

renunciation and perfect freedom in the spiritual sense of the word. Living and moving alone by himself, 'like the rhinoceros', the Hindu Sannyasin devotes his whole time and energy to God-realization. Not unoften he acts as friend, philosopher, and guide to those in the other three stages. He is detached from all narrow or selfish ends such as the desire for wife, children, community, and even country. Renouncing everything for the sake of the soul, the Sannyasin lives 'like a servant of humanity' and yet above and beyond all duties and obligations. As the *Gita* says, he is truly a Sannyasin and a Yogi who performs actions free from desire for fruits—not he who externally discards the prescribed sacrifices, rites, and obligations.

Perhaps one can never be sure if these stages of life and their enjoined duties can still be enforced today as the best solution for India's social problems. Whatever the defects of the older system and whatever the needs of the present-day Indian way of life, one thing is certain that without this excellent organization of life and society, India could

hardly have attained to the degree of spiritual culture and religious harmony that are still evoking the unstinted admiration of the countries of the world. The decline of her material prosperity in more recent centuries is due not to her religious and spiritual pre-occupations but to their abuse and mis-application. Material and spiritual values were equally to be pursued by the householder at the Garhasthya stage. It is a wrong study of history to impute the charge that India neglected secular matters in preference to religion and spirituality. The emphasis was no doubt on the latter in preference to the former. It would not be far wrong, on the other hand, if one should say that the pursuit of real religion yielded place to a narrow socialized, ritualistic, and communal form of it owing to the disintegration of the Varna-Ashrama Dharma and the gradual disappearance of the latter two stages of Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. Now that Indian history is being re-written in independent India, it may not be long before the myths of foreign misrepresentation are exploded and the essential grandeur of the Indian way of life re-established.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON INDIA'S MESSAGE OF PEACE

BY SWAMI TEJASANANDA

It is a truism that a nation like an individual does not live by bread alone. That India has once again leaped into the full flame of life and has wrested from the hands of Destiny her long-lost freedom after centuries of political servitude and economic exploitation, is a clear testimony to the fact that a nation can never die and its culture can never be annihilated if it be loyal to its spiritual traditions. 'Everywhere (in the East and the West)', Swami Vivekananda said, 'I find among nations one great ideal

which forms the backbone so to speak of that race. With some it is politics, with others it is social culture; others again may have intellectual culture, and so on, for their national background. But this, our motherland, has religion and religion alone for its basis, for its backbone, for the bed-rock upon which the whole building of its life has been based. . . . This is the line of life, this is the line of growth, and this is the line of well-being in India.—to follow the track of religion'. That this nation lives,—the *raison*

d'être—is because it still holds on to the Supersensuous. Romain Rolland, the illustrious litterateur of the West, strikes the very same note in his celebrated work entitled *Life of Ramakrishna* when he says,

'The age-long history of the spirit of India is the history of a countless throng marching ever to the conquest of Supreme Reality. All the great peoples of the world, willingly or unwillingly, have the same fundamental aim; they belong to the conquerors who age by age go up to assault the Reality of which they form a part, and which lures them on to strive and climb. But each one does not see the same face of Reality. It is like a great fortified city, beleaguered on different sides by different armies, who are not in alliance. Each army has its tactics and weapons to solve its own problems of attack and assault. Our Western races storm the bastions, the outer works. They desire to overcome the physical forces of Nature, to make her laws their own so that they may construct weapons therefrom for gaining the inner citadel, and forcing the whole citadel to capitulate. India proceeds along different lines. She goes straight to the centre, to the Commander-in-chief of the unseen General Headquarters; for the Reality she seeks is transcendental'.

In fact this has been the immortal theme of Indian life—the message of her culture, and this has enabled India to stick to her ideal of peace and goodwill and to triumph over the brutal onslaughts of the forces of materialism on the citadel of her life from age to age. Swami Vivekananda was fully conscious that no lasting peace could ever be established on earth through the mere fanfaronade of politico-economic principles of a few politically obsessed people of the world, who, immured in the prison-house of their own passions and prejudices, could hardly get above their personal predilections and sordid self-interests, political or other, and dictate real peace to humanity. It is only God-men who have felt peace, lived in peace, and diffused peace all around, that can transcend all limitations, geographical or other, and claim that sacred privilege of being the real peacemakers in the world. Swami Vivekananda belongs to the category of those dynamic spiritual personalities whose lives and contributions are for all time the

inestimable possession not only of India but also of entire mankind. It is worth while to know how this cyclonic monk of modern India put himself into the treadmill of austere discipline to acquire that priceless wealth of peace and wisdom within himself and how he gave it out in full to the world for the benefit of humanity. He himself unfolds the secrets of his life 'To a Friend',¹ in the following words:

'Friendless, clad in rags, with no
possession,
Feeding from door to door on what chance
would bring,
The frame broken under Tapasya's weight;
What riches, ask thou, have I earned
in life?

