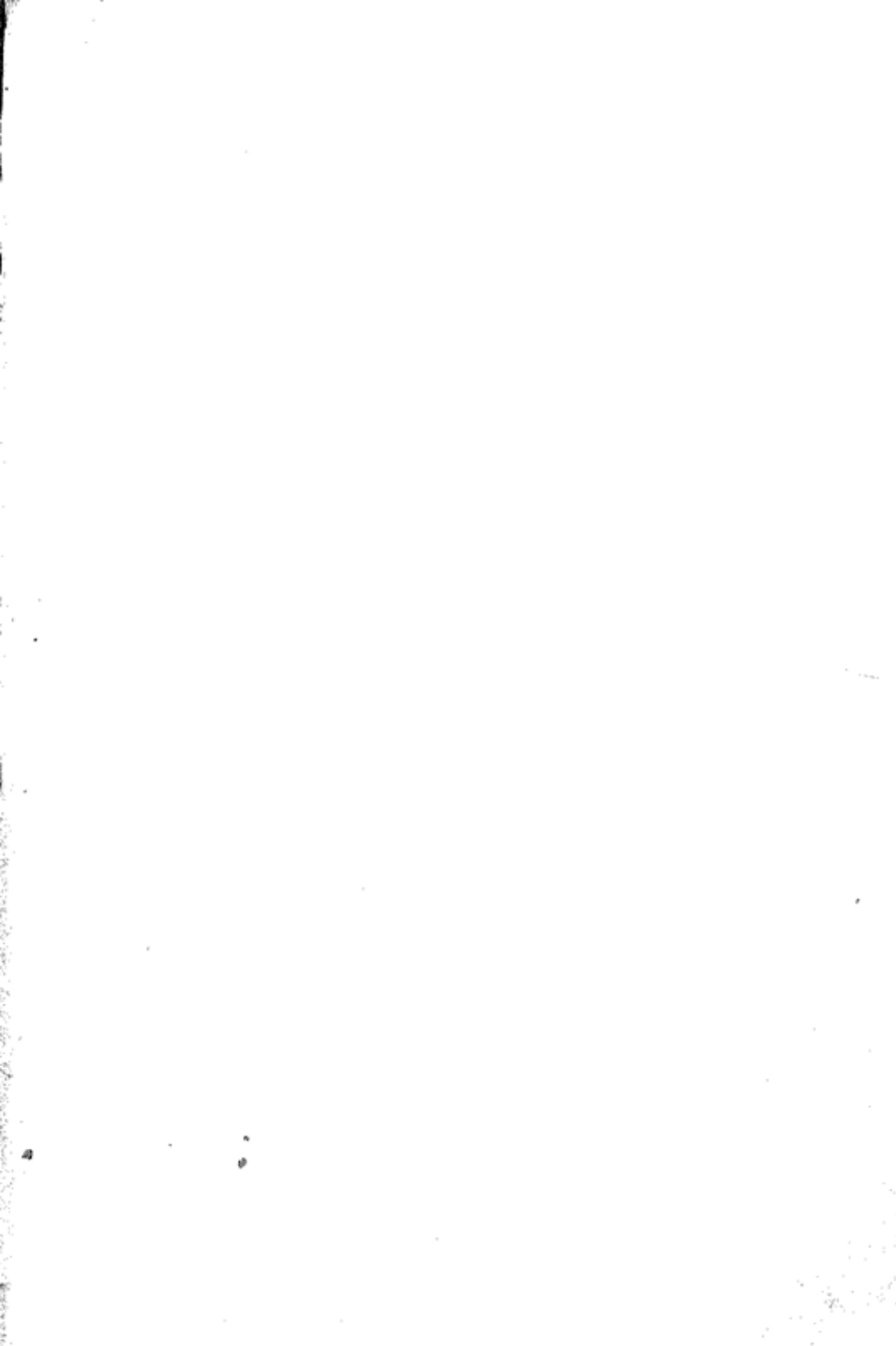


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EDUCATION AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

By M. Mujeeb
World History—Our Heritage

EDUCATION AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

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PREFACE

MORE than a few words of apology are necessary to explain the publication of this collection of articles and essays, but I need only say that it is because of the generous and courteous insistence of the publishers rather than any plan of my own that my random writings appear in book form.

It is not only now that I feel doubts about the propriety of writing on request instead of concentrating on self-chosen tasks that at least provide, when accomplished, the consolation of having being planned. However, if I were to start all over again, I would not have been able to act differently. A request for a talk or a contribution is a bit of a challenge, and if all those in a position to accept challenges of this kind cultivate the habit of refusing them, it would create a big void in our literary life. I am not at all unhappy about the miscellaneous, some might say purposeless, writing that I have done. I have even relished the exercise of writing at short notice even when I apparently had no time to spare. And now it is again a bit of a challenge to face the public with an assortment of articles written for some occasion and my publishers have persuaded me to act according to my habit.

M. R. R.

review from N.Y. Metropolitan Book Co. Bello - 215 W. 4th St. N.Y. 10011

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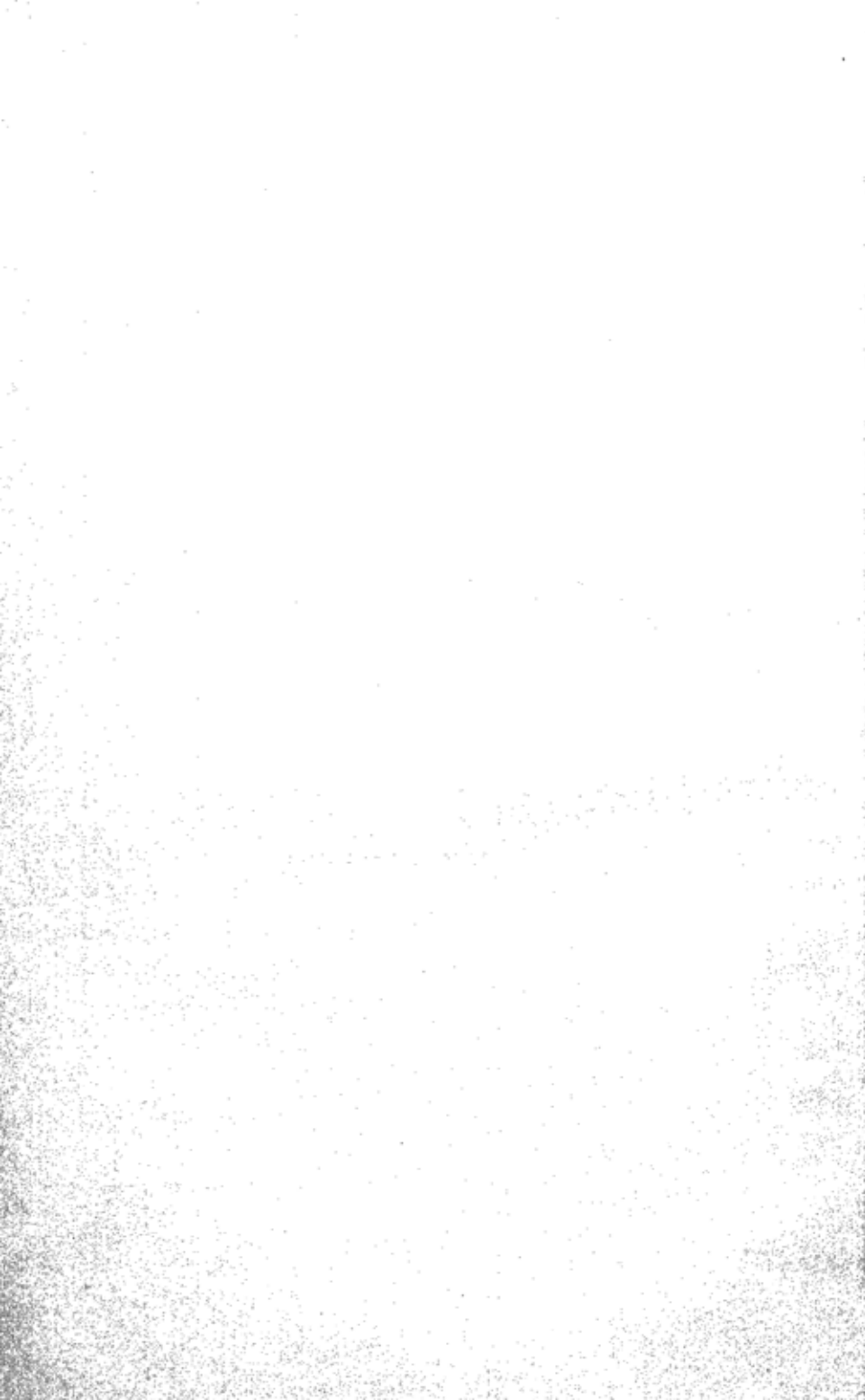
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VALUES



CULTURE

PEOPLE who have everything else assume that they possess culture also, and people who have nothing else are proud of their sole possession—culture. The artist whose only topic of conversation is his own self, the writer who looks down upon the world from his ground-floor window, the critic who vents his spleen on everybody and everything not up to his standard, the society lady looking for puppets—be they human beings or ideas—which she can play with, all claim to be creators of culture. In India today, culture means the fine arts and literature, and even more than these, the gatherings where they are talked about. People with no recognisable pattern of living, with no taste and no refinement belch out claims to being heirs to a culture that has endured for thousands of years. The person who has impressed me most with her culture was a Hindu lady I met over twenty years ago. She was hunchbacked, with hardly any interests beyond her household work and her family. But everything she said and did seemed to me the expression of culture. It is true that, with my particular associations, I should take Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and Dr. Zakir Husain as examples and proceed to a definition of culture. But such examples would, I fear, only increase my difficulties. Culture is not talent, however versatile it may be. It is not achievement, for too often culture is the price paid for achievement. We cannot isolate culture by any process of elimination, or give perceptible form to it by adding up the good qualities that appeal to us most. Culture seems to exist in its own right, independently of

appearance, aptitude and the circumstances of living. It is either there or it is not there.

Does this mean that culture cannot be inherited or acquired? There are too many instances proving and disproving this statement for any conclusion to be drawn. But to say that culture cannot be communicated or acquired would be to deny the possibility of education in every sense of the term, and that would be frivolous. There is no human quality that is not acquired or inherited in some manner or in some sense. There would be no continuity in society and civilisation without breeding and education. But the same breeding and the same education would not make a generation of people equally cultured. Culture seems to have the quality of an accident that may or may not occur.

How does this accident occur and what forms does it take? I believe we must put away most of our books on sociology and psychology and forget what we have learnt from them before we can answer these questions. Next to God—for those who believe in God—man is the least known and the least knowable. I am not thinking here of the mass-produced creatures crowded together in the big cities, who can be studied and analysed as if they were objects. I am thinking of those who have the will and the power to stand apart, if not alone, to watch the game of life even as they play it, who can judge themselves and others, and whom such judgements often lead to decisions. In other words, I am thinking of originals, not of copies of standardised products, whether they be the products of a technological civilisation surprised at itself or of a caste or other social system which has been dominant long enough to efface the individuality of all individuals. The accident of culture would occur least when there is stability without hope (or fear) of change or change without the desire for stability.

CULTURE

Stability implies belief in the permanence of certain moral and social values, the observance of certain imperatives. Change, in the context of culture, would mean recognition of the individual's right to select, order, harmonise accepted values, to give them an individual expression. Man cannot have culture if there are no values which he can reverence and preserve by giving them expression in his own personality, in his own life. He has culture when, because of heredity or education, he selects those values which his nature can best express, and succeeds in assimilating them to a degree that makes their expression spontaneous. Change in culture means novelty in the self-expression of those who, in assimilating existing values, also decide what should and what should not change.

If we do not confuse culture with accomplishment or talent, it will be clear that culture has really only one form, and that one form is given to it by faith. We have to distinguish, of course, between genuine, deep-rooted faith and fanaticism, dogmatism, addiction to custom, and prejudices engendered by the desire for self-preservation. Genuine faith has all the qualities of culture, and culture is living proof of the genuineness of faith. Its hall-mark is a natural dignity, which is the product of self-confidence, and is the quality which strikes one first. The cultured man is free from fear, he is therefore free from all those psychological inhibitions which prevent us from showing regard for the welfare, wishes and interests of others. He has understanding, he has objectivity, and he never loses hope. His enjoyment of life lies in his way of looking after the world.

Can heredity and education bring about the happy accident of culture often enough for us to say that culture is possible? Serious people have maintained that culture and cultural values can be hereditary, and have looked to the aristocracy for both security and survival. Oswald Spengler, after his remarkable study of the rise and fall of

civilisations, came to the conclusion that, so far as Germany was concerned, the hierarchical grading of society, with responsibilities increasing in proportion with status, was the only guarantee of survival. Most of us, almost unconsciously, associate culture with aristocratic birth and breeding. It is true that good family and wealth can contribute much to creating the kind of self-confidence which we find in all men of culture, but in any society the rot also begins with the aristocracy. As leaders of opinion, aristocrats take the lead in perversion of standards more often than they do in maintaining them. Education is almost ineffective by itself. At best, it can reinforce existing standards of conduct; it cannot create them or even raise them. For even if people are influenced by what they are told or what they read, they are affected far more deeply by the attitude of society towards moral and social values and the conduct of persons who are recognised as 'successful'. Education is organised by society for its own ends. It can only bring into relief patterns that exist; it cannot create patterns.

Whichever way we look at it, culture remains an accident. It is a form of what the Christians call 'grace' and the Muslims '*tawfiq*'. But grace has degrees, and so, while none of us has grace bestowed in fullness, most of us, in some way or at some time receive enough of it to make a little difference in our life. It may not be given to anyone of us to be a type of the cultured person, but most of us are cultured in some way or at some times. And we can discuss what culture is, and perhaps understand what it means.

CONSCIENCE

GOD in His mercy has given us friends and neighbours endowed with an infinite capacity for gossip and with the sensitiveness that makes them so indignant at falsehood, hypocrisy, bad faith, selfishness, conceit, that we always know what is wrong with us. To some people, however, this earthly gossip does not appear to be enough of a directive principle or a deterrent. They believe that the angels in heaven are also engaged all the time in gossiping, eavesdropping, peeping through keyholes and gatecrashing at all intimate parties where two or more people are likely to enjoy themselves. Of course, you should not expect me to explain how angels can be in heaven and on the earth at the same time if the two are geographically apart, and if the two are not apart, why we so seldom have the feeling of heaven being in and around us. In fact, I would advise you to believe without thinking, because otherwise it might occur to you that God's omniscience does not need to be supplemented by the gossip of angels or His memory to be refreshed day in and day out and finally on the Day of Judgement by records kept by the angels, which are anyway purely subjective impressions. But even if you believe in God and the angels and have, for that reason, to keep your thoughts in leash, you would feel less constricted than those who believe that the process of recording our thoughts and actions is a part of the law of existence, and unless you get rid of existence itself, there is nothing you can do about this recording or its consequences. For instance, if you see a face so made up that it hurts your eyes or a form so scantily

clad that your imagination feels like a skirt being blown up by the wind, you have just got to clench your teeth and assure yourself that nothing really exists, otherwise, there is the risk that when the automatic record is played back, you might find yourself having to perform a belly-dance in some night-club.

I know I am being flippant. You can put the case differently if you like. But what I mean is that with friends and neighbours, with angels and God's omniscience and omnipotence, with a law of cause and effect which cannot be evaded even by the lovely and the wise, we do not really need to have a watch-dog or an inquisitor or an internal auditor sitting right inside us, constantly reminding us of what we have done already when we want to do so much more. So it is quite natural that most of us allow things to happen because of us or to us, hoping that ultimately there will be such a mess that no one will want to clear it up. And we will be able to say, with pride or stubbornness or indifference, that we have lived our life.

But it is also quite obvious that flippancy and cynicism and a happy-go-lucky attitude can only make good conversation or enable those gifted and persistent enough to produce readable novels or collections of essays. Anything but the truth is a make-believe, a subterfuge, and ultimately becomes tiresome and repellent. We cannot stop at being intellectual and sophisticated, epigrammatic and paradoxical. There is nothing here if there is nothing beyond. Let us not be cocksure and grim and forbidding when we talk of truth, of right and wrong. Let us not fall into the error of thinking that our conscience is conscience only if we inflict our virtuousness on other people. If we have to choose, let us prefer to be unassuming and say that truth and justice are so difficult to attain that all our efforts to realise them are ridiculously inadequate. Then we can be intellectual and laugh at ourselves without undermining our

moral nature, and perhaps serve truth and justice in a way that might be indirect or roundabout but can be quite effective.

I wish this were the end of the matter, and I could tell you without fear of contradiction that man has a moral nature, an innate, ineradicable sense of right and wrong, that with knowledge and culture this sense can grow stronger and stronger, and that the aim and purpose of human existence is to make truth and justice objective realities. But no, I cannot say this. It would be unscientific, it would show that I am utterly ignorant of modern psychology, and of those experiments which have established that there is nothing moral or immoral about man's nature, that what we call conscience is the individualised form of accumulated social experience. We are all creatures of our environment, ideas of right and wrong are like particles floating in this environment, and the amount we inhale and the manner in which we assimilate them is all purely accidental. This scientific approach has been reinforced by literature. There is hardly a novel, a play or a poem which critics will recommend you to read unless it contributes in some measure to the intensification of moral chaos. Life, according to generally approved literature, is an enormous abstract painting, and you would be taking just the wrong line if you tried to look for the intelligible in its pattern.

This scientific apocalypse makes me hug my conscience, or my belief that I have a conscience. Imagine what I would be doing if I had abdicated my moral sense for the sake of a scientific approach. The conflict with China would not be a moral issue at all. I would be engrossed in analysing the minds and motives of those who think the national emergency a proper occasion for making themselves and their resources into national assets. I would dismiss as expressions of antiquated sentiment any idealisation of the widow's gift to the National Defence Fund of

all that she had saved for her old age, and the dedication of the old and tottering Sikh warrior and his wife who came to offer as homage to the Prime Minister a long tradition of service in the Indian armed forces, kept alive today by their sons at the front. I would even have hesitated to mention the light I have seen in the eyes of my students, because in the thousands of years of human history this light has shone and been extinguished many times. I might have been more active if I had no conscience, but only a scientific approach, because science is based on observation and observation demands activity. But whatever I might have done would have been as barren, as immoral, I would even say, as my attitude.

Does this mean that the scientific spirit is to be excluded from political life, that there should be no impartial studies of politics and politicians, no exposure of mistakes and fallacies, no ridicule of marionette and pantomime shows improvised for the limelight? This and many questions of the same kind could be reasonably asked. But here I am really concerned with something else, and whether this is an answer to the many hypothetical questions and situations or not, I would say that the mainstay of genuine and enduring democracy is the conscience of the individual citizen, his sense of right and wrong, and the compulsion he feels to do the right. I have said this to myself in another context also. I believe I am not the only one who has felt during the past two months that our Government was thinking and wishing and legislating, but not giving orders, not requiring the regimentation now necessary to meet the known and unknown needs of the time. I realised, however, that I was thinking of government, not of democracy, and certainly not of a democracy which had thrown the whole responsibility for order and development and security on the people themselves. Such a democracy cannot deny its own nature because of an emergency, and if there is to

be a swiftness of action, a tightening of controls, a regimentation, it must come as the demand of the people's own conscience, and find expression in their own individual and cooperative action. It will then be something significant, historic, and not merely a gearing of the machinery of government to a new situation. And so, along with some inevitable fretting due to bad nerves, those who thought like me and I have inhaled freedom and gained new vigour.

Conscience, being the moral sense of right and wrong, has been commonly associated with religion. But religion, like politics, can have its own interest. There are reasons of religion, as there are reasons of state; religion is no more absolutely subject to moral law than the state. Conscience stands above both, helping, guiding, admonishing. This may sound like a heresy, and I suppose it is. But the heretic, though he may completely misrepresent himself by being aggressive, foolish and fanatical, stands out as the symbol of the human conscience, of the human mind demanding its freedom to express the moral laws in its own way in word and deed. For me, too, there is only one source of freedom and source of obligation, and that is my conscience. And it is my conscience that tells me not to be too serious about myself. There are friends and neighbours around and gossiping angels in heaven.

LOYALTY

ONCE upon a time it seemed that asking and answering questions about ethical and moral terms would determine the future of mankind. Now it appears to have become a habit, an intellectual exercise, a literary pastime. Truth itself having become relative, all questions are only relatively serious, and no answer need be correct if it is interesting, amusing or provocative enough. But epigrams, irony and cynicism do not always succeed. There is an Indian saying that a hundred tapings of the goldsmith are not equal to one stroke of the blacksmith. We can say that an army of citizens marching to victory or death may be impressive as a spectacle, but does not prove that patriotism is a moral principle ; we can say that the sovereign being a person or body of persons, obedience must be governed by the moral as well as the political law. Patriotism, obedience, justice, law are terms about which we can be profound at public expense, till a situation arises when the state demands its due, and all thinking has to be laid aside. There is no authority that can require the assertion or the surrender of personal opinion in matters of truth, goodness or beauty, and we can live safely and even honourably without feeling the need to inquire into their nature. We may not hurt others or even ourselves by telling useful lies, by confusing our habits with the ideally good, or decorating our walls with gaudy pictures of film actresses or mythological females. But some virtues have the annoying quality of never leaving us alone, of becoming more troublesome with every attempt at evasion. Loyalty is one of them.

However clever we may be, we cannot trifle with it. In its concrete form, it has all the characteristics of an inescapable companion inspired with a nagging solicitude; in its abstract form, it is the greatest rival to what we cherish most, personal freedom. The more earnest we are, the more absolute the control of loyalty threatens to become. Whichever way we turn, we are face to face with some aspect of it, and every single aspect seems to be a mirror reflecting all its other aspects in a baffling intricacy of patterns.

I know this is not the way to talk of a virtue highly esteemed in the citizen, the husband, the wife, the friend. But let us be frank. Loyalty is no doubt a virtue, and no doubt it deserves esteem. But is it a single, straightforward virtue? Does it ever lead one to a position where one can stand, with feet firmly planted on the ground? No. It forces us to play the game of snakes and ladders, and often enough a step forward can take us a hundred steps back. The citizen who has been blindly loyal to his country can find himself in hell because he has been disloyal to his conscience, and if he begins by being loyal to his conscience, he finds himself in conflict with his fellow-citizens and may ultimately be punished by the state for being a subversive influence. The family is maintained by traditions of loyalty, and cannot be maintained otherwise. But how many parents, husbands, wives demand loyalty without offering anything or, what is worse, forcing unwanted things, in return? Has not the family often perverted itself as an institution by becoming the embodiment of one-sided demands of obedience and loyalty? In fact, the whole literature of romance is, directly or indirectly, an indictment of some aspect or other of an accepted system of loyalty, however much the intention of most creators of such literature may have been to fortify this virtue by giving it the surer foundations of spontaneous love and idealism. In our own days, the individual conscience seems

to have acquired a higher moral status than loyalty, and any relationships can be challenged and broken off because duty to oneself requires it. A wife can walk out of her house, leaving even her children behind, because the traditional form of loyalty has made her into a doll, or she can do it for the greater attraction of a new attachment. A husband can do the same. Gauguin abandoned his family and his profession in order to become a painter, and such instances of genuine self-realisation have been a pretext for the breaking up of thousands of families in the West. The loudest preachers of a higher concept of loyalty are generally those whose excuse for rejecting what they call its lower form is flimsy, and almost always they succeed in disturbing sentiment if not promoting cynicism. But even when the existing system of rights and duties in the family or outside is not violently affected, the conflict of loyalties is continuous. Should I perform my regular duties or take a day's leave to do this other thing, such as taking a sick relative to the hospital, showing an uncle from the village round the town or attending the marriage of so and so? This is a situation that arises daily everywhere in the world. It has been simplified by making the performance of duty compulsory, by limiting the amount of leave that can be taken, by educating the worker to be loyal to his work. Still, some degree of internal and external pressure has to be resisted; in other words, one form of loyalty has to be consciously and deliberately preferred to another. I have not tried it myself, but they say that if you crush the stings of the nettle between your fingers, they will not hurt. I have sometimes had the feeling that loyalty is more of a stinging nettle than anything else.

Still my enduring belief is that there is hardly any sentiment that is so beautiful in itself and has greater power of creating beauty. In a sense it gives meaning to all other personal and social virtues. Can anything be more execr-

able than life without loyalties? Will not home, family, country go up in smoke if loyalty ceases to define and guide our relationships? Loyalty makes us uncomfortable because it is always taking our measure. If we are undecided about our preferences, lukewarm in our regard for values, if we are pretentious or hypocritical, loyalty creates conflicts within ourselves which can be intensely embarrassing and painful even if we succeed in concealing them. On the other hand, a fanatic may not be deterred by any person or situation, but a conflict of loyalties will bring him to his knees. The cultivation of loyalty, more than that of any other virtue, helps us to build ourselves. It teaches faith and nourishes constancy, it moulds us into shape, gives the right proportions to our nature, sharpens the outline of our personality, and touches it up with the light of happiness and the shades of unfulfilled desires. It does not make life easy, for it is a jealous master, but it creates new heavens of exaltation and limitless horizons of feeling.

SECULARISM

THE future of India seems to depend on secularism. We may be able to practise it without giving it a precise definition or define it to our satisfaction without being able to practise it. Whatever success we achieve in practice or definition, secularism will have fulfilled its main function by imposing on us the freedom to think. We are suffering from beliefs that are just sanctified habits, and secularism should help us to attain to belief that derives from personal intuition, thought and experience, and is strong enough to face the challenge of everchanging circumstances. Our destiny will be moulded by the character of such faith.

It is already apparent that the organised institutional religions in India are not opposed to a secular state. Most of the dangers arise from the activities of the pessimists, the frustrated, the hypocritical, the highbrows, whose numbers are large though their strength is small and who nibble continuously at any solid intellectual food that can nourish the people.

The pessimist is of course always right. He knows of too many examples in history and contemporary life of the emptiness of dreams, the inevitable ultimate foundering of hopes, however many the storms they may have weathered and however often they may have basked in the sunshine of fulfilment. The pessimist is as right as the man who says that the end of all life is death. We can agree with him cheerfully, for however we define secularism, we will not give it an eternal, changeless form. The frustrated are more dangerous than the pessimists. They do not discourse on

the vanity of life, which is a healthy background for all concepts of progress, but on personal shortcomings and failures, on matters of yesterday and today, on trains being late and clerks being slow, on the rich being greedy and the politicians being dishonest, on slogans being false and enthusiasms being faked. The pessimists do not want answers, the frustrated want too many; the pessimists can stand aloof, the frustrated are always looking for company and conversation. Secularism demands just that sturdy commonsense, that confidence in human nature which despises mental and moral anaemia too naturally and wholeheartedly to offer appropriate treatment. It is only the frustrated who have regard for their kind. They have soft and sighing ways of discovering each other, they mate and breed. As secularism gathers strength they dilate upon the invincible nature of its enemies, ignorance, superstition, conservatism, hypocrisy, the frivolousness of the 'moderns' and the snobbish frowns of the intellectuals. We must listen now and then to what they say, if we can do so without feeling frustrated and joining the wrong company.

Ignorance and secularism cannot, of course, go together. Because they cannot, we must think, as the frustrated want us to, of India's illiterate masses. The facts are distressing enough. While one process of multiplication is increasing the number of the literate, another, fatally swift, is increasing the number of those whom education fails to reach. But the masses do possess that commonsense which is the soul of secularism. Their fanaticism and frenzy, wherever it becomes evident, is generally the result of their intimidation or indoctrination by the educated, not of their ignorance. For the propagation of secularism we must consider the educated as first needing our attention. Their maladies are much more complicated; and among the educated are those who teach as well as those who learn.

No knowledge or skill worth possessing can be acquired

from a man without character, character being that peculiar grouping of qualities around a central theme which transforms persons into personalities. This central theme is always something to which a person dedicates himself. It may be as unexciting as punctuality or as lofty as self-realisation, but character is determined by the degree of dedication. Our education has ignored this, and knowledge has become a confusion of uncoordinated pieces of information, undisciplined desires, vague aims and vagabond thoughts. Such education, offered in schools and colleges that did not identify themselves with any traditional expression of spiritual and moral values, could not inculcate a spirit of dedication. Most of those who developed character, who became positive personalities, did so in spite of education. Very few of our teachers today have the type of character that imprints itself on the mind of the pupil because it attracts reverent or at least sincere attention, and the teachers who are uninspiring because they are uninspired have taken refuge just behind those negations of which secularism can be all too easily believed to consist. It is non-religious, non-spiritual; in asserting the values of this world it has to negate the values of the next, in concentrating on man and his happiness it has to turn its back on the metaphysical and the divine. So the teacher who should inculcate secularism can assume that he has nothing to do except teach the rejection of certain things. He creates a void, and education is in many ways reduced to the cultivation of the illusion that intellectual activity and moral stability are possible within this void.

No wonder that hypocrites are found mainly and high-brows of course entirely among the educated. Some hypocrites talk after the manner of secularists but nurse ancient superstitions in their hearts and adhere to irrational rituals by giving them national status or anointing them with the fragrant oils of art and culture, others profess to be modern

and defend superstition and ritual with all the weapons of secular knowledge. Eating meat and drinking whisky outside and being rigidly vegetarian and prohibitionist at home is a fairly common practice among the educated in north India ; and such people generally know how the irrational elements of their religion, which they ostentatiously reject as moderns can be most easily and effectively preserved. I would not have believed that the services of *sadhus* could be utilised to popularise the Five-Year Plan if I had not myself been invited to a meeting where this proposal was to be discussed, and though the Five-Year Plan derived no benefit, the *sadhus* succeeded in infiltrating into high places. Astrology has established itself firmly in Uttar Pradesh and it is commonly known that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was chided by a Chief Minister for not paying heed to the warnings of astrologers about the imminent catastrophe. Celebration of Holi is a religious rite that has become a national obligation. There is, of course, a difference between hypocrisy and inconsistency, but in India they often appear to be animals of the same species and inhabit the same den.

Many would have been saved from inconsistency at least, but for the intellectual highbrows who cannot bear to hear any mention of religion. They have spread terror from the earliest days of English education. Long ago the poet Akbar of Allahabad wrote :

Friends have reported to the police, so violent is their rage,
That Akbar dares to mention God in this our modern age,

and belief has had the choice of living as a mouse in a hole, scampering away at the approach of every intellectual, or of turning political and criminal.

If secularism is intended to be an antidote to religion, there is grave danger of its being appropriated by the highbrow as a part of his make-up, of its becoming a fashion instead of a second nature, an aggravation instead of a

solace. The *Oxford Dictionary* in a way condemns secularism by defining it as something fundamentally negative. Historically this definition is true; and it is necessary to remember this because for centuries organised religion and churches have exacted service of religious values for their own benefit. But it is no longer necessary for secularism to be militant. It can find a place for itself in the ordering of values without having to jostle and push; from being an adversary of religion it can become its helpmate and friend.

For ages people all over the world have suffered from the illusion that the flesh is the enemy of the spirit. Flesh and spirit are hackneyed terms, but the illusion is a chronic disease and does not deserve literary ornament. In India particularly, where piety is always imagined and portrayed in the nude, it is necessary to use a blunt weapon to dispose of the illusion which hypocrisy of the spirit as well as of the flesh has fostered for ages. The worldly have been forced to propitiate the spiritual with reverence and gifts; the spiritual have established their title to reverence and gifts by proving with unassailable logic that nothing could be attained without giving up the world. Between the obligatory humility of the wordly man and the cold logic of those who were wise enough not to be seduced by the world, the human personality was lost sight of. Man could not stand up on his two feet and look at destiny straight in the eyes, he could only fall on one side or the other, because he was made to believe that there was no such thing as balance. But now the West, by committing all the conceivable sins—the most genial statement of which, however, I have found in India's Ghalib :

I have man's nature, I am born of man
And proud that I commit the sins I can—

has asserted man's right to postulate and discover the balance. In state policy, this is represented by secularism

which, as we conceive it, does not imply negation or rejection of values associated with religion and the spirit, but only a limitation of the state's interest to what it can and should do as a state. I have seen people touching the feet of a minister ; I have also been asked to wait till a minister finished his devotions at a time which I count among my working hours. But ministers are not policies or principles, and secularism is an assurance that ministerial idiosyncrasy or presumption will not extend to the vital question of what constitutes the real welfare of the citizen. It lays down that this welfare is physical and material, and measurable in terms of economic prosperity, health and happiness. The Indian citizen cannot be asked to choose between the goods of this world and the next. He must be given his due share here and now.

