. The really rich man does not go about telling everybody that he has wealth. But the man who has newly come by wealth, is not sure of himself and so boasts of his wealth. So also, the really strong man never bullies other people. Suppose a child of five hits us with his fists; surely we do not react by hitting it back. We laugh at it and chide him if necessary because we are quite sure that our strength is much more than that of the child. There is no necessity to prove it. But if another man hits us we hit back because we lack faith and want to prove our strength. Thus patience is a sure sign of strength, while impatience and anger are signs of the lack of strength. Even so a display of emotion is weakness, to bear and control emotion is strength.

Rama, the epic hero, has been worshipped throughout these thousands of years because he has continued to be the symbol of strength in the minds of men. He was unequalled in physical

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. I page 33.

prowess. The people of Ayodhya loved him as the apple of their eye. Yet he chose to carry out the wishes of his father. His mother, brother, teacher, in fact everybody tried to persuade him against giving up the kingdom and banishing himself into the forest. But his mind was clear about his duty and so chose the hardships of banishment and difficulties of forest life. Rama's reply is classic, "Heroes give their chest without flinching to the mortal attack of the spear. Others may give up their wealth and life. These indeed are indications of great valour and strength. But greater than all these, is that strength, by which a man will continue to do his duty throughout life, whatever be the consequences. Such a man is the hero among men." Doing one's duty throughout life and undergoing the worst sufferings in its performance and accepting its consequences with peace and equanimity is the sign of the highest manliness. He is the strong man who does not deviate from his path in any circumstance.

There has been considerable discussion on that saying of Christ: "When a man hits you on the right cheek, show him your left." Gandhiji said the same thing. Gandhiji made it clear beyond all doubt that patience is a sign of real strength; but if one puts up with the blow because of cowardice, fear or weakness, it is sin. Suppose an innocent woman or child is attacked by a bad man; looking on at the incident is not a sign of strength; it is a sign of utter weakness and cowardice. The strong man must intercede to protect them from the wicked even if it means his own death. Gandhiji preferred a man to resort to violence rather than be a coward and desist from resisting out of fear.

In our daily life, our strength is tested almost every hour. We have constantly to make decisions in the course of our work. Whether we do our tasks with efficiency or mediocrity, whether we keep our body, dress and environments clean or otherwise, whether in talking to the others we use harsh or pleasant words, whether in paying taxes we pay our dues or try to avoid them, while in selling things, we sell them pure or adulterated; in all these and various other ways we have constantly to make decisions.

The way may not always be clear and may be beset with doubts. In all these instances, Swamiji has given an infallible touchstone by which we can judge namely, we should always do or choose to do whatever is strengthening physically, intellectually and spiritually and reject as poison anything which does not give spiritual and mental strength.

Spiritual strength is the greatest strength, greater in effect than physical or material strength. We have seen men with physical strength quivering before men of greater might, but spiritual men have never bowed down their heads to any tyranny, however cruel. Socrates drank his poison with a smile. Christ, even at the moment of his being nailed, appealed to His father in Heaven to pardon his assailants. Gandhiji, though shot in the heart, died with a smile and the Lord's name on his lips. Men who have identified themselves with the spirit proclaim with a mighty voice, 'Me the fire cannot burn, the water cannot wet and the wind cannot dry. Nothing can affect me. I am the all-pervading *atman*.' Such souls have no fear of any kind; they are not afraid of destruction or death. They sing to mother *Kali*:

*"Come, Mother, come!
For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou "Time", the All-Destroyer!
Come, O Mother, come!
Who dares misery, love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes."¹*

Coming again to the great rulers of mankind, there have been emperors who conquered the world. Alexander conquered the world he knew but who knows about him today except a few students of history? It is said that Caesar was so powerful that

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. IV, p. 319.

even children who cried were hushed at the mention of his name. But today the spider weaves its web where the Caesars ruled in the Capitoline hills. About the other emperors in history how many people know them! Even the few people who read their history and thus come to know of their lives are rarely affected by them. But Rama and Krishna lived in the pre-historic age. Buddha was born two thousand and five hundred years back and Christ two thousand years back. Mohammed was born in the seventh century A. D. and so also many other spiritual giants. Though they were born thousands of years ago and their life-stories are shrouded in the mist of history and tradition, their lives still continue to affect and inspire millions of men and women in the most personal manner. The strength of their message and personality have been so great that they not only have survived through the centuries but are getting stronger everyday.