Listen, friend, I will speak my heart
to Thee,
I have found in my life this Truth
Supreme,—
Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life,
There's one ferry that takes across the
sea,—

'Formulas of worship, control of breath,
Science, philosophy, systems varied,
Relinquishment, possession, and the like,
All these are but delusions of the mind;—
Love, Love,—that's the one thing, the
sole treasure'. . . .

'From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,
And the very minutest atom,
Everywhere is the same God, the All-love;
Friend, offer mind, soul, body,
at their feet'.

Thus equipped, the great Swami 'wandered free from plan, caste, home, constantly alone with God. And there was no single hour of his life when he was not brought into contact with the sorrows, the desires, the abuses, the misery, and the feverishness of living men, rich and poor, in town and field; he became one with their lives'. 'The great Book of Life', says Romain Rolland, 'revealed to him what all the books in the libraries could not have done . . . the tragic face of the present day, . . . the cry of the peoples of India and of the world for help, and the heroic duty of

¹ Title of poem by Swami Vivekananda, originally in Bengali.

the new Oedipus, whose task it was to deliver Thebes from the talons of the Sphinx or to perish with Thebes'. The Swami, with the boldness of a seer, threw the gauntlet of challenge to warring humanity and said,

'The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war; . . . whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago and held on to it through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness,—Renunciation. This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, . . . the spiritualization of the human race'.

Did not the old Rishis of India sing to the same tune? Did not Buddha and Shankara, Nanak and Ramanuja, Chaitanya and Ramakrishna deliver the same message to the world? Did not even Jesus the Christ—the great prophet of Asia—boldly sound the tocsin of alarm in his immortal utterance, 'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword'? Indeed a true prophet of peace would welcome death on the Cross rather than sell the self for pelf or conquer the world with the sword. For, as Prof. Toynbee, the author of *The Study of History*, has rightly observed,

'The truth seems to be that the sword which has once drunk blood cannot be permanently restrained from drinking blood again any more than a tiger which has once tasted human flesh can be prevented from becoming a man-eater doomed to death. . . . So it is with the society which has sought salvation through the sword'.

The trend of events in the world shows that modern civilization has brought in its trail death and destruction more than anything else. The inhuman atrocities that are being perpetrated in the sacred name of peace and culture, the violence and oppression that blacken the annals of every great nation of the world from day to day, set us seriously athinking as to whether or not mankind is once again running along the downward curve of evolution. As a matter of fact, violence can never be overcome by violence. Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. It aggravates desires,

and multiplies wants and miseries, clash and conflict, in life and society. Armies, when they attempt to conquer armies, only multiply and make brutes of humanity. More than half a century back Swami Vivekananda, with his forecasting vision of possibilities, pointed out,

'The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. You will find that the very centre from which such ideas as government by force sprang up are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upanishads'.

The world is painfully aware how his prophetic words are being fulfilled today before its very eyes. Therefore it is that the great Swami has come forward today, following in the footsteps of his spiritual forbears, with his message of peace,—a universal specific without which the wounds and ills of human life can never be cured. It is time for the great leaders of thought to rise equal to the occasion and to do the behest of these great master minds so as to swing the pendulum of human thought from the noisy violence of war to the silence of the soul.

It cannot be denied that there is something hidden in the inmost depths of the heart which wants to break through all physical barriers and human limitations to visualize the Supreme Source of Peace—the Eternal Reality. The realization of this highest Truth is the true measure of greatness in the life of an individual or of a race. For greatness is not a thing of kilometres or an extent in space. The true wealth of a man or a nation is the spiritual genius that shines and radiates, and unless and until this light of wisdom, the realization of the oneness of all being, is kindled in the human heart and transfigures the entire personality, it would be vain to expect a healthy revolution in the existing relation between man and man, between nation and nation. In fact the warring instincts of mankind cannot be set at rest without a universal seeping of these spiritual ideas into men's minds and hearts. And this mankind must learn from the immortal teach-