Secularism has been accepted by those concerned with their own institutional religion because it imposes an attitude and a policy of impartiality on the state. But that is the least reliable aspect of secularism. I suggested to a conference of Muslims, convened for the purpose of organising religious education, that secularism should be considered as a challenge to the religious to prove that they were interested in human welfare and not only in dogma, to make as large a contribution as possible to the moral development of the country by offering examples of how the true believer could rise above considerations of caste, creed, personal and even communal benefit. This interpretation is no doubt idealistic, but not much more than is necessary to put in the scales against vague fears and suspicions. And it was not unwelcome to the particular audience. But ultimately the policies of organisations representing institutional religion will be moulded by the reaction of those individuals who profess the various religions to all that is irrational and harmful, and it is here that the acceptance or rejection of secularism will prove

most decisive.

It is a commonplace of political thinking and conversation to attribute all dissensions and conflicts to religion and religious organisations, and the slow change in attitudes to religiousness and superstition. The accusation is not unjustified. But the remedy does not lie in negation and rejection, in the creation of a void. Secularism must be inculcated wisely and patiently through positive concepts : the human being as the end product of evolution, the striving for physical and material welfare as the expression of true religiousness, personal fulfilment as the achievement of perfect harmony between material and spiritual values. Many of the superstitions which are proving hindrances to economic development are survivals of animism, and animism is the stage of belief in which man stood in terror of nature, and was willing to offer unquestioning reverence and worship to stones, trees and animals in the desperate hope that it would ensure his survival. Animistic superstitions will be cast off like worn garments as man becomes aware and proud of his dignity. To maintain this dignity he must cooperate with his fellowmen, and the only visible, tangible aim of such cooperation can be the material welfare of all. But man will be denying the fullness of his own nature if he sees nothing beyond the physical and material, for there *is* something beyond to which he himself bears witness in literature, art, scientific and philosophical speculation. Material welfare must be inspired with and governed by aesthetic, moral and spiritual ends. These should not be prescribed. No organisation, no institution, not even the state itself should possess authority to dictate what man should do in the privacy of his own being. Secularism asserts and guarantees the right to this privacy and ensures that nothing should stop the well-spring of man's action or divert the clear waters into barren lands.

WHEN THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

A very long time ago I read what could be called an essay by Gorky on Man's Behaviour When Alone. He relates among other stories how once, on a moonlit night, he was standing on a bridge. He saw a woman coming from the opposite side. All at once she stopped walking, looked around and, feeling sure she was alone, put out her tongue at the moon. Then she went on, as if she had done what she came for. On another occasion, Gorky saw Chekhov all alone in a garden. It was a bright morning and Chekhov was trying to catch the sunlight in his hat and put it on his head. There were other examples also of the curious things people do when they imagine they are alone. This proves nothing. The woman who said, 'Sometimes I sits and thinks, sometimes I only sits' may have made a statement applicable to many besides herself, but that also proves nothing. Recently I told some of my colleagues that desire for company and conversation was a sign of weakness ; one should aim at being self-sufficient and enjoy being alone. That was a rejoinder to their complaint that I did not meet them often enough. It does not represent a confirmed opinion. But the idea that a man can get away from the world and be all by himself has a long tradition behind it, a tradition of making a scapegoat of civilisation. I believe there is as little substance in this tradition as in the dream of a poetic fish to live on dry land.

It might seem prosaic, but I have found that the best way of arriving at the truth is to begin with elementary

questions. After all, even the most fastidious interior decorator has to know the dimensions and the disposition of the rooms before he begins to exercise his imagination. He may, later, create what illusions he likes, but he must have the basic facts to begin with. So we, too, must make elementary realities our starting point. That will give our adventure some sort of a direction, whether ultimately we end up floating on some flimsy cloud or slumping down exhausted because the mind fails to discover anything beyond the elementary reality which can stand the test of objective analysis.

The elementary reality, as I see it, consists of two factors—man's biological urge to live and perpetuate his kind, and the resources provided by nature which enable him to do so. Out of these man has created all the values of civilisation. But he has also felt exasperated because of the elusive quality and oppressive quantity of all that he has created, cities, workshops, smoke, noise, insatiable wants. He has developed the capacity to endure the consequences of his own ceaseless activity. He can work in factories and mines, he can move about unconcerned in petrol fumes, he can survive the merciless employment of instruments of destruction devised by himself; he can hold on to truth while propagating falsehood, and love in spite of becoming the embodiment of hate. We, today, like hundreds of generations before us, keep on adding to the expanse and intensifying the penetrative power of the world we live in. Some of us attempt, now and then, to take stock of the situation, most of us keep their noses to the grindstone. To satisfy our vanity, we distinguish between things we do because we must, such as earning our livelihood and performing our civic duties, and things we do because we want to do them, because they are a means of asserting our personal freedom, our right to have preferences. But, you will see, in either case we are doing something, and what is called

the world may be even more with us when we are exercising the right to approve and reject, to make our independent contribution to the idea of the good life. One who is employed in an office or a factory lives, during his working hours, in a smaller world, a world with which he is basically less concerned than when he, in his moments of leisure, devotes himself to his hobby of collecting stamps or growing roses or reading poetry or being one with nature. All these inevitably enlarge his knowledge, his sensitiveness or his vision. The world, the same man-made world of smoke and noise and bustle, is not less with him because of his cultivating interests that take him beyond his surroundings. The idea that we can extricate ourselves from the world or even turn our backs on it, is a poetic fallacy. Even nature can be enjoyed only because of a sensibility which is one of the finer products of culture. Those who desire to be something by themselves and not just units of a mass, who realise that they cannot get away from the world but are determined none the less to exercise their right to accept and reject, to live by their own idea of culture and freedom can, I think, do so only if they suppress every tendency to make a bargain and, like Rousseau's citizen, surrender everything to the general will.

I remember I was once buying fruit from a vendor outside the Fatehpuri mosque. The vendor's small son was attending to me. I accepted all the prices he quoted. But before I had purchased anything, I heard the vendor shout at his son from behind, 'You rascal, don't you see the gentleman is not bargaining. Why do you demand more than the real price?' And then I got the same fruit at much lower prices than I had agreed to pay. I would not say that all who do not bargain get things at the right price. What I would say, however, is that if you consider the prices as fixed, you know what you can afford to buy and what you cannot. Otherwise you get involved in measuring

the intensity of your desire for a thing, the capacity of your purse, the honesty of the salesman, the time and energy required to go from shop to shop making a greedy search. I have never been forced to reflect on my own shortcomings because of the success of those whom I know to have made good bargains. But I wish philosophers and religious persons had not appropriated the concept of detachment and made it impossible for the unpretentious man to show that it is the commonsense way of looking at life and achieving happiness. I have experienced many forms and degrees of detachment that had nothing spiritual about them, and yet they were very effective. In fact, they enabled me to live in two worlds at the same time, one made by mankind and another equally human but entirely my own creation.

I have not made a secret of my basic disagreement with the poet who wanted us to realise that the world was too much with us. But I do look for variety and relief. I know what it means to return from the office and take up my woodwork. I have felt as keenly as anyone else the difference between drudgery and joyful occupation. But somehow I cannot identify peace with inactivity or accept the view that a man who is all alone with his feelings has got away from the world. Peace within should be a normal condition, not an accident or a target achieved according to some plan, and solitude should not take man away from the world, but only from one aspect of it to another. Civilisation is man's past and present, the expression of his being, not to be bargained with or, even for a moment, denied.

CAN WE KNOW THE RIGHT THING TO DO ?

ABOUT the worst thing one can do is to consult a habitually indiscreet person in matters of right and wrong. If the indiscreet person is unconscious of his failing, and quite often he is, he reinforces wrong advice with irrelevant moral considerations. If he is sensitive, he thinks more of the mistakes he himself has committed than of saving another from similar errors, and embarrasses by recounting his own indiscretions. This does not mean, however, that the discreet person is the right one to consult. He will generally avoid being direct, or attempt to indicate in some soothing fashion that if you want to know what is the right thing to do you had best find it out for yourself. That is why discreet people in the old days quoted the scriptures or writers known for their worldly wisdom or aphorisms or proverbs. Perhaps they thought that those who consulted others did so more out of habit than genuine need or that they wanted to make someone else responsible for decisions they had already taken. I know of a person, now among the most highly esteemed in the country, whose early reputation for tact, sagacity and charm grew out of the shrewd guesses of the real intention of those who came to him for advice. It is so reassuring to find another person arguing with a suavity, you yourself do not possess for a course you have decided upon as the best in your own interest.

So where do we stand? Open injustice and violence and dishonesty and such other things apart, can one really know what is right and what is wrong? A young man,

already the father of two children, who could not get on with his wife, and a young woman who had succeeded in getting a divorce from an impossible husband, ardently desired to get married. They felt that not only their own lives but human existence itself would acquire meaning and purpose and be filled with joy for all time if their desire was fulfilled. But those related to or concerned about them were scandalised. They did not wish to be helpless spectators of what appeared to be not only a social but a moral crime, and loudly proclaimed their disapproval. One of the elders, however, who had rather flexible ideas of right and wrong and whom both the young people as well as their relatives trusted, told the romantic couple that they had full freedom to do what they desired, but asked them as a personal favour to wait for five months. Before the period was over, she got married to someone else and he became reconciled with his wife and his family. There was another case of a woman student becoming attached to a married teacher whose wife was a perfect fury. Student and teacher both claimed that their relationship was one of pure affection, but academic rules had to be enforced. The woman student was expelled from her hostel, the teacher was asked to resign. They bore their punishment bravely and somewhere, somehow they are fighting it out. The only person whom they found sympathetic was the one who administered the punishment. These are obviously cases where many different values got entangled, and whatever we may think of the result, the uncertainty in regard to the right and the wrong in each case will remain.

But these are really minor issues, which do not cause any enduring distress of mind. It is the ambitious who succeed in their ambitions, not minding the price others have to pay, the Alexanders and the Caesars, the Chenghis Khans and the Stalins, and smaller men of the same breed who raise the greatest moral problems. They compel

admiration, they make opposition mortally dangerous. They become symbols ; they enforce acceptance of success as a value in itself. As against them the great moral leaders have emphasised the values of humility and meekness, of sympathy and goodwill, of an ultimate victory of goodness and virtue, of the eternal superiority of martyrdom, intangible results notwithstanding. The smaller moral leaders have philosophised. "When Alexander left this world" the pious Muslim says, "both his hands were empty." The poet says,

Worlds to conquer, but Caesar fails
To add a song to the nightingale's.

Both statements are very true, but can we for that reason erase the names of Alexander and Caesar from the records of history? We say that those who praise the rulers and conquerors of the past or flatter the successful persons of their own times suffer from bad taste, but can we deny the importance of the successful without being unrealistic? We cannot. And so dilemmas are passed on from generation to generation, men learn without becoming wise, drawing water from dry wells. Now, as before, when the man who could not make much of his life in any case, or the man who could achieve a little for himself by way of income from some business or profession, or status and authority in the service of his government, wishes to know on the threshold of his career what is the right thing for him to do ; there is really no standard by which he can judge. He has to magnify his aims and his ends himself, to create the illusion of a worthy objective, or others do it for him. If at the end he is satisfied with himself, he offends the sensibilities of other people, if he is dissatisfied in spite of reasonable success, he becomes spiritual and a crank or a bore. The question as to what is the right thing to do remains as undecided at the end of a career as it was before.

One answer to the eternal question of right and wrong have been logically constructed patterns of the good life in what we call institutional religions. It is they, indeed, that gradually replaced man's aboriginal instinct to live and act as he liked with codes of disciplined conduct, with hope of reward and fear of punishment, with moral endeavour and spiritual ecstasy. Now they are blamed for everything that has gone wrong with man's destiny. They have, it is true, attempted to impose symmetry and uniformity, to prune man's feelings and compel him to deny his nature in many ways. But in fact they have been an answer to man's own needs, to his desire for security, for confidence, for peace within or without. If man could look freedom full in the face, and not be dazed by its beauty, if he could banish fear and malice from his heart, if he were not maddened by the hunger to possess, human history would have been different. But history is the greatest argument against man, and perhaps the only argument in his favour. That is why the youngest and the last of institutional religions bases itself entirely on history. Man must realise that he is responsible for destroying or saving himself. God, being omnipotent, could act otherwise also, but He only confirms man's own verdict on himself.

No system of belief or thought has provided more than a very limited degree of certainty, and beyond this certainty there has always been doubt. There has always been a striving to understand what is beyond good and evil, beyond right and wrong, beyond man's insignificance and his haughty self-assertion. So, while in cultured society we try to avoid doing things by which others are, rightly or wrongly, offended, we also look beyond good manners to correct principles, and beyond these again to what makes the principles themselves correct. Knowledge seems to be but the fringe of a vast ignorance. Those who, in every day life, think actively about the right thing to do have as little

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claim in the event to knowledge of the truth as those who take the line of least resistance. Often the most important decisions in our life are taken unawares, and they appear afterwards to have been the most correct. We need not, for this reason, believe in chance or fate. We need only to admit our incompetence to decide, because we can never really know, and to accept our decisions cheerfully, because we are hardly ever in a position to make a free choice.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

WE are all Indians, basically well-intentioned, anxious to understand each other, and to cooperate. Do we need to discuss the problem of integration? I remember on one occasion I wanted to speak about it to some students of the Jamia Millia, but I had hardly broached the subject when they began to smile and finally requested me to talk of something else, as they were living in an atmosphere of freedom and happiness and cared as little to be lectured to on communalism and regionalism as on epidemics and droughts. Among the students were Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, men and women, and they meant what they said.

Does this mean that we are today discussing a problem that does not really exist, and thereby doing ourselves more harm than good, because we emphasise quite unnecessarily the disruptive factors in our life? I do not think so. Even if there were no outbursts of hatred and violence of a nature that is obviously communal or racial or regional, we must remember that national integration is not achieved once for all. It is not a law or a system, a habit or a programme. It is a process; it is something that takes or does not take place. It can be speeded up or retarded. It has a hundred different forms and, in a sense, it can never be completely attained. At the moment, we are in the process of attaining it, but there are tendencies that support as well as tendencies that hamper its realisation, and we must consider what we can do about them.

The Indian people comprise many communities, and Indian culture consists of diverse cultures that have been

assimilating and also rejecting each other. There have been many conflicts of different types in our history, but on the whole we are justified in saying that Indian life has been significant as an example of the co-existence of communities and cultures. But we can make the mistake of regarding only the community as the unit of our nation and not the individuals of whom these communities consist. The community, as you know, represents a belief, a moral code, a culture. All these are abstract things. They become concrete when individuals act and behave in accordance with the belief, the moral code and the culture of their community. And these individuals remain individuals, no matter what beliefs they profess and what their practices and actions are.

We have gone so far in confusing the individual with the community that the qualities and acts of individuals are imputed unconsciously to the community to which they belong. For instance, if a girl is kidnapped by a person belonging to her own community, it is only a crime, but if she is kidnapped by a member of some other community, we do not stop to consider what type of person this particular individual is; even if he is a habitual criminal, his action creates a sentiment against the whole community to which he belongs. It is the same in the case of good actions. An individual who is good in himself is regarded as being what he is because of his belonging to a particular community. This is obviously a wrong way of looking at things and we must do what we can to correct our perspective. Communities do not think and act as a whole. It is the individuals who think and act. If individuals have the gift of leadership or the ability to collect other individuals around them, they find it to their advantage to represent or profess to represent a whole community. They may succeed in making the majority or the majority of the active members of their community accept them as their

representative. But if we keep our minds clear of illusions, we can still distinguish between the community as a whole and those who claim to be its representatives, and even among those who are recognised as representatives we can distinguish between individuals who are acting deliberately and consciously and those who are just following the natural herd instinct of man.

National integration requires that we concentrate on individuals. It is the individual whom we should consider the focal point of national integration. It is he who identifies himself, to the degree of which he is capable, with his people and his country, with his history and the situation which history has created for him. By such identification I mean that a person accepts to a smaller or greater degree the responsibility for the condition of his people and his country, who is grieved by wrongs done and elevated by the good achieved in the past, and whose own conduct is guided by what he conceives to be the highest and most beneficial moral code. Thus the process of national integration takes place primarily within the individual. If India were a country inhabited by the people of one race, speaking one language, professing one religion, but did not possess a sufficient number of individuals who consciously identified themselves with it to an effective degree, it would remain, in fact, unintegrated. We have only to look at the history of the world to discover examples of communities that failed to achieve integration, in spite of possessing all the reasons for unity and cooperation. We can discover also examples of nations integrated by a sense of common purpose in spite of differences of race or of language or of religion.

Now, how does an individual identify himself with his country and his people? All individuals are not and cannot be alike. The philosophers, the artists, the businessmen, the civil servants, the petty shopkeepers, the landless

labourers, do not all have the same interests, and to whatever community they may belong, they cannot all feel and think and act in the same way. But that is just what we forget when we talk in terms of communities, and it is natural that when we think in terms of the nation, we go on to imagine that we can and should impose a certain degree of uniformity and thus prove to ourselves that we are integrated, that we are alike. But that is looking at life from the wrong end and distorting our perspective. Because the process of identification takes place within the individual, it cannot be achieved according to any set plan. In fact, I believe, that integration can only be an indirect result of the identification of each individual in his own way with the people as a whole and it can be enduring only to the degree that it is indirect. Integration cannot and does not need to be maintained at any particular level. Its intensity can and should vary with situations and requirements.

If we analyse our freedom movement during the last fifty years, we shall find that its momentum derived very largely from the fact that one person—Mahatma Gandhi—identified himself with a certain moral value which is typically Indian—non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi deduced his belief, his political policy, his constructive programme, his social reform from his doctrine of non-violence. I have still to find persons who understood him fully. I had the privilege of being associated with him because of the educational objectives of the Jamia Millia from 1926 till the end of his life. In many matters I did not understand him and in many I disagreed with him, but the fact that he had succeeded in identifying himself with India and Indians through his faith in non-violence was a tremendous force compelling me to discover for myself some means of identification. There were millions who felt so compelled.

Usually patriotism, which is taken to be an index of

integration, is a projection of family relationships, group interests, desire for self-assertion and self-preservation as a people. These sentiments are national. But they can also mislead. They can create situations in which one loyalty or interest comes into conflict with another and the nation is split up, or material interest runs counter to moral principle, and moral principle is sacrificed. But there can be points of identification along with group and mass sentiments and interests which will provide a safer emotional anchorage and a more personal means of self-realisation. We can feel one with India because of the fascination of Indian trees, Indian mornings and evenings and moonlight nights, Indian poetry and music, architecture and sculpture. None of these points of identification has much to do directly with nationalism or patriotism or pride in political or social achievements of our ancestors or faith in the freedom and security offered by our secular state, but any one of them can become the eye that makes everything visible and intelligible, the ear that catches all sounds, or an embodiment of feeling that stimulates our own sentiments. It can make Indian citizenship the live and active part of our nature; it can help us to look across yesterday, today and tomorrow to things that are beyond time.

These are random samples of identification. I have selected Gandhiji as an example because an ethical value such as non-violence is the highest and most patent means of identification. I have mentioned other means because they are within the emotional range of the ordinary citizen. As I have said, I believe that the most genuine form of identification is the purely personal. But, you will ask, can this lead to national integration? Must not the Indian citizen be so mentally conditioned as to identify himself politically also with his people? Should not those who feel that integration has already taken place, such as the majority ruling party or those deeply concerned about it,

utilise the resources of administration, legislation and social and economic pressure to maintain and further strengthen it ?

There can be no question about the overriding value of national integration. But just because of its basic importance, all other considerations must be subordinated to it. In the matter of benefits conferred through economic, social and educational policies, it is possible to plan the distribution geographically, classwise, strictly in accordance with justice. But where such methods of distribution clash with the interest of national integration, they should be modified. A nation should have a national language. History provides instances of the sentiment of nationalism growing around or because of a common language. But history and contemporary facts also provide instances, such as Switzerland and Yugoslavia, where the recognition of all the languages spoken in the country as national languages has been a means of integration. The approach to the problem of a national language, if it is too logical or dogmatic, may injure the interest it is meant to serve.

Religion also is not necessarily a means of integration. In fact, we fear that it is not. Therefore, those among us who are deeply concerned with integration seek to neutralise differences by asserting the fundamental unity of all religions. I have my doubts about our being able to prove this unity either by arguments drawn from history or from the doctrines of the religions themselves, but even if we accept the unity of all religions in theory, the realisation of this unity will still remain a matter of personal spiritual experience and will confirm my view that the most genuine form of integration is the purely personal. There are many who wish to overcome the embarrassments created by differences of religious beliefs by going to the opposite extreme and saying that no religion is necessary. I cannot agree with this point of view in theory, and I have also

often found that this denial of religion is quite superficial and those who profess to reject all religions possess most of the prejudices that are generally associated with religion. I suspect that under pressure such persons would align themselves with those professing the religion of their fathers. Then there is secularism. Our constitution and our national policy advocate secularism, but I wonder how many of us would accept secularism wholeheartedly if they really knew what it meant. As I understand it, secularism does not mean the rejection of religion or of reducing it to something purely ornamental. What secularism means is that a citizen cannot ask to be judged on the basis of the religion he professes ; he will be judged by his actions, by the fruits of his belief. Secularism is, therefore, not a compromise but a challenge to all of us to show through our actions the true social value of our beliefs.

We have thus no alternative but to think purely in terms of persons. I would advise you as persons to discover the ways and means of promoting national integration by identifying yourselves not only with the India of today, but with India throughout our history. We have done ourselves a great wrong by dividing our history on a religious basis. We imagine that there is a history of India which is a history of the Hindus, a history of India which is mainly a history of the Muslims and a history of India which is for the time being called British but is in the process of being divided between Hindus and Muslims. I am quite sure that if we knew all the facts we would reject this division. About the so-called Muslim period I know that it was as Indian as any earlier or later period. But I would be the last person to prescribe the manner in which any Indian should personally identify himself with Indian history. For real identification can only be result of a search for the beautiful and the true, for all that promotes happiness through understanding and goodwill, for that

strength which is attained through self-discovery. If such identification takes place, it will, in its collective form, constitute the power of the Indian people.

But even if you agree to all this, you may still ask : What are we to do to promote national integration ? The most essential thing, I believe, is to cultivate an attitude of trust. I do not mean that we should trust each other rather than have an administration, law-courts, police. I am thinking here of trust in man's moral nature. If we do not have this trust, we begin to be guided by prejudices and may become incapable of examining our own point of view honestly and fairly and of seeing the justice behind the opposite point of view. You will have many examples of this in your own mind, and I need give you just a few. We have a neighbouring state, our relations with which depend very largely on mutual trust. We have differences between regional and cultural groups which are exaggerated beyond measure because of lack of trust. If we are unable to see the genuine interests behind each other's viewpoints, there will be continuous misunderstandings which will inevitably confuse our internal situation. This confusion may take ugly and violent forms and prove an obstacle to integration. I hope you will not think that I am talking politics. As I have already stated, I do not think in terms of religious or any other kind of communities, but only of individual human beings and their identification with causes which will promote goodwill, happiness and cooperation.

Secondly, I think we must cultivate an attitude of giving more than we get. If our general inclination is to give, I assure you we shall all get more. For instance, if we give more of work than we are paid for, what will happen ? We shall have more of achievement, more of results from any type of investment we make, a general feeling of confidence and a stimulation of every type of creative, constructive activity. We shall have large numbers of individuals

anxious to cultivate their aptitudes to the full, individuals who set for themselves high standards of competent performance, individuals who not only pay income-tax to the state but enrich it with the fruits of their labour. We shall also have widespread appreciation of excellence instead of the fault-finding from which we suffer today.

Thirdly, we should avoid the use of pressure to induce uniformity of opinion and behaviour. Let me take an ordinary example. We say that it will promote integration if communities join in celebrating each other's festivals. Now, while I agree wholeheartedly with the intention with which this is said, I must object in principle to the use of the word 'community'. It implies that if I am a Muslim I should participate in the celebration of Hindu festivals and because I happen to be the head of an institution with a Muslim name, the obligation becomes all the more binding. I do not like any festivals, Hindu or Muslim. I want to keep away from crowds. But I have an ideal of civic duty that makes me do many things which Muslims, who are fond of festivals and crowds, would not be anxious to do. So, instead of asking members of other religious communities to participate in the festivals of any particular community, why could we not leave it to personal choice, making full allowance for persons with my taste, no matter to which community they happen to belong? In the same way, I think, a national language would have developed much sooner if we had not talked about it so much or given any section of the Indian population occasion to say that a language was being imposed on them. I would go further and say that it should be open to every citizen to serve his country in his own way, and no tests of patriotism should be imposed in the matter of opinion or method of serving the country. National integration should derive from a sense of freedom, of service to the highest forms of the common interest and the most intense realisation of the

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fact that in cooperating with fellow-citizens each of us is realising his true self.

DEFENDING FREEDOM

WE have turned over a new page in our national history. Our northern frontiers have been attacked, and the whole nation has risen as one man to resist and repulse the invader. We have felt hurt by the physical fact of an attack ; but it has hurt us even more to find friendship betrayed and goodwill trodden under foot. So we rise united to support our Government, to strengthen the spirit of our army and to contribute all we can to the defence of our country. War has made us one body and one mind.

We have desired peace for ourselves and for all the nations of the world. It was not wrong of us to believe that our desire for it would ensure peace. Even now, we must not change our minds. The desire for peace and the advocacy of peaceful methods are too valuable to be jettisoned because of a single disillusionment. The Chinese aggression is really a test, a challenge to us to show that we are strong enough to make our desire for peace a more effective force.

How shall we become strong enough ? There are necessarily many answers to this question and together they make up the one composite national answer. I can only speak of what I know and understand, and my field of knowledge and experience is education.

It seems to me that we have taken for granted a destiny of peaceful development. In spite of fixing targets and the time required for achieving them, we have not driven forward with a sense of urgency. In other words, we have not felt that we were facing the challenge of an enemy, that

we were fighting for life. But now one enemy is there and prudence requires us to treat him as a symbol not only of dangers from outside but of dangers within. We must now be strict with ourselves. We have been wasting words. There is no end to our discussions. In fact, we could be accused of having discussed issues for the sake of discussion, not in order to arrive at conclusions. If we have arrived at conclusions, we have not felt a sufficient obligation to enforce them. We have wasted thoughts, everyone of us wanting to add his own little bit to what another had thought till the whole thing became a swarm of little thoughts unable to extricate themselves from each other. We have wasted time, the most precious thing in the world, because we could look back very far behind to the beginnings of our civilisation and very far ahead into a future extending to infinity. We must now adjust our perspective, we must face hard facts.

Let us not mistake fruitless discussion for democracy. If the principle of democracy requires freedom of speech, its successful practice requires spontaneous, intelligent obedience. We do not obey masters; we obey ourselves. We are not ordered to remain silent; we impose silence on ourselves in order to arrive at results in our deliberations. Any restraints we subject ourselves to will only make us more worthy of our freedom. Our personalities will grow and flourish in thoughtful silence far more than they do in exuberance of speech, and we shall learn far more through conscientious execution of decisions than we do through continuous examination of their wisdom.

There is much that should make us thoughtful. China, the enemy we are faced with today, has a very long history. It is a history of expansion, which sometimes became political imperialism. It is also a history of patience and hard work, to which the Great Wall, the Grand Canal and other achievements bear witness. It is the history of a people

who can go out into the world in small groups, establish themselves and form the hard core of a self-directing economy, like the Chinese communities in Malaya and Indonesia. It has happened that the Chinese, defeated in one sphere of life have succeeded in asserting themselves in another. So when I say that we should be thoughtful, I mean that we should not think only of the Chinese forces attacking our northern frontiers. We must think of possibilities of Chinese penetration in various forms and be prepared for danger wherever it arises. We must study, according to our aptitudes, the military, the political and the economic strategies which the Chinese are likely to adopt. The war that has now begun is not likely to be short, and even if it is short, we must remember that the only guarantee of an enduring peace can be our own foresight and strength.

I believe it was a feeling that we would be able to live in peace which has made us indifferent to standards of personal competence. We are reluctant to judge ourselves. Examinations and degrees have mattered far too much and real knowledge far too little. Rules and regulations made by Universities cannot change the situation. It is only when the young men who are studying and the teachers who are guiding them feel the urge to increase their competence that education will become real and useful, and instead of trying to learn and teach as little as possible, we shall demand of ourselves the maximum of knowledge and competence in every field.

Competence is not something we can dispense with in times of peace, but I have always spoken of it with misgiving, because it might have been regarded as a part of academic sermonising. Now I see it as an immediate requirement, which must be fulfilled in the national interest. Now young men have to look to their physical fitness, for the country may need them for military service at any time.

They have to see that they are well-informed and that their information is correct. They must know about strategy, tactics, military organisation, communications; they must realise the need for imposing restrictions on travel, for doing without raw material and manufactured goods required for defence; they must know that hoarding and black-marketing have to be prevented, and that they must control their local market by seeing that government regulations are not evaded and nullified by unsocial acts. They must learn the use of light weapons in the NCC or organise rifle clubs for the purpose. They must be able to guard their locality against bad characters and rowdy elements. They must, in short, have the minds of soldiers even if they have the appearance of civilians, and they must subject their lives to a strict if informal military discipline. They must do all this without disturbing their routine of study, without giving up their aim to achieve competence in the field of their special aptitude.

Teachers and students working according to a strict time-table and feeling that they must squeeze the utmost out of every minute will induce a similar attitude in others. There will be less of idle talk, less of indifference and delays, less of uncleanness in public places, less misuse of public amenities, less breakdowns in the public services. Instead of frustration and passive acceptance of different forms of disorder we shall have a youth demanding by its example a total dedication to the prompt and efficient fulfilment of duty.

Such competence has been achieved in other societies, but these societies are competitive in spirit and we have been wondering whether competence was worth while if it could be achieved only through competition, through a general acceptance of the idea that only the fittest deserve to survive. Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have stood out for the ideal of a cooperative

society, which means a society in which competence is consciously utilised for social purposes by society as a whole and by the individuals concerned. I do not know of any nobler social ideal, but we have been, unfortunately, far too inclined to ask for the benefits of a cooperative society without considering the need for each of us to make the greatest contribution we can to its realisation.

Let us think of all this when we think of the Chinese invader. We are not fighting only for territory, only for injured honour, but also for an ideal of life for which no sacrifice would be too great.

SECULARISM AGAIN

WE must have developed an optimism which makes us feel that we have completed an intellectual journey as soon as we have decided to undertake it, otherwise many might have felt anxious because of the complacency about our commitment to the idea of a secular state. As it is, everyone seems to be happy and proud that India is secular, though in fact our ideas are extremely vague, and even the *Jan Sangh* might discover that it does not need to advocate a new orientation of state policy, because what we call secularism now can very well comprehend both *Ram Rajya* and pure Hindu culture, unless, of course, these terms include violent suppression and elimination of non-Hindu citizens.

Secularism, as generally understood, is something negative. The state has no religion; it does not teach any particular religion in its own institutions and does not give grants to any institution in which any religion is taught compulsorily. It also does not prohibit or hinder any community from following its religion or from imparting religious instruction in its own schools. But if the population of a country consists of religious communities, and the right of these communities to maintain their religious character is recognised, secularism means nothing more than the impartiality of a few enlightened individuals in matters of religion. Are these individuals the secular state? On the other hand, the recognition of all religious communities as legally equal does not make them equal in number, influence or power. How can a state be secular if the vast majority of its citizens are, and are legally entitled to remain,

members of a particular religious community? Secularism, as we understand it, cannot logically be regarded as secularism. It is just an evasion of what is one of our most serious national problems. Otherwise we would not have been so agitated about the growing decay of moral sense among the youth and thought it necessary to appoint committees to consider the problem of moral education in schools.

But what other interpretation can be given to secularism? It is true that, in states that are secular and not anti-religious, nothing more has been done than what we have done in India. But just as in the matter of language no state in the world can provide a precedent for us, it would be useless and unwise to look for precedents for the solution of our problem of religious communities. We have to find a solution for ourselves, acceptable to our conscience, and positively beneficial.

I asked a Muslim divine, who was talking with the usual enthusiasm about India being a secular state, whether the ideal of secularism was really compatible with the idea of a religious community, and suggested that Muslims should take the lead in releasing the mind from allegiance to this idea. I even reminded him that the religious function of the Muslims was to reconcile and unite communities led astray by misunderstanding of their own religion; the Muslim community was not meant to create another vested interest in a world that was already suffering from conflicts of vested interests. The Muslim divine sighed and changed the subject. And the representative of any other religion would have done the same.