When Swami Vivekananda said: "make me a man" he meant a man of spiritual might and eternal strength, who has universal love and who will not be affected by anything. When he said that what we want is man-making education, he meant an educational system which will create such men. As he said, purity, unselfishness and altruistic service are more paying, only people do not have the patience to practise them. It is also paying from the point of view of health. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lie manifestations of immense power. Only such persons can be said to be manly and can be counted as men.

XLI IN HIS FOOTSTEPS

Swami Vivekananda in one of his letters to his friend and disciple Alasinga of Madras, wrote: Let us pray, 'Lead, kindly light'; a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. Let each one of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions of India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny; let us pray day and night for them. I care more to preach to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor. I love the poor. Who feels for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Him I call a Mahatman, who feels for the poor. They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them, who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way."¹

Thoughts are strong, they travel far. "Every thought projected from every brain goes on pulsating until it meets a fit object to receive it."² The deep and noble thoughts uttered by the prophets and saints create an impact on other noble minds. Even so the deep feelings of compassion and love of the great Swami for the Indian masses had its reaction in a great and noble soul. The Swami said, "Him I call a Mahatman, who feels for the poor"

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. VI 45.
2. *Ibid* Vol. I, 80.

and lo! a mahatma appeared on the scene. Love of the poor and down-trodden was the breath of Mahatma Gandhi's life. He identified himself completely with the lowest of the lowly and continued to work for the masses of India to the end of his life.

Swami Vivekananda had proclaimed: "Tell the truth boldly. All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening and must be invigorating. Take up this philosophy. The greatest Truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. Take them up, live them up and salvation of India will be at hand." Gandhiji lived up to these principles in his daily life. To him Truth was God.

Thus it was that Swamiji's message of dedication and service worked through Mahatma Gandhi and brought about the freedom of India. Gandhiji dominated the Indian scene for nearly thirty years in the first half of this century and as long as he lived, he worked to spread the message of renunciation and service so dear to Swamiji's heart. He practised the great message of Swamiji and reinterpreted it to suit the needs of the times.

Mahatma Gandhi had great reverence for the Swamiji. He said that the name of Swami Vivekananda was one to conjure with. When I requested him to write an introduction to a compilation of Swamiji's works on Education, he wrote: "Surely Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody." Such was his great respect for the great Swami. Once when he had gone to attend a celebration of the birthday of the Swami in Belur Math, he said: "I have gone through his works thoroughly and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousandfold."

There have been others who have also contributed towards the building up of modern India. Of them may be mentioned poet Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. The former affected Indian life through his art and poetry and gave a message of universalism transcending the nationalistic view. The latter began

as a political revolutionary and became a saint and philosopher and interpreted the spiritual message of India to the world. Both of them derived inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Tagore proclaimed: "Vivekananda's message lights up for man's consciousness the path to limitless liberation from the trammels and limitations of the self. His message is a call of awakening to the totality of our manhood through work, renunciation and service." Sri Aurobindo said: "The going forth of Vivekananda was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer. Vivekananda was the soul of puissance, a lion among men. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India, and we say, 'Behold', Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his motherland, and in the soul of her children."¹

Thus the great men of India have adopted Swami Vivekananda's message and implemented it each according to his own genius. While their field was work amongst the great masses of the people in the country at large, there is also another aspect to the Swami's message. Democratisation of all concepts leads in a large measure to lowering of standards. When large masses of people take to certain ideals, in the course of time, the intensity of its practice and its high standard comes down for the reason that all do not have the capacity to reach high standards. Only a few can strive and attain higher levels in any sphere of life, art, education, industry, culture or religion. This is all the more true when the ideals are the highest and most difficult to reach. When millions of people are to do it, the standard of performance amongst the generality of the people cannot be as high as can be reached by select dedicated people. Therefore in addition to the work amongst the masses, it is necessary that a few people become completely immersed and dedicated to these ideals and are constantly involved in thinking of them and striving for them at great sacrifice to themselves. Such persons who can hold aloft the lamp of spiritual life will be examples to others. This is just what the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are trying to do.

1. *Vedanta Kesari* Swami Vivekananda Centenary Issue, 1963, Vol. 1. No. 4. P. 134.

