

SPEAK YOUR WORD, VIVEKANANDA

(A dialogue and discourse)

SWAMI PARAHITANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

II

In an age twisted out of its true pattern,
is my last word *sannyasa* ? I tell you,
anything I say that breathes of chastity and
sacrifice, that fights humbug and deceit, is bound
to make men black me down the corridors of time,
even as they have done — these learned gentry who,
living far away, know Ramakrishna and his purpose
better than all those long acquainted with him did !
— But Swamiji, how is it that you, of all people,
show bitterness and temper ? — No, my boy, not that :
it is my love that makes me hate them so.
They steer the young I love in their crafty channels.
See the fun of it ! they unwittingly propose me
who oppose me. Nor do I hate them. My Beloved
comes to me in the form of them. Do I not say,
My God the Jealous ! and salute from a distance ?
— brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

As a way of life here and now, I teach *sannyasa*
to very few. To all I teach it as an ideal
and goal ; as a guide and standard by which men's
ventures keep their balance and direction ; as a
power-house generating thought-currents to maintain
the sanity of society ; as a mother of souls seeking
no reward, given up to the good of the world.
Sannyasa is expanded life : the monk makes the whole
world his own — and all I say of monk applies to nun.
It is intensified life : he infuses the wisdom of
his best moments into all the moments of his life.
It is compassionate life : not to speak of any sort of
callousness, all that smart crust of being in the know
dissolves from inside out in tenderness, and he is one
with the life of those around him. The monk grows
into infinitude. Such a man, dead to all self-seeking,
alone lives. This that you call life is life by courtesy
compared to that full life to which you all are called

as soon as you are conscious of the call and
Providence permits

— brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

The true monk has a mother's heart, though he may not show it ; the true nun has a soldier's fibre, though you may not know it. They are artists : with the thoughts and acts of life they express their vision of the truth.

The great artist reaches through to Reality by gleams and glances ; the great monk or nun reveals It by steady glow and gaze. Now, just as the greatness of great art is known in its greatness only by those born and trained to it, so holiness in its holiness, not in its incidentals, is far from easy to discern.

And let me tell you one thing my Master said, not quite in this connection, but having to do with our subject.

Without the artistic faculty none can be truly spiritual, was what he said. Now if monastic life is spiritual life in its logical conclusion, this means the would-be monk must not be lacking even in aesthetic sense, far less in physical or mental capacity. So you see how wrong those whiskered babes are, who tell you that monasticism is a retreat and defeat. If your brass hats of church and state, if your cultured, self-appointed judges, cannot see the grandeur, usefulness, and truthfulness of this thoroughly-unbourgeois ideal, I call them of child-mind.

Let them say I am only a Calcutta boy, and go their haughty way — I admit it, yes, am proud to admit it.

They forget one thing. They forget at whose feet I sat. They do not see that that picks out one Calcutta boy from several million more. If I have ever spoken word of truth, it is by the grace of the owner of those feet that it was spoken

— brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

Next, what is this *sannyasa* of which I speak ?

For seeker, it is the effort for his own liberation and for the good of the world : not two aims, but two sides of a single aim. There is no liberation until he is one with whatever is real in the world ; and this identity expressed in action is service rendered to the world. This service is worship, for it is the Godhead in the world that this man serves.

And how to rise to awareness of identity without practising the habit of it, that is, without living for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many ?

Again, how to do true service to the world without virtually being, at least while doing the service,

a *sannyasin* ? Without renouncing every trace of self it is not easy even to know how best to serve the world, still less actually to do so. This is why, at the start, we do well to be guided by those who are better established in *sannyasa*. My Master used to say : he who struggles for freedom is the real preacher. You should not understand his teaching from just this one statement, but I mention it to show that one may easily go astray in judging what is the world's good and what is not. To change the thought-current of the world in the right direction is to do the greatest good. But outward action surely has its place, relative to time and place and need — need both of world and aspirant — brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

For attained, *sannyasa* is that Selfishness that is unselfishness. It is freedom-in-life. Such a person, monk's garb or no, is a blessing to the land wherein he lives, let people say what they will. This one cannot cease to love the world, seeing, as he does, that his Self lies all about him. A few such souls hold the world on its course. To say so seems absurd, but he who knows the truth knows that I speak the truth. Now you begin to see, perhaps, why *sannyasa* is my word in a critical century. It may seem against all reason, but it is not against Reason's reason. Ah! do you see what I see ? It is the principle of reason itself, expressed in life. Think it out — brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

Do not tell those who are dear to you, and those to whom you are dear, that I call the youth of the world to *sannyasa*. Of course, I ask you all to practise such inward renunciation as you can. The more you can the more will be your peace of mind and that of those around you. As to taking up monastic life itself, that is something destiny must call you to, though your longing for it is certainly not of no account. What I have done is try to make you see that *sannyasa* is the needed ideal today. I did not mention politics. At the outset you showed you had the right perspective there. Politics works for good or ill according to those who put hands to it. Politics cannot make people good, but the right people can make politics good. Your character determines the character of your leaders, and your leaders make your politics clean or dirty, boon or bane. My concern is to make those men and women of character who are

so badly needed. Not levelling down, but levelling up,
I preach. Aim high, be high, and high will be your politics
— brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

Last, remember well : each one of you is Mother Darling's
only child ; and you would know it did you but let Her
have Her way — no, no ! that's just a taste of truth :
the mystery of the Mother and the mystery of you, one
blissful Mystery, not two, appearing, marvel of marvels,
as not at all a mystery except to the faculty of
understanding. Neither to Itself nor to the seer is it a
mystery : It is all-Light. To you also, It is no mystery,
since you see mere bread and rice, and all the drear
and dross of pavement life. Arise ! awake to the mystery
hidden in this dross. Realize the Infinity that is
your very being. The way is not for weaklings.
We are born for this, and life after life shall
have to bear until we know what we really are.
Arise ! awake ! and stop not until the goal is reached
— dear brothers and dear sisters.

OLD HINDUISM FOR EVER ! — (*Continued from page 491*)

enter the Christian's church and kneel before these, but I shall keep my heart open for all
the crucifix ; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and that may come in the future.'
in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit When understood in this sense of the Swami,
down in meditation with the Hindu, who is is not 'Old Hinduism', not only Sanatana
trying to see the Light which enlightens the Dharma, but Viswa Dharma as well, not only
heart of every one. Not only shall I do all the Faith Enduring, but also the Faith Encom-
passing ?

THEY ALL AVER ALIKE — (*Continued from page 496*)

And lo ! a guess can never take the place of the truth. —THE QURAN

The knowledge of evanescent objects is not properly knowledge, but bears
the same relation to reality as the mirage of the desert to water, the searcher after
which obtains nothing but an increase of thirst.

—AZAR KAIVAN

The end of learning is to know God. —MILTON

A little learning is a dangerous thing. —POPE

Mere dry reasoning — I spit on it ! I have no use for it ! —SRI RAMAKRISHNA