ings of the Vedanta—the treasure-house of the accumulated wisdom and experiences of the ancient seers of India. As already pointed out, every nation has got its distinctive culture, its peculiar traits,—its own line of growth and development. And this variety in the phenomena of life almost baffles the scrutiny of even the boldest of intellects, and as such any attempt to find out a golden link of unity in this world of diversity appears to be as unprofitable as a blind pursuit after the *ignis fatuus* of a marshy land. But still to the enlightened vision of seers, this world of multiplicity has yielded all its secrets. They have visualized that there is one persistent Reality,—an abiding substratum on which the cosmic dance of phenomena has been going on from eternity. They have realized that from the highest to the lowest, from Brahmā down to the minutest particle of dust, there is but one pervasive Reality, ‘through whose fear all elements function,—the fire burns, the sun gives light unto the universe, the moon sheds its lustre, the air blows, and Death does its own duty’. It has also been their experience that this world, bereft of its names and forms, is one with Brahman, and that every individual, organic or inorganic, is in essence the same,—the apparent differences being due to human ignorance which brings about a dichotomy in what is otherwise a homogeneous entity. The finding out of such a broad background of unity in the domain of apparently conflicting and heterogeneous thoughts and beliefs of mankind, a basis on which all men and women, irrespective of caste, creed, and colour, can stand in mutual love and admiration, the identity of the individual with the universal,—is one of the boldest pronouncements of the Vedanta. ‘The modern researches of the West’, says Swami Vivekananda, ‘have demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe; how, physically speaking, you and I, the sun, moon and stars, are but little waves or wavelets in the ocean of matter, the Samashti, and how, going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedanta that behind

that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real soul is one. There is but one soul throughout the universe, all is but one existence’. Humanity is seeking this impulse of thought as the universal spiritual pabulum to satisfy the hunger of its soul. The religion of India is thus a clarion call to rise to the radiance of the spirit, and her science and economics, arts and literature, have the same upward look. This urge toward the Eternal and the fidelity to her ideal of renunciation and service, universal brotherhood and goodwill, based on the recognition of the fundamental oneness of being, constitute the real Magna Charta of peace which bewildered humanity needs today. And it is India that should deliver once again this message to the war-weary world. So did the great Swami declare,

‘Hence have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Hence have proceeded the tidal waves of philosophy that have covered the earth, East or West, North or South, and hence again must start the wave which is going to spiritualize the material civilization of the world’.

It is a tragic phenomenon that there is a sinister attempt on the part of some war-mongers to drown the voice of the Rishis of India in the clang and clatter of their arms, and fresh fetters are also being forged from day to day to enslave human thought and action in the sacred name of freedom and peace. Rightly did Dr. Radhakrishnan remark in a spirit of indignation,

‘Integrity is lost and truth-seeking has become the handmaid of state policy. In the belligerent countries of the present day, the intellectuals must think, if they think at all, in one particular way. If they show any independence, they do so at the risk of their lives or their freedom of action. There is no use making any profession of impartiality. We must think to order . . . Before our eyes we see how intellect has become the servant of diplomacy . . . spiritual powers are being exploited for temporal purposes. Religion is made to turn the mills of state authority’.

‘Men are suffering’, he further adds, ‘from the fever of violent motion and they make philosophy out of it . . . Pure contemplation,

aesthetic ecstasy or reflection on the end of life, is dismissed as mystic raving or poetic dreaming'. No truer picture of the prostitution of human intellect can be so realistically drawn, as has been done by this great oriental thinker.

No doubt various 'isms' have of late sprung into life and have already secured a firm foothold in the citadel of human thought and action in many a country of the world to solve the hydra-headed problems of mankind. But in the opinion of the great Swami, the solution does not lie merely in the fantastic formulation of theories, or in the balancing of political powers, or in the evolution of artificial equilibrium of economic forces. The real remedy lies, he emphatically declares, at the hands of those powerful personalities—both men and women—who have gained the vision of spiritual unity and are imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and service, freedom and courage. They must go forth as cultural ambassadors to the farthest corners of the world for the dissemination of the universal and most democratic principles of Vedanta which proclaims the fundamental equality of all on the spiritual plane. Persons whose lives are moulded in the light of such a lofty idealism, are the real peacemakers of the world and the true lovers of mankind. They entertain the deepest regard for every faith, for every individual, and feel no scruple in going to the mosque of a Mohammedan or the church of a Christian. They will delight in taking refuge in the Buddha and his Law and sit in meditation with the Hindu in the forest or in the temple. To them the Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, the Avesta, the Holy Granth, and all other sacred books are so many pages, and infinite number of pages yet remain to be unfolded. This catholicity of outlook is what the world needs today, and nothing fulfils so beautifully the manifold requirements of mankind as this universal gospel of Vedanta. It stands as a living faith embodying the varied aspirations of humanity and furnishes the much-needed forum where all faiths and thoughts of humanity can meet