The membership of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission is not large. It is a closely-knit brotherhood, drawing its members from everywhere, but feeling as one because of their dedication to the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. An institution with renunciation and service as the practising ideals of its members can never be very large. All the members of the math and most of the members of the mission are wedded to life-long celibacy and selfless service. In the running of the brotherhood, the golden middle path as suggested in the *Gita*, are followed. Freedom is given to all members, but under discipline consistent with the ideals they have undertaken. Neither too much austerity nor too much luxury is allowed. Conditions necessary for preserving health and active service are provided. Above all, care is taken to see that all the *Brahmacharis* and *Sanyasins* of the order, are well versed in the scriptures and trained for all aspects of service for which the mission is famous throughout India and elsewhere in the world. Thus the training in the mission lays stress on the cultivation of an integrated life in which the pursuit of knowledge, devotional absorption, mystic communion and selfless work find due emphasis.

The message of the Ramakrishna Mission is the message of Sri Ramakrishna as expounded by Swami Vivekananda. By his life Sri Ramakrishna proved the reality of spiritual experiences at a time when thinking men wanted practical proof of religion. As has been said, Sri Ramakrishna went through the spiritual experiences of the human race and proved by his life that all religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism and others are true, each providing for the growth of people, in different countries and circumstances. Thus the foundation for a universal religion, for all humanity has been laid. Swamiji pointed out that spiritual experiences can be had by everyone who chooses to strive for them. In short, religion is not mere prattle or following some ceremonials, religion is realisation. The other message that work is worship, is one which has brought a new meaning in the conception of social service as explained in the previous chapters.

The greatest contribution of Swami Vivekananda is in the field of education. He was convinced that education was the only instrument for our progress. He wanted education not only to be intellectual but also to be moral and spiritual. He believed that all souls had tremendous potentiality and all could express them, only the requisite effort and training were necessary. He wanted an education which will inspire self-confidence in the people. He wrote in a letter on July 11, 1897, 'All the wealth in the world cannot help one Indian village, if the people do not help themselves.' He wanted that man-making should be the ideal of all education and training, based on personal purity and strength of character.

Thus we see, following his footsteps, the mission he founded has organised educational institutions of all kinds throughout the country. They cater to all grades of education and offer many varieties of training.

But we will be wrong if we imagine that the working of his message is limited to these institutions. The message is world wide, and may be called the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement. We are too near the source, too near its inception to understand its full working and even its full implications. We are indeed fortunate that it has been given to us to see its beginning and to become both its beneficiaries and instruments. The new message has been hailed as the harmoniser of different points of view, the synthesiser of different cultures, the enhancer of human dignity and the creator of a new basis of human relationship, education and international understanding. It is pregnant with great possibilities for the future.

Swami Vivekananda gave India and the world, a message which transcended the limitations of time and space. It will be good to hear what Miss. J. Macleod, an American friend, says about it in one of her letters: "The thing that held me in Swamiji was his unlimitedness. I never could touch the bottom-or top-or sides

amazing size of him - I think *Nivedita's* hold was that, too..... Oh, such natures make one so free. You ask if I am utterly secure in my grasp on the ultimate. Yes, utterly. It seems to be part and parcel of me. It is the Truth I saw in Swamiji that has set me free! One's faults seem so insignificant, why remember them when one has the ocean of Truth to be our playground? It was to set me free that Swamiji came, that was as much a part of his mission as it was to give renunciation to Nivedita or unity to Nivedita or dear Mrs. S. But it is in renunciation that he is India's great spiritual gift. I only hear one word ringing through my ears day and night, Remember Renunciation'..... I haven't any renunciation, but I've freedom. Freedom to see and help India to grow—that is my job and how I love it. I feel that Swamiji is a Rock for us to stand upon."¹ Thousands in the east and west have felt in the same way.

Swami Vivekananda has passed away. Yet he is with us, inspiring us daily to noble thoughts and actions. He will continue to inspire India and the world for thousands of years to come and make us 'men'.