Loyalty to the idea that believers in a particular religion should be an autonomous religious community is very deeprooted. Muslims do not want to marry more than one wife and do not want wives to be divorced by the mere repetition of a known formula, but they were greatly agi-

tated by a rumour that Parliament was about to consider legislation that would be an amendment of Muslim Personal Law. If we go back to an earlier phase, the great difficulty of the Muslim nationalists was the lack of clear and binding legal opinions in favour of a mixed state of Muslims and non-Muslims. Nationalism could be advocated as good policy, but could not be given the status of a religious or moral obligation. The opponents of nationalism and of the idea of a mixed body-politic had, on the other hand, many effective weapons in their armoury. The Hindus, in this earlier phase, had their own difficulties. It was their intellectual and social task as the majority community to offer a common basis of loyalty, and a calculation of what they stood to lose was more disturbing to them because they were less reckless than the Muslims. Some retaliated intellectually by giving their nationalism a communal character, some were content with a purely emotional reaction to what was felt to be Muslim intransigence, but fortunately there were some very powerful personalities in the leadership who were able to win wide acceptance for a rational, modernist approach. It is doubtful if Mahatma Gandhi, the mainstay of the enlightened Indian leadership, was either rational or modernist, but what he called truth could demolish mental and social obstacles with an ease which left eloquent rationalists amazed. Ultimately, he suffered martyrdom because he attempted to make the majority community as a community assume unconditional responsibility for a minority. His success would have meant that the majority community would sacrifice its own identity so that the separate identity of the Muslim minority could be safeguarded, over and above the citizenship rights that would be given to individual Muslims. This was obviously far in excess of anything a moral and spiritual leader has ever demanded from his people. Later, the Constitution gave citizenship rights to Muslims within a

framework of directive principles and policies. This was a rational solution, made completely acceptable because of secularism, a compromise which made the religious communities responsible for themselves but not for each other; state and government were, of course, to protect legal rights and maintain law and order, without promoting or opposing the purely religious interests of any community.

But how much spiritual power, how much moral content can there be in a compromise? So long as we continue to regard secularism as something purely negative, the state will remain morally inferior to the religious community, and may be morally disowned if it is found that it cannot maintain its policy of being non-religious. This will be disastrous. It is time, therefore, that thoughtful persons should emphasise the positive aspect of secularism which, put briefly, is the autonomy of the individual conscience.

I have searched in vain in Muslim theology and jurisprudence for any reflection of the Quranic injunction to think. At every turn the Muslim is told that all the necessary thinking has been done for him, and if he wishes to keep on the right path, he must find out what the most authoritative opinion is on any point that happens to exercise his mind. He can pit one authority against another, but he would be deemed to have gone astray if he himself formed an opinion without reference to any authority. Hindus may feel free because apparently they are not bound by theological opinion. A Muslim is not bound either; he can do almost anything he likes that is permitted by the law, unless he claims, at the same time, to be doing the right thing, to be establishing, in other words, a precedent for others to follow. If he makes this claim, he has to appear before the judgement bar of the community. The Hindu is in a similar position if he breaks a custom, in fact in a worse position, because his children are regarded as participants in his act. This may appear as outmoded

criticism no longer applicable to educated Hindus who are breaking away from custom altogether. I myself wish I were wrong. But my fear is that education and Westernisation and even life in big cities have not brought about in fact the change that we assume has occurred.

The question here, however, is the extent to which the right of a Hindu or a Muslim or a member of any other community to regard himself as a free moral agent has been recognised. Unless the individual citizen has this right, he cannot have any direct, unqualified moral relationship with the state, and the state cannot, therefore, be a moral entity. Obedience to the law and support of administrative policies will form one compartment, ethics and moral ideals another, and there may be no emotional or intellectual link between the two. It is my impression that the misuse of public property and public amenities and the indifference or negligence of those employed in the public services is due primarily to the lack of a moral association between the citizens and the state. The citizen will cooperate so long as his personal interest is served, otherwise he and the state are opposite parties in a conflict of interests, and though the state may be restrained by a regard for democratic procedure and the processes of the law, the angry citizen will set fire to a bus and the employees of public services stop work without, perhaps, any compunction.

This is not a situation in which an appeal to religious traditions would have any relevance. We have to face the fact that a socialist economy cannot be based on even the most enlightened interpretations of the *dharma* and the *shariah* or the closest cooperation between communities so long as these are basically religious. It is the individual conscience that has to be aroused ; it is the individual citizen with an alert and active conscience who has to be assured that the health and existence of the whole political and social system depend upon his ability and his courage

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to establish moral precedents. Only on the foundation of such precedents can the structure of secularism be raised.

THE DISCOVERY OF INDIA

DISCOVERY is a fact ; it is also a feeling. There is a rich opportunity for any Indian who travels round the country to see what he has not seen before and to immerse himself in the feeling, approaching ecstasy, of becoming a new and a larger person. Our culture has prescribed travel. The Buddhist visited holy places ; the Hindu performs the pilgrimage to Amarnath, Rameshwaram, Dwarka and Puri, to Badrinath and, of course, to Banaras ; the Muslims pay homage to piety at the tombs of saints, far and near. Now it is almost an obligation imposed by loyalty to the state for the Indian citizen to travel around the country and strengthen the sentiment that binds him to it. It is not enough for him to live in the country, for living can all too easily become a vegetative process. He must discover it, and make his discoveries a vital aspect of his life.

The plains constitute such a large part of the country that those who pass through them and even more those who live in them are disposed to regard the Indian landscape generally as flat and monotonous, and to think of the hills as providing the only variety. Those who are frequent visitors to the hills think more of the cool climate and the comfortable living. But anyone who wishes to discover India must remember that he has, at the same time, to discover himself, to seek for harmony between nature and his own moods, to understand the language of dawn and sunset, of trees and the breezes that live in them, of flowers and butterflies and birds. 'The morning of Banaras, the evening of Oudh, the night of Malwa' have for centuries been regarded as

symbols of beauty, as moments when man feels at one with nature. These symbols can be multiplied by anyone filled with the urge for discovery till they become a part of his being. The Emperor Jahangir was among those continuously desirous of communion with nature. Many of the spots he noted as remarkable were developed into gardens during his own time or later. We also, if we are sensitive and observant, can find such spots along our many roads, and transform them into landmarks of aesthetic adventure.

The character of civilisation and culture in various parts of our country is as diverse as the natural landscape. We incline too easily to talk of an inner unity, which means, unfortunately, that we avoid the intellectual and spiritual effort necessary to understand, appreciate and enjoy the diversity. No two styles of building could be more different than the temple and the mosque, and there is no easily accessible inner unity that can relieve us of the cultural responsibility of delving deep into the mystery of how both can be houses of worship. To associate the temple with Hinduism and the mosque with Islam may be factually correct, but it does not make the understanding of temple and mosque architecture automatic for the Hindu and the Muslim. House architecture has lost its character because of the growth of large cities and the change of habits in the urban population, but many towns still have an individuality of their own which will not escape the observant eye.

If any programme of the discovery of India is to be made, one should begin with the nearest groves of trees. There may be nothing to see there, but they would be ideal places for the first lessons in aesthetic appreciation, in getting the feel of the Indian atmosphere. The nearest stream, with the inevitable dry ravines, reminders of the process of corrosion that is continuously taking place, could come next, with circuitous rambles along the water-channels and

boundaries of corn fields. Sight-seeing, when it begins, can be much more meaningful after the preliminary local excursions in the discovery of oneself, of nature, and the creations of culture.

Let us begin with these last, because they are visual representations of long processes of the search for knowledge and harmony, for the realisation of the eternal in what is itself physical and transient. The cave, the free standing *stupa*, the temple and the mosque symbolise attitudes and modes of worship, the mausoleum is man's response to the challenge of death and time, the garden is a call for communion with nature. These are parts of our heritage where the self of India is reflected. To see the typical examples of these we must traverse the whole country and visit its modern towns as well.

The geological structure of the Deccan plateau, with its immense rocks, provided the best opportunities for cave architecture. There are caves at Nasik, Bhaja, Bedsa, Karle, Ajanta, Ellora and other places, and all have their individual qualities as works of art. The common features are the degree of faith necessary to undertake such a task and the exactitude of what must have been calculations in a void. The larger caves must have taken decades to hew out of the solid rock; the Kailash temple at Ellora was chiselled out of a rock by four generations of craftsmen. There is no evidence of any after-thoughts, any change of design. And though they were meant for monks, who were supposed to have given up the world, the caves do not convey the impression of isolation from the life around. On the contrary, representations of the world are generally there, in some very striking form. In the Chaitya cave at Karle there are parallel columns of pillars surmounted by human figures symbolising the glory and the sensuousness of the physical world. In Ajanta, of course, the canvas is larger, comprehending all the variety and the rich colours

of life. The gateways of the Sanchi *stupa* present almost every type of activity and are about the fullest record of the various aspects of social and economic life of India in the 2nd century A.D.

Cave sculpture was gradually replaced by architecture in the north and the south, but certain traditions were continued. Sculpture remained dominant, determining the character and outline of even the largest structures. The Konark temple in Orissa, the Hoysalesvara temple in Halebid and the Dilwara temple in Mount Abu represent the finest and most elaborate combination of sculpture and architecture. The multiplicity of forms and ornamental motifs is staggering. The calculations were astonishingly exact. Sculptors and stonemasons worked on the ground, and every sculptured piece was fitted into the place where it belonged. The *silpa shastras* were never wrong in the proportions they prescribed, and the sculptors and stonemasons, repeating their formulas as they worked, never made a mistake. The planning was as marvellous as the beauty of the finished detail.

We shall never, perhaps, be able to reproduce fully the spiritual experience that went to the making of the temple. We admire the architectural conception, the art, the inwardness. The temple possessed all these aesthetic and spiritual qualities, but it was also something more. It was a fusion of the physical, the sensuous, the transient and the eternal, a spiritual unity that was greater than the sum of its constituent elements. The Temple of the Sun at Konark, so ambitious in design that it could not be completed, is perhaps the greatest challenge to our understanding. It represents the twelve-wheeled chariot of the sun, drawn by seven horses, and is a mysterious blending of the sacred and the profane, of allegory with gross physical fact, of the profusion of creation on the exterior and absolute silence and formlessness within. The great temples of

Madura and Tanjore, apart from the religious significance which they possess, also present a new concept of the vastness of the country, teeming with life and cultural activity. Their lofty *gopurams* overshadow the shrine, their tanks and courtyards were planned for multitudes of worshippers. Without any change in the ritual or the social system, religion seemed to have become the religion of the people, and to comprehend their limitless preoccupations, hopes and aspirations. Their significance is supplemented, in a way, by the Qutab Minar and the Buland Darwaza of Fatehpur Sikri, which are political in character and embody the determination to achieve power and glory by fusing all the diverse elements of the country into one body politic.

The Muslims insisted on maintaining their identity as a community. There is much to be said for and against this attitude. But what is important is to remember that the problem still exists for all of us as individuals and also as members of communities. Do we contribute more by being like the rest, by merging our personalities in a large or small social or religious group, or by asserting our individuality and beginning a series of reactions by giving expression to what is unique in us? The Muslims did not isolate themselves. They created new forms in music, in literature, in the minor arts, in architecture, in social life, and much of their contribution was due to their self-assertion in matters of belief as well as taste.

Muslims can pray on any piece of land that is clean and level, and where they do not commit trespass by praying. Mosque architecture is, therefore, entirely incidental and has nothing to do with the requirements of the faith. The construction of mosques became necessary because of the varying climatic conditions and because social and political symbols are indispensable, and the practice, once begun, was continued. But idolatry was forbidden, and the prohibition was enforced with a rigid fanaticism by public

opinion. The mosque could have naturalistic ornament, but no human, animal or allegorical figures. The architect was, therefore, thrown back on forms of beauty that arose out of symmetry and proportion, and the combination of arches, domes and minarets. But the variety achieved even under these restrictions is quite astonishing. The Jame Masjid of Gulbarga is all a covered area, with a multitude of domes; the Jame Masjid of Delhi has a covered area of 200 by 90 feet and an open courtyard of over 250 feet side. In the Jame Masjid of Fatehpur Sikri an attempt has been made to combine pillars, reminiscent of temples, with arches and vaulted roofs, and the Jame Masjid of Ahmadabad indicates the intention to endow the mosque with the inwardness of the temple.

The Muslims bury their dead, but the grave should, according to the rule, be a small mound of earth that will disappear within two or three years. However, the religious injunctions in this respect were disregarded by all except the poor, and kings and powerful noblemen erected mausoleums for themselves in order to keep their name and prestige alive. But the mausoleum had to possess some meaning, to indicate in some way the attitude towards life and death, and to give this attitude an individual quality. The Mausoleum of Iltutmish, near the Qutub mosque, is a small structure, and its interior surface is covered with inscriptions in many styles, as if cultural and spiritual values had been the monarch's chief concern. Tughlaq's tomb is by contrast the quintessence of self-assertion, the mailed fist of a warrior who had not known weariness or fear. Sher Shah built a mausoleum for himself at Sassaram in an artificial lake, expressive of all the power of his personality, his imagination and his vast ambitions. The Taj Mahal, though it has an Indian ancestry and could have been conceived and built only in India, has attained the height at which the spiritual and the physical meet, at

which all the arts, all aesthetic standards, all tastes, all longings for beauty and immortality merge and take a precise form. Here architecture has achieved the highest. Beyond it there is only the 'garden of mystery'.

This 'garden' is a spiritual hypothesis, but it has also been associated with the physical world. It has been the forest where the scriptures were studied, where self-discipline was practised, where illumination was attained. It has been the meadows and groves and streams where people went to purge their minds of the dross of town life. Later it was formalised. It became a pattern of water-channels, terraces, flower-beds and fruit-trees. It was enclosed, but it also gave a perspective on the surrounding landscape. Because of the prerequisites, of which the most important was the availability of water, it could not be just something around the corner. The location of the formal garden was the result of patient search, the reward of courage, imagination, planning and successful execution. The sun sets everywhere, on mountains, plains, lakes and seas. Everywhere during some season or in particular climatic conditions the play of colour assumes magnificent and mysterious qualities, but the sunset as seen from the Chashma-i-Shahi in Srinagar is a profoundly moving experience. However, it was not the Chashma-i-Shahi Jahangir thought of as he lay dying. He thought of Verinag where, as the night approaches, the spirit can lean back for all eternity on a cool and friendly hillside.

There is no end to what we can discover of India once we have prepared ourselves for the adventure. We shall not all discover the same things or respond in the same way to the challenge to our understanding. But India will be all the richer for every sincere attempt made to discover her secrets and to become intellectually and spiritually aware of what she represents.

MEDIEVAL INDIAN VILLAGES

AN aspect of Indian history which is generally ignored is the struggle of civilisation against forest, waste land, distance, isolation. It was the struggle of rulers to rule effectively, of cities to maintain commercial intercourse, of men to travel in safety and comfort, of culture to expand. There were many turns of fortune in this struggle, and for those who are unable to identify the opposing forces, there is ample opportunity to be romantic. Of course, the realistic attitude I propose to adopt may itself have no basis in history, but it has enabled me to trace a continuity in Indian life and to avoid certain inconsistencies which seem to sterilise our thinking now. Perhaps a generation or so later people may find that what I must call reasonable conjecture now is true history, or the nearest approach to true history.

We know of centres of production in the most ancient times where industries based on the utilisation of locally available raw material manufactured goods that were cherished in places far, far away. In the course of thousands of years the trade-routes along which these goods were carried became more and more precisely demarcated. The technique of road-building is not more than two hundred years old, and what we call trade-routes were, to begin with, vague directions in which people came and went, and which gradually developed into more or less familiar tracks and pathways through forests. While cities were growing and commercial intercourse developing, the human race was also multiplying. Large tribes and groups of tribes migrat-

ed from Central Asia westwards and into India. If they did not capture political power, they settled around the cities under the protection of the forests. Till about the fourteenth century, the process of migration continued, and along with a large number of big and small cities a rural population came into existence which was settled in villages, and which represented what we may call layers of different races. No village was large or self-sufficient or powerful enough to protect itself, and a kind of feudal relationship, based on the overlordship of the strongest rural chiefs was established. The rural chiefs were almost constantly at war, and no overlordship could be made enduring because of the perpetual changes of alliance and allegiance. The so-called middle age of Indian history begins with the preponderance of the rural chiefs, bearing the generic term of Rajputs, over the cities and the political system required to maintain commercial intercourse and urban civilisation. The whole country was studded with large and small forts, strongholds of rural chiefs who could, by making a hunting ground of the trade-routes, strangle commercial intercourse.

From the purely economic point of view, it may be said that the establishment of the Sultanate in the early 13th century tilted the balance in favour of the cities as against the rural areas. There were attempts to make the administration effective, to make the sultan not an overlord but the only lord, to ensure safety of travel, to exact regular payment of revenue in cash or kind. The sultans thus came into conflict with the big and small rural chiefs, there was continuous warfare, which becomes intelligible only if we realise that a central authority was asserting itself against the rural chief—whatever his name or race or religion—who sat entrenched in a fort and could endanger a trade-route or hamper the work of the administration.

In this context, there appear to be three categories of villages: those that were so far away from cities and trade-

routes that attempts to bring them under the administration would be difficult and uneconomic; those that lay along minor trade-routes and could be kept under control if the local administrator was vigilant and energetic enough; and those that lay along the major trade-routes or their tributaries, and whose produce was usually brought to the markets which supplied the cities.

We can say that the villages which lay beyond the range of the army and the administrator remained independent, and we can use what romantic adjectives we like to glorify that independence. The other side of this picture is that these villages were completely isolated from civilisation, sunk in superstition and dominated by tribal chiefs and a hierarchy of birth and caste. There is a charm in primitive life, an innocence which the civilised man, aware of his moral nature and struggling with his conscience feels inclined to envy. But for most of us the only road away from civilisation leads to ridiculous inconsistency or unashamed hypocrisy, and the historian and the sociologist should beware of bestowing praise on what they do not and cannot admire.

This does not mean that the villages within the indirect and direct control of the administration were fortunate. Villages under indirect control were either the property of rural chiefs or were assigned to some government officer or employee in lieu of salary. Some were also wholly or in part assigned as gifts for the maintenance of scholars and other deserving persons. Rural chiefs may, in their extortions, have thought of the future also; those who were given land for maintenance would generally not have been in a position to practise extortion. Other assignees would seldom have had any scruples. The lot of the villages under the indirect control of the government was very hard indeed. But those under direct control must have been even worse off. Laws were made, no doubt, fixing the

state's share of the produce, or of revenue when it was collected in cash, relief measures were undertaken when crops failed, but there really was nothing to check the greed and rapacity of the revenue collecting staff except the fear that they would be punished and made to disgorge their gains.

There are questions concerning the medieval Indian village which interest the economist and sociologist. What was the system of land-ownership, the method of cultivation, the means of determining how the land-revenue demanded by the state was to be paid, how the village settled its disputes and managed its affairs, for what reason authority was believed to vest in the person or persons who exercised it, what loyalties or considerations of interest kept the village together as a community, if it was a community and not a collection of individuals or families. I think these matters are intimately connected with racial migrations, with race habits and those accidents which enabled one racial group to dominate the rest in particular areas. It would be unhistorical to look for a generally accepted system of land-ownership, and unrewarding to try to determine the nature of proprietary rights in land when such rights could be neutralised by a superior force, whether the rural chief or the state, which regarded the produce as being at its disposal. I imagine the village community as consisting of what may be bluntly called rulers and subjects, the subjects not being in a position to assert any rights. They would mainly do what they were asked to, and provide for their own subsistence by putting in additional labour on land that was left to them after the best had been taken. I would hesitate to consider any *panchayat* or assembly as being in any way a democratic institution, because I suspect it would consist of members of the dominating families, and its decisions would be the self-assertion of a particular vested interest. Even today those who do

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not cherish illusions would admit that, at least in north India, the village incorporates some vested interest which may be openly despotic or too elusive to be identified.

Altogether the history of the Indian village is a sad story of isolation, stagnation and systematic plunder enshrined as custom and administrative law.

ISLAMIC INFLUENCE ON INDIAN SOCIETY

I BELIEVE there would be much less misunderstanding among the representatives of the different cultures of the world if we examined more closely the nature of what we call influence. Influence is not imposition, or a free gift of ideas and goods to those supposed to need them or a borrowing and lending or imitation of the ways of one people by another. It is something really indefinable and can take the most devious ways. We look for it in obvious and concrete forms, in architecture, music, painting, literature, where it is least genuine and seldom enduring, and we generally come to the wrong conclusions. For instance, would it be accounted an influence of Islam, which is rightly taken to be a democratic religion, that the caste system should become more deeply rooted than ever before among the Hindus? But that is what did happen. The Muslim sufis in Iran and Khurasan initiated in the 10th century a movement of taking Islam from the classes to the masses. Muslim sufis in India continued this movement. Goswami Tulsi Das, through his Ramayana, made the veneration of Rama the religion of the masses in north India, and as an indirect consequence strengthened the faith of the masses in the caste system as an unalterable, divine dispensation. Would this be considered an influence of Islam? We would say yes, if we regarded the idea of taking religion to the masses as the essential element, and say no, very emphatically, if we valued the democratic tendencies of Islam. Or again, take the case of the poet-

saint Kabir. He attacked both Muslims and Hindus for making religion exclusive. We cannot be sure whether he himself was a Muslim or a Hindu ; to what influence, then, can we trace his determination to attack and ridicule exclusiveness ? Islam, as a missionary faith, enjoins the eradication of false belief, and I would say that Kabir's attitude is an instance of Islamic influence. But, then, Kabir accused the Muslims of holding false beliefs, although they professed Islam. A third instance is even more illuminating. I have often heard it said that in north India Muslims have been the most outstanding masters of vocal and instrumental music. But music is, according to Muslim religious law, one of the frivolities, and for this reason, addiction to it has been condemned. The only explanation I have been able to think of is that the Muslim who took up music would have been one of the damned, both in this world and the next, unless he achieved the highest excellence. That would give him a status in this world, and he would have the confidence to expect forgiveness in the next. But would we call this the influence of Islam ?

So let us not try to simplify matters where the reality is complex and, for that reason, all the more fascinating. Let us assume—what was most probably also true—that the Muslims wanted to keep Islam and the Muslim way of life to themselves, and that the Hindus had no desire whatever to be influenced by the Muslims. Then let us see what changes took place.

One I have already mentioned. Religion became the religion of the people. Then, the spoken languages of the people became literary languages. We have the beginnings of Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi and Sindhi literature. Further, the city became the centre of culture, tailored clothing came into general use, simplicity was discarded in favour of a life enriched and complicated by a vast increase

in the articles of daily use, manners became elaborate and were, so to say, codified in the form of a recognised etiquette. None of these changes, except perhaps the first, can be regarded as due to the influence of Islam, but the changes would not have taken place when they did if Islam had not become one of the religions of India.

Spoken languages benefited because Muslim rulers, while not exclusive in their patronage, had no reverence for Sanskrit and no reason to venerate the Brahmans, who were generally the only people who learnt and could speak it. On the other hand, the Muslim sufis wished to propagate their ideas, and they could do this only in the language of the people. They were not interested in the Hindus but in the Muslims of the lower classes. The Muslims thus made a wide breach in the ramparts behind which the linguistic prestige of Sanskrit—and also, let us remember, of Arabic and to some extent Persian—was entrenched. As early as the first decades of the 15th century, a Muslim sufi was asked why he was so favourable to Hindi. And about a hundred years earlier people had seen that when Persian verses failed to produce a mood of exaltation in Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, the singers took up some Hindi folk song, and the Shaikh was soon in rapture.

Islam is averse to luxury of any kind, and the life of the good Muslim should perhaps be more simple and austere than that of the Hindu. But the cultural expression of Islam has been the exact opposite, and Islam has almost everywhere promoted urban life and luxury. This was, perhaps, inevitable when religion required the congregation of the faithful in the mosque preferably five times a day but at least once in a week. Muslims have to live together, a mosque has to be the central feature of every Muslim settlement. In India, specially during the first two or three centuries, the Muslims could maintain themselves as a community only in the cities. Their ruling classes had to

strike the imagination of the people. And so we have both a multiplication and a rapid development of cities, and of the glamorous products of craft and industry. From this flow the other changes—the demand for many and excellent products of all kinds, even to the extent of having a pair of slippers costing Rs. 50,000/-, the cultivation of elaborate manners, and so on.

I have already indicated how the evolution of an elaborate and extravagant city life can be traced back to some features of Islam. Hinduism is not congregational. There were large cities in the Mauryan and Gupta periods: there have, indeed, to be cities, if there is to be any civilisation. But the Hindu ideal—and my own, if it comes to that—is life away from the city, away from noise and dust and worldliness, where one can live in peace and think. I remember reading somewhere that the Vedas should not be studied and recited in cities. There is, therefore, according to Hindu standards, worldly advantage but no religious merit in city life.

And now I come to the intriguing question of the use of tailored clothing. There is a Sanskrit word for tailor, but I have not found evidence of tailors having been generally busy at any time previous to the settlement of the Muslims. Men and women draped cloth around themselves, or tied it where just draping could not be depended upon. The tailor may have existed, but he could be dispensed with. The Muslim, on the other hand, cannot say his five daily prayers without the help of the tailor and his craft, and the Muslim woman would lose all rights and status if the tailor did not enable her to clothe herself completely up to the wrists, the neck and the ankles. Rulers set the standard of respectability, and non-Muslim women had to pay the price of respectability by employing tailors and wearing a minimum of tailored clothing.

Finally, though it is not my business to discuss the

influence of Hinduism on the Muslims, I must say that if I were an eighteenth or early nineteenth century Muslim, I could easily have become that public nuisance called a reformer. I could have said, 'Islam is buried deep beneath Hindu influences ; let us dig it out, clean it and see what it really looks like !'

THE MUSLIM MIND IN POLITICS

SPASMODIC assertions of a unity of interest and ideal, specially because they have been made in opposition to some other interest, have created in the Muslim mind the conviction that the Muslims are one community with one way of thinking. The Muslims themselves have not examined this conviction in the light of their normal way of living and thinking, and do not appear inclined to do so even now. But Muslim history, both in India and outside, bears ample evidence of great political, moral and social tensions, and the Muslims would understand themselves and make their behaviour as a community more intelligible to others if they frankly recognise the existence of these tensions and their disruptive effects.

The fundamental question that arose after the death of the Prophet was: To whom does the right of leadership belong? This question became morally very significant when the right of leadership was arrogated to themselves by persons who did not lay claim to piety and did not disguise the fact that they ruled because they had the power. Apart from the Shiah sects whose complicated metaphysics concealed the fact that they were really movements of protest against misrule and injustice, the *sufis* and the righteous *ulama* repudiated on moral grounds political authority as exercised by the rulers. We have in the early Sultanate period a remarkable instance of this repudiation. Sultan Alauddin Khilji and Shaikh Nizamuddin Awlia were contemporaries. Alauddin Khilji was a powerful ruler who was determined to root out opposition; he was very

competent and very successful, but Shaikh Nizamuddin Awlia, who felt in duty bound to meet anyone who desired to meet him, refused to meet the Sultan. On one occasion when the Sultan insisted, he let it be known that if the Sultan entered by the front door, he would leave his *khanqah* by the back door. Shaikh Nizamuddin Awlia did not hesitate to advise people against seeking government service. There is every reason to believe that the Shaikh was loved and honoured by hundreds and thousands of people and his attitude towards the Sultan and his administration could not have remained a secret, and must have undermined the prestige of the Sultan. Later on we have numerous examples of *sufis* who were on good terms with Sultans. Perhaps the *sufis* were not as strict as they should have been or perhaps the Sultans themselves were less inclined to be brutally assertive and themselves sought the advice and blessings of *sufis*, but the tradition that the good Muslim who was anxious for the welfare of his soul should avoid Sultans and courts persisted.

The *ulama* who studied jurisprudence, served as judges and *Qazis* and *Muftis* or received pensions from the court to carry on their studies and indirectly assist in maintaining the religious prestige of the state evolved a theory of right based on power. We have instances of these people being cornered and forced to declare their honest opinion, which was not different from that of the righteous *ulama* and the *sufis*. But they supported the rulers and the rulers depended on them. They were mainly responsible for making government the embodiment of power, and of depriving the Muslim of the right to rebel against unjust governments. But even the righteous *ulama* realised very early in Muslim history that opposition to the state on moral and religious grounds would deprive people of whatever peace and security the state could give them without a political order being set up that would be based, in theory and practice, on religious

law. So the fiction that the Muslims were a community at once religious and political and that political authority was a means of maintaining the *shariah* became something of a desperate belief. Political life was a cracked surface so painted over with religion that the cracks came to be regarded as a necessary part of the surface.

The idea that power was the basis of authority made it essential for the rulers to make a display of wealth and might. They had to overawe their subjects with their magnificence, to win their admiration through spectacular acts of justice and magnificence, and to impress them with the swift execution of their decisions. While remaining almost inaccessible to the common man, they had to show that merit of any kind did not escape their notice. The conduct of successful rulers, who knew how to strike the imagination of the people, established a pattern which imprinted itself on the minds of generations, and became a standard of judgement. The British were admired because in many ways they seemed not only to follow but in a sense to improve upon the traditional standards. The democratic national leaders did not attract the Muslim masses because there was no pomp and pageantry about them, they did little or nothing that was spectacular and, above all, they had no personal power. If Mr. Jinnah had not been arrogant and aloof, if he had not shown by his treatment of his subordinates that he had power and knew how to exercise it, if he had not arrogated to himself the sole authority to think and decide, the Muslim League would have had little success under his leadership.

Democracy as taught by Islam still has a firm hold on the mind of the Muslim. It is something of which he is justly proud. But it is one of the basic contradictions in his pattern of thought that he does not identify political democracy with Islamic democracy. He wants a leader saying and doing spectacular things; fellow-citizens actively engag-

ed in discussing public affairs, electing representatives insisting that all must be politically equal do not impress him. He does not regard the state as a moral entity; only the Muslim community as a whole could claim moral status, and that, too, only if the *ulama* and the people were of one mind on some religious issue. But if somehow the craving for a leader could be extinguished, the whole pattern of Muslim thought would gradually change, because then the Muslim would feel that he must reconcile himself to a government which can spend only in accordance with a budget, which consists of ministers and administrators who cannot do spectacular things and must think before they act, because they are answerable to an assembly for everything they do. Understanding of this system of government would bring him closer to his fellow-citizens, with whom he has many common interests, and these common interests would then acquire a moral quality.

The question whether Muslims can under religious law accept the Indian Constitution and be loyal citizens is not a new question. As I have stated earlier, Muslim governments also could not be recognised by religious law except through some constructions placed on particular verses of the *Quran*; that the government today happens to be non-Muslim or secular makes no material difference. A government, according to the jurists, had to be obeyed unless it propagated unbelief, which meant unless it prohibited Muslims from praying, fasting, performing pilgrimage or following their personal law. The present government allows the Muslims full freedom in matters of religious belief and practice. It has, therefore, to be obeyed. Loyalty, as something higher than habitual obedience, is a virtue that needs to be cultivated by all Indians, not the Muslims alone. Both among Hindus and Muslims there must be a realisation of the moral nature of the democratic state. Obedience in an active, creative form will be an outflow of

the identification of political with moral obligation by the conscience of the citizen. It is only such citizens who will establish the cooperative, socialistic society which is our ideal.

GLORIES OF INDIAN ART

THE oldest known examples of art are the oldest expressions of belief ; the creative artist was perhaps the first articulate human being. The oldest Indian representation of a deity, a figurine known to archaeologists as the 'dancing god of Harappa', is the statement of a view of life that has not changed basically for five thousand years. This figurine is imbued with a vital, dynamic quality ; it suggests a movement that is at once rhythmic and powerful ; and there is that spontaneous and complete identification of the artist with his work which expresses a belief that is inborn, that is the whole of man's nature and the whole of his universe.

Students of religion connect the dancing god of Harappa with the Hindu god, Siva. The relationship between the bulls on the amulets of the Indus Valley, the Rampurva bull and the Nandi bulls of later years is even more obvious. The presentations of the deity are necessarily abstract ; but the animal world can be brought close to man in a concrete form, and help us to guess the quality and measure the depths of that feeling which bound man to the mysterious forces of nature that governed his life.

In course of time, religion acquired its own identity through metaphysical doctrines, rituals and ethics. Intellectually, man had associated himself with a group of concepts, he had realised the need to discriminate between his emotions and to discipline his nature. But the approach to metaphysics was something which the believers discovered for themselves. On the railings of Bharhut and the gateways of Sanchi, story upon story and scene after scene was

carved upon stone where the primeval attitude of oneness with all creation is depicted with an exhilarating spontaneity. There is no question here of a conception of sin or wrong, of sanctity and profanity, in fact of any divergence between moral command and natural urge. The wood nymph of the Sanchi gateway is a symbol of joy, an assertion, both innocent and intense, of 'I am what I am'.

The art which represents this view of life has been called naturalistic. It reveals an inner awareness of nature, of the rhythm of cosmic movement, of the need to achieve harmony between symbol as compressed meaning and fact as the alphabet of expression. It could base itself ideally only on a doctrine of the unity of all art. In a book that could be called the artist's scripture, the principle is laid down that he who wishes to understand the theory and practice of art must begin with music and song, then go on to dance and then to painting and sculpture. He will then realise the inner unity of all art, which leads to the realisation of the absolute within one's own living body. This unity of all art was supported by a technique, by a symbolism in which posture, arms, gestures, the expression of the face all contributed to the exposition of a metaphysical idea. 'The likeness of man became merged', as a writer has said, 'into the presence of God.' The principle of unity of art had also a social significance, in that the craftsman, his patron and the public became magically one.