and shake hands with one another in a spirit of love and fellowship. It is however a hopeful sign of the times that this great principle has already begun to form the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in the various countries of Europe and America. And time is not far when there will be a happy synthesis of the cultural forces of the East and the West as embodied in the Vedanta of the East and the Science of the West to evolve a new civilization in which the various types of cultures will be harmoniously blended, but at the same time shall still have adequate scope for full play and development. 'Let us hope', said the Swami, 'that the East and the West may make their full contribution to the perfection of humanity, and the last civilization of the world, like her first, may be a civilization not of struggle and warfare, but of peace and sympathy, charity and harmonious co-operation to a great end'.

It augurs well that great geniuses shining on the intellectual horizon of the West, have also begun to dream nobler dreams of a New Faith that would usher in a period of universal peace in the world. 'Out of the trouble and tragedy of these times and confusion before us,' said the celebrated historian, H. G. Wells, 'there may emerge a moral and intellectual revival, a religious revival, of a simplicity and scope to draw together men of alien races and new discrete traditions, into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. The beginning of such things are never conspicuous. Great movements of the racial soul come at first "like a thief in the night", and then suddenly are discovered to be powerful and world-wide. Religious emotion—stripped of corruptions and freed from its last priestly entanglements—may presently blow through life again like a great wind, bursting the doors and flinging open shutters of the individual life and making many things possible and easy that in these days of exhaustion seem almost difficult to desire'. Moreover, he 'finds today spreading over the hillsides upon a windy day in spring,

the idea that there is a happiness in self-devotion greater than any personal gratification or triumph, and a life of mankind greater and more important than the sum of all the individual lives within it'.

Swami Vivekananda, with his characteristic insight into the future, proclaimed many years ago that from India such a tidal wave would rise and sweep over the whole world. It would be a spiritual revival, he said, which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose scope, whose whole force, will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true divine nature.

'Up, India,' exhorted the great Swami, 'and conquer the world with your spirituality. . . . The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought'.

'I am waiting for the day when mighty minds will go from India to the ends of the world to teach spirituality and renunciation—those ideas which have come from the forest of India and belong to the Indian soil alone'.

Let us shake off the fetters of intellectual or spiritual slavery and respond to the call of the great monk of India and make a vigorous effort to usher in a new era of lasting peace and goodwill in this war-torn world of ours.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA

BY G. L. MEHTA

After three thousand years and more of recorded history, India survives, India endures. She has had a civilization which goes back to centuries, contemporaneous with the earliest civilizations of China and Egypt, preceding the civilizations of Greece and Rome. This civilization still survives in India, as one can see any morning, even on a wintry day,—thousands of men and women, poorly clad in tattered garments, going for a bath in a holy river. I remember one occasion on which I saw women, barefooted, of course, with not even a woollen shawl over them, going with a little brass utensil in their hand for a bath in the holy Ganges. And I said to myself, this is real India; not the people whom you see in cocktail parties in Bombay, Calcutta, and Delhi, not the people whom you see in fashionable clubs and hotels, but these people who are simple, humble people, and about whose spirit I hope to say something.

This India survives in its temples, in its

architecture, and sculptures, in its epics and its lores. One of the great epics of India is *Rāmāyana*, the story of King Rama, an incarnation of God Vishnu, who conquered evil and destroyed a demon. The original text of *Rāmāyana* is in Sanskrit, our ancient language, but it has been translated in Hindi, our national language, by a poet called Tulsi Das; and although the story is known to everyone from his childhood, its recitation still fills one with some kind of deep ecstasy. Indeed, this is one of the stories, one of the epics, which mothers tell their children, and those children, even if they do not know how to read or write, know these epics, and the earlier generations knew them by heart.

This India, with its great religious and cultural heritage, is still there, while other civilizations have perished, and modern civilizations have come into being. And one asks, are there some enduring values in this India? And has that India got something to contri-