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GLOSSARY

ADVAITA	... The Vedanta doctrine of monism advocated by Sankara which holds the Absolute to be personal in relation to the world.
AHALYA	... Wife of the Rishi Gautama. She was changed a stone by her angry husband. However, she was restored to her natural state by Rama and was again united with her husband.
AKASHA	... The first of the five material elements that constitute the universe; often translated as 'space' & 'ether.'
ARJUNA	... The hero of the epic <i>Mahabharata</i> and a friend and disciple of Lord Krishna, Also see Krishna.
ARYAVARTA	... The land of the Aryans—the tract between the Himalayas and the Vindhya ranges, from the Eastern to the Western sea,
ASHVAPATHI	... Lord of horses. Appellation of many beings The Father of Savitri.
ASOKA	... The most celebrated King of Maurya dynasty of Magadha. He became a convert to the Buddhism and remained a zealous protagonist of it.
ARYA SAMAJ	... A Hindu religious movement founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati. (1824-1883)
ASANA	... Posture
ASHRAM	... Hermitage.
BADRINATH	... A famous temple and place of pilgrimage situated on the banks of Vishnu - Ganga tributary of the Alakananda on the lower slopes of the Himalayas. The temple is said to have been founded by Sankaracharya.

BANARAS

... A sacred city of pilgrimage with an alternate name Varanasi situated on the left bank of the Ganges. This city was acknowledged to be the religious capital of Hinduism.

BEETHOVEN

... One of the most famous and influential German composers of the 1800's generally regarded as the "emancipator of music". Many of the characteristics of written music today stem in part from his creative genius.

BHAGAVAD GITA

... An important Hindu scripture containing the teachings of Lord Krishna. It also comprises eighteen chapters of the *Mahabharata*.

BHAKTA

... Devotee of God.

BHAKTI YOGI

... A follower of the path of devotion.

BHAKTI

... Love of God.

BHAKTI YOGI

... The path of devotion followed by dualistic worshippers.

BHARATI

... His full name is Subramania Bharati. A patriot and Tamil poet of recent years who took active part in the freedom struggle of India and suffered extremely. His songs in praise of India are popular among the Tamils. (1882-1921)

BODHI

... The famous tree under which Buddha attained illumination.

BRAHMACHARI

... A celibate student who lives with his teacher and devotes himself to the practice of spiritual discipline.

BRAHMACHARINI

... A nun.

BRAHMACHARYA

... The first of the four stages of life; life of an unmarried student.

BRAHMAN

... The Absolute; the supreme reality of the Vedanta philosophy. Also means teacher.

BRAHMO SAMAJ

... A liberal Hindu religious movement started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.—(A.D. 1774-1833.)

- BUDDHI** ... It means the discerning faculty of the mind which makes decisions; sometimes translated as "intellect".
- CHAITANYA - Krishna Chaitanya** ... A saint born in A.D. 1485, who lived at Navadvip, Bengal, and emphasised the path of divine love for the realization of God.
- CHHANDOGGYA or Chhandoggya Upanishad** ... One of the major Upanishads. It contains eight out of ten chapters of the Chhandoggya Brahmana. See *Upanishads*.
- DADU** ... The Dadu Panthi sect of Western India founded by Dadu about the year 1600, has many followers in Ajmir and Marwar. The followers of this creed wear no distinctive mark or badge except a skullcap; nor do they worship the visible image of any deity, the repetition of the name of Rama being the only kind of adoration by them.
- DASARATHA** ... A king of the solar race. He was the father of Sri Rama.
- DWARAKA** ... 'The city of gates', Krishna's capital, in Gujarat, which is said to have been submerged under the ocean after his death. It is one of the seven sacred cities.
- DHARMA** ... Righteousness, duty; the inner constitution of a thing which governs its growth.
- DHARANA** ... Fixing the mind on the point: a stage in the process of meditation.
- DHYANA** ... Concentration.
- GAUTAMA** ... Gautama, afterwards called the Buddha or the Enlightened One was the son of a prince of the Sakya clan. His father was the king of Kapilavasthu, on the Nepalese borderland.
- GARGI** ... Gargi Vachaknaru. A vedic teacher. She gave up the pleasures of prospects of married life and took a life of asceticism.