While this principle was taking shape, there were revolutions in the political and social world. In the third century B.C., the Emperor Ashoka imported Iranian stone-masons and patterns. The Indian environment and the Indian genius transformed the styles to suit its own ideal of perfection. Some two centuries later, Greeks settled in the north-west of India introduced their own conceptions of art, and in their sculptures made the Buddha into a Greek god, if not Buddhism into a Greek religion. But in fact all that the

Greeks achieved was the introduction of a new concept of proportion and symmetry and the general acceptance of the idea that making images of the Buddha was also a form of worship. The craft of image-making established itself at Mathura and then at Sarnath. At Mathura was made the statue of the Buddha with transparent robes and sensuously moulded limbs, the grace of his form revealing the boundless grace of his spirit. At Mathura were also made female figures of a wondrous charm and lasciviousness, snaring other-worldly men with wicked smiles. They had to be made, and to be displayed in all sobriety, for was not the Buddha himself tempted, and is not temptation a part of the universal order? At Amravati the question is stated with almost a deliberately cultivated frankness, heavy anklets and bangles tying the ethereal slenderness of limbs to the earth we know so well. The seated Buddha of Sarnath, delivering his sermon on the cause and cure of sorrow, is a vision of another world, the perfection of spirit embodied in perfection of form.

We have, unfortunately, very few examples left of painting, which must have developed side by side with sculpture. Prayer halls and living quarters for Buddhist monks began to be carved out of rock in the third century B.C. But the world, with its stories and its colours, invaded or was led into the monastery. We have not much evidence of how it unfolded itself before the monks, apart from the frescoes of Ajanta and Bagh. But what we see of it passes understanding. Critics select a figure here and an episode there for discussion and comment, for the mind is staggered by the vastness of the panorama, the endless variety of experience, the exquisite beauty of every detail of form and feeling.

The ideal of unity within diversity and the plasticity of form found their consummation in temple architecture. However big the temple may have been, and the natural

tendency was to make them more and more imposing, they symbolised the silence and the solitude of the cell where the individual soul could hold communion by itself with the world soul. We now look for other values. For us the Kailash temple at Ellora, carved out of one piece of rock by four generations of reverent craftsmen, ranks as one of the wonders of the world. At Konarak, in Orissa, standing by itself near the seashore, is the temple that represents the highwater-mark of design and sculpture, planned on a scale so magnificent as to have defied completion.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the naturalistic views of life and style of art had fulfilled themselves. Still, the formalism that the Muslims brought into India must be regarded as a revolution. The Muslims had an entirely different view of life, of its significance and its meaning, an entirely different tradition of relationship with the divine. They had a religious law consisting of commands and prohibitions, a doctrine of community life in which the individual was just a fragment, and a concept of God based on the rejection of all material symbols. Image worship was condemned and representation of living things forbidden. Architecture, calligraphy and crafts were the only permitted means of satisfying the craving for beauty, but to these the Muslims added the arts, sinful perhaps but not past forgiveness, of music and painting and poetry. They cultivated almost everything, in fact, except sculpture, which was too obvious a challenge to the iconoclast. When the Muslims came to India, they had acquired and given a distinct form to all the arts recognised by culture, except the presentation of the human form in wood or stone. They had evolved, besides, a philosophy of what they called Love, and developed a craving for the beautiful that could not be satisfied. They believed also in the assertion of the human personality, in majesty, in power, in domination over space and time.

The first Muslim work of art, the Qutub Minar, is a tower so named and so constructed as to present the typical Muslim values and aspirations. Its mass is cleverly concealed by variations in the surface of its several storeys, by calligraphic and floral bands across its tapering length, by balconies supported on clusters of miniature arches; its slenderness creates an illusion of height, while the pyramidal distribution of weight gives it great stability. The arched screen of the mosque, of which the Qutub Minar formed a component, has not stood the test of time, but what remains is fascinating in grace and beauty of proportions. The inscriptions on the older arches constituting this screen are a unique mixture of Quranic verses and floral patterns, and create the feeling that the word of God is being whispered among leaves and flowers.

Beginning with the Qutub Minar, the Muslims experimented in architectural forms. The most characteristic structures were mosques and mausoleums. The mosque, as the house of prayer, represented the numbers, the strength, the aspirations, and the democratic character of the community as a congregation. The Atala mosque at Jaunpur and the Purana Qila mosque at Delhi are typical as symbols of strength and stability, one expressing them in a primitive, the other in a refined and disciplined form. The mausoleum has a long history behind it. In Indian Muslim architecture it is not a reminder of death but the last and the most glorious message of life, for what else could be said of Humayun's Tomb, of Sikandra where Akber lies buried and of the Taj Mahal? Architecture collected around itself, with striking discrimination and tastefulness, the arts of calligraphy, of mosaic, of gardening. It explains to us the beauty and significance also of what is not there, of the craft of the jeweller, of the brass-worker, of the ivory-carver, above all of the textile worker, whose patterns, simple or elaborate, belong to the world of the minaret and

the dome, of channels and cascades, of birds and flowers. Like architecture, Indian Muslim or Mughal painting belongs to the category of formal art. But the rich illuminated manuscripts, the birds of Ustad Mansoor, the portraits, some of them most exquisite, reveal an inner unity of culture, vibrant with an intense longing for beauty, a beauty out of which we are born and to which we return.

THE RED FORT

NOTHING looks so dreary as a house that is not lived in but only visited. The dreariness of the palace that has become a monument—even a national monument—is in proportion to its erstwhile magnificence. Still we admire palaces, for even as monuments they impress the mind, and enable some of us to exercise our imagination and see them as they once were. But the Red Fort is a challenge which the most imaginative would not venture to accept. It has a moat and a high wall around it, but it is most unconvincing as a fort. The buildings supposed to have been once inhabited leave us wondering how even kings and queens could have lived in them. We have either to tell ourselves that it is all make-believe or to accuse the Mughals of having sacrificed comfort to a hard and showy elegance.

In fact, there would have been nothing to perplex us if the civil and military officers of the British Government had not been afraid of ghosts. In 1858, the Mughal Empire was dead and the last Mughal Emperor a prisoner. There was no one even to haunt the Red Fort. Still it was thought necessary to convert it into a cantonment. It was only much later that the Fort was given the status of a monument, but only a small part of it, and that, too, overshadowed by ugly military barracks. The other buildings were pulled down, the orchards removed, in order to make the place look like a proper cantonment. Another reason for perplexity is that the Indian way of life has changed. We think, like the Europeans, that a house consists of rooms, and rooms are not rooms unless they have

four walls. Even the verandah, which so far served as a relief from enclosed living, is fast disappearing. We now think in terms of permanent fixtures, isolation, privacy. The ghosts of earlier centuries would prefer to haunt their own prisons rather than live in our houses.

The age of the Emperor Shah Jahan, the builder of the Red Fort, was an age of refinement, in which what are called the minor arts attained their highest level of excellence. Shah Jahan was the wealthiest of the Mughal Emperors, and he could build as grandly as he liked. He did not really need a palace, the one at Agra was commodious enough. But architecture seems to have been his principal means of self-expression and so he planned a new city at Delhi, to be named after him, Shahjahanbad, a new palace and a new mosque. The palace of the Mughal emperors was only the hard core of the imperial camp. But the royal palace was still only the hard core of the royal camp. It did not eliminate improvised outdoor living, the tent of the nomad, the exquisite carpets hung and spread, the flow of water, the blaze of colour and the bloom of flowers. The imperial palace was also the seat of the government. Its privacy was not the privacy of the householder sheltering himself from prying eyes, but the dazzling publicity and the baffling mystery of power.

Shah Jahan had the gift of making the solid look immaterial, the strong appear delicate. I said the Red Fort was most unconvincing as a fort. That is because there is nothing grim and forbidding about it. The walls and the moat could really protect, but the gateway of the Fort is more an invitation to loyal subjects to come and pay respects to their sovereign than a warning to actual or potential enemies. Those who entered the gate and passed the scrutiny of the chamberlains would proceed through the attendants' quarters to the Naubat Khana, where the time of the day or night was indicated by the music played. If a

public audience was being held, they would be taken between serried ranks of soldiers to the Diwan-i-Am, the Hall of Public Audience. This is a pillared hall, its roof supported on broad, graceful arches whose proportions have a striking harmony. Here the Emperor sat on a balcony, the entrance to which is from the back, from the interior of the palace. Below the balcony stood the Vizier, on a pedestal high enough for him to hand over and receive documents from the Emperor. On both sides of the royal balcony the nobles stood with folded arms, in strict accordance with their rank, and they stood stiff, silent and motionless till the audience was over.

This audience was really the second audience of the day. The first or informal audience, called the *darshan*, was about the time of the sunrise. The Emperor appeared on a balcony at the back of the palace, towards the river. Anyone who wanted could come and have a look at him, and some families in Delhi made it a tradition not to have breakfast before they had seen the Emperor. But those who had complaints or requests to make also came at this time, and they had the opportunity of presenting their papers directly. These were received and examined, and orders passed on them were communicated to the officer concerned at the Public Audience on one of the days following. It was a most serious event if the Emperor did not appear for the *darshan*, and usually people began to fear for peace and security and to pray for the Emperor's life.

The Public Audience was generally followed by another consultation, the most important of the day. This was held in the Hammam, the royal Bath, after the Emperor had refreshed himself. The royal Bath has now a very plain exterior. But inside, with the water-channel and the small fountain from which came a spray of scented water, it is almost the ideal place for the thoughtful mind. Subsequent generations associate with the Bath mysterious ways of

heating the water and regulating its temperature as it flowed into the spacious pool, but even without this mystery one cannot but envy the luxury which the Emperor enjoyed of having so much water to himself.

The part of the palace which was meant to overawe the mind with the imperial splendour was the Diwan-i-Khas, the Hall of Private Audience. This was for the evening assemblies, when candles were lighted and the Emperor and his courtiers appeared in full dress. This Hall is of marble, its ceiling is elaborately painted, and there is the presumptuous inscription that if Heaven is to be found anywhere on earth, it is here in this Hall. But architecturally this Hall seems gaudy and pretentious when compared with the simple elegance of the Diwan-i-Am. In this Hall stood the Peacock Throne, a marvel of the jewellers' craft. It was taken away by Nadir Shah as part of his booty in 1739, and was too valuable to have remained intact. But judging from its descriptions and the pictures of what is left of it, it must have been a piece of artistic extravagance.

South of the Diwan-i-Khas there is a suite of rooms and a small hall. In one of the rooms one can still see the furnishing. Were these carpets, these cushions and pillows, this bed, all that the Emperor had for himself? We hope not. But if this room is an indication of destitution in the midst of wealth, even what is left of the ladies' quarters sickens us with its contrast of abundance and deprivation. The Emperor had an abundance of ladies in the palace, the ladies having nothing except what the Emperor bestowed on them as a favour. The Rang Mahal, the Palace of Colour, must have been seething with humanity, filled with the noise almost of the country fair, and repellent to anyone not brought up in its atmosphere. The two buildings of the ladies' part of the palace that we see now are survivals of what must have been a township of females. The situation was really much worse than appears

THE RED FORT

at first sight, and makes the household of the simple honest citizen a haven of contentment and peace.

Odd structures come up in every group of buildings that grows with time. Aurangzeb put a jewel of a mosque right in the midst of the worldly pomp of the Red Fort, as if to show that he could have communion with God while all around him worshipped pomp and power. The two pavilions, Sawan and Bhadon, Early Rain and Late Rain, with the water-channel and the pavilion in the lake between them were part of a large garden, the garden which has disappeared and in whose stead stand military barracks. We can give our imagination free play in reconstructing the architecture of the Red Fort, but the barracks remain where they are.

THE QUTUB COMPLEX AS A SOCIAL DOCUMENT

THE Memoirs and Reports and Lists of Delhi Monuments published by the Archaeological Survey of India contain complete and detailed information about the groups of buildings which constitute the Qutub Complex and other related material which is beyond the scope of this paper. My purpose here is not to reproduce all that information in an abbreviated form. I have had to study Indian architecture for a book I wrote some eighteen years ago on ancient Indian culture and now for lectures on Indian Muslim architecture. I am not a specialist in any sense. I can only present certain methods of approach that have occurred to me in the attempt to make architecture intelligible and interesting to myself and to my students, and I have selected the Qutub Complex as the subject of this paper because it is particularly useful for this purpose.

The study of my specimen of architecture consists, I feel, in reading the architect's mind to discover how he adopted techniques and selected material for the construction of the building, the purpose of which was known to him. In reading the architect's mind we are moved by the same sentiments, we participate, as it were, in the planning, in the choice of ways and means, in the execution of the plan and in the assessment of the completed work. It may bring us no joy if we feel from the start that the architect was content to imitate or to follow a fashion, to use the prevalent techniques and the most easily available material, and to look forward to no appreciation beyond what is shown

by the unimaginative for work which did not involve exercise of the imagination. We may, on the other hand, share the rapture of the artist who discovered the most perfect harmony between purpose and design, and find that the plan, the techniques, the material and the proportions of the created work reduce themselves to a single moment of exaltation. It is this experience which assures us that the beauty of architecture is the beauty of poetry, music, painting and sculpture, and the great artist can enable us to overcome our imperfections and realise the underlying unity of all art.

Unfortunately, we tend to impose many limitations on ourselves. In Indian architecture, for instance, we consider first the categorisation—is the building Hindu or Muslim? Then we look at the size, the costliness of the material, the names and dates of the builder and the building. We also overlook certain basic facts of the history of architecture. The technique of corbelling, that is, projecting stones or bricks of the upper layer over the lower so as to make an arch or a ceiling, and the use of the beam and post, or the trabeate system, are much older and more universal than Hinduism; the use of the arch and dome, or the arcuate system, was developed by the Romans and is much older than Islam, but we have labelled one system Hindu and the other Muslim. We look everywhere for borrowed elements. I do not mean that there are no differences between Hindu and Muslim architecture or that they should be ignored. The temple and the mosque represent two different concepts of worship, and cannot, therefore, be built in the same way. But if we begin, as we should, by understanding the purpose of the structure and then attempt to read the architect's mind, we shall appreciate the beauty of the created work without being misled by irrelevant considerations.

What we have to remember, I think, when studying Indian monuments, is the difference between architecture

and sculpture. While trying to explain this difference to my class, a definition of both these arts occurred to me, which my artist friends have since assured me is fairly apt and comprehensive. Architecture is creation with material; sculpture is creation out of material. The canvas of the architect is space; in space he creates a form by putting together whatever material he builds with. The canvas of the sculptor is the material itself, out of which he makes a particular form emerge. A very small building can be a specimen of architecture; a very large building, or even a complex of buildings can be an example of sculpture. Not only the Kailash Temple of Ellora, which was in fact sculptured, but many other temples have been deliberately given an outline which creates the impression that they were not built with but hewn out of stone, and are sculptures on a gigantic scale. Between the definitely architectural and the definitely sculptural we can have variations of approach. The architecture of Gujarat is generally characterised by a sculptural approach, though there are also buildings, like the Jame Masjid of Sarkhej, where the influence of sculptural standards is completely absent. We could say that up to a certain time in Indian history the aesthetics of sculpture dominated architecture. During Muslim rule sculpture may not have been patronised to any appreciable extent, but the stone-masons and sculptors certainly did not give up their profession, and they took their time to accept the aesthetics of architecture. It would be fairer and more precise not to make distinctions on the ground of religion when the real difference lies in the degree to which the standards and aesthetic principles of sculpture and architecture have been applied in the planning, the construction and the ornamentation of a building. If we bear this in mind, a study of the Qutub complex becomes an exciting intellectual and aesthetic adventure, and gives history another perspective.

I cannot here dilate upon the purely archaeological problems. We know that the Quwwat-al-Islam mosque grew with the Muslim population of Delhi. As constructed originally, in 1199, it would not have accommodated more than 2000 persons. Its final extension by Alauddin would have made it sufficient for ten or fifteen times that number, if not more. These extensions have been traced out without much difficulty by archaeologists, and fairly reasonable and convincing reconstructions have been made to show what the mosque looked like after its first extension by Iltutmish and second extension by Alauddin. Here I propose to consider only what is still standing, and can be seen and judged by those who do not have the imagination and the training of the archaeologist.

The Turks who occupied Delhi came from an area in which both brick and stone were used in building, but architecture in brick, such as we see in the oldest monuments of Bukhara, would have set the standard. Along with brick structures, the art of making tiles had been developed and was making continuous progress, both aesthetically and technically. On the other hand, sculpture and stone-masonry practised in the Greek colonies of Bacteria and Gedrosia would not have died out. Thanks to Alauddin Jahansoz, we cannot now say whether Ghazni was mainly a city of brick or of stone or of wooden structures. But we may be certain that those who thought of building a mosque and a *minar* at Delhi were thinking in terms of architecture and not sculpture. Construction in wood was ruled out; bricks were not available; they could only build in stone.

There is an inscription above the northern entrance to the Quwwat-al-Islam mosque stating that the material of 27 temples was utilised for its construction. If this was done after the people of Delhi had submitted, it was certainly against the *shariah*, but there would hardly have been any among the Turks occupying Delhi whose conscience

would have troubled them on that account. We must, however, unequivocally condemn the action. Some of the temples would no doubt have been damaged and desecrated during the fighting, and they would have been abandoned for that reason. But the inscription indicates that these temples were deliberately dismantled, and it was not only a matter of utilising the material of temples destroyed as an act of war.

While the moral and legal issue is clear, however, the question of who carried out the dismantling has still to be answered. We can assume that Hindu stone-masons were forced to do it, or that Muslim masons were employed. In any case the work was done by stone-masons. If they had been Muslims brought over from the Punjab or beyond they would have known the technique of building true arches and we would not have had corbelled arches in the screen of the Quwwat-al-Islam mosque. As it is, the true arch appears for the first time in the Alai Darwaza, built in 1311. We must assume, therefore, that the stone-masons were Hindus. And not only in this first instance. It appears from an inscription on the 5th storey of the Qutub Minar that the repairs and additions in the reign of Firoz Tughlaq in 1368 were carried out under the supervision of a master-mason named Nana Salba, son of Chahada Dev Tala.

The stone-masons employed for dismantling the temples and building the mosque would not all have been residents of Delhi. The city was not large enough to provide continuous employment for any considerable number of stone-masons, unless we assume that a good proportion of the 27 temples mentioned was in the process of construction. Family group or communities of stone-masons and sculptors generally migrated from one place of work to another, remaining settled for as long as was necessary to complete a particular project. Many such families and groups would

have been collected in haste from near and far, for the mosque had to be built soon and the Minar was to follow.

What would have been the attitude of these stone-masons and sculptors to what they were asked to do? Would they have undertaken it for fear of losing their lives, with hatred seething within them? That would be the logical deduction, considering what had happened. But, then, would not their feelings have affected their work? Cunningham has pointed out some technical defects in the construction of one or two corbelled ceilings and their supports in the southwestern corner of the mosque colonnade, and attributed them to haste. But the later extensions have not stood the test of time as well as the original mosque, and instead of any evidence of slipshod work we find unimpeachable examples of free, creative effort. The stone-masons were not submissive instruments. They must have asserted themselves as technicians, and also exercised their imagination to appreciate and their skill to realise in practice the architectural values they were asked to express.

There are many mosques in India with colonnades around their courtyards, but none in which the eastern side has been so definitely emphasised. The gateway built by Iltutmish and the Alai Darwaza are on the southern side, because the city lay to the south. But the main gateway of the original mosque, like the entrance to a temple, is on the east, and the columns on this side are four deep, while those on the north and south are only three deep. Does not this imply that the stone-masons, or their chief, feeling instinctively that the eastern colonnade must represent the vestibule of a temple, insisted that this should be emphasised, and had his way? The screen, which stands opposite, was probably the central feature, following a prevalent style in mosque construction which was further developed in different parts of India. It must have been higher than

the domes of the covered area behind it. What remains of the screen now is the central arch and three of the four low arches which flanked it, two on each side. Originally, one would have looked through the central arch into a shadowy interior, and felt that passing through it one would enter the world of the spirit, of calm and quiet contemplation of the divine. Now one looks through it into space and feels that in isolation and decay its beauty has acquired another and far richer meaning. I remember taking the Russian artist Magda Nachmann to the Qutub over twenty years ago. Once she had seen this arch she would look at nothing else. She stood before it in rapturous silence and wept when it became dark and we had to return. And indeed, if we look at the arch and take in its beauty, we feel that it is something that can be translated into many forms and many moods, into the peace and tranquility of the Buddha image, into the timeless contemplation of the Trimurti of the Elephanta Caves, the ecstasy of the *sufi*, the poet's dream of a loveliness that eludes the drapery of words. It is something beyond architecture and beyond sculpture, a chiselling out of space that creates the framework for endless horizons of thought and feeling.

I referred earlier to reading the architect's mind in order to understand his work. Archaeologists have found inscribed, on a pillar of one of the arches of the screen, and again near the entrance to the Minar, the name of Fazl bin abi'l Maali as superintendent of the works. He may have been an Arab or an Iranian or a Turk. He may have been a genius in the art of communication as well as of architecture, able to design beautiful and impressive monuments and to explain to masons who did not know his language how to build what he had designed. But if he were a Muslim from outside India, would he have designed corbelled arches, knowing that they could stand much less weight than true arches? We can be sure that he would

not. It must have been the Hindu masons who insisted on building according to their traditional techniques, disclaiming all responsibility for the stability of the structure if any other technique was followed. And when this had been agreed to, they must have made their own calculations of the width and height and the massiveness of the supporting piers. This explains the exquisite proportions of the central arch, its quality of being eloquent and alive, its rising upward with a moving, natural grace, the two sides meeting not with a mathematical precision, but as it were by mutual attraction, with an upward tilt at the meeting point symbolic of the joy of union.

But this is only a part of the sculptors' contribution. I imagine that the suggestion of making the decorative reliefs sweep upward instead of running horizontally, as in temple decoration, must have appeared to the stone-masons as an exciting novelty, and their enthusiastic response is evident in their work. Among the decorative bands are verses from the Quran, inscribed in bold relief. The architect may have known of a mausoleum in Uzkund, built in 1187, where the Quranic inscription has a setting of flowers and foliage, and have proposed to do the same here. But while the floral setting in the Uzkund monument is stylised and repetitive, the setting in the Qutub screen is naturalistic, warm and vocal. The Hindu sculptor did not know anything about the doctrine of revelation, he knew only about nature, and instinctively he has represented the Quran as an utterance of nature, the voice of leaves and flowers, the whisper of the woods.

Some thirty years later, the mosque was enlarged, and the screen extended to maintain symmetry. The arches of this screen do not have the same proportions. In the relief work on their frontage there is stiffness and austerity; the exuberant naturalism of the earlier work has given place to something severely geometrical. An archaeological expert has express-

ed the view that this relief work is in Saracenic style, and must have been executed by imported craftsmen. This is unlikely. The arches are still corbelled ; there is still lack of faith in the strength of the true arch. As for the ornamentation, it is doubtful if a sufficient number of skilled stone-masons would have been found in the neighbouring Muslim principalities or would have been worth recruiting when so much skill was available in India. Besides, Persian and Central Asian ornamentation is of tiles or inlay, and depends for its effectiveness very largely on colour compositions. On the screen built by Iltutmish and on the inner walls of his tomb the patterns may be similar, but they have been executed on different material. They are neither plastic nor colourful and give the impression of overloading. The craftsmen must have been Hindus or Indian Muslims, but because more than a generation had passed since the construction of the first screen, they would be new men, less imbued with the sculptural traditions of their fathers. In any case, a change was bound to come, with architecture seeking independent self-expression.

In the context of this aesthetic struggle, the Qutub Minar stands midway between the first screen of the Quwwat-al-Islam mosque and its extension. It was built in two stages, the first storey in 1199, and three storeys by Iltutmish about 1230. Firoz Tughlaq repaired the Minar because it had been damaged by lightning, and very unwisely converted the fourth storey into two. He somewhat increased the height of the Minar, but also introduced incongruous elements. Apart from the alteration made by Firoz, the Minar would have been planned as a whole, Iltutmish completing what Qutubuddin Ibak had left undone. An inscription—the lower band on the second storey—states that Iltutmish ordered the completion of the Minar.

What was the idea underlying the Minar? It would have gratified the religious if it were called a *mazna*, a lofty

tower from which the muezzin called the faithful to prayer. There are examples of such maznas in Muslim countries, but probably not as tall as even the first storey of the Minar, which is 95 feet high. There are also examples of free-standing Minars which have an architectural significance of their own. The lower we now call the Qutub Minar has not been so called in the contemporary histories. It could have been used as a mazna. But its architectural qualities most probably derive from the fact that a small group, determined to occupy and rule for all time as much territory as it could, found it necessary to create a symbol for its confidence in itself, in the stability of its power and in its destiny. But great architecture, let us remember, is the instinctive self-assertion of man against time and death. It is the offspring of inspired moments. The purpose of a great monument cannot, therefore, be too precisely defined. It is almost always something beyond what the planners themselves could have stated in words.

The Minar has a Central Asian Turkish ancestry. There is a minar at Jar Qurgan, near Termez, built in 1108-9, which has the appearance of 16 round columns tied together, and there is a strong resemblance between it and the second storey of the Qutub, which has a pattern of rounded flutes in section. The Minar-i-Kalan, at Bukhara, built in 1127, has a round, arched clerestory at the top, supporting a cluster of arches, like three balconies of the Qutub. The Minar at Ghazni consists in part of a polygon with deeply indented angles, a form of which the wedge-shaped flanges of the third storey of the Qutub could be considered a variation. An almost contemporary structure was the minar at Wabkent, built in 1196-97. All these minars have a taper. But these were examples for the Muslim architects of the Qutub, Fazl bin abi'l Maali, whose name is inscribed near the entrance, and Muhammad Amir Koh, under whom the minar was completed in the reign of Iltutmish, as

appears from an inscription on the side of the doorway of the third storey. One question of basic importance would have been decided the way the Hindu craftsmen wanted it to be. These craftsmen, in accordance with their inherited notions, would have insisted that to ensure stability, horizontal pressures should be entirely eliminated. The minar has, therefore, a very pronounced taper. Its diameter is 46 feet at the base and, as it now stands, 10 feet at the top. As originally built, in four storeys, the top would have had a diameter of perhaps 12 to 15 feet. There are notations on the south face of the minar's plinth which Cunningham believes refer to an adjustment of about an inch in the plumb-line of the building. In this respect, the Hindu master-masons would have left nothing to chance. The minar at Jar Qurgan has a fairly high plinth, the Minar-i-Kalan of Bukhara, a very low one, and there would not have been much discussion if the Hindu master-masons insisted that there should be no visible plinth. They were not used to the idea of the plinth as a distinct feature of a building. The rounded flutes and wedge-shaped flanges as we see them give the Minar an exquisite sculptural character, and it is my conjecture that this, too, is either entirely a contribution of the Hindu master-masons or their interpretation of the treatment of the facing shown in the plans or explained to them by word of mouth. The massing of inscriptional and ornamental bands and decorative mouldings below the balconies reminds us of the decorative treatment of temple walls, but the restraint shown in the spacing out of the other bands on the shafts of the three storeys of the minar is something on which the Muslim architect would have insisted. The balconies, which form one of the most attractive features of the Minar are an essentially Muslim idea, and so are the clusters of miniature alcoves, or vaulted arches, which support them. But, in a network that looks like honeycombing and in the cusped

tracery reminiscent of temple ceilings, there is evident an attempt to disguise architectural forms with sculptural effects. The result of the technical and aesthetic cooperation of the Muslim architects and Hindu master-masons is one of the most striking monuments of the world. But in form as well as meaning it is not what it was probably meant to be. The Turks wanted to create a symbol of power and stability; with its upward surge, expressed in the taper and in the almost organic emergence of one storey from another, the Qutub Minar is such a symbol. But the Hindu sculptor has also put his stamp on it. You can have power, he seems to have said, but I shall so suffuse it with beauty that those who see it will know that beauty is the only power that endures.

Political conditions following upon the death of Iltutmish and up to the time Alauddin had ensured security from foreign invasion and established law and order in his dominions were not such as to stimulate architectural ambitions. At least, there is nothing in the Qutub Complex that can be traced to this period. Stone-masons would have been employed in miscellaneous minor projects and by degrees lost touch with their sculptural traditions. Perhaps the need for employment forced them to accept the new styles, to learn the technique of building the true arch and to put trust in its strength. Some of them may have experimented, in buildings that no longer exist, in various methods of assimilating sculpture and architecture. For the next monument that we see, the Alai Darwaza, is the work of practised hands and of minds thoroughly versed in the art of creating pleasing compositions of architecture and sculpture.

As originally planned, the Alai Darwaza consisted of a domed chamber with three entrances and a fourth archway leading into a portico, which was projected into the enclosure of the mosque. There were extensions also sideways, east

and west, to combine the Darwaza with the enclosure wall in a harmonious fashion. The portico, which must have been built on the trabeate system, with a low roof, to be in keeping with the colonnade around the courtyard of the mosque, is no longer there, but the extensions still form visible parts of the existing structure. The architect of the Alai Darwaza was beyond doubt a Turk steeped in the Seljuq and earlier traditions of monumental architecture. He must have had the good sense to seek out the best stone-masons and sculptors and to consider how their skill could best be utilised before he gave a final shape to his plans. In this process he must have had consultations and discussions, and his plans must have been endorsed by his master-masons before they were submitted for final approval. The idea of three entrances into a chamber and an entrance into the mosque across a portico would have been his, and it would have appealed to his master-masons because of its resemblance to the structure of a temple. People would enter the mosque through what they thought was a gateway, but when leaving they would pass, like Hindu worshippers, from the *mandapa*, or the vestibule, into the *viman*, or shrine.

Structurally, the Alai Darwaza is a marvel of inspired simplicity. The arches of the three entrances are so exquisitely proportioned that they are equally beautiful whether seen from the outside or the inside, although the floor of the chamber is several feet above the ground level. The square of the chamber is converted almost imperceptibly into the circle of the dome, which rests on elegant squinches of a simple, sculptural pattern. From the outside, the dome is rather low. In fact, it is not a separate unit of the structure but the roofing of the vault, the height of which, when seen from the inside, is very impressive.

The plinth of the Alai Darwaza is indicated by means of a projection round the base, which could be used for sitting

on, and of a cornice, but in a way, it has also been concealed in sculptural patterns, most of them of the traditional Indian style. This may be taken as an instance of the architect adapting a feature of temple architecture to suit his own purpose or as a contribution of the Hindu master-masons, who would have had considerably less opportunity to display their skill if the plinth had a straightforward architectural character. The superstructure of the Darwaza appears from the outside divided into two storeys, the distinctive features of the lower storey being ornate arches, small replicas of the main arch, two on each side of it, and of the upper storey rectangular panels formed by a judicious and pleasing juxtaposition of inscriptional bands of marble and red sandstone. The impression of height conveyed by the lofty entrance arch is toned down by the panels into a quiet dignity, and the eye could wander long and admiringly over the whole facade without any feeling of satiety or weariness. The three main entrance arches, with their white and red nookshafts, their intrados or inside surfaces alive with patterns of foliage in deep relief, their spearhead fringes and their marble frames have a beauty and a meaning all their own. If the central arch of the Quwwat-al-Islam mosque leads outwards into an uncharted world, the entrance arches of the Alai Darwaza leads inwards to a beauty distilled in lucid and harmonious detail, which holds the eye and mind in thrall.

And what of the two exactly similar arches, one of red sandstone and one of marble, on the fourth side, where one now enters the mosque enclosure, but which formerly led into the portico? These arches, with their delicately suggested trefoil, are something unique; they have no ancestry and no offspring, Indian or foreign. They obviously bear the impress of the ivory-worker who has undertaken an adventure into the dimensions of architecture, or let himself be lured by a dream. But the social and religious

aspect of these arches is even more significant. For, quietly and unobtrusively, they tell the Muslim worshipper that as he enters his mosque he is also passing beneath the shadow of a temple, under an archway that was created for him by devotees of beauty who could see all facets and all forms of truth.