- GITA** ... See *Bhagavad Gita*.
- GOPIS** ... The cowherd girls of Vrindhavan, playmates of Krishna.
- GURU** ... Preceptor.; spiritual teacher.
- GURUGRIHA - VASA** ... Life of a disciple with a preceptor.
- GURU-PATNI** ... The wife of the spiritual teacher.
- HANDEL** ... (1685-1759) German-born British composer. He showed a feeling for expression and style which led him to create areas of new kinds of music.
- HANUMAN** ... Also known as Mahavira. A celebrated monkey chief and conspicuous figure in the *Ramayana*. His services to Rama are exemplary.
- HIRANYA** ... A giant king in the Puranas, who got power and became a tyrant.
- HARISHCHANDRA** ... Twenty-eighth king of the solar race. He was celebrated for his piety, justice and truthfulness.
- HOLY MOTHER** ... The name by which Sri Ramakrishna's wife Sarada Mani Devi is known among his devotees.
- JAPA** ... Repetition of the Lord's name or of a sacred formula taught to the disciple by a spiritual teacher.
- JHANSI, Queen of** ... The heroic widow of Raja of Jhansi. During the Mutiny of 1857, she put herself at the head of the rebels and died bravely in battle.
- JNANA YOGA** ... A form of spiritual discipline mainly based upon philosophical discrimination between the real and unreal, and renunciation of the unreal.
- JNANA YOGI** ... Follower of Jnana Yoga.
- KALI** ... The black Kali means the black or terrific tongue. This meaning of the word is now lost, but it has developed into the goddess Kali, the fierce and bloody consort of Siva.

KAIKEYI	... A princess of Kaikeya, wife of king Dasaratha and mother of Bharata, third son of Dasaratha.
KAMA	... Lust and greed
KAMBAN	... Author of Kamba Ramayana, one of the outstanding literary works in Tamil language. He belonged to the 11th Century A. D.
KARMA	... Action.
KARMA YOGA	... A spiritual discipline, mainly discussed in the <i>Bhagvad Gita</i> based upon the unselfish performance of duty.
KARMA YOGI	... A follower of Karma Yoga.
KATHA	... Story.
KRISHNA	... An incarnation of God described in the <i>Mahabharata</i> and the <i>Bhagavata</i> . He is the most celebrated figure of Indian mythology. He is said to be the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, or rather a direct manifestation of Vishnu.
KUCHELA	... One of the classmates of Lord Krishna. His real name was Sudama. Since he was very poor and wore torn clothes he was called Kuchela. In spite of extreme poverty he never asked for help.
KUSA	... A kind of grass. One of the two sons of Rama and Sita. A vedic rishi and author of hymns.
KUSHALA	... Welfare, Help.
MAHAT	... Cosmic intelligence-the highest manifestation of nature, consisting of the three materials of which each human is a part.
MAHATMA	... The great self or soul; denotes both the supreme soul (of the universe) and the individual soul. At the highest stage they are identical.

MAHAVIR	... The founder of the Jain sect, was the son of a nobleman of Lichhavi clan, and was born at Vaisali near Patna. He was called the Jina or conqueror and his followers received the name of Jains. At the time of his death he had 14,000 disciples.
MAITREYI	... Wife of Yajnavalkya and herself a saint.
MANTRA	... Sacred word by which a spiritual teacher initiates his disciple; Vedic hymn; sacred word in general.
MANU	... The celebrated ancient lawgiver of India.
MATH	... Monastery
MAYA	... A term of Vedanta philosophy denoting ignorance obscuring the vision of reality, the cosmic illusion on account of which the one appears as many, the Absolute as the relative.
MELA	... Religious celebration, congregation.
MIRA BAI	... A poetess admitted to have been among the greatest saints of India. Her deep love for God as Giridhara Gopala is well known.
MUNJA	... A kind of grass, as the emblem of vow to keep one's body, mind and speech in control.
NACHIKETA	... A hero in the Upanishads personifying <i>Shraddha</i> .
NANAK	... The founder of Sikhism, is variously known as Guru Nanak, Baba Nanak, Nanak Shah. Their religious book is Granth Sahib. It was compiled in A. D. 1604.
NAMASTE	... The Indian form of salutation and greeting.
NARADA	... A rishi to whom some hymns of the Rig Veda are ascribed. He was the inventor of Vina (lute) and the chief of the heavenly musicians.
NIRVANA	... Final absorption in the all pervading Reality, through the annihilation of the individual ego.

SHAKTI	... The Goddess or Maha-Devi the wife of God Siva. As the Shakti or female energy of Siva She has two characteristics, one mild, the other fierce, and it is under the latter that she is especially worshipped. She has a great variety of names such as Uma, Parvathi. Jaganmata. Bhavani, Kali, etc. Shakti in general means power.
SHASTRAS	... Holy scriptures.
SHIVA	.. Or Siva. The destroyer God; the Third person of the Hindu Trinity, the other two being Brahma and Vishnu.
SHANKARA	... Same as Sankaracharya.
SHASTRA	... Scripture. sacred book; code of laws.
SHRADDHA	... Earnestness, ardent devotion.
SMRITI	... Sacred books of the Hindu, subsidiary to the Vedas, guiding their daily life and conduct; they include the epics, the puranas and the code of Manu.
SRINGERI	... A hill on the edge of the Western Ghats in Mysore, where there is a monastic establishment founded by Sankaracharya.
SRUTI	... Vedas.
TAXILA	... A city of the Gandharas (a country on the west bank of the Indus, The purana says it was famous for its breed of horses) situated in the Punjab. It was the residence of Taksha, son of Bharata and nephew of Sri Rama, and perhaps took its name from him.
TAITTIREYA UPANISHADS	.. It is applied to the Samhita of the Krishna Yajur-Veda. It is also applied to Brahmana, to an Aranyaka, to an Upanishad and a Pratisakhya of the same name.
TAPAS	.. Austerity, penance; intense application of Yoga.

TAPOVAN	... Hermitage situated in forest where sages and their disciples learned and taught.
THEVARAM	... Religious hymns in Tamil of Saivites.
THIAGARAJA	... The greatest composer of devotional songs of Telugu language in South India and saint. (1767—1847).
THIRUKKURAL	... Thiruvalluvar's great work regarded as the masterpiece of Tamil literature, one of the great ethical codes of the world, written about 200 BC.
THIRUMULAR	... One of the yogis whose sweet Tamil verses are concerned with Kriya, Yoga and Jnana Ways. The author of Thirumandhiram.
TULSI RAMAYANA	... <i>Ramayana</i> in Hindi, written by a celebrated Vaishnava poet Tulsidas.
UPANISHAD	... The well known scriptures of the Hindu, containing the philosophy of the Vedas. They are hundred and eight in number, and of them seven are called major Upanishads.
VALLUVAR	... Also known as Thiruvalluvar. See Thirukkural.
VEDA	... The revealed scriptures of the Hindus, consisting of the Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Atharvana-Veda.
VEDANTA	... The essence of the Vedas; A system of philosophy ascribed to Vyasa, discussed mainly in the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras.
VIRAHA	... A horrible man-eating giant. By penance he had obtained from Brahma the boon of immutability.
VRINDAVAN	... Also called Brindaban. A town situated on the bank of river Jamuna is held sacred as the scene of many adventures in the life of Krishna.
VYASA	... The compiler of the Vedas, reputed author of the Mahabharata and the Brahma Sutra, and the father of Sukadeva.

NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI	... Losing the self in the realisation of the impersonal God.
NIVEDITA, Sister	... An English disciple of Swami Vivekananda who dedicated herself to the service of India.
NIYAMA	... Restraint of the mind; the second of the eight yoga disciplines.
NYAGRODHA	... Banyan, Indian fig tree, branches of which root themselves over great extent.
OJAS	... Virility.
OM	... The most sacred symbol of the Veda. It is a symbol both of the personal God and of the Absolute.
PRITI	... Love, devotion.
PRANA	... The Vital breath, which sustains life in a physical body; the primal energy or force, of which other physical forces are manifestations.
PRANAYAMA	... Control of the breath; one of the disciplines of Yoga.
PRATYAHARA	... Restraining the organs.
PURANAS	... Books of Hindu mythology. The Puranas succeed the Itihasas or epic poems, but at a considerable distance of time, and must be distinguished from them.
PURI	... A city associated with the deity Jaganatha meaning the 'Lord of the world,' a particular appellation of Vishnu, or rather Krishna. Puri is situated near Cuttack, in Orissa.
PURUSHA	... Person. A term of Sankhya philosophy denoting the individual conscious principle. In Vedanta the term Purusha denotes the Self.
RAJA YOGA	... A system of yoga ascribed to Patanjali, dealing with concentration and its methods control of the mind, Samadhi (ecstasy or communion with God) and similar matters.