The Alai Darwaza is the parting kiss of architecture and sculpture. They meet in fruitful union in Gujarat, but the next monument of significance in Delhi, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq's tomb, is pure architecture disdainful of any sculptural devices and interpretations. Even in Gujarat, though the ascendancy of architecture does not appear in any chronological sequence, architecture has the last word in the Jame' Masjid of Champaner. And so it is evident that, while in political and social life, in literature, music and dance the movement is towards unity, in architecture the tendency is in the opposite direction, the drapery and the aesthetics of sculpture being gradually discarded so as to achieve purely architectural expression. Akbar brought artisans together from all parts of India to build Fatehpur Sikri, but all that he could achieve was a harmonious assemblage of different styles. The sculptural beginnings of Indian Muslim architecture are an indication that we must revise our perspective. For while the written record of history shows the establishment of authority by force and bloodshed, we have in the architectural record unimpeachable evidence of understanding and cooperation, of joyful participation in creative work of the very highest quality. Should not this incline us to reconsider any views we may have formed of blind hostility between Muslims and Hindus in the first stages of the Turkish occupation of north India? War and destruction would have been inevitable in any case if ambitious men came from outside to displace the rulers of the country, but need we also assume that the people as a whole, Hindus as well as Muslims, were committed to

this conflict, that there was no mutual appreciation and cooperation between the urban populations of north India, the Ghaznavi kingdom of the Punjab and lands beyond the Khyber Pass? Surely the actual builders of the Qutub complex must have known, if not admired, each other, for how else could they have achieved such perfect understanding? And if we assume that they knew and admired each other, we must exercise our imagination to correct impressions created by the rhetoric of the medieval historians and the political slogans of our own times.

SUFISM IN INDIA

WHEN one is dealing with people whose survival and influence depended on making the search for truth a solemn and exciting adventure of the spirit, one must begin by talking in their style, the style which offends commonsense and provokes the mind, so that one must sit up and listen. So I begin with the first paradox that occurs to me : If laws could not be broken, they would not have been made.

If human beings could live together in peace and happiness, respecting or at least making full allowances for each other's needs and desires, laws would not only be irrelevant ; it would be an offence to think of making them. But human history begins with Cain murdering his brother Abel, and almost succeeding in concealing his crime. That may be only the Jewish version of the beginning of history, and of why God made it a habit to meddle with human affairs, but it is symbolic of what must have happened, wherever and whenever human history had its beginning. And again, according to the Jewish version, which is most intimate and revealing, when God found His motives being persistently misunderstood and even His presence being ignored, He gave increasingly precise and emphatic expression to what He had in mind. Ultimately, He had to inscribe His laws on the hearts of the pious and on the tongues of the preachers. This is all symbolic, of course, but the fact is that when the first Muslim mystics, or sufis, as they are called, looked around at life and began their search for truth, they were appalled by the amount of law-making that had been, and was still being, perpetrated. People said,

there must be, there is, a law to cover every aspect, every minute detail of human affairs; man must be yoked heart and soul to the law, for it is the law which represents truth, which ensures salvation. Knowing that man, wittingly or unwittingly, is constantly guilty of transgression, God had, in His Mercy, enabled him to construct a system of law that was complete in all respects and would endure for all time.

But, the sufi asked, can this be absolutely true? Is it God's will that man should never rise above the level of thought and action fixed in the law-books? Was man to be guided in his relations with God by legal precedents and technicalities? Surely, God is not an angry and jealous autocrat, sitting eternally in judgement upon his own creatures. He is the God of Mercy and Solicitude, the Father Who expects and exhorts His children to live up to the ideal He has set before them. His will cannot be confined within ass-loads of books. If He made laws, it must be His will that they should be broken, so that higher laws, which are closer to His will, might come into operation.

So we arrive at an entirely different interpretation of the paradox that laws would not have been made if they could not be broken. The paradox becomes a challenge. One must abhor the evil intentions that make laws and their enforcement necessary, one must despise the attitude which reduces man, in the words of a French writer, to a 'bourgeois compromise'. One must break laws so as to rise above them, to become one's own lawgiver, and look to God not for punishment and reward but for exalted guidance. This point of view loses its stimulating character unless it is expressed with a measure of extravagance. It was better to follow the example of Mansur Hallaj, to declare, 'I am the Truth', and suffer the consequences, than to preach and practise tranquillity. But, of course, each sufi had his own disposition, his own way of breaking the law to demonstrate that the letter must be sacrificed to

the spirit. Some broke the law in regard to the five daily prayers and thirty days of fast by praying and fasting most of their time, some by not praying and fasting at all. Aīn al-Qūzat of Hamadan declared that all worship performed as a matter of habit is idolatry; only that worship is real which releases the mind from the thralldom of habit. The sufis did not criticise and reject each other's views. They created instead the fiction that sufis were of two types, the sober and the intoxicated, that is, those who were careful because of the effect their words and actions might have on the generality of the Muslims and those who threw caution to the winds in a drunken ecstasy, and could not be called to account for anything they did or said. This makes it difficult to define sufism; it also makes the sufi infinitely more attractive.

Till about the middle of the eleventh century, there was no system of *shaiikh* and *murid*, teacher and disciple. Those who believed in a higher life decided for themselves what they would do about it, and they sought each other out, travelling sometimes hundreds of miles, for comparing methods and experiences. Then many of them became sedentary, living in a *khanqah* or *tekieh* with their disciples and practising their particular form of spiritual discipline. But the number of those who did not accept the obligations of community life and a fixed routine was always large and influential in many inconsistent ways. And even when sufism came to be widely recognised as a system of life and thought, and books began to be written for study, the daring aphorism, the challenging paradox, remained the symbol of self-expression.

From about the eleventh century, poetry also became a medium for the sufi. Orthodox Muslims should, if they are strict enough, hold the same views about poets and poetry as Plato. But Jalaluddin Rumi went to the other extreme. The poet is in part a prophet; only an ass

would say that poetry is forbidden. Muslim culture has reconciled the two attitudes by regarding love, beloved, union, wine and song, Islam and *kufi*, Kaaba and temple, as symbols, and the poet who used these symbols strikingly enough was recognised as a mystic who desired to show the way to exaltation and ecstasy, to annihilation in God. So not only have collections of verses been attributed to almost every great sufi, but all the great poets have been given the status of sufis. Poetry can never be profane, if it is good poetry. In other words, aesthetics, if genuinely and successfully cultivated, becomes ethics and religion and spirituality.

Whatever other cultural offspring the marriage of sufism and poetry may have had, it generated in man a boldness which brought him into intimate converse with God. God was the judge who was sure to embrace the sinner brought before Him with a forgiving smile, the Friend and Beloved who placed a halter round the neck of His lover, and dragged him where He listed, the embodiment of all Beauty and Charm who nevertheless flashed angry looks around to wound most grievously those who adored Him most, the Omniscient and Omnipotent Being wearied by His labour, whom man could invite to come and rest in his bosom. One begins to wonder whether God made the poet or the poet created God. Either interpretation seems to be correct and neither seems to matter. What does seem to matter is the intensity of spiritual experience, the occurrence of the moment when man realises that he is the whole of existence.

AMIR KHUSRAU

ALL that historians want to tell us about Amir Khusrau seems to me irrelevant. He was born in 1253. He called himself an Indian and was proud of it. Historians insist that he came of a Turkish family that had been driven from its home by the Mongols. His father had a fairly successful career as an officer, but he died when Khusrau was still a boy. Another relative became Khusrau's guardian. As soon as he was old enough, Khusrau, according to the common practice of the day, looked for patrons among the noblemen. He had not wanted to be educated. His teachers first tried to fit him into the usual pattern, then helped him to cultivate his extraordinary natural aptitude for versification. It was as a poet that he found welcome in the courts of the noblemen, and ultimately of kings. And for the historian it is of great interest that Khusrau composed in verse chronicles celebrating the achievements of his patrons. They are contemporary sources, and therefore of great value.

As poetic compositions, however, they are pedantic, ornate, heavy. I would say they are unreadable. But in between accounts of insignificant events which Khusrau has forced his skill to exalt, there are scattered lyrics of great beauty. To Khusrau they must have provided relief from tiresome artificiality. They must also have lightened the load on his conscience, because the chronicles were written solely for the purpose of earning rich rewards. And in a way they misrepresent him and his times. He had, against his nature, to assume the coarse political attitude of con-

querors, to give to wars and warriors a religious and cultural character which they did not possess, to magnify little men and little things beyond all reasonable measure, to indulge in partiality without regard for truth and justice. It is undeniable that the kings, the nobles and the armies Khusrau glorified in his chronicles could destroy life, happiness, property ; they could inflict great suffering. This was not something that impressed Khusrau or appealed to his imagination. It was necessity, the moralist would say, necessity created by not a little greed, that made Khusrau the eulogist of noblemen and kings. Really he belonged somewhere else ; to another court, to another people.

What history tells us about is the political and military activity of the Turks who established their rule in India. I would distrust any computation that would place their number above 20,000 families. Not all of these Turks were professional soldiers, and those who were would have realised, far more clearly than historians would have us believe, that they were a small minority in a vast country. I do not wish to belittle their ideas and their achievements. I only wish to emphasise that these ideas and achievements had a social background, and with this our historians have not yet learnt to concern themselves. They forget that the whole country was not involved in political rivalries, that it did not participate in campaigns. There was peace, goodwill, understanding, reinforced by powerful spiritual tendencies.

Perhaps the most important single factor in the social background of India of those days was the influence of the sufis, the mystics, particularly of the Chishti order. We are now inclined to question their social value, because they had no plan, no programme of any kind of philanthropic activity. They had no concrete aims. They just sat somewhere, prayed, talked to people ; they gave spiritual advice, and sometimes indirect practical guidance to those who

asked for it ; they had no political ideas or interests ; and if wrongs were openly committed, they prayed for a change of heart. We cannot now realise the effectiveness of this apparent inactivity. The sufi began to be called *Shah* or king. His seat became a throne, and at the times when people came to visit him, the etiquette of the court was observed. A king could kill a thousand innocent persons ; that would be an evil fate. But he risked his throne if he took action of any kind against a sufi.

Amir Khusrau belonged to the intimate circle of the great sufi, Shaikh Nizamuddin of Delhi, whose influence, once established, was far greater than that of the most powerful kings. And this remarkable and enduring influence was always exerted to promote fellow-feeling, tolerance, reverence for all beliefs sincerely and steadfastly held. The example of the saint opened out to Amir Khusrau a vast field for the exercise of his intellectual and artistic powers. Nothing was alien to him, nothing without meaning and interest. He seems to have been completely at home in the village, to have seen how men and women lived and felt and behaved. He seems to have studied several languages, and there are still extant scores of couplets where he plays charmingly with words. His teacher had forgiven him his worldliness. He smiled at the liberties Khusrau took with ideas and beliefs, at all his poetic images, even when they inclined to be erotic. In Khusrau's lyrics, the saint figures everywhere and in all aspects, as the proud hero, as a woman of loveliness beyond description ; as the master of the wine-house, dispensing spiritual intoxication in the form of the supremely handsome, and cruelly indifferent Turk. The saint did not mind. He must have been really pleased when Khusrau abandoned the current literary language and its style, and explored the possibilities of a new medium, which he calls Hindi. The mystics believed in cultivating the spoken language, and were the

first to make the people's speech the means of expressing lofty spiritual ideas. Khusrau took over from folk poetry the form of depicting the woman as the lover, and nothing that has come down to us from that period is more delightful than the mixed Persian and Hindi lyrics of Amir Khusrau. But, judging from quantity alone, these expressions of love in Indian style would seem to be literary excursions. The achievements of Amir Khusrau which have made his name endure are lyrics that he wrote for singing at gatherings where music and poetry were used as stimulants to religious fervour, to spiritual ecstasy. Many of these lyrics express beliefs that are, from the orthodox Muslim point of view, heretical. But this heresy had the full support of a sufistic tradition of humanism, of an interpretation of religion which, while it intensified religiousness, also released the believer from the bonds of orthodoxy. It gave to the Muslim poet complete freedom as well as a peculiar spiritual status. It made the blending of intimacy and reverence, of beauty and sorrow, of poetic adventure and deep spirituality an outstanding feature of Muslim culture. The genius of Khusrau represents this quality of Muslim culture almost at its best. Khusrau has become a legend. He was called the Indian songster by his contemporaries, who thought his Persian compositions rivalled the best poetry of Persia. He was master of Indian music, the originator of particular styles of singing. He was supposed to have frolicked with village women, to have amused and confounded them with his riddles and his wit, to have so mixed up Persian and Hindi in his speech as to make people laugh and feel at one with each other. A song that is sung when the bride is leaving her home, something entirely and utterly Indian, is said to have been composed by him. A glossary of Hindi and Persian words and phrases, a masterpiece of scholarly frivolity, is believed to be a literary exercise of his. Whether one wishes to laugh or to make love,

to study philology or folklore, to sing or to induce spiritual exaltation, Khusrau is there as the archetype. With him tradition becomes suddenly rich, versatile, exquisite. For centuries he was looked upon as the creator of Indo-Muslim culture. And even now we have to recognise him as the source of much that we cherish.

PROFILES OF SOME GREAT CULTURES

THE cultural map of the world has been constantly changing, and we cannot fully understand any one part of it unless we see it in the context of the whole. If we look at the map of Europe in 800 A.D., we find that Charlemagne (Charles the Great) had just founded a state known as the Holy Roman Empire. He was crowned at Rome by the Pope, who was the head of the Western Christian, later called Roman Catholic, Church. There was another Empire, with its capital at Byzantium (later called Constantinople and Stamboul), and its own Church, which came to be known as the Eastern or Greek Orthodox Church. The Scandinavian countries—Denmark, Norway, Sweden—and Europe east of the Elbe and north of the Danube had not yet been converted to Christianity, and the converted peoples were constantly in danger of attack. To the south of Christian Europe and dominating the Mediterranean Sea, lay the strong and expanding Muslim states. Most of Spain was also under Muslim rule. There were constant conflicts in all parts of this world, but it was also held together by commercial and cultural bonds.

The chief centres of production and, therefore, of civilisation were Byzantium, and the cities of Syria, Egypt and Spain. Syria and Egypt were also of great importance because goods that came from India and Southeast Asia passed through them. The Abbasid Empire, founded in 750 A.D., controlled these routes and was for about two hundred years the richest state of the world. The decline of this Empire and of other Muslim states bordering the Mediter-

ranean was followed by the attempts of Italian cities like Venice and Genoa to capture the Mediterranean trade and also to imitate and surpass the manufactures of Byzantium and the East. The Italian cities were not strong enough by themselves to seize the production centres of the eastern Mediterranean, and it was largely due to their intrigues that the Popes and Christian kings of Europe fought the long and devastating series of wars known as the Crusades. These wars had the effect of acquainting European kings and noblemen with the standard of living in the Muslim states, which was at the time much higher than the European. It would be most interesting to trace the influence of Arab dress and manners on the medieval European way of life.

The cultural map of the world at any time repeats to a considerable extent the map of the immediately preceding ages. The Roman Empire, which began as the city-state of Rome around 600 B.C. and included ultimately all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, left two ideas firmly implanted in men's minds, the idea of a 'universal', efficiently administered state, and the idea of a law which meted out equal justice to all. The western half of the Roman Empire was constantly overrun by barbarians in the fourth and fifth centuries, and finally succumbed in 476 A.D. The foundation of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 A.D. marked the revival of the idea of a Christian world-state, which was to be as well-administered as the Roman Empire. A world-state of the same kind, but based on Islam, was the Abbasid Empire established in 750 A.D. Muslim rulers did not have the right to legislate on any matters comprehended in Muslim religious law, called the *shariah*, and it is interesting to note that Muslim religious law was based on the interpretations of the Quran and the Hadis (record of acts and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) by learned men, just as a large part of Roman law was based on the opinions of eminent lawyers. Roman law

was codified by the Emperor Justinian (527-565). Muslim religious law was codified along the same lines between 750 and 850 A.D. The Muslim idea of a world-state was based on the concept of a universal religion and a ruler who would be the successor to the Prophet (*Khalifah*), the religious head of the community (*Imam*) and the chief administrator (*Amir al-Mo'minin*). Since there was no church and no separate organisation of the religious, the political ruler became all-powerful and matters of religious law continued to depend very largely on the opinion of the learned, as collected by four schools, known as the orthodox, the Maliki, the Shafi, the Hanafi and the Hambali. The Christian idea of the world-state was also based on the concept of a universal religion, with Christ as the head and with authority divided between the Pope as the spiritual and the Emperor as the temporal (or worldly) ruler. It was assumed that Pope and Emperor would act in complete harmony, but this did not happen. There was, instead, conflict between Pope and Emperor over the question as to which of them possessed final and overriding authority. Lawyers of the Church took up the study of Roman law, and the principles laid down by it were first used as arguments by the scholars of the Church to prove that the highest authority vested in the Pope. Supporters of the Emperors also studied Roman law and used the same arguments to prove their case. It was because of this discussion that the theories of a law of nature, a law of nations, natural rights and sovereignty became important elements of European political thought and served as the foundation of the modern European state.

A more important formative influence on Western civilisation were the thinkers and writers of ancient Greece. But the European peoples came into contact with the culture of ancient Greece later and in an indirect way. The works of Plato and Aristotle were first studied in Muslim

centres of learning, particularly in Spain, and this led to the growth of a tendency to introduce philosophical ideas into religion and formulate beliefs in a manner consistent with logic and reason. This tendency spread from the Muslim to the Christian centres of learning. An outstanding example of this is the prevalence of Averroism in the University of Paris and among Christian-thinkers. Averroes is the Latinised form of the name of the Spanish Muslim philosopher, Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), who taught among other things that the universe was eternal and human beings mortal. His teaching took such root that they had to be combated by several Christian writers, among them St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who effected a reconciliation between Christian beliefs and Greek thought as apprehended by the Muslim—and through them the Christian-thinkers. By the end of the fourteenth century, the number of people in the prosperous cities of Italy who got educated outside the institutions of the Church had grown, Latin began to be studied and then Greek. After 1453, when Sultan Muhammad II took possession of Constantinople, a large number of people who could teach Greek fled to the Italian cities, and the study of Greek became an intellectual fashion. About the same time, books began to be printed, and side by side with religious knowledge there developed a learning which was secular in character and spirit, and which could be subjected to criticism. This was the beginning of humanism, of knowledge which was human and not divine in origin, which centred around man and depended entirely on human effort for its advancement. The content of this knowledge was all that could be learnt from the writings of the ancient Greek and Roman poets, historians, philosophers and scientists, and the first means of increasing it was to recover as much as possible of the old literature in whatever form it could be found and print and publish it. The art and architecture of the ancient Greeks and

Romans also began to be studied, imitated and adapted. The result of all this study and diffusion of knowledge has been called the Renaissance, or the intellectual and artistic rebirth of the European peoples. The Renaissance began in Italy and spread to France, central Europe and England.

A very important aspect of the Renaissance was interest in the methods of production and a search for better techniques. Books on technical subjects began to be written and printed from the fifteenth century, and a scientific basis was given to processes knowledge of which had hitherto been handed down from father to son or master to pupil as a 'mystery' or trade secret. In the fifteenth century the manufacture of fire-arms was begun, and because success in war depended on superiority in arms, the iron industry made rapid progress. Trade with Byzantium and the Muslim countries promoted accumulation of capital, and Italian merchants got around the religious prohibition of usury by forming companies or houses and lending capital for industrial and sometimes military enterprises. We must always bear in mind that there was a close relationship in Europe between the advancement of knowledge, industrial development and increase in wealth.

There was no conflict at first between the Roman Catholic Church and the new learning. Popes and dignitaries of the Church patronised artists and raised no objections to the ideas expressed in the poetry and literature of writers influenced by humanism. But the new ideas were bound to influence the attitude towards religion. Erasmus (1467-1536) evolved what he called the 'philosophy of Christ', and his *Manual of a Christian Soldier* was translated into many languages and very widely read. But Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Calvin (1509-1564) were reformers rather than intellectuals, and their successful revolts against the Roman Catholic Church divided the Christians into three camps. Rulers, for political reasons, supported the

Roman Catholic Church or the Lutherans or Calvinists, and for about a hundred years (1555-1648) there were disastrous wars of religion. The Roman Catholic Church now became hostile not only to those who opposed its authority or rejected its beliefs and practices, but to all those who put forward new ideas. Galileo (1564-1643) was taken to task for declaring as a scientific proposition that the earth revolved round the sun, and would have been burnt as a heretic if he had not recanted. Gradually, the people were divided into two camps, those who adhered to the Church and the established authority in the state, and those who were opposed to established authority. In France, during the eighteenth century, an intellectually alert and vital people were oppressed by the combined power of the Church and the king. Writers like Voltaire (1694-1778) and scholars of the group known as Encyclopaedists tried to undermine blind belief by stimulating the exercise of reason and providing so much of what they regarded as real knowledge as to make men intellectually independent of the Church. Political opposition to absolutism culminated in the French Revolution, which began in 1789, and which provided opportunity for the assertion of the rights of man, as an individual human being and as a citizen. These had been proclaimed already in the constitution of the United States of America (1777), and the two together formed the basis of democratic ideology. The Revolution of 1688 had established parliamentary government in Great Britain, and government through elected representatives of the people became the basis of the democratic state.

In the meantime, scientific knowledge had grown. Galileo invented the simple telescope, Newton (1642-1727) the reflecting telescope, von Guericke (1602-1686) made the first pump and demonstrated the power of the vacuum. Newton, as is well-known, formulated the laws of motion and of gravity. Science was ably seconded by skill, and during the

second half of the seventeenth century, instrument-makers of fine and accurate craftsmanship could be found in every big European town. Indispensable measuring instruments had already been invented, the Vernier scale in 1631 and the micrometer in 1638.

Economic and political rivalry were the most potent means of stimulating industry and the application of scientific knowledge to the techniques of production. The scientific attitude and the spirit of competition became the distinctive features of western civilisation. The scientific attitude consists in the acceptance only of what can be proved by adequate evidence and is capable of practical and useful application. The competitive spirit is seen in the ungovernable impulse to acquire more and more of wealth and power, and in the tendency to judge men by the success they achieve in the race against all rivals to amass money and goods. A great change in the methods of production, known as the Industrial Revolution, began in England about the middle of the eighteenth century and spread rapidly to the European continent. It led to the growth of large manufacturing cities and enormous business concerns; to the development of means of transport and communication; to living conditions in which the old ideas of family life and morality had no place, and also to comforts and amenities which no one had even dreamed of before.

The history of Eastern Europe followed somewhat different lines. The organisation of the Eastern or Greek Orthodox Church was such that, while it was subject in matters of doctrine to a general council of representatives, the Emperor had executive power and could control the Church. The Church, therefore, was a means of support for the state. This characteristic was a determining influence in the history of peoples who were converted to Christianity by missionaries of the Greek Orthodox Church and helped to create the absolute authority of the Tsars of Russia.

The first centre of culture and political authority was Kiev. After the Tatar invasions of the thirteenth century, the Romanoffs, whose seat was Moscow, gradually expanded their territory and power. Tsar Peter the Great (1689–1725) made St. Petersburg (now called Leningrad) his capital, and introduced European industries and ways of life. The Empress Catherine II (1762–1796) extended her dominion to the Black Sea and the lower Danube, and raised Russia to the position of a European power, with a dominating influence. European statesmen realised the enormous war potential of Russia. Napoleon's attack on the country in 1812 was the climax of his attempt to get Europe completely under his power, and the Crimean War (1853–1856) was intended to stop Russia's advance southwards. The political ambitions of the rulers of Russia far exceeded the industrial development of the country, there was cruel suppression of ideas and movements of reform, and when Russia collapsed during the war of 1914–1918, there was a revolution which led to the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, of a state administered and controlled by the Communist Party. Stalin, the General Secretary of the Party and absolute ruler of Russia—called, after the revolution, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, planned the industrial development of the country from 1927 to 1953. Whether this planned development is superior or not to what the Western nations have achieved through free competition is a matter on which no judgement can yet be passed.

We have seen that the Muslims studied Greek thought and were instrumental in transmitting it to the Western peoples. They also acquired knowledge of Indian mathematics and astronomy, and they cultivated and developed these sciences also on their own. Translations were made of Greek, Persian and Sanskrit works. Al-Kindi wrote on meteorology and optics, al-Razi (known as Rhazes in

Europe, 864-925) was esteemed as a mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and physician; his works were translated into Latin and his authority in medicine was undisputed in Europe down to the seventeenth century. Al-Khwarizmi was the author of an epoch-making work on mathematics in which the zero, decimals and the nine numerals were used. He was also the author of a basic text-book on algebra.

But science failed to become associated with the enduring features of Islam. In the conflict between orthodoxy and the rationalism represented by Greek thought, orthodoxy was victorious, and independent enquiry came to be regarded as essentially irreligious. The autocratic, monarchical state, which had no basis in religion, was accepted and supported by orthodoxy, with the result that no experiments could be made in political organisation. Administrative reforms were carried out, as by Sulaiman the Magnificent (called the Lawgiver by the Turks, 1520-1566) and Akbar the Great (1556-1605), but the principles according to which authority could be possessed and should be exercised never became subjects of speculation and discussion. States could be large, well-governed and prosperous, but everything depended on the personality of the ruler. Arts and crafts were patronised and industry was encouraged, though no significant improvement was made in the methods of production; social grace and personal refinement were cultivated to a high degree. From the thirteenth century onwards, the distinctive feature of Muslim life was mysticism or sufism, which exercised a profound influence on literature and the general outlook and attitude of the people. The rapid industrial advance of the West undermined the economy of the whole Muslim world, causing political disintegration and social backwardness everywhere. But the two world wars have considerably altered the situation, and advantage is being taken by

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the different Muslim states of the new opportunities to rebuild their economy and adapt their cultural ideals to modern conditions.

THE PERSO-ARABIC SCRIPT

'My pen works miracles' wrote Mir Ali, a calligraphist of Jahangir's court, 'and rightly enough is the *form* of my words proud of its superiority over *meaning*. To each of the curves of my letters the vault of heaven acknowledges its bondage, and the value of each of my strokes is eternity itself.' On the face of it, this is fantastic self-praise. But the calligraphist was admired as much the poet, the painter, the architect, and ranked high among the creators of the most cherished forms of beauty. He was definitely superior to others because his profession was recognised by law and religion as one of the most worthy. Copying out the Quran was almost as meritorious as teaching and reciting it, and anyone who wrote out the Holy Book in a beautiful hand was deemed to have performed a most acceptable act of worship. Calligraphy was also an art which had absorbed in itself the aesthetics of composition, line and movement, and cultured persons were expected to derive from it the exquisite pleasure of poetry. There was little reason, therefore, for the master of calligraphy to be modest.

Writing was not raised to the level of an art for the first time by the Muslims. The Iranians and particularly the Manichaeans had cultivated it, and they acquired a taste for it from the peoples of Central Asia, who were most probably influenced by the artists and calligraphists of the Han and T'ang dynasties. From the purely materialistic point of view, the cultivation of calligraphy can be traced to the manufacture of paper and the use of pen and ink. This again takes us to China, where paper was first made,

and where the first book was printed around 600 A.D. Calligraphy became significant and widely practised as a profession among Muslims because books were much in demand. Copies of the Quran were needed by the hundred thousand. It was obligatory for every Muslim to read the Holy Book, which meant at least that there would be a copy of the Quran in every house. The calligraphist had to know his art well because it would have been irreverent to write the Holy Book without an honest effort to make the script look attractive. The evolution of a concept of beauty in script is in itself an interesting aspect of history.

Pre-Islamic Arabia had a language of which the Arabs were proud, but writing was not common. The earliest extant document we have of Islamic days is almost a scrawl compared with the later refined script. Contacts with Syrians and Iranians created the idea of a standardised script with an aesthetic appeal, and thus appeared the different styles of what is known as the Kufi script. There are copies of the Quran in this script, but the Quran has to be read correctly, and the Kufi script, though capable of being given highly artistic ornamental forms, could not ensure correct reading. So the script known as the Naskh was evolved. In this the letters were clearly distinguished, diacritical marks could be used, and it could be written with much greater ease and speed. Both the Kufi and the Naskh scripts were adapted by Muslims of different countries to suit their own tastes. But when painting began to be practised as an art from the 13th century onwards, the calligraphists felt that the Naskh script did not offer opportunities for realising the full value of the line and the curve, and so a third style of writing was developed, known as the Nasta'liq. This brought calligraphy much closer to line drawing, and the illuminated manuscript became a synthesis of literature, painting and ornamentation.

We have in India specimens of all styles of writing. In

the tomb of Iltutmish in Delhi we find inscriptions in the Kufi style as fine as anywhere else in the world and here and there are copies of the Quran in imposing but almost illegible Kufic. The Naskh has been widely used, both in its decorative and utilitarian forms. But the style for which Persian and Urdu knowing Indians have opted most wholeheartedly is the Nasta'liq, and its shorthand form, known as the Shikast. Apart from books in Arabic, all the others have been written and are now being printed in Nasta'liq. It was the style used in official correspondence, in *farmans* and legal documents; it is now the style used for Urdu. Its shorthand form, the Shikast, was used for taking notes in the royal courts and later in the courts of law, for correspondence and private records. For the Urdu speaking Indian, basic literacy has consisted in the ability to read and write Nasta'liq and Shikast.

One of the things for which I personally feel grateful is the punishment I got for bad writing when I was being taught the Urdu alphabet. I feel now that I was punished not for carelessness or ineptitude only but for lack of respect for culture. A person's handwriting is also a form of self-expression, and till early in this century it was assumed, I think quite reasonably, by those using the Perso-Arabic script that indifference to handwriting indicated indifference to culture as a synthesis of the various types of excellence. Everyone who could write had to be something of a calligraphist, to know to give a proper point to a reed pen, to mix his own ink, and to make his writing conform to the standards of elegance that had been achieved in the forms of address and methods of expression. The Perso-Arabic script is not only a way of writing with a long history behind it, not only a heritage of great aesthetic value but a symbol of the essential unity of culture and art and an urge to the achievement of excellence in everything that is done.

We are living, however, in a scientific, technological and necessarily utilitarian age. Many questions have to be answered before the full contemporary value of Perso-Arabic as well as of other Indian scripts can be assessed. How long does it take to learn reading and writing the script? Can it be used without unnecessary cost and inconvenience in all the processes of correct and good printing? Can it meet all the demands of education in science and technology? How does it compare in legibility with the Roman script? The answers to these questions that are habitually given in India by the advocates of different scripts are based more on sentiment and political policy than objective reason. Following the general practice, I could say that the Nasta'liq form of the Perso-Arabic script is as good as any other. On the basis of experiments made it has been found that adults of less than average intelligence can learn to write it in 35 half-hour or 17 full-hour lessons, and those who speak Urdu or some form of Hindustani but cannot write it could learn to do so in ten days. The number of spelling mistakes made by those learning Urdu is certainly not more than students make in English. If the lithographic process is adopted, printing of the Perso-Arabic script can be cheaper and almost as quick as in type. Correct printing, as we all know, is a matter of luck. But the most ardent lover of the Perso-Arabic script will hesitate to maintain that the ordinary lithographic process could be used for printing scientific or technological works. As regards legibility, it could be said in defence of the Perso-Arabic script, that judgements on this point are liable to be subjective. I for one would not, however, let it go at that. The Perso-Arabic script cannot be reduced below a certain point without becoming illegible. It may not be inferior to Hindi in this respect, but it cannot, by any means, compare with the Roman.

Would it be advisable, in the interest of the survival of

Urdu, which means of the adaptability of Urdu as a language to all the modern requirements of scientific education and the preparation of scientific and technological literature, to discard the Perso-Arabic script? The answer to this is that if by the Perso-Arabic script we mean the Naskh script, which is used in all the Arabic speaking countries and Iran, the question of a change in script does not arise. But in India a very large minority, if not the majority of those who speak Urdu and are keenly interested in its survival are non-Muslim. They regard the Nasta'liq script, which is now being used, as Indian, and the Naskh as Islamic. Urdu being an Indian language, its script should also be Indian. They are not interested in the historical origins of Urdu or of the scripts in which it could be written, and if they had to choose between Urdu in the Naskh or the Roman script, they might choose the Roman. Muslims who desire the survival of Urdu should consider this matter with all seriousness. They are themselves not used to the Naskh script, and apart from some rare examples, books and journals printed in Naskh type have not been popular. Nasta'liq type cannot be made without destroying all the beauty of the script, and even if its beauty is sacrificed, the technical difficulties in using this type are formidable. The Perso-Arabic scripts are creations of great beauty, but the Urdu language is more precious than the script in which it is written. Its survival is not threatened by other languages, nor is the Perso-Arabic script endangered by other Indian scripts. The real risk lies in the possibility of the script isolating the Urdu language from the modern world of science and technology, and delaying the attainment through Urdu of the knowledge which moves the wheels of life.

INDO-IRANIAN SYNTHESIS IN LITERATURE

I DO not know when the first Iranian nightingale poured forth its passion for the rose in full-throated song. But this is an instance where time and circumstance do not matter ; the nightingale and the rose have become poetic images which are an eternal symbol of the heart inspired to lyrical eloquence by the vision of beauty. All over the world there has been the ardour of love, and at all times beauty has had its moment of glory. Everywhere imagination has brought the two together, to make them timeless and to give life perhaps its only meaning. But I do not think there is, in any literature except the Persian, an image that is, to the same degree, daily bread and heavenly sustenance for the poet, and commonplace fact and exquisite novelty for the lover of literature. Persian poetry has other images also, as typical as the nightingale's adoration of the rose: cup, cup-bearer, wine, intoxication and, the source and origin of them all, the beloved. They can be ways of saying things; they can be the things themselves. But there is always an intensity about them that carries conviction and makes all questioning irrelevant.

Iran is not a land of birds and flowers. Except in some parts, the barren waste is a striking, sometimes an overpowering contrast, to the green of the pasture, the orchard and the field. The number of men who cherish the cup is not larger than elsewhere, and perhaps the number of those who can fill it full and drink it empty is smaller. The slender, silver-footed cup-bearer of Omar Khayyam, whom

every poet has conceived in different forms and different moods, is perhaps entirely a poetic fiction. The place where lovers assemble to drink, where their thirst and longing evokes the fascinating illusion of the cup-bearer, warm-hearted and generous, or gay and mischievous, clad in the garment of dazzling mystery, or just too humanly attractive, this place, called the *maikhana*, would in reality have been as ungainly as the English translation of its name, the wine-house. Why, then, has there been such a concentration of the poetic fancy on these things, why has the custom of drinking, common to almost all the peoples of the world, become so rich and meaningful an allegory, the fountain-head of a vast world of thought and feeling, of aesthetic achievement and spiritual endeavour?

One reason, not particularly Muslim or Iranian or Indian, is the inevitable reaction of human nature, in its search for balance and harmony, against the tediousness and legalistic stiffness of orthodoxy. The human spirit, when a new message has brought it deliverance, seeks freedom, space, opportunity. The creative force of a new idea drives it to establish new empires, worldly and spiritual. But when this initial force is spent, the need for consolidation is felt, the virtues of intellectual and social discipline are cultivated, and the best laws are made with the best intentions. The spiritual and worldly home thus created is then lived in, wisdom becomes an inheritance and not a personal acquisition, peace and security are not only desired but imposed, and punishment for any form of deviation, for any disposition to intellectual adventure, is considered necessary. This is the age of orthodoxy. It is the age also of repression and revolt, in which the human spirit attempts in different ways to shake off the fetters which its own logic has forged. It does not succeed always or entirely, but the form which its development takes, if it is not affected too much by political or social accidents, is mysticism. In

Muslim history these four phases can be clearly distinguished. They can be distinguished in the history of other religions also. But, of course, we should not imagine that these developments in spiritual thought followed a precise pattern, or that the response to a new faith, the expansion and consolidation of its particular way of life, the establishment of its orthodoxy, the expression of its mysticism followed an evolutionary logic unaffected by the vagaries of human nature and earthly circumstances. The poetic religion of the *Rig Veda* leads to the expansion of the Aryans, the Aryan way of life is solidified in Brahmanic orthodoxy, which has to face the challenge of Upanishadic mysticism and a host of men adventuring into unknown lands of spiritual experience. From these Buddhism emerges as a creative force, with a momentum that takes its message far and wide across seas and mountains. Orthodoxy could not take a common Buddhist form in this vast expanse of territory. Buddhist orthodoxy was the orthodoxy of sects, but it was rigid enough to generate a reaction that took the form of a mystic adoration of the Buddha, of the sensuous images of Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati and Ajanta, and of the poetry of Ashvaghosha. Buddhism was brought dangerously close to Brahmanism by the development of its own religious thought, and by its mystic acceptance of all creations of the human spirit, which meant acceptance of all the people's religions. We see then a revival that takes many forms, one of which is mystic devotion to a particular deity. This was about the time Islam found its way into India as the religion of Arab traders, of Arab warriors and, after a time, of Turkish conquerors.

There can be no doubt that these Turkish conquerors were the representatives of Muslim orthodoxy. If they had not succeeded, the orthodox might have sat in judgement upon them. But their success was spectacular; what was more, it provided for the Muslims of Khorasan and Iran,

harassed by tribal migrations from Central Asia, both a spiritual consolation and a refuge. The orthodox did, indeed, occasionally admonish a king now and then. But the bread-winner had the last word. The Delhi Sultanate, the provincial dynasties, in spite of the irreligiousness of most of the rulers and their disregard of religious law for what appeared to them reasons of state, had the blessings of orthodoxy and the support of the vast majority of their Muslim subjects. But their orthodox state could not exist in a political and intellectual vacuum. It had to win the active support of its Hindu subjects. It must have succeeded in this, otherwise it would not have survived. But there have been, ever since Islam came to India, those for whom political success had no value, those who wished to erase, in as many forms as possible, the dividing line between communities and cultures. It was only in this way that they could establish an orthodoxy of spiritual values, a way of life that led people towards each other, in love and prayer and ecstasy. So they became the creators of a literary synthesis that was universal as an idea and is now an inspiring memory.

It was they who brought to India the story of the nightingale and the rose, the imagery of the cup, the cup bearer and the wine. They were not only subtle and elusive enemies of orthodoxy, professing an adherence to the law more sincere and deep-rooted than the thinly veiled hypocrisy of the doctor of theology. They did not only expose the worldliness, the hunger for the joys of life crudely concealed by the grim visage of those who sought to terrify men into righteous living. They asserted the right of each man to be himself, to know God in his own way. From the abject creature whose only function was to learn the law that he might obey it, to suppress not only his body but his soul that he might escape punishment on the Day of Judgment, they raised man to the dignity of a free agent by

divine grace, cooling his face in the breezes of eternity, looking beyond sin and sorrow, beyond innocence and guilt, a lover, a friend of God. In the language of European humanism, they made man the measure of all things. In the poetic images of their own language, they made intensity of feeling and beauty of expression the measure of man.

The synthesis that was the result of the fusion of Iranian and Indian cultures was not an imposed solution. Rose and nightingale, cup and cup-bearer, do not force themselves into Indian literature. They become a challenge, and the consequence of the challenge is the search for a new language, a new imagery and, what is most important, a new audience. Like the Muslim *sufi*, the Hindu reformer and saint addresses himself to the people; like the Muslim poet, the Hindu poet aspires to intensity of feeling, to imagery that will enchant the listener, to a vision of man conscious of himself and making his act of worship an event of eternal significance. Beginning with Amir Khusro, who was proud of his Persian and delighted himself and others with his command over Hindi, we have poets and writers of eminence who follow the Persian tradition, also poets belonging to this tradition who reject it and take up the spoken language as a medium having greater appeal. We have, on the other hand, those who meet effectively the challenge of Persian eloquence and imagery, poets like Sur Das, Kabir Saheb, Goswami Tulsi Das. A synthesis takes place by degrees, and is seen at its best in Urdu poetry. We cannot define Urdu philologically. Its range is from the popular song where Persian words occur but rarely to almost pure Persian. And it should have been so. A cultural synthesis is an invitation to live and feel in a larger world, to see in love and suffering, beauty and indifference, grace and elusiveness a universalism that resents and rejects the bondage of time and space.

UMRAO JAN ADA

OVER twenty-five years ago I read a review of Mirza Ruswa's novel, *Umrao Jan Ada*, in a literary magazine. I felt curious. The novel is the biography of a courtesan. But what really roused my curiosity was the praise lavished on it by the reviewer, a scholar of uncompromising orthodoxy and notorious puritanism. I made haste to buy the book and read it. And I understood why the scholar had lost his hold on orthodoxy and why puritanism had lost its grip on him. *Umrao Jan Ada* was the kind of person whose company and conversation would make things look entirely different.

Her life was not in any way remarkable. In the disorder and decadence characteristic of the middle nineteenth century Indian states, it was nothing uncommon for a girl to be kidnapped and sold for whatever her face and figure would fetch. Such girls were bought by people who wanted domestic servants or courtesans who kept brothels or trained singers and dancers. Umrao Jan was bought by a courtesan with a good head for business, taught to read and write, and trained as a singer. She made use of her opportunities better than other girls did. She learnt Urdu, Persian and Arabic. Composing verses was almost an essential accomplishment for anyone who claimed to be literate, and Umrao Jan cultivated her natural gifts with remarkable success. When she was forced by the influence of her environment to adopt her mistress's profession, she distinguished herself by her qualities as a singer and even more by her wit and conversation. Her life was perhaps less event-

ful than that of any other girl brought up with her. She met people whom she liked and suffered many whom she disliked. Some awakened in her the faculty of dreaming, but passed all too quickly out of her life. She eloped with a man who turned out to be a robber, she was betrayed by one who should have been loyal, and protected and helped by another who was himself a scoundrel. Sometimes it seems as if a pleasant accident has really been invented to give substance to the story, but Umrao Jan lived in a world that was socially and geographically very small indeed, the world of courtesans and their friends and admirers, of nawabs and their hangers-on, of adventurers, thieves and robbers, of lovers of music and poetry, all within the petty state of Oudh, deemed to have lost its right to independence in 1856. There is nothing far-fetched in the story, not even the prudence with which Umrao Jan saved as well as spent, and the shrewdness because of which she retired before the indifference of men told her it was time to do so.

We meet her in the novel when she has already retired. She gets herself invited to join a group of amateur poets who assemble occasionally in a house next to her own, and beginning with the recitation of her poems, we are led on to an account of her life, given by herself with a sweet but transparent diffidence. As she tells her story, Umrao Jan also gives her views on things and passes judgement on herself and others. Her judgements are always fair and balanced, but there is nothing original or profound in her reflections on life. Every system of living evolves a philosophy of its own, spontaneously and as a matter of course, and the first prize for wisdom goes to those who are able most convincingly to affirm the truth and illustrate the justice of the principles underlying this philosophy. Umrao Jan does not aspire to anything beyond this wisdom. She does not exaggerate her sorrows, or make any claim to the

possession of knowledge, conscience or virtue. All the time she is just herself, and we are so fascinated by her being herself that no doubts or conflicts are raised within us.

We begin to wonder only when the last incidents have been related and the last verses aptly quoted, when we are left with a woman past middle age who has told us all about herself and now looks at us with a challenging smile. Do we understand her? Has she asked for understanding? Does she need sympathy or forgiveness, or only an intense appreciation of her many gifts, of her ability to rise above all situations, to live without regret? She has been so frank and open, she has invited us so often to condemn her for being what she is, she has been anxious, so ingenuously, to prevent our lifting the veil which she has obviously thrown over all the ugliness in her life, that it would be rude, almost vulgar, to attempt any form of moral judgement. But then we have to explain to ourselves the deep impression she makes on us of dignity, of innate virtue, of a detachment that not only helped her through the vicissitudes of life but seems to possess a deep spiritual quality.

It is quite clear that Umrao Jan is not the Anglo-Saxon heroine waiting for the chivalrous knight, and longing for fulfilment through love and lover. She has grown far beyond this. No surrender is possible for her; she knows too well that two persons do not become one by any process of spiritual melting or smelting. And if they could, she would not submit to it; she can exist only as an independent entity. But what of the great risks involved? What about personal security, social standing, the flagellations of a conscience worried by age and stung to action by unsatisfied desires? What about the emptiness of life, lived for oneself and alone? These are common fears, not real in themselves, perhaps, but so constantly communicated from one to another that they become a disease which none can escape and against which immunity can be developed only

through sacrifice of many of the finer human qualities. Umrao Jan seems to be well protected, first by her strength, secondly, by her culture.

What is her strength due to? I think it is a common-sense acceptance of the inevitable. This is not the same thing as belief in fate, of which the peoples of the East, specially Muslims, are so often and so lightly accused. There are, no doubt, many among us who talk of fate, but even a cursory examination makes it apparent that this talk is just a cloak for ignorance, laziness or obstinate refusal to do the right thing. Umrao Jan accepts the inevitable cheerfully and deliberately, making a limited study of life and men go a long way in guiding her safely across the dangerous and unsparing quicksands in which she is placed. She will have nothing to do with romance, with the uncertain quantities of human emotion, the unknown factors that govern human behaviour. She would rather be the innocent victim of circumstances than offer herself as a sacrifice on the altar of love and marriage. She would rather plead guilty with charm and get a verdict of innocence out of a fascinated jury than condemn herself with passion and lead a crusade of those whom she knows to be unjust against an injustice that is almost self-inflicted.

In fact, she is far too cultured to take all the usual talk about morality with more than a passing seriousness. What matters to her is company and conversation. She would delight in planning for days and nights the strategy and tactics of an intellectual skirmish that might last for five minutes or even less. What she asks of men is not admiration or love. She suspects both and will not take them at their face value or even as current coin unless she has proved to herself that they are supported by an intelligence, a discernment and a power of cultured expression equal to her own. She does not find her match and does not look for one, but is willing to give a try to such as desire it. In

the end she convinces us that she has won, that of the many definitions of culture at least one is valid, and that is her definition. Culture consists in the mind moving freely upon a world in which virtue is the kept mistress of temptation, and understanding waits upon sin.

HABBA KHATOON

FROM the earliest days of the freedom movement in Kashmir, a topical poem by Ghulam Ahmad *Mahjur* was a normal feature at every important political meeting and the occurrence of every significant event. *Mahjur's* passion rose with the tide of the freedom movement, and his verses became symbols of the new Kashmir that was in the making. It is not for me to discuss how great his poetry is, or his contribution to the liberation of his people, but one of his most memorable achievements was to restore to Habba Khatoon the position and the honour that is her due.

Habba Khatoon was not discovered. She has been everywhere in Kashmir, like her songs, ever since her lifetime. Still less was she unearthed, like some glorious work of art buried under the dust of the ages. She has been a fact of every-day life and thought, so familiar that she did not stand out and be noticed. *Mahjur's* admiration and reverence for her made people aware of her presence, of her personality, of her work as a creator of culture. And since *Mahjur* and Habba Khatoon were both poets, speaking to the same people in the same language, it seemed that one began where the other had left off, that the interval between them was an illusion, that New Kashmir came into being in the sixteenth century, that Habba Khatoon composed her songs for the people of today. Now the two have become inseparable. One cannot speak of Habba Khatoon without first paying his homage to the poet who revealed her greatness to all admirers of New Kashmir.

Mahjur has written a biography of Habba Khatoon

which, we hope, will soon be published. It throws light on all the aspects of her versatile personality and the many vicissitudes of her life. But it does not tell us what year she was born and when she died. Perhaps that could be discovered only after laborious search, and we would not be sure even then. Habba Khatoon belonged to an age when only kings were privileged to have a date of birth and of death. About other people such knowledge was unnecessary. Habba Khatoon lived in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and died seven or eight years after the final occupation of Kashmir by Akbar. We do not know how old she was when she became a queen, and several important events of her career can be only approximately dated. But what we know is enough to give a clear picture, and the fixing of dates can be left to the antiquarian.

Habba Khatoon was born in a fairly well-to-do family. Her father must have been particular about her education, or she was so gifted that she could pick up what the men-folk knew without any proper instruction, because shortly after her marriage we have evidence of her knowing Persian. Muslim custom prescribed a certain type of behaviour for girls of good family, but did not prevent a father from teaching his daughter what he wanted her to learn. Habba Khatoon, or Zoon—for that was her maiden name—must have been a great favourite of her father's, and he may have taught her all that a cultured person was expected to know. That, however, makes it all the more difficult to understand why she was, with inexcusable carelessness, married to a man who resented her being educated and refined, and was jealous both of her character and her beauty. But perhaps an adoring husband would have kept her in happy obscurity. Her sorrow revealed her to the rest of the world.

Probably the decisive moment in Habba Khatoon's life was her visit to the Sufi, Syed Mubarak. Habba Khatoon used to sing songs of her own composition while working

with fellow village women in the fields or when out collecting fuel wood. She had a rich, sensitive voice, the full beauty of which could not have been appreciated by her simple, unsophisticated audience. But her songs must have touched them deeply, otherwise those of them who went with her to ask for Syed Mubarak's blessings would not have mentioned it to him. Syed Mubarak, himself a poet, asked Habba Khatoon to sing, and after a little persuasion she agreed. Syed Mubarak had never heard songs in Kashmiri before, and never heard anyone sing so well. He suggested to Habba Khatoon the use of a Persian metre that was his favourite, implored her not to suppress her personality or conceal her gifts and promised her immortal fame. The mystic may, in a moment of exaltation, have had a glimpse of her future; a later reporter may have put into his mouth words justified by subsequent events. But Syed Mubarak gave her the name of Habba Khatoon, and perhaps wished her to regard her visit to him as the beginning of an entirely new life.

Some time later, the crown prince Yusuf, while out hunting, saw Habba Khatoon by chance, and fell in love with her. It was arranged that her husband should divorce her, so that she might be married to him. This would appear a tyrannical procedure to some and heavenly justice to others. There is no doubt about Habba Khatoon's love for Yusuf, but a person of her character would not have reconciled herself easily to a divorce and remarriage brought about under pressure. Events do not show that love and regard for her, specially after he had become the king, was a dominant factor in Yusuf's life, and though they shared many interests, there must have been an element of strain in their relations. Twice it led to open rupture. Whatever power or influence Habba Khatoon possessed was due to her personality and not to her position as a queen. For Yusuf was pleasure-loving, negligent, weak, and easily

induced to act against his better judgement. His addiction to drink must also have been a constant source of anxiety to Habba Khatoon, for whom self-control and a mystical dedication to duty were more important constituents of culture than even music and poetry.

The fickleness of the King was not Habba Khatoon's only problem. The Muslim Shariat condemns 'frivolity', which can be made to include almost everything that is not patently religious. Habba Khatoon's love of music and patronage of musicians offended the susceptibilities of those for whom the aesthetic in all its forms was essentially frivolous. A leading Muslim theologian was very outspoken in his condemnation of the vogue of music and song, and blamed it all on Habba Khatoon's court. His more ardent followers began to beat up musicians and singers, so that some fled for their lives. The heir-apparent, Yakub, threatened to retaliate, and might even have laid hands on the great theologian himself. But Habba Khatoon knew that the theologian was also a poet, and judged that his attitude to music derived its bitterness and violence from a consciousness of his own craving for it. So she made a select troupe of her court musicians learn some of his ghazals and early one morning, when the theologian came for his ablutions to the usual spot by the riverside, he heard divinely sweet voices singing his devotional verses. As he listened, the voices came nearer, and became more and more ecstatic. The theologian lost his sense of time, forgot his ablutions, missed his prayer. And when after sunrise his disciples came to look for him, they saw a strange sight. A band of musicians and singers sat in a boat moored to the bank, singing and playing while the holy man swayed to and fro in a rapture which had made him oblivious not only of his surroundings but even of the primary duty of saying his prayers. Habba Khatoon's love of music was vindicated, and henceforth the court musicians lived in peace.

There are other anecdotes also which show that Habba Khatoon had an almost mystical insight into human nature. But today we would consider her deep reverence for justice and for civic duty her most outstanding qualities. In spite of her great love for her husband, she could not overlook his neglect of his duties. Some years after Yusuf had become king, she left the court in protest against his disregard of the interests of his subjects, and it was with great difficulty that Yusuf discovered her whereabouts and persuaded her to return. He had to make solemn promises that he would attend to his duties, administer justice to all without regard to their social position and strive to make his people happy and prosperous. But he forgot his promises, and a popular revolt forced him to leave Kashmir and seek asylum in the court of the Emperor Akbar. This was a symptom of weakness that induced Akbar to plan the annexation of Kashmir. His first attempt was a failure, though Yusuf so lost heart that he surrendered himself to the Emperor. He was succeeded by his son Yakub, whose fanatical persecution of the Sunnis drove them into the arms of Akbar. All the while Habba Khatoon suffered helplessly. She had lost her husband, her people had lost their freedom. For the politicians some advantages and opportunities were destroyed while fresh ones were created. The religious Sunnis could console themselves with the thought that orthodoxy had been saved, the religious Shias could find some support in Akbar's court. The common people could hope, as they always did, that a change of rulers might lighten the burden of life. But Habba Khatoon could not look at life from any one point of view. She had lost her position and influence with the government. That would not matter if it meant more justice and freedom for the people. But it did not. She was a devout person, not so devout in the common sense, however, as to barter away freedom for the supremacy of her own particular sect.

HABBA KHATOON

She was not made for political leadership. Perhaps freedom meant to her only the maintenance of existing conditions, with the rulers and the ruled spontaneously and scrupulously performing their appointed tasks. Habba Khatoon put into her songs the intense sorrow that filled her heart. That touched her people more deeply than any direct expression of moral or political ideas would have done, and years after the annexation of Kashmir her songs prompted risings among the people. Habba Khatoon mourning the loss of her husband was an emotion which all could understand, and it created a mental disposition in which feelings could become political ideas, and the desire for happiness take shape as a striving for liberty. Habba Khatoon awaiting the return of her husband was the personal expression of a people's longing for the return of freedom. Habba Khatoon's songs show how the personal makes itself universal and immortal, rousing sentiments that become the well-springs of action, spanning with intangible bridges the interval between tribulation and deliverance.

IQBAL

MOST Muslim poets got themselves involved in sinfulness just to the degree that assured them against the risk of being taken for teachers and philosophers and provided them with a springboard for those exalted flights when vision apprehends as much of absolute truth as is possible for the human mind to assimilate. Iqbal (1873-1938) began extremely well, breaking through conventions and artificialities that clouded the aesthetic atmosphere as he rose towards the heavens. But then something happened. Instead of steadily looking up, he began to look down; instead of attaining the pure nudity of the poet, he wrapped himself in the gray cloak of the preacher; instead of getting lost in truth, he became a reformer. Some fervently believe this to be the natural and inevitable unfolding of his personality; most do not think consequently enough to draw any conclusions. There are a few who, like me, regard this as a tragedy. Iqbal lived at a time when he could have made a large number of Muslims sober, enlightened and creative men; by becoming a reformer he invested his invaluable resources in mass-producing them according to the old, orthodox pattern, using moulds that had long ago lost the cementing power of commonsense and utility. Now anyone who writes of him must beware of offending against the dignity of a prophet. The critic's only protection is the tradition which has regarded poetry as a part of prophecy. He can appraise and admire Iqbal the poet, and let Iqbal the prophet take the consequences.

Iqbal received the right kind of education—a thorough

grounding in the traditional sciences and systematic instruction in the new—and was appointed a lecturer in the Government College, Lahore. He came into prominence early in life because of his poetic gifts, and was much in demand at conferences and meetings held to bemoan the sad plight of the Muslims and exhort them to bestir themselves. His is not the only instance of poetry being asked to serve as the handmaid of reform, nor is it the only instance in which a poet, through forced contemplation of the circumstances of the Indian Muslims, lost sight of humanity. The seeds of specialised if not exclusive thinking and writing about Islam and the Muslims had already been sown in his mind when Iqbal went to Europe for further study in 1905, and he was in the mood to discover that European science and philosophy was showing humanity the road towards Islam. This, according to my own firm belief, is a perfectly tenable position. But it would be disastrous to imply that the Muslims of today could stand proudly where they were now or had been five hundred years ago, and expect modern knowledge to come to them and make grateful acknowledgement of their superiority. However, political policies and events—European imperialism and general cultural aggressiveness, the Italian invasion of Tripoli, the wars of the Balkan States against Turkey, the world war and its aftermath—did not create an atmosphere conducive to a purely human outlook. Iqbal was forced to adopt the tactics of self-defence, not only against the hostile and destructive elements in western civilisation, but against the forces liberated by human progress—creative nationalism, democracy, liberalism, freedom of women. In his passionate love of the Muslims he overlooked the deep inconsistency of preaching to them, on the one hand, that they should, like the eminent personalities of their history, laugh at suffering and death and develop within themselves the firmness of the rock-hewn fortress and, on the other,

advocating political separation from the Hindus because otherwise they would be crushed and their religion and culture obliterated by the economically and educationally more advanced Hindu community. There is no continuity between one poetic moment and another, and the poet is not concerned with those who hear or read his verses. But the preacher has to see that one sermon does not contradict another, and religion does not go down because love of God is stultified by fear of the devil.

Iqbal could create poetic values in the most time-soddened sentiments ; what was new in him was fresh as the dawn. Let it suffice that his turning a preacher is a matter of regret. He was beyond doubt a great poet and a most lovable man.

Urdu was naturally Iqbal's medium when he first began to write poetry. After his return from Europe he affected a preference for Persian. It is idle to discuss which medium gave better opportunity for the expression of his genius ; he was at home in both, and he did not give up either. His *Masnavi Asrar-o-Rumuz* is his most didactic and perhaps weakest work ; the *Bang-i-Dira* contains his freshest, the *Bal-i-Jibril* his maturest compositions. His *Payam-i-Mashriq* is a poetic response to Goethe's *West-Ostlicher Diwan*, and reflects more than any other work the wide range of his vision and the catholicity of his ideas. The *Jawid-Namah*, following the tradition of Ibn Arabi's *Futuh-i-Makkiya* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, is a book of judgements. In his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* Iqbal began boldly and ended timidly, sometimes disowning the conclusions that followed from his own arguments. The attempt to identify the whole of western science and philosophy with extracts from thinkers and writers selected for special reasons by himself also does not carry conviction.

Iqbal rejected Muslim mysticism in principle as something promoting passiveness and quietism, but he was deeply imbued with it. He rejected western humanism as a

spiritual blind alley, but his poetry is steeped in humanism.

Come, nestle in my bosom for a while,
'Tis such a weariness being God and Father,

is something that would occur most easily to a mystic contemplating the self-inflicted sorrows of mankind and God's pathetic omnipotence. His humanism appears most clearly in his identification of Satan with man's determination to learn for himself. Some of Iqbal's poems and many of his verses indicate that he could move far away enough from orthodoxy to be able to view traditional beliefs objectively and critically, that when he spoke of man's responsibility as God's representative on earth he was not repeating a theological cliché but asserting the essential freedom of man's will. Iqbal's mysticism and humanism—the blending of which is a unique feature of Persian and Indian Muslim poetry—is a flower that grew on the stem of orthodox belief. There can be no flowers without trees; and need the tree ask to be forgiven because the flowers are rare and lovely?

Iqbal was knighted because he was an outstanding Muslim; in politics he was never a force to be reckoned with, but he participated in important political discussions and was invited to attend the Round Table Conference in London. The distinction he attained did not affect the simplicity of his nature. He never had enough of money and often less than enough. He lived in a shapeless sort of house and was most of the time to be seen in a corner of its front verandah or an adjoining terrace. Anyone could visit him for any purpose at any time, but the particular hours for visitors were from about four in the afternoon till late at night. He sat on his bed and smoked his hookah and talked. He did not show preference for any type of visitors or any variety of topics. Nothing restrained the flow of his conversation, which possessed an inexhaustible charm and reflected the amazing versatility of his mind. At home he

was dressed invariably in a shirt and a shalwar : his outdoor dress was the typical Punjabi combination of a coat, a necktie and a shirt hanging loose over a capacious shalwar. He did not seem to care for anything, least of all for the time spent in aimless conversation with aimless persons. But he was lively and lovable, and even idle questioning would quickly reveal how intensely concerned he was with the political and spiritual fate not only of the Indian Muslims but of all mankind.

NEHRU AS LEADER OF THE YOUTH

THE old are unfortunately apt to rely on platitudes when addressing the young. They could hardly do worse, for those among the youth who are receptive only learn to repeat platitudes and those who have minds of their own remain unconvinced, if not disappointed. Some platitudes it is almost impossible to avoid; they are a kind of traditional remedy for passivity and indifference. But they lose their efficacy if used carelessly and too often. The number of avoidable platitudes is far larger and the best safeguard against them is a humility which forces us to think for ourselves and not lay claim to intellectual eminence by repeating great words.

Can we form a correct idea of Nehru as the leader of the youth by collecting all his messages to students and addresses to youth conferences? We shall find that all these were delivered in the context of particular events or particular requirements. Those delivered before 1937 would in some way or other be subversive, because it was necessary to mobilise the youth for the struggle against foreign rule. Taken out of their context they might now incline the youth towards opposition to the national government rather than close, constructive cooperation with it. We cannot see Nehru in the proper perspective, far less see the whole of his personality, if we consider this one aspect only of his intellectual and political leadership. Yet there was hardly anyone among his contemporaries from whom the youth had more to learn in his time and have more to learn now.

The cause for which all great men have 'fought' is self-realisation. This self-realisation can have a moral and spiritual motivation. It can require a rejection of habits, customs, intellectual attitudes, ideas, even facts of life which are not in consonance with its aims. We can imagine what this means if we consider all that Mahatma Gandhi rejected. We must also, of course, consider the full implications of what Mahatma Gandhi asserted. Then we shall find that his rejection did not create a vacuum; it was the removal of the lower so that the higher might take its place. But while such motivation is present in all who are serious about moral standards, it is not intense enough to become the one or the principal means of self-realisation. We accept the culture and the civilisation we are born in, even though we may be unhappy about some of its aspects. The social and moral space our personalities need in order to have the feeling of being there is not large enough to create problems of adjustment for ourselves or for others. Most of us prefer, therefore, self-realisation through acceptance of the civilisation that is for us an existing reality and cannot be displaced. But we can be willing and able to make certain changes on moral grounds and succeed in making them. This is the type of self-realisation of which Nehru is the most outstanding example in modern India.

It has been said that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. The silver spoon can be a fatally effective instrument for the suppression or the malformation of personality. Perhaps the first act symbolic of Nehru's leadership of the youth was his overcoming the obstacles created by wealth, an extraordinarily high standard of living and the wishes and expectations of his elders. He was not really young when this happened, being thirty years old when he threw himself into the Non-cooperation movement. But he was much younger than the men who counted, and appeared even younger because of the passionate spirit of his

revolt. He had the temper of a very young man when I first heard him speak at the All-Parties Conference at Lucknow in 1928, bored and resentful because of the caution of his elders and the irrelevance of what they held to be of importance. He was still younger and more passionate a year later when, at Lahore, he forced the Congress to adopt independence as the goal of its endeavour.

Nehru broke through the restraints of affluence but, unlike Mahatma Gandhi, he did not come to regard simplicity of life as an end in itself. He is, therefore, nearer to the normal young man who wants to live well, and the normal young man can come nearer to him by weighing the value of living well against his duties as a man and a citizen. This weighing of values is not something to be talked about among friends, with a fear being put each time on one side of the scales and an aspiration on the other. This leads to inconsistency, bewilderment, moral debility. It is something to be done boldly and definitely on every occasion. If the performance of duty is chosen, it need not be a choice for all time. The desire to live well and the ability to do so are essential elements of culture. But duty must be given precedence. It is a quality of his greatness that Nehru could go to jail as if he belonged there and live in the Prime Minister's House as if it were just enough to meet his idea of good living.

The old attempt to stimulate the young and induce them to give an absolute precedence to duty. The technical term for this is rousing the enthusiasm of the young. The physical symptoms of enthusiasm are a glow on the face, a rapturous tearfulness in the eye, a fast pulse, indicative of an overactive heart—all symptoms that forebode a collapse if they persist. This is the enthusiasm evidence of which convinces the common type of politician that he has succeeded. What Nehru desired was to communicate to the youth his unshakable conviction that certain things are

right and necessary and a firm determination to achieve them. He did not rely on oratory; opposition, especially of a silly kind, roused his temper. But he maintained his own balance and did not wish to unbalance others. He was dynamic. He may have taken one step at a time, in order to enable others to keep pace. But he was always moving forward and taking others with him. He endeared himself to all who were touched with idealism because he believed in and talked of progress, but was not willing to leave anyone behind. Even in his most passionate moments he could not forget that ideas and standards have significance because of the human beings whom they benefit and guide.

Again, even in his most passionate moments, Nehru never failed in reverence. It was something in him deep and compelling, not policy and not politeness. It is a matter of history that he sometimes disagreed with or just failed to understand Mahatma Gandhi's decisions or the workings of his mind. He always had the courage to express his disagreement, but because he was convinced that Gandhiji's aim was identical with his own, he never refused to abide by a decision Mahatma Gandhi had taken. There were others whose way of thinking and whose aims were quite obviously opposed to his own. Such persons also he treated with respect. Ridicule, barbed epithets, sarcasm, personalities were foreign to his nature. The young men who attempt to establish their idealism by attacking the motives and the integrity of rivals and opponents have most of all to learn from Nehru. An idealism that ignores the nature of the means for achieving its ends cannot be constructive or creative, and in fact ceases to be idealism.

Let us not forget that during his last years Nehru was distressed by the frequent occurrence of cases of flagrant indiscipline among students. There were people who, in private conversation, if not in public, held all those leaders responsible for this social disease who had encouraged

students to participate in the national movement by defying the authorities, and Nehru was by implication made to bear the larger share of the blame because of his popularity. Students of today will create a gulf between themselves and Nehru if they remember only his resistance to domination by the old, who were mentally over-cautious and wanted freedom without endangering security. That resistance was really a consequence of his assertion of the moral values of freedom and justice. Now that freedom has been attained and the creation of a democratic, socialist and cooperative society has been ordained as the aim of state policy, students should seek guidance from the positive elements of Nehru's leadership. They must regard the achievement of the ideals the Constitution has set before us as a moral command. In obeying this command they must create an atmosphere in which the desire to obey it becomes general. They must have a reverence for the state and for society which is not subject to any conditions. They must inspire and seek inspiration from each other in the service of the common interest. They must promote thoughtfulness by being themselves thoughtful and restrain themselves from that type of criticism which lowers standards of judgement. They must cultivate the ability to see the problems of life not in the context of their personal experience or local or regional conditions but in the larger national and world context. They must be animated by the desire for a wide and precise knowledge. Above all, perhaps, they must learn to regard nobility of conduct an essential virtue, and seek occasions for its exercise. They will then be able to realise what qualities went to the making of Jawaharlal Nehru and mould their personalities so as to reflect his greatness.

A MYSTERY OF CULTURE

I HAVE been trying to understand why Jawaharlal Nehru was not a pessimist.

A degree of pessimism is essential to culture. It is the classical among human moods, a shadow of the grief that comes with much wisdom. It neutralises the effect of disappointments, it is a safeguard against illusions. Jawaharlal Nehru possessed all the qualities of the wise and cultured man. He was also extremely sensitive. But he was not pessimistic, though he must have had thousands of reasons for at least being inclined to pessimism.

Was it because of a peculiar quality in his faith in the future? The future can be regarded as predetermined, or as something subject to fate and circumstance or something which it is our moral duty to achieve. The faith and the strength of the genuine Marxist derives from what he considers to be the scientifically determined and, therefore, absolute certainty that the working of immutable laws will bring his ideal classless society into existence. His aim in education—in a sense wide enough to include political and economic policies—is to inculcate belief in this future, which is desirable because it is inevitable, and to eradicate from the human mind every tendency to doubt the inevitability—and, therefore, the desirability—of the predetermined future. The Marxist is not a pessimist, even though he may be aware of the recalcitrant nature of man; and he is not an optimist, because he relies on scientific laws and not on accidents or hopes or man's innate goodness. On the other hand, the genuine democrat believes in individual freedom. He

recognises the possibility. in fact he openly admits, that this freedom might be utilised in a manner harmful to the best interests of individuals as well as the society which these individuals constitute. In a democracy it is open to the writer and the psychologist to deny the reality of man's moral nature, to the pessimist to harp on the futility of things, to the believer to hold fast to his faith in man's glorious destiny. Democracy is, in a sense, an abdication by a society of its right to give a direction to its life and of seeing to it that all its members believe positively that the direction must be followed. It is a negation of compulsion which creates a compelling force of its own, a prevention of injustice and wrongdoing which establishes a system of justice and fair dealing. Patience and persistence in the service of causes deemed to be beneficial, and not the achievement of a known destiny, are the essence of democracy.

It has been a matter of doubt and dispute whether Marxism can promote real culture of the mind. Whatever view one may have on this, it is quite clear that Marxism and democracy will not create the same kind of culture, and it is only under a democratic system that a thinker can venture freely and by right beyond the established pattern of thought.

Jawaharlal Nehru was sensitive to the ideas of his time, and he had a personality which could transform into vital forces the ideas which it assimilated. The process of assimilation was governed absolutely by his innate nobility of character ; so was the expression he gave to his ideas. One may, if one believes in the power of the intellect, say that his choice of ends and means was dictated by his rationalism, that he could imbibe some elements of Marxist ideology and reject others on a purely rational basis. But that would have made rationalism a far more outstanding feature of his personality than it was. It would have given him a hard

look, and robbed him of his smile. It would have seriously affected his instinct to forgive, and perhaps deprived him of the gift of winning loyalty and cooperation and of that vast love which a fundamentally irrational people felt for him. It may have even seriously interfered with his becoming the founder and the inspiration of democracy in India.

Most of the intelligentsia in India are, I think, rational enough to realise that in adopting democratic procedures as we have done, we are creating enormous difficulties for ourselves and possibly postponing, for no intellectually valid reason, the attainment of the ideals we have set before us. Because of Jawaharlal Nehru we have not chosen the rational, swift and effective way. We have chosen the noble way. We believe not only in the rights of the people, but in the rights of all the people, and in a system that not only provides but insists upon equality of opportunity, cost what it may.

This can obviously lead to a pernicious scramble for rights and opportunities, and the danger must have been far more obvious to Jawaharlal Nehru than it is to any of us. Why did he disregard it? He felt, I believe, that the risk could be taken because the laws of human development were immutable. He had not imagined a destiny for the Indian people: he described the inevitable. Hence his stress on science and technology, his preference for large comprehensive projects, his concentration on the concept of a socialistic welfare state. Industrially advanced democracies of the West had instituted welfare schemes and they gave full rights to the individual, but they were creating a distance between themselves and the ultimate destiny of mankind by adhering to capitalism and a self-centred and self-conscious nationalism in a manner that was basically irrational and unscientific. Their militant attitude towards communism and the new democracies seemed less excusable

than the equally or perhaps more militant attitude of the new democracies because they were deliberately vague about ends and violently critical of the means adopted by the new democracies to maintain and aggrandise themselves. The planned life and activities in the new democracies were all geared to a clearly foreseen and extremely—if not absolutely—desirable future. Perhaps they would be less violent and aggressive and permit more individual freedom if they obtained the security of peaceful coexistence. But even if their means could not be justified, their awareness of the ends was something for which they deserved understanding and admiration.

But the ultimately decisive factor was Jawaharlal Nehru's own instinct, which compelled him to think and act in accordance with the highest standards of noble conduct. He believed in the immutable laws of social development not as a theoretician driving home every argument or as a fanatic who will not listen to any other point of view, but with the serene confidence with which some have believed in God, knowing that nothing could be contrary to His will. So he could raise generosity, which is the distinctive quality of all noble natures, to the level of a principle governing political and social policy, almost to the level of an absolute value. Generosity could not be influenced by any form of calculation, by any expectation of return. The question of risks and losses could not arise. True generosity is unconditional.

No one who desired to serve, to create, to contribute in any form to any aspect of welfare and advancement failed to get a favourable response from Jawaharlal Nehru. If he had said that this was required by faith in God, he would have fitted into a known category. He has to be regarded as a mystery of culture because his personality combined the inconsistent, if not mutually repellent values, of unquestioning generosity and a scientific attitude, democratic free-

dom and faith in an immutable law of human development into a magnificent and convincing harmony.

EDUCATION

THE IMAGE OF THE TEACHER THROUGH HISTORY

THE teacher as we know him is not medicine-man or spiritual guide or miracle-worker. As a social phenomenon he appeared first when a system of writing had been developed, writing material became available in adequate quantity and the number of persons who could not become kings or administrators and did not wish to become priests but could pay for the advantages of becoming politicians and social successes had grown sufficiently large. The teacher as we know him has always been a dealer in intellectual goods, and these goods have never been generally so highly cherished as material goods. In Greece the task of instructing the young was usually entrusted to slaves. The Sophists made good business out of teaching, no doubt, but that did not raise their status as citizens. Socrates, who was a full citizen, ruined their business; Plato and Aristotle followed up with their academies. But they were philosophers, moral and intellectual guides, not professional teachers. In Muslim society there were eminent scholars, but they were either righteous men inspired with the ideal of leading the truly Islamic life or philosophers and scientists who looked for truth outside the scriptures also, and often risked their lives to do so. We honour them now, but in their lifetime they did not enjoy freedom or security, except when they had patrons who supported them whole-heartedly, which was very seldom. The professional teachers were attached to madrasahs, mosques and households of well-to-do persons. Some were able to obtain small grants of land, mostly they

lived on gifts and contributions, which was the same as living on charity. We cannot say when the teacher appeared in India, unless we confuse him with the *guru*, who was a spiritual guide, or with the Brahman who taught other Brahmans the mysteries of religious ritual. Where everything depended on caste and the functions of caste, there could be no question of one course of instruction for all at any stage, and, therefore, of the existence of the teacher by profession.

Honour and prestige have been the right of rulers, among whom we should include commanders, army officers and government employees. Myths created much later have raised prophets and spiritual guides higher than kings, but myths are myths. The power of money has ranked next to the power of the sword, and wealthy men have acquired both spiritual merit and social influence through prudent or impressive expenditure of money. All the other people—classes or masses—have been attached to those possessing the power of the sword or the power of wealth. The teacher has never been in the picture, and no one really wanted him to be in it. To liken him to a *guru* now is either hypocrisy or a pious fraud practised upon him. To make him responsible for spiritual or moral guidance is to assign him a task for which he is not, and should not, claim to be competent. We know it and we feel it. But it seems that it is the teacher's destiny to be squeezed between the thoughtlessness of the parent and the pretentiousness of the state. All children are born intellectual—and now also moral—orphans; we pay the teacher to adopt them, and blame it on him if the orphan remains an orphan.

We say, in another context, that the teacher, the book and the class are only one source of the acquisition of knowledge. Some Muslim mystics established the tradition of rejecting all knowledge that was merely transmission of information from one person to another; today the Ameri-

cans misuse the words 'experience' and 'creativity' to emphasise the view that transmission of information is not enough. The visible teacher has, therefore, to compete with invisible rivals, and loses by the mere fact of being visible.

The image of the teacher has, throughout the ages, been confused with other images, with hypothetical persons free from the responsibilities which ordinary mortals have to bear, persons without needs and without desires. Let us clarify the image of the teacher. He is a person who adopts the profession of teaching, more by force of circumstances than conscious, deliberate choice. He will lose interest in the work, and his profession will become more and more unattractive if he is deprived of satisfaction in terms both of money and of status. His main task is to transmit inherited knowledge: it is only possible for a very small gifted minority to make additions to this inheritance. Moral values, concepts of virtue, ideas of perfection are a part of this inheritance, but the teacher can transmit these only if state, society and parents fulfil their function of cooperating to maintain what has been inherited. It is not the teacher's function to raise the moral standards of parents or to reform a corrupt society. There is far greater likelihood of the teacher himself being corrupted. For he, too, has parents, and he grows up in the same society as the children whom he instructs. Let all the others perform their duty, and give the teacher a chance.

MY SCHOOLDAYS

THE first school I went to was the Loreto Convent at Lucknow. Schools of that kind are now even more popular, perhaps, than in my time, and for the good reason that they are serious about the fulfilment of their functions. But if we assume that there is an Indian way of life, a distinctive culture which each generation believes it should transmit to its successor, the inconsistency of an Indian Muslim boy being sent for education to a Roman Catholic school is obvious. It was more obvious in my case because my father wanted me to be brought up as a good Muslim. So I learnt how to close my mind to alien influences, to learn English and other subjects from Christian teachers without becoming favourably disposed towards Christianity. But my real teacher in those days was an illiterate villager, Ramzan, whom I called Nan for short, whose business it was to take me to school and escort me back. It was on my way to school and back that I learnt what I still cherish. Ramzan had an incredibly wide range of interests—growing vegetables, training dogs, making ornamental walking-sticks with his knife, fishing, hunting, watching out for parasitic growth on fruit trees, searching for edible wild fruit, chasing monkeys and jackals, killing snakes. He had a ear that caught the sound of every bird and understood its meaning, a love of dogs which enabled him to follow every movement of their minds. Nothing could repress his passion for open air life, not even the anger of my parents or the sarcastic remarks of his fellow-servants. His pet dog saved my mother's life, and he himself was such a success-

ful snake hunter that, living on the wild outskirts of the city as we did, we could not but feel indebted to him for preserving us against snake-bites. Ramzan, however, transgressed too flagrantly in following his own inclinations, and I was his only admirer. I only watched him doing things, still I feel that but for him I would have had no interest in making things with my hands, birds and animals would have meant nothing to me, and I would have passed by the most graceful tree without giving it a look. I would also have had no idea of the free life, for Ramzan is the only person I have known who could do only what he liked, and he had a passion for doing a large number of things.

My other teacher was Robert Talbot Dalby, Principal of the Cambridge Preparatory School, Dehra Dun. The school was an enterprise of three or four Muslims who could not raise funds but were desperately anxious to do something to provide education in English style for the sons of well-to-do Muslims, mainly landlords and lawyers. Their ideas of education were not only vague; they were silly. The school lasted as long as it did only because Dalby was able to carry the whole burden of teaching on his shoulders. He taught us English, Latin, Mathematics, Physical Geography and the Bible. He had a fine library of his own, and it seemed to me that he possessed all the knowledge a man could possibly acquire. I was not his best student, except perhaps in Latin, and sometimes he got so annoyed with me for my negligence or unpleasing behaviour that he would not talk to me or turn his face away if he did, but from the beginning I was filled with the aspiration to be like him and he could not have helped noticing it. He was a theosophist and I became interested in theosophy. I read the *Bhagwadgita*, several books of Annie Besant and other theosophists because of him, and devoted special attention to Latin, a subject in which he was particularly interested but which none of the other students liked. He felt elated

if I did my home-work well or answered questions correctly in the class. He forced me to take what is called Higher Mathematics in the Senior Cambridge syllabus, though even elementary arithmetic was something beyond my capacity, purely for the reason, I think, that he felt that a man should be equal to any task. He never said so, as far as I can remember, but his conviction must have been transmitted to me in some intangible form. I have failed in many things—mathematics, music, business, short-story and play-writing, administration, gardening—but I owe it to my teacher that I have always wanted to try.

In my home life, what left a real impression on me was a type of discipline which my father imposed. The occasion for imparting this discipline was breakfast time. All the children living in the house had to be present at this meal, or their absence had to be explained. We had to talk, to talk refined Urdu, and each of us had to make his or her individual contribution to the conversation interesting enough to evoke some form of appreciation from father, on whose face our eyes were continuously focussed. If anyone used a wrong word or idiom, the others were asked in turn to give the correct word. We laughed at each other's attempts, but it was a serious matter if none succeeded, because then mother would be accused of having spoilt our speech by always talking in her '*purbi*' dialect. When she was no more there to take the blame, the reproach of being indifferent to language had to be borne by all of us together. Circumstances have changed, of course, but the fear of laughter or reproach is still there, and I feel that the use of the appropriate word is a moral command.

My sisters were privileged persons. Father was very fond of them and made it quite obvious. He did not deprive his sons of anything due to them under Muslim personal law or custom or social practice, but we saw that his daughters were more a part of his life than his sons.

There were two stories of my childhood which father was never tired of repeating. One evening, while driving home from the city I asked the coachman to stop, and when father asked me why, I said I wanted to buy some sweets for Sabira—my younger sister—who had not been able to come with us. This was an outburst of affection for which I got full credit. But I could also be resentful. Once father was teasing me with remarks about daughters being better than sons and I countered by asking, 'What about the daughters of King Lear?' He was highly amused and I, of course, felt ashamed at what I had said. Later in life my attitude has been somewhere between these two extremes. But it is because of father that I cannot even now understand why a father should not be closer in spirit to his daughters than to his sons, and it is because of him that I think men must want to give women more than their just share of everything. I have found that all talk of 'reverence' for womanhood is due to hypocrisy or anemia. I have no such reverence, but only a full and frank acceptance of my father's attitude and its implications for his sons, and, in principle, for all sons. A sister has no right to ask for more than her due, but he is no brother and no man either who does not want and does not try, at least sometimes with success, to give her more than her due.

It used to be the talk of the family that father was quite unnecessarily interested in other people. It was said that he had gone out of his way to help lawyers in mofussil towns to come and establish themselves at Lucknow and look! Were they showing any gratitude now? They were behaving like big people, making money, showing off, regarding the man who made their careers as someone not half as clever as they! This was true. But father could not help giving talent any support it needed and being happy at the success of anyone who had ever come into contact with him. Family and community had nothing to do with it.

It was sheer goodwill towards all who honestly worked for success, and he valued this success more highly than his own. I have not been in the same position so far as helping others is concerned, and I have no right to look around for expressions of gratitude. But I owe to my father the interest I have in the happiness of other people and the gratification I feel for any success that they achieve.

SPEAKING FOR MYSELF

I THINK I have improved now, but for a good part of my life I have been an extremely nervous person who most of the time kept on asking himself the embarrassing question, Am I wanted or not wanted? I could, of course, hide myself from the question, or turn my back on it, or in a way look down upon it in a spasm of dizzy self-confidence. But it was always there. Even now at parties when I do not see known faces I feel I am not wanted, and if I misunderstand a person or a situation and am made in some way to realise it, I feel like the guest at a hotel who has by mistake walked into the wrong room. And really, if I am not as nervous now as I used to be, it is because I have been too long in the world already for the question of my being wanted or not wanted to have much relevance.

This is just a preface to my confession of an utter failure to understand life or anything about it. I have not, however, allowed my intellectual curiosity or my sense of freedom to be smothered beneath the weight of a borrowed philosophy or of plain despair. I think, those who have tried to prove that existence is an illusion, have merely deceived themselves and others. I have never had the desire, like Ivan Karamazov, to return my ticket of entry into the world. I have lived, I have wanted to live and I have enjoyed life. If I have not understood for myself the meaning of existence or accepted on trust any traditional interpretation, I have not felt that I was walking in the dark. Tolstoy made a moving story out of the question. How much land does a man need? Why can't one make a whole life of spiritual

discovery out of an answer to the question? How much light does a man need? It's just a matter of how far and how clearly you want to see. The sun can never be bright enough to efface the limits fixed by distance on the human vision, and the light of a few matches will help one to get up and down dark and winding stairs. The wisest of men cannot see even into the immediate future, and a little commonsense properly used is guidance enough in the present.

So why kick against the pricks? If God alone knows what the future of the world, of India, of the Indian Muslims, of the Pakistani Hindus, of the Jamia Millia, where I have spent the whole of my adult life, is going to be, and He does not want to or cannot, without showing flagrant favouritism, share His knowledge with me, I do not wish to be importunate. I do not know what success is and I have not tried to find out. I do not know what is the right thing or the good thing to do. The question is just too complicated. So why not say that we cannot measure success with any confidence, that we cannot know what is the right thing to do; we can only hope that we shall have the good sense not to do the wrong thing and the courage to examine what we have done without partiality towards ourselves.

I joined the Jamia Millia over thirty-nine years ago, and I have remained there since. Many people admired my colleagues and me for having asked for seat in the leaking boat of national education when other crafts were available. I know I offered to join the Jamia Millia on an impulse and have never been able to explain my action even to myself. But I have always hated looking around for the better job, and the line of least resistance has led me to seek wholehearted satisfaction in the choice I had made.

I think I liked the Jamia Millia best because it demanded creditable performance in return for admittedly meagre compensation. Work under this condition did not carry

with it any social status or moral prestige. On the contrary, we had to justify continuously the existence of the Jamia Millia, to remove suspicions, to withstand ridicule. And so service in the Jamia Millia meant really giving without question all that one could give and accepting without question whatever was doled out in return. There is a principle involved in this the ramifications of which I have been discovering for myself, and the more discoveries I have made the more confident I have become about its value. But please don't imagine that I am thinking of self-sacrifice, of dedicated service to great causes. I am not. I am talking at the ordinary level of human nature, the level of mere biological persons, undivided and indivisible into a higher and a lower self. For me the principle, know thyself, is not a call to be spiritual, to dive into the depths of the real and the unreal, but a straightforward matter of discovering my own nature, of finding out pragmatically what exercises my faculties to the utmost, what gives me the greatest amount of satisfaction over the greatest length of time. I have been engaged in finding this out. In this process I have not felt the need to ask others what should make me feel satisfied, and though I have admired persons, this admiration has not induced me to deny my own nature or to attempt what it is not in my nature to achieve.

The one-sided bargain which the Jamia Millia offered kept people away. We never had enough workers for a reasonable distribution of the total work, and so everyone had to try his hand at everything. I was no exception, and my failures made me sharply aware of my shortcomings. These failures, fortunately, were part of a long and continuing account. Being aware of them did not produce despondency or feeling of inferiority; it just corrected my perspective. The joy in doing what I could became keener and I saw, at the same time, that the shortcomings of others were as natural and inevitable as my own. But

what has been most helpful to me personally is the habit of freely admitting my mistakes and of inviting others to do the same.

If you remember what I said at the beginning about the embarrassment I used to feel at not knowing for certain whether I was wanted or not wanted, you will understand my telling you now that my ideas have not solidified into a philosophy. Working in the Jamia Millia made me feel that I could live a full life even if, according to any reckoning, I was classified as unwanted. I can, therefore, be happy with my ideas even if they are, like me, classified as unwanted. I do not need to make a system out of them, or even to argue in their favour.

But is not this attitude, you may ask, individualistic, narrow and even unsocial in the larger sense? Perhaps it is. I have a right, however, to adopt all reasonable measures to maintain the status of a sane and normal person. I am afraid I would be charged with insanity or worse if I advocated openly the principle that we should all aim at the highest excellence in our work and accept without question any compensation offered in return. We all know that this is the operative principle in communism, and will have to be freely and sincerely believed in and practised by us if we hope to realise our own ideal of a democratic, cooperative and socialistic society. But who dare ask a citizen of our democratic state, not to put himself first, when he, his salary and his allowances are so much more important than anything else. It would be still worse for me, I might even render myself liable to prosecution if I attempted to publicise my view that all our communities and groups should think only of what they can give to each other of goodwill, opportunity, security and trust and ask for nothing in return. I know that there are innumerable persons who as persons have all the goodwill towards other persons that one could ask for. But generous instincts

have to be set aside in public affairs, set aside, that is, where they really matter. There they are condemned as expressions of foolishness or treachery. So I would much rather keep to myself the habits of thought that I have acquired in a lifetime, and regard them as unwanted but not conceal them deliberately. I realise, of course, the supreme significance of basic moral and social principles. We cannot have a just social order without a concept of justice. But statements of lofty principles and definitions of ideals are not enough. You would agree with me that they are rather like light thrown into the eye than the light of the eye itself; they do not improve the vision or illumine the mind. So why not have your own private light, not so bright as to hurt the eye, but bright enough to gather a few people around and create the feeling that all is not strange or dark. Why not imagine a country with glimmering landscapes of such lights, each encircled by people with thoughtful faces and hearts at peace?

WHAT SHAKESPEARE MEANS TO ME

THE question what Shakespeare means to me could be framed in another way: What do I owe to Shakespeare? I owe to him my first experience of articulation, of association between language and feeling, of the value of the apt word, the striking phrase. Does this not mean everything?

My education began with learning to read the *Quran*, and I was charmed by its magnificent rhetoric. But I did not understand it at all. I then went on to Persian and the *Gulistan* of Sa'di, one of the world's classics, but beyond the comprehension of a child of six or seven years. I also learnt Urdu. *St. Mark* in the Authorised Version was my first real acquaintance with English, and I felt compelled to learn it by heart. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear* were my texts in the Senior Cambridge, but I knew most of *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice* by heart from the books of the senior boys before Shakespeare's plays became a part of my course. I must have made many mistakes in my English exercises, and I do not remember having ever been fluent of speech, but Shakespeare gave me a thrill that took me beyond correct English and beyond fluency to the music of words, the cadence of sentences, the sheer emotional delight of dramatic expression. English became my language in a far more intimate and exciting sense than the 'mother-tongue' of the educational theoretician.

The Russian masters, most of all Tchekov and Dostoevsky, first made me aware of human character, of human

beings who were basically amorphous and of those who struggled to attain meaningful form. This experience had nothing to do with language and was different from what I had learnt from Shakespeare. Then I wandered into what I could call the world of Jalaluddin Rumi, in which the poet claims to be something of a prophet, and poetry to be something of revelation, a world of intense expression and enigmatic confusion of symbol and reality. This is the world of Persian and Urdu poetry, and this is where, for most of the time, I find myself now.

Am I more satisfied than I was in Shakespeare's world? One cannot compare one's first moments of exaltation with those that follow; the occasions and the responses are somehow so different. But after passing through more and more of real situations, the created situation, however near to reality, appears created, or rather as reality qualified with an 'if'. When one has looked for years for the purpose of one's own life, and had just a bare glimpse of it, or not even that, imaginary identification with characters who live within the enclosure of a known purpose, which is their emotional and mental horizon, or lesser fry whose world is a still narrower circle of hopes and desires, becomes a strain on the mind. But I would be misrepresenting myself if I emphasised this too much. I have not moved away from the Renaissance or the aesthetic concepts of Greece, which modern writers and artists have broken through as a limitation on their freedom. And I feel there would be many reasons why, if I had to choose, I would prefer to abide with Shakespeare rather than the moderns.

What of the world of Jalaluddin Rumi, where I find myself now? Is it God-centred or man-centred, is it a world where one cultivates the pleasures of self-denial, where one turns away, even if without disgust, from man and human interests? It is, no doubt, a masculine world, in which love is real but woman non-existent, or just a faint

or vague suggestion. Here Nature appears in a few symbols—spring, rose, poppy, valley, mountain, shore, wave, stream, sun, moon, light, shade, darkness, thorn, wasteland. There are archetypes of lover and beloved, mythical figures whose resemblance to man is purely nominal. There are typified emotions, typified situations. The wine, the wine-house, the intoxication, the hangover, all are hypothetical.

This fruit, you will say, has no flesh and no juice. How can it have any relish? I do not think this is a problem for the philosopher. There are no philosophers or prudent, knowledgeable men in Jalaluddin Rumi's world; they cannot survive in its atmosphere. Those who confuse desire with physical desire, those who aim at happiness derived from worldly goods, peace, success are regarded as carriers of the disease of vanity. In this world there is only intensity, the intensity of the aesthetic moment which expands into a universe of thought and feeling. It is sight, not the eye, mind, not the object apprehended, heart, not body.

That is why its most striking quality, in terms of literature, is epigrammatic expression. That is why, though characterisation is quite foreign to it, it gives the most comprehensive rendering of the human personality. It is man-centred, in a larger, freer sense, than the world of antiquity or of the Renaissance; it is not a world of problems but of solutions, the solutions arising from within man in quite as real a sense as problems in the Greek drama. It is a world of experience in which the trivial and the commonplace also acquire aesthetic value, in which the divine and the human, truth and falsehood, piety and sinfulness are taken to pieces and man is judged and honoured and understood in the background of the immediate as well as the ultimate reality.

I know that those who are not intimately acquainted with Persian and Urdu poetry will find it difficult to accept

these statements. I cannot substantiate them, because the best translation would be a disfigurement of the original. But I shall admit that, though anyone who finds himself in this world after having passed through the labyrinth of thoughts and emotions which is the world of Shakespeare, might feel that he had entered the open spaces, the very expanse of these spaces tends to convert them into an abstraction where one is not certain of being able to live and breathe, to retain one's identity. There is an inevitable inclination to set up a dividing line between imaginative experience and physical existence, to seek refuge in compartmentalisation. That is a relapse, an admission of defeat in the ordering of values. It is the realisation of this risk for those who attempt to establish permanent domicile in the world of Jalaluddin Rumi that takes me back to Shakespeare, to the images of man, to sheer earthly fun, to passion and conflict, to life and, let me admit this also, the despair of ever being able to see beyond life.

RURAL SCHOOLING IN INDIA

ONE is afraid of repeating, as obvious and hackneyed, the statement that 80% of the Indian people live in villages and far less than 20% of the government's attention has been devoted to them, specially in matters of welfare and education. The British government in India prudently avoided responsibilities that would not be fulfilled without the active and continuous participation of the public, and primary education was entrusted to Municipalities in towns and District Boards in rural areas. The District Boards had hardly any resources, and no experienced or competent members to organise and supervise education. To them the school was a superior sort of cattle pond. Whenever an assessment was made, the defects of the system of primary education were exposed, and the Hartog Committee, at the end of the first decade of this century, gave statistics to show that the dropping out and the wastage and relapse into illiteracy was on such a scale that primary education, as organised, seemed purposeless. But nothing was done, because nothing could be done.

When the first Congress Ministries were formed in 1937, the man mainly responsible for bringing the freedom movement to this stage was suddenly confronted with a problem which was as important for him as the freedom of the country. His response was characteristic of the courage, the discernment and strength which he had shown all along. The man was Mahatma Gandhi; the problem was free education for all children, and the reply was what has now come to be known as basic education. As soon as the

Congress Government in Madras had been constituted, Mahatma Gandhi asked one of his most trusted lieutenants, Rajagopalachari, to introduce prohibition as well as free education for all children in his State immediately. The trusted friend, who was now the Chief Minister and found all his powers and his prestige fettered by the administrative practices of his day, had to consider all the aspects of the rules and regulations. His enquiries led to the conclusion that because prohibition was being introduced at the same time, funds would not be available to provide free education for all children. Mahatma Gandhi was horrified to find that he was being asked to choose between what he felt to be immoral and the abandonment of Indian village children to ignorance and degradation.

His instinctive reaction was to declare that if money was not available for education, education should be possible without money. He reflected on his own life and all that he had done, and the means he had used for achieving his ends. He felt sure that the State would be relieved of the burden of expenditure on primary education if education could also become a means of production.

The stupendousness of the idea, or rather the discovery, was not realised. Mahatma Gandhi was the prophet who had been inspired, and the truth it had been given to him to declare surpassed his own power of comprehension and expression. It emerged from discussions and expressions of opinion later on that what Mahatma Gandhi envisaged was the building up of rural India through the release of moral energy under the guidance of a leadership completely dedicated to its task. The teacher was to be a 'constructive worker', supporting himself on the earnings of his own labour, teaching children in the day, adults at night, and using every minute of his life to spread the message of creative work, study and service. If Mahatma Gandhi had been used to thinking in terms of administrative action, he

would have asked for the concentration of attention and resources by the Ministries of Education, Industry, Agricultural and Rural development on a joint endeavour to produce through education and educate through production. His 'constructive worker' in each village would have become the spearhead of a nation-wide movement for reconstruction and free, effective education of children as well as of the whole community would have been an inevitable by-product of this movement. It is tragic to see how the truth that was too great to find precise expression gradually took forms contrary in many ways to the truth itself.

Mahatma Gandhi had the habit of thinking aloud. It happened many times that he was thinking aloud and people thought he was expressing opinions. This thinking aloud on education through production, through cultivation of crafts relating to food, clothing and shelter, raised in some quarters a storm of protest. It seems that even before Mahatma Gandhi had thought aloud to the end and given a rough outline of his magnificent idea, he had turned his own mind to explanations, to details, to technical questions of education which had little or no relation to his basic idea. Most probably, if people had let his idea grow, if they had watched patiently, we would have got a definition of education that would have been of tremendous value and would have in the very act of expression indicated the means by which it was to be realised. Mahatma Gandhi would have saved his idea from many major and minor distortions by making it clear that the education he had in mind was beyond the capacity and outside the range of the education departments and their administrative system. But this did not happen. Those who considered Mahatma Gandhi to have antiquated notions about politics, economics, sociology and national policy seized upon this idea of education through production, and loudly complained that the children of the country would be exploited and made to do

forced labour in schools in the name of education. Others, who were more interested in educational practice than upholding ideas of social justice, thought it impossible that production could be a means of education, because the knowledge imparted through books, and specially the basic concepts on which the sciences are based, could not be taught through production. An agitated discussion continued for some months, till in October, 1937, Mahatma Gandhi called together a conference of all educators of note, and to ensure the implementation of any decisions taken, also the Education Ministers and Directors of Education of the provinces in which the Congress formed the ruling party. By the time this conference was held, certain transformations of the original idea had taken place in Mahatma Gandhi's own mind, perhaps without his being conscious of them. He addressed the conference on the value of teaching through craft and enabling the school to support itself by what was produced through the teaching and practice of crafts in the school. This was not identical with his original thesis of a production that would be a continuing process of building up the economy of the village and serving as a means of educating the young by making them aware, in the first instance, of the social and moral ends to be achieved and stimulating them to acquire the knowledge necessary for attaining these ends. His insistence that the crafts should be taught in a scientific way did not in any sense make up for the loss.

Another turn which his thinking took also proved in the end to be rather unfortunate and an obstacle to the attainment even of what had survived of his original idea. Because he had devoted all his life to the propagation of spinning, because he was absolutely certain in his own mind that no other answer to the question of finding employment for all was possible, he spoke of spinning in such a way that it was assumed to be the craft that would

not only enable education to become rich and full but would also lead to the realisation of the scheme of reconstruction which he had in mind.

An inevitable result of consulting educators and administrators was that the new education also was conceived of as education in schools, as education with an academic syllabus, and answering to the standards and objectives of the current system. That the current system was loudly and unnecessarily condemned by those who advocated the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi with a cocksureness which the Mahatma himself considered to be the best enemy of truth, created a situation in which even with very skilful handling the new system would have had little chance of success. At the conference, a Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Husain to draft a report and draw up a syllabus within as short a time as possible. The Committee did its work with amazing speed and at the session of the Congress held in March 1938, the new scheme was placed for the consideration of the leaders of the nation. The Congress accepted it and passed the following resolutions :

1. Free and compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.
2. The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.
3. Throughout this period education should centre round some form of manual and productive work and all other activities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft with due regard to the environment of the child.

This was the first step in according sanction to the scheme. There were other hurdles to cross. The Central Advisory Board, which is the highest advisory body in matters of education, adopted the scheme, but in a form so modified as to endanger its future even before any practical

shape had been given to it. The Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education made the following recommendations :

1. The scheme of Basic Education should first be introduced in rural areas.
2. The age range of compulsion should be six to fourteen years, but children can be admitted to the basic school at the age of five.
3. Diversion of students from the basic school to other kinds of schools should be allowed after the 5th class or about the age of eleven plus.
4. The medium of instruction should be the vernacular of the pupils.
5. A common language for India is desirable. This should be Hindustani, with both the Urdu and the Hindi scripts. Option should be given to children to choose the script and provision should be made for teaching them in that script, viz., Urdu and Hindi.
6. No external examination need be held. At the end of the basic course a School-Leaving Certificate based on an internal examination should be given.

It was decided a little later, after much discussion, that basic schools should be established in specific areas of different States as experimental schools, so that it might be possible to work out on a limited scale the different implications of the scheme of basic national education. These experimental schools were established in selected areas, but even before they could make a proper start, the Congress Ministries resigned because of differences with the British Government consequent upon the outbreak of the Second World War. Except in one State—Bihar—the administration lost interest in basic education, and in some cases those very administrators who were full of praise for basic education issued reports condemning it or creating serious doubt in its value and practicability. Something else also happened

which carried basic education still further away from the original inspired idea. The basic school began to be compared with the ordinary primary school. Its academic criteria began to be measured against the prevailing academic standards. The whole jargon of the educationist was introduced in the evaluation of the basic school. Importance was attached to the child, though what really mattered in the original idea was the community of which the child was to be an educated, cooperative and enlightened member.

Since independence, education has become increasingly important and the directive of the Constitution that free compulsory education should be provided for all the children of the country within 15 years has further stimulated efforts towards the expansion of basic education. Recently, directives have been issued by the Planning Commission and Ministry of Education, the results of which should be the creation of basic schools in large numbers all over the country and the introduction of the characteristic features of basic education in all schools, urban and rural. At the moment, primary schools are being converted into basic schools and all the new schools opened are basic schools. At the same time, the results of the policies followed so far are making themselves apparent in a somewhat disconcerting manner. It was hoped that the establishment of basic schools in selected areas would provide a model for all primary schools and the superior system of basic schools would lead to improvements in the working of the ordinary primary schools. But what has happened is the opposite. It would not be any exaggeration to say that the basic school, instead of having its superiority recognised, has accepted a kind of inferior position, and in some cases the rural population has resented the establishment of a basic school on the ground that it represents a type of education that was considered good enough only for the rural areas. In some rural areas, English has had to be re-introduced in what is

called the senior basic school (age group 11-14) at the insistence of the villagers. Much of the enthusiasm that people felt for basic education has now evaporated and even those whose business it is to run basic schools are wondering whether the basic system is worth all the trouble and expense which is devoted to it. The complete acceptance of the academic standards of the primary and secondary schools have placed the student of the basic school at a disadvantage, because he cannot devote all the time that is required to academic subjects, and the craft which he learns does not get any recognition when he seeks admission in the secondary school.

Expansion under pressure has also not had beneficial results. An attempt was made in Madras State in 1953 to increase the speed of conversion of primary into basic schools and of creating opportunities for a larger number of children to get education by modifying the whole scheme of basic education and by introducing a shift system would enable the same teacher to teach double the number of pupils without increasing the financial burden of the State. A further modification suggested by an assessment committee appointed by the Ministry of Education would convert the basic school into an activity school, with the only difference that its activities would on some occasion bring it closer to the community in which the school happens to be situated. All that can be hoped from this modification is that the basic school will be somewhat better than the primary school, which is considered to be socially and educationally a dead institution. After 20 years of experimentation we have come to the position that basic education means education as good as we can make it under adverse circumstances.

Basic education has been dealt with at such length because it was expected to make education self-supporting and therefore available to every child of every Indian village,

and because it embodied a method of education that would appeal to the village parent as purposeful and immediately useful. Neither hope has been fulfilled. The basic school has proved more expensive and has made larger demands on the educational administrator than the old book school. The villagers as a whole have neither been attracted nor convinced by its method ; they have accepted or welcomed it, however, as a school.

What is most significant is that the rural population has refused to endorse the distinction made between rural and urban education. The villager does not see why his cultural needs should be considered different from those of the townsman. Now that the Union and most State Governments have agreed that certain features of basic education should be introduced in urban schools also, the rural population will have less reason to feel that it is being given an inferior type of education, and differences of opinion in regard to the merits or the success of basic education will not slacken the rate of expansion. It may not satisfy those who have been used for generations to seeing every child in their own country being given its birthright to education, but even a rough study of the circumstances will reveal that if the expectation that about 60% of Indian children will be going to school within the next few years is fulfilled, much will have been achieved.

GANDHIJI AND BASIC EDUCATION*

THE world has seen many great men whose teachings have changed the life and thought of their society. These great men have had disciples and followers who heard and remembered their utterances for the guidance of succeeding generations. But there is hardly anything one can say which is so independent of time and context as to be equally relevant subsequently at any time and in any context. We cannot, for that reason, make it a rule to interpret all statements in accordance with time and context, for the certainty and security of belief depends on the acceptance of records as they are. But once a record has been accepted as true, it gives rise to many embarrassments, because the time and the context have changed. The habit of quoting scriptures can perhaps do as much harm as the habit of not reading them.

This is something which should be borne in mind by all who read this book or any collection of a great man's sayings. Gandhiji had to answer numberless questions, and he would not have been able to give any guidance if he did not simplify issues. He objected, it is believed, to industrialisation. Would that mean that he did not want India ever to have any industries, that he believed India's economic survival to be possible even if there were no tools or processes other than those found in the villages? Perhaps he meant that population was our main liability and man-

* Written as Foreword under the caption 'A Warning to Readers' to a collection of the sayings of Gandhiji published by the Teachers' College, Jamia Millia.

power our main asset, and therefore we should think of devices that required human labour and not machines that made it superfluous. Perhaps he feared that we would not be able to compete with the industrially advanced nations and therefore should keep our wants on the same level as our productive capacity, raising both by degrees. Or perhaps he was really disgusted by the smoke and dust and competitive frenzy of industrialisation and wished to maintain the purity of the Indian atmosphere and the Indian soul. These are just guesses. But we may be sure that if he was confronted with the principles and policies underlying India's planned development, he would have approved them rather than draw up plans of his own based on non-industrial development. But then, what about his views on industrialisation?

It is the same with education. Gandhiji believed that India could not be free if educational policy and institutions were controlled by a foreign government, and he exhorted teachers and students who wished to serve their country to leave institutions controlled by the British government. He said that when he hoped that Swaraj would be attained within a year or so, but did not continue saying it after the suspension of the Non-cooperation movement. Had he changed his mind about government-sponsored education, or did he feel that the time was no longer appropriate to ask teachers to resign and students to leave colleges and schools? In 1937, when he began the discussion on self-supporting schools, he said that he was not concerned with the whole system of education, but only with the question of how village children could be educated without any financial burden being placed on the state. Did that imply a condemnation of the prevailing system, and the enunciation of principles that would apply to education of every type and at all levels? To go a step further, did it imply that if village schools were not self-supporting and increased

the expenditure of the government, Gandhiji would not be interested in them; that he would rather have no schools than state-supported 'book' schools?

I was present at the first conference of administrators and experts in October 1937, at which Gandhiji explained his idea of making education self-supporting by centring it around a craft—or rather, the craft of spinning. As a member of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh I attended for a number of years meetings and conferences at which the principles as well as the experiments in basic education were reviewed and discussed, but I was not personally or actively concerned with any particular project, and my own subject is history, not education. It took me some years to understand basic education, partly because I had no academic background in education and partly, it appeared to me later on, because the points under discussion, both among believers and non-believers, were generally irrelevant. People talked against the book school; some were reckless enough to talk against books. Experts discoursed on the beneficial effects of craft-centred teaching long before any valid assessment could be made, and exhausted their ingenuity in correlating all topics, from the ice-house of the Eskimo to the Great Wall of China, with cotton and spinning. Even the Zakir Husain Committee's Report slurred over the underlying educational principles of teaching craft to the children of the age-group 7-14. Dr. Zakir Husain explained these principles later in his addresses; he made even me understand them. But it is an open question whether it would have made any difference if he had put everything in the Report. There were too many persons connected with the propagation of basic education whose mental horizon did not extend beyond *charkha* and *takli* and yarn; they were too close to Gandhiji and too much with him, and they would have carried Gandhiji with them, Dr. Zakir Husain's wisdom and persuasiveness notwithstanding. So

basic education became identified with spinning and its propagation—the propagation of spinning. There was no possibility of the educative values of spinning as a craft being discussed with an open mind; it was an essential requirement of education, and whatever happened, it had to continue as the central feature of the basic syllabus. It was known that one yard of cloth involved ten hours of labour, that even this yard of cloth would materialise only under exceptional circumstances, but the attempt to prove that spinning would make a school self-supporting ‘to some extent’ was not given up. And no other craft got a fair chance.

Gandhiji's advocacy of spinning had profound reasons. He discovered, I think, in course of time that hand-spinning was uneconomic, and no matter how large the number of people engaged in it, it could be carried on only if subsidised by the consumer paying a higher price for cloth or by the state. But he had discovered much earlier that spinning induced a mood of prayerfulness, tranquillity, even exaltation; it was a materially productive activity that brought man nearer to himself and truth and God. This I can confirm from my own experience, and if I do not spin it is because of a positive preference for dissatisfaction, restlessness, abandon. But I can understand why Gandhiji placed such a high value on spinning, equating it almost with virtue and prayer; why all the Pharisees fervently agreed with him, and would not hear anything to the contrary, and why all the Philistines disagreed with him, suspecting that spinning would introduce an element of spiritual balance and equanimity into the general pattern of unexamined life. I can also understand why Gandhiji conceived of a system of education which would derive its vital force from spinning. But all this does not make spinning into a craft with an educational value, in that it involved planning, consideration of ways and means, exe-

cution and assessment, and trained the mind in what is the *only* correct method of work.

I do not think more than half-a-dozen people, if even that many, have understood what Dr. Zakir Husain meant by saying that education through craft made the child understand and assimilate the values embodied in the material culture of his society. Foreign goods had begun to monopolise our markets, and we had turned our backs on our own skills and aesthetic standards about a century and a half before Dr. Zakir Husain made this statement: it was no more than a cry in the wilderness. And if now Europeans and Americans are admiring and buying our craft products, and we are imitating their admiration, it does not mean that an organic relationship between our past and our present has been reestablished. India would have been really free and Indians really able to create if this aim of basic education as expressed by Dr. Zakir Husain had been understood and a sincere and intelligent effort been made to realise it.

We can throw the blame for the failure of basic education on the administrators, but what could we have done except put the administrators in charge? How many of the so-called experts in the methods of basic education had themselves handled and loved tools, and personally experienced the joy of creating beautiful and useful things? We thought the country must have basic education because Gandhiji wanted it, and left out of account our ignorance of what it meant. Now basic education is a term without any intelligible meaning and basic schools are something less than schools, not more.

The moral of all this is that the opinions of great men do not in the least absolve us from the duty of thinking for ourselves. They are flashes of inspiration which reveal to us aspects of truth and reality that may have remained invisible without them. But that is all. We cannot live

for them or even by them. We can only live for ourselves, and we should look only within ourselves for the light that guides and the will that creates.

THE CULT OF CORRELATION

EVERYTHING that has been said and written about correlation derives from a pronouncement, which is also a part of a resolution of the Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress of 1938 :

'Throughout this period (that is the seven years' education in the basic school) Education should centre round some form of material and productive work, and all other activities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft with due regard to the environment of the child.'

In the interpretations of this original idea the modifying words, 'as far as possible' were completely forgotten, it was taken for granted that the child came from a cotton-growing area, that clothing took precedence over all human needs and that successful correlation was the acid test of the teachers' art. It was also assumed that without the exercise of ingenuity, correlations would not be possible. They would, therefore, have to be sought after, proclaimed, propagated. The effort required for this was enormous; the outcome has been a cult.

The first question that occurs when one considers the place of correlation in the teaching of crafts and other subjects is whether an intensive study of the craft is to be aimed at, and if it is, what the relative importance of the other subjects is to be. The second question is whether the correlations are more important or the subjects themselves, because in the excess of enthusiasm it has also been stated that subjects should be taught to the extent that they can be

correlated with the craft. The third question is whether knowledge should, from the beginning to the end of education, be regarded as an organism to which the arts and sciences contribute, or whether having interest in a particular subject creates a nucleus which, deriving sustenance from all sources, later develops into a body of information representing a type of knowledge. I have not the competence in craft, educational theory or philosophy to attempt to answer these questions. I can only talk as a layman with the feeling that I may be entirely wrong.

It seems to me that study is either intensive, or an occupation for leisure hours or a waste of time. I take it, therefore, that the answer to the first question is that the study of craft must be intensive. I am confident that those who follow the cult of correlation will agree with me most heartily, particularly if craft is considered synonymous with spinning. The answer to the other half of the question is already implicit in this statement: all other subjects will have only a relative importance.

I am not aware of any advocate of correlation who has made an intensive study of any craft, without reference to its social and political associations. I do not know, for instance, of any advocate of spinning who has become a master-craftsman, whose yarn has a value comparable to the productions of the old spinners. If there were, I would sit at his feet and ask him all my questions. I have no evidence for it, but I believe that he would have confirmed the views I express.

If a craft is studied intensively, its correlations will all be internal. Their aim will be to discipline the hand and the eye, so that they become more efficient instruments, to perfect the accordance between the mental image and the material form to be created. The master-carpenter will not talk geography, he will not talk about forests, he will talk about wood and wood only. He will talk of wood he has

seen shaped by his own hands. Whatever he says, the object will be to unravel the mystery which enables wood to take shape when worked upon by the hand, under the guidance of the mind, and in the light of all that has been done by way of shaping wood with the hand. The master-carpenter will talk of things made, of the harmonisation of material with form, of function with form, and of form and function with the patterns which his eyes have seen or his craft has inherited. To the students of the craft it will appear as if there is nothing worth while in life except the creation of beautiful and useful forms in wood. At a certain stage this kind of isolation is necessary for the full concentration of the mind on the craft. At another stage, when the road to perfection has been travelled almost to the end, the isolation will become more intense if the student of the craft gets no other education, and will be broken if he does. At this stage, the student will look beyond the material available, beyond his tools, beyond his patterns, beyond his teacher, to other wood, other techniques, other attempts at attaining perfection. In other words, having assimilated all that his teachers and perhaps his religion or his country can give him; having, in the terms of the technique and aesthetics of wood-work become a full citizen of his country, he can become a citizen of the world. He can become an heir to all civilisation as wood-worker; whether he becomes an heir to all human civilisation will depend on other qualities of his mind, which may or may not be related to his special aptitude for wood-work.

If an intensive study implies necessarily that all correlations must be internal, then any correlation that leads away from the subject can only result in reducing the intensiveness of the study. The answer to this objection is that correlations need not be forced; they must be made use of only when they follow logically from the particular work being done in the craft. For instance in card-board work,

correlations with arithmetic and geometry, specially geometry, are considered to be automatic. The shapes we make in card-board are geometrical shapes, the calculations are arithmetical. So why not correlate card-board work with geometry and arithmetic? Here again there is a confusion of aims. In card-board work we have forms and patterns. They are judged by their beauty and utility, with which geometry and arithmetic are not concerned. In geometry, a rectangle is a rectangle. There is no beautiful and no ugly rectangle, no pleasing proportions, no disproportion which can hurt the eyes. In card-board work, beauty of form is a primary consideration. That beauty has not been derived from geometry and cannot be learnt from it. The arithmetic in card-board work is the servant, the instrument, of the creative mind. Its function is to enable the mind to achieve what it desires; it should not intrude as a separate value. Of course, those who do card-board work will recognise, when studying geometry, the forms that they have learnt to remember and to judge when doing card-board work; they will apply the arithmetic which they have learnt in order to make correct calculations for their card-board work to other purposes. That is all.

Does this argument lead to the conclusion that no correlation is necessary or possible? In a way it does, and in another sense it does not. No craft can be learnt properly unless it appears to the students as the whole of knowledge, as the only worth while knowledge. But to acquire this knowledge it is necessary to cultivate certain moral qualities whose end results are conscientiousness and objectivity, or the development of what might be called the worker's conscience, the altruistic desire and the ability to place one's skill and industry and enthusiasm at the service of society. It is here, in moral values, that crafts and other subjects are correlated, and it is here that the realisation comes that individual aptitude, social needs and all the different branch-

es of skill and knowledge have to be fused into a harmonious, living and dynamic whole.

The interpretation of the principle, stated in the beginning, that the study of all subjects should be integrated with a central handicraft has to be revised. Any subject that we teach at school is deeply rooted in some human need. If it is not, it should be deleted from the curriculum. If it is, then we should recognise its separate identity, the particular aptitude necessary for its study and the discipline required for a fruitful study. Education is essential; it is an imperative. It is not a pampering of young minds. It cannot be reduced to a problem of making learning a matter of interest for those who are basically uninterested, or easy for those who find everything difficult. Those who learn must be able to exercise their minds, to develop a second wind of concentration when the first is exhausted, like those running a race. On the other hand, those who are desirous of integrating the teaching of all subjects with a central handicraft must consider whether this integration is a principle of general application, or whether it was recommended as a method for the self-supporting rural school, where the teaching of craft had to be vocational. No experiments have been made to see whether education in the village can be made self-supporting; we have only had basic schools, most of them teaching crafts uneconomically. Correlations improvised for the sake of orthodoxy, by teachers with a poor knowledge both of the craft and the academic subjects have added to the confusion of ideas and the futility of the new educational practice. We cannot revert to the old method—or lack of method—because that would be retrograde. We cannot continue to talk of craft-centred education without a body of opinion that is growing stronger and stronger correlating it with some form of dishonesty.

Perhaps the most undogmatic way of stating the position

would be this. The teaching of craft has been considered necessary and has been introduced at a particular stage of education because at this stage of development the hands are the principal means of acquiring knowledge. I cannot answer the questions as to how long and for what particular types of mind the hands are and remain the principal means of learning at the stage. There are children who are awkward with their hands and retain this awkwardness throughout life. We cannot condemn them as sub-human. There are children who are skilful with their hands in childhood and remain so throughout life. They are not superhuman. There are those who can exercise their judgement in the creation of colour and form; they may not be able to judge ideas. There are those who can judge ideas, but have no sense of form or colour. The achievements of human civilisation would not have been possible without this diversification of abilities and aptitudes. Any principle of teaching which does not fully recognise this fact can only damage civilisation. What we want in education is commonsense and not a cult.

ADULT EDUCATION

I SPEAK with great diffidence. But I feel that a sufficient number among us do not realise the extent of the responsibility we have taken upon ourselves in achieving our freedom. We are not just politically sovereign and independent. We are not just a democracy. We are not just a people planning our development within the framework of independence and democracy. Mahatma Gandhi insisted, and we willingly agreed, that our freedom should not be the freedom of a class, that our idea of the spiritual and material good should not be a fixed, traditional idea. We have written into our Constitution fundamental principles and directives that make us into a classless society, that make it incumbent on us to promote the highest development of the individual citizen. Our state has undertaken to eliminate all distinction and discrimination, to allow free-play for talent within an administrative and social structure that provides for all equal right and opportunity. We have gone far beyond other nations in imposing on ourselves the moral obligation to foster international peace and cooperation. Our freedom, far more than freedom elsewhere, is a professed, constitutional obligation to work for the highest social ends.

These ends cannot be realised in a day. It would be unfair if others, or we ourselves, took a too strict account of the eleven years for which we have been free. The legal fact of our independence has been considerably modified by circumstances, by the occurrence of events which forced us to divert our attention and energies to issues that arose

unexpectedly. Nature has also put us on trial, and we have had to spend on foodgrains, resources that should have been utilised elsewhere. But we cannot be complacent. We should not too easily excuse ourselves if we lack the feeling of urgency, if we think that the time at our disposal is not to be measured by the length of our own lives, but in centuries and even millennia. Nor should we excuse ourselves if we mistake an experiment undertaken for a task accomplished, a performance that on critical appraisal appears to be of dubious or small value for an obligation fulfilled in part.

In the field of adult education, we did begin with a proper sense of urgency in 1937. It did seem to us that a democracy of the illiterate would be no democracy at all, and that it was the primary duty of the educated to remove the blemish of illiteracy. But we were hasty in deciding that quick results were essential, and we fixed the target too low. Of one state, at least, I know that the first wave of enthusiasm was spent in teaching the illiterate to sign their names. But institutious and organisations were set up which gave literacy a more ambitious interpretation, social education centres of a permanent character were established, literature was prepared to enable the new literate to acquire elementary knowledge of any subject that happened to interest him. Immediately after independence, work on both these lines was expanded and intensified. In addition, the idea of people's colleges was taken up, following some experiments that appeared to be useful. The planning and execution of social education projects became a somewhat specialised task, the social education worker began to look upon his job as one of constant, organised repetition. The states added a department of social education to their education departments, and gave social education the status of routine work.

Are we to be satisfied with what has been done, or what

seems likely to be accomplished if we continue on the lines we have followed so far? I do not think there would be many who would say 'yes' with a convincing degree of confidence. A recent survey, based on random sampling, of five Hindi-speaking states, shows that the actually literate are only a fraction, and not a large fraction, of those listed as literate. We may dispute the findings. The fraction that is actually literate may be somewhat larger. But so may be the number of those found to be illiterate or almost illiterate. The question is not one of arithmetic, of small or large percentages. We use glasses to acquire normal sight, not for relatively better sight. Our effort is not well used, or well directed if the main result is to convert absolute into relative illiteracy. The people's colleges are an idea we have borrowed but not been able to adapt. We have not succeeded in making them centres of general education, and it was not intended that they should be training centres for agriculture or crafts set up by voluntary agencies to compete with those set up by governments. But for the scheme of adult schools, we are almost where we were, so far as methods are concerned.

In the matter of means, also, no definite progress seems to have been made. We began with mass effort. We felt, perhaps, that if we organised and disciplined this mass, used it as a general uses his army, we would be overstepping the limits imposed by democracy. In other countries, specially the Soviet Union, mass effort has been applied. The mass may have been collected and organised by force, and fear of the consequences may have prevented it from disintegrating. But masses cannot be kept together and made to apply their energies to specific purposes on a purely voluntary basis. When mass action is at the same time the action of competent individuals, training and discipline and relentless persistence are also required. We did not or could not fulfil any of the conditions. Our mass action

remained indistinguishable from mass enthusiasm, and as enthusiasm evaporated, the mass disintegrated. I would say even now that mass action would be the swiftest means of eradicating illiteracy, but we must train and discipline this mass of the educated as if it were an army sent to battle with ignorance and illiteracy. We must set out with the determination to win the battle, and we must have the courage to give swift and sure punishment to defaulters and deserters and those who spread discontent or undermine morale. But I know that we shall not be able to do it, because we shall not be able to bring ourselves to fulfilling the conditions on which alone mass action can succeed.

Another means, now generally in use, is the social education worker. A discussion of his fate raises many inconvenient issues. We can have a social education department administered like the education department, if we also have a syllabus, classes, examinations; that is, if the social education worker knows precisely what he has to teach, whom he has to teach, and why he has to teach. But if we are dissatisfied with this conception of social education, if we desire to make it a means of stimulating the impulse for self-improvement, of imparting the skill to practise a craft in order to earn a livelihood or to supplement other means of earning it, if our aim is to produce competent, public-spirited citizens, then the social education department has to be differently organised and administered, the social education worker to be differently recruited and differently treated. He must be educated enough to understand his function, confident enough to exercise his initiative, and he must be given the freedom to adapt his means to his ends. His freedom must be ensured by responsiveness on the part of the administration, by a sharing in the sense of urgency and a willingness to shoulder an equal degree of responsibility. I have no authority for saying that we have not found the social education worker we wanted, or not known

how to treat him when we found him. But I believe social education in India would have had a different aspect if such workers had been found in sufficiently large numbers.

You and I know, however, that we have gone to the other extreme of making, by and large, social education a part-time employment, of paying the local primary school teacher an allowance for looking after the local social education centre. A part-time worker costs much less than a full-time one, and if we have to deal in thousands of workers, the saving can amount to lacs of rupees. But if saving is our objective, we could save the part-time workers' allowance also. If we have other ends in view, if social education means literacy plus social sense plus participation in all forms of development work plus understanding plus earnestness and zeal, then we just do not deserve any return for what we spend on part-time workers. Primary school teachers have not, in any part of the country, been found to be sufficiently competent or devoted. Those who are competent and devoted will be too occupied with and too exhausted by their substantive work to undertake any more. We may be breaking their back by adding to their responsibility. The other kind will be just selling their incompetence and indifference to us, and what we give them in return and the manner in which we give it, is not sufficient to awaken their conscience. Social education, or any education, cannot be the result of such traffic. But somehow the idea of saving money sticks to our mind. The plan of employing part-time social education workers is known to have failed. But the Ministry of Community Development are trying it again.

A very serious problem, when we are discussing the means of social education, is whether this is the proper function of the government or of voluntary agencies. I do not hold any brief for voluntary agencies. Too often the voluntary agency provides an outlet for the ambitious, or

a stepping stone to an essentially different career. But voluntary agencies are the eyes and the hands and the mind of the public. They may become the tools, but they are also the only correctives of the political party. They are the only form in which citizens interested in various activities of social and cultural value can organise themselves for cooperating with the government. They are the symptoms and the symbols of public initiative. They force the government as well as the people to think and act. Because they need help, their work can be examined and assessed. Even their mistakes have a significance, as they provide experience at a comparatively low cost. On the other hand, the initiative of the government is in reality the initiative of a few officers. Except where small pilot projects are taken up, the government tends inevitably to work on a large scale and in an impersonal way. It takes greater risks, and all its undertakings, in spite of the lavish use of the word 'temporary' in making appointments, become vested interests. The disappointments and frustrations of voluntary agencies become visible and audible; they often see the butcher's knife in their dreams. Government officials cannot speak out their minds except to other officials, their career depends very largely on the exercise of tact. Government departments have a forehead on which the hallmark of eternity appears as bio-chemical reaction to the very fact of their coming into existence. There are risks in any case, and the greatest risk is that the desire for work will degenerate into planning for survival. But all things considered, the voluntary agency seems to be the more suitable for actual execution, the government for financial aid, scrutiny and evaluation of all kinds of projects of social education.

I do not know if you will think a pessimist like me the proper person to discuss policy. But I am not alone in having learnt from experience, and policy does need to be

discussed even if it involves some waste of time.

I believe, first, that we must concentrate instead of diffusing our efforts. Secondly, we must concentrate where success is most likely, where it is most easily measurable. We must concentrate on the adult school, on workers' education, on the philosophy, in the widest sense, of adult and social education.

I wish I could talk about concentration of effort without committing myself further. It is most embarrassing to discuss the value of a heritage, specially when this heritage is a policy that finds the most honourable mention on the most solemn occasions. All our sense of duty, all our allegiance to the ideals of democracy, all our love for our native earth seems to call us to the village. Going back to the village spiritually is like the intoxication of love, to which sobriety must be brought as the most cherished sacrifice. But have we succeeded in making our love acceptable? I dare not say 'No'. We have Mahatma Gandhi, the supreme example of statesmanship, of dedication to moral values telling us that if we cannot make ourselves and our love acceptable to rural India, we might as well write off anything else that we have achieved. We may be condemning ourselves too strongly for our failures in the past and laying ourselves open to the charge of an inconsistency that amounts almost to a moral offence if we now say that, for purposes of social education, we must begin with the town, and wait for a happy coincidence of desires before we advance into the village. But I believe we have no choice.

Since I have said this much, let me say the rest. No one in his senses will deny that the rural population of India has the greatest claim on the state, and is entitled first and foremost to all forms of welfare service. But is the problem of rural India a problem of social education? Let us postulate that it is. Then we must persuade villagers to

learn to read and write, to desire a cleaner, healthier life, to learn how to cooperate, how to use their intelligence and energy for promoting projects of common benefit, and for getting higher returns for the labour they put in by using the best methods in agriculture and animal husbandry. While we are persuading villagers to follow particular lines of self-improvement, we must—or rather the social education service must—have on hand the rewards to be given as soon as they are deserved : books and opportunities for stimulating the mind, an income from which more clothes and better food can be purchased, a medical service for the prevention and treatment of the most common diseases, proper conservancy arrangements, opportunities for exercising the ability to cooperate and for deriving substantial benefit from cooperative enterprises, a market and marketing facilities. The Ministry of Community Development is doing all that can be done to improve economic and living conditions in the rural areas under its charge. But it is not, and I do not think it should be, an agency following the principles of social education, waiting till needs become felt needs, making development a result of education, thinking primarily in terms of personality, of civic virtue, of social fulfilment. I do not think there is a middle path between helping the people by providing what they need and teaching them to help themselves. If we have established a Community Development for helping the people, we must give an entirely different form to what we have been calling social education.

What this form is to be, I shall discuss later. For the present, let me say that this form will depend entirely on the measure and the nature of the success achieved by the Community Development Ministry. For other agencies, adult education should mean the setting up of adult schools in urban areas.

The adult school will be a school, and will be conducted

like a school. It will be based on the assumption that men are selfish, that they are so deficient in their sense of values that they would not care for literacy if all they get in return for their labour is the dubious ability to read books and newspapers, to understand national and international problems, and to perform such civic duties as voting intelligently. The adult school will not be an institution for making people literate. It will depend on its ability to attract those who wish to become literate so that they might study further. Of course, there may be those who would be satisfied with literacy. For such people, literacy would mean the study of all subjects up to the standard of the fifth primary class. But the purpose of the school will be to induce further study. And now that we have begun an experiment in adult schools, the aim of the Indian Adult Education Association should be to see that this experiment succeeds, that the establishment of adult schools becomes a part of the Plan, and that proper opportunities are provided for those who pass out of the adult school.

This further education will consist in opportunities of studying up to the higher secondary standard, and in obtaining professional training of the kind each adult needs or is suited for. I hope and pray that trade schools and institutions for professional training will have become a part of our programme of educational development by the time adult schools have begun to teach up to the higher secondary level, and organisers of adult education will only have to see how they can make use of existing training facilities. Of course, if these are not available, the adult with a higher secondary certificate will want to join the university, and we shall have to see what the universities can do. In any case, the adult school is meant to provide not literacy but education, and to lead on to a career.

If we adopt the policy of establishing adult schools in urban areas, we shall have to review our conception of

social education. So far we have imposed an idealistic approach on ourselves and on the adult we wished to educate. Now we must look to material interest. The well-to-do villager already consults his material interest by sending his son to school. The poor villager wants to earn more, and adult or social education of the type we have been giving has not evidently helped to increase his income. The agencies whose assistance he can benefit from are the Ministry of Community Development, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the local government officials. It should be the function of these agencies to make social education a part of their programmes. In the urban areas, the adult school ought to offer a material inducement, and we ought to make sure that the inducement is material enough.

But if the scope of adult education is restricted to this extent, do we not eliminate social education altogether? It would appear that we do, because the present social education centre will be converted into an adult school. We do that, however, for the reason that the people whom we have been trying to draw to the social education centre really need adult schools. It is the educated, the employed who need social education centres, and it is their need that we must try to fulfil.

The basic need is to think, to think intelligently, consequently, seriously. The duty to think is one that we all evade. We have personal reasons for this evasion, and the reasons differ. The manner of evading it is also different with each one of us. Some of us stop thinking because they have their work marked out. The teacher has his syllabus prescribed, his periods assigned; he knows what registers he has to fill; he knows the rules about salary and D.A. and leave; he knows when to expect a promotion and when to fear or hope for a transfer. His life is an example of continuity without change. He has now, because of the

exertions of forward-looking educationists, to sit through lectures or to attend workshops or seminars. He has sometimes to formulate in words what is called his 'experience', to repeat substantially what he knows. My arithmetic has always been bad, and I cannot give in figures how many times the same things would be repeated if we had twenty seminars, each attended by fifty persons. But you can guess the figure. Social education workers, at all levels, are no less guilty of confusing thought with repetition, or with the passing around of clichés and technical terms from mouth to mouth, seminar to seminar, conference to conference. Earnest and enthusiastic government officers add official slang to the technical terms and clichés appropriate to the subject they are dealing with, and mistake for serious thought precise correspondence, between scheme and budget, idea and expenditure. All of us seem to have arrived at a tacit understanding to avoid, first, discussion of fundamentals and, secondly, analysis of the terms we use.

Let me give a few examples. We all talk of urban and rural education. Does it mean that we have two kinds of human beings that have to be distinguished from each other if we wish to give them proper education? Does the same educative process have one effect in the country, another in the town? If human beings and the process of educating them are the same, why do we suggest that there is a difference? Further, when we talk of urban and rural, do we imply that a difference of circumstances exists or that this difference has to be maintained? Will the economic development that we are planning now reinforce and perpetuate or will it undermine and destroy the present social and economic structure of the village? If the village is to be maintained as it is, are we adapting education and development to this objective? If we think the village as it cannot, or