RAJAS	... One of the three gunas which refer to the mystic elements or principles out of which all things and beings in this world are made. These are illumination (Sathva), activity (Rajas), and dullness (Tamas).
RAMA	... The hero of <i>The Ramayana</i> . He is the seventh incarnation of God Vishnu. His story is told in the <i>Ramayana</i> which is supposed to have been composed by the sage Valmiki about five centuries B.C. Also known as Ramachandra.
RAMA NAMA	... Chanting the name of Rama.
RAMANUJA	... A great saint of Southern India, the foremost interpreter of the school of Qualified Non-dualistic Vedanta (A. D. 1017-1137).
RAVANA	... The monster-king of Ceylon, who forcibly abducted Sita, the wife of Rama.
RISHI	... A seer, the author of a Vedic hymn; a general name for a saint or an ascetic.
SADHANA	... Spiritual practice or endeavour.
SADHU	... Holy man.
SANKARACHARYA	... One of the greatest saints and philosophers of India, the foremost exponent of Advaita Vedanta (A. D. 788-820).
SANKHYA	... One of the six systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy, which teaches that the universe evolves as the result of the union of Prakriti (nature) and purusha (spirit). It was founded by Kapila.
SANYAS	... Renunciation of the world.
SANYASIN	... A Hindu monk who has renounced the world in order to realize God.
SARASWATI	... The Goddess of Learning.

YAGNA	... Sacrifice.
YAMA	... Self-restraint, the first of the eight steps of Raja Yoga. Also the name of the king of Death.
YOGA	... Union of the Supreme soul. The discipline by which such union is effected.
YOGI	... One who practises Yoga.
YOJANA	... Thought, plot, research. The distance of about nine miles.
YUDHISHTHIRA	... The eldest of the five Pandava princes, one of the heroes of the Mahabharata renowned as a ruler and director.



INDEX

A

Abhih	... 219-220
Aim of Education	... 29-30
Ancient Schools	... 37,49
Asoka	... 230-231
Attachment	... 127
Attitudes	... 234

B

Blasphemy	... 25-26
Body	... 262
Body on mind	... 35
Brahmananda, Swami	... 81
Bramachari	... 52, 182
Brahmacharya	... 110, 181
Gandhi on	... 84

C

Cause of India's fall	... 17-18
Character	... 69; 214-215
Man of	... 71-72
National	... 74
Cinema	... 250
Cleanliness	... 237
Community, World	... 214
Concentration	... 58, 61-62
Power of	... 59, 60
Types of	... 60

Continnence	... 83, 86:
See Brahmacharya	... 170, 181
Control, Palate	... 83
Mind	... 107-108
Senses	... 109-110
Co-operative habits	... 43
Society	... 207
Country, Duty to	... 231
Courage	... 246
Courtesy of Turks	... 229-230

D

Destinies	... 78-79
Disciple	... 54
Discipline	... 42
Spiritual	... 52
Self	... 248
Duties of Students	... 37-40
One's	... 132
Sense of	... 134
to country	... 231

E

Education	... 20
Education, Present-Day	... 28-29
Aim of	... 29-30
Essence of	... 60
Value of	... 31-32
Experiences, Past	... 75
External influences	... 77

F

Faith	... 5
in teacher	... 55
Fearlessness	... 71; 236-237
Also see Abhih	... 219-220
Festivals	... 200
Francis of Assissi, St.	... 117

H

Habit	... 70
Habits, cooperative	... 43
Harmonising differences	... 209
Hastie, Dr.	... 7, 48-49
Huen Tsang	... 48-49

I

Ideas, postive	... 41
Impressions	... 69
India's fall, cause of	... 17-18
Influences, External	... 77
Instruction methods	... 34-35
Integrity	... 246

J

Jealousy	... 192
Justice, Sense of	... 238-239

K

Kali, Mother	... 267
--------------	---------

L

Learning by memory	... 36
Love	... 240, 245

M

Madness of love	... 115
Mahatman	... 269-270
Mangal Singh, Maharaj	... 10
Meaningless ritual	... 20
Meditation	... 113, 155
Memory, Learning by	... 36
Message, Swami's	... 19-20
Universal	... 27
of India	... 253

Methods for instruction	... 34-35
Mind, Scientific	... 66-67
Study	... 79
Controlling of	... 106-107
Mission, Ideal of	... 25
Mirage	... 167-168
Motherhood	... 180
Motherland, Dedication to	... 3-4
Motherly love	... 89-92

N

Nachiketa	... 258
National regeneration	... 193
Naren	... 6, 7, 8, 10
Nivedita, Sister	... 16

O

Ojas, power of	... 153
Orderliness	... 237-238
Organisation	... 242

P

Palate, Control of	... 83
Parable of Fishermen	... 69
Sadhu & Prostitute	... 106
Parliament of Religions	... 13-14
Past experiences	... 75
Patriotism	... 76
Real	... 192
Personality, def.	... 143
Personality	... 144
Development	... 145-146
Politics	... 250
Positive Ideas	... 41
Praise vs Reprove	... 45

Preamble, UN	... 212
UNESCO	... 213
Projects for Service	... 196-197
Present-day education	... 28-29
Punishment	... 42
Purity	... 80

Q

Qualities, Good	... 211
-----------------	---------

R

Ramakrishna, Sri	... 1, 54
Regeneration, National	... 193
Religion	... 5, 12, 20-22; 76; 207-8, 230, 257, 264
def.	... 218
Religions, Acceptance of	... 21-22
Renunciation	... 2, 54
Reprove Vs Praise	... 45
Reverence	... 140, 217
Restraint, Self	... 264
Ritual, Meaningless	... 20

S

Sadhana	... 2, 26
Samadhi	... 156
Sanskrit	... 186-187
Sanyasin, Song of	... 11
Saradamani Devi, Sri	... 175-77
Schools, Ancient	... 37-49
Scientific mind	... 66-67
Scientific superstition	... 66
Secular state	... 204
Self	... 163-5
Self abnegation	... 137
Discipline	... 248
Restraint	... 264

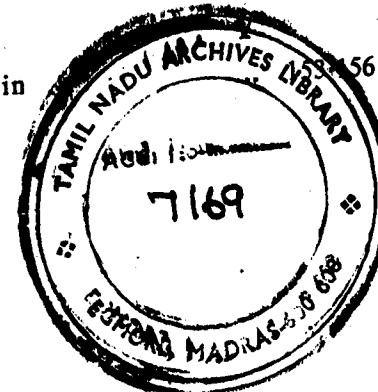
294

Senses, Control of	... 109-110
Sense of justice	... 238-239
Service of man	... 9
Projects for	... 196-197
Shakthi	... 181, 218
Shraddha	... 18-19; 258-259
Society, Co-operative	... 207
Soul of man	... 161
Spiritual discipline	... 52-53
Training	... 227-228
Values	... 231; 232-233, 234, 240-242
Story, Student & Guru-patni	... 56-57
Alexander & Sanyasi	... 220
Drunken Monkey	... 77
Guru upon a river	... 226
Harold Russell	... 103-104
Mongoose	... 136-137
Minister's Wife	... 151-152
Monkey of Varanasi	... 263
Queen Madalassa	... 97
Sanyasin & Housewife	... 1; 4-35
Savitri	... 173-175
Shuka	... 111-112
Two brothers	... 215
Vilva Mangala	... 115
Strength	... 18
Spiritual	... 267
Students, Duties, of	... 37-40
Studentship, Eligibility for	... 37
Study by Spitz	... 89
Sublimation	... 114-116
Superstition, Scientific	... 66
T	
Teacher	... 45, 49, 248
Teacher, Life of	... 33
Qualities of	... 47, 48, 50-51
Faith in	... 55

295

Think, Learning to	... 67
Thinking, Power of	... 65
Thirukkural	... 101-102
on Women	... 96
Thoughts	... 68, 124, 144
Buddhist	... 162-165
Training, Spiritual	... 227-228
Truths, Sets of	... 218
U	
Unattached	... 129-130
Unit existence	... 163-165, 167
Universal message	... 27
V	
Value of education	... 31-32
Values, Spiritual	... 231; 232-233; 234, 240-232
W	
Weakness	... 18
Physical	... 262
Womanhood	... 178, 180
Women, Thirukkural on	... 96
Work	... 26, 43, 106, 127, 193
Power of	... 194
Worker, Unattached	... 135
World Community	... 214
Worshipper, Shakti	... 181

Yoga, Steps in

T
N74

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வழங்கிய நாள். (1)	திரும்பிய நாள். (2)	வழங்கிய நாள். (1)	திரும்பிய நாள். (2)
13/11/91			
18/5/93	27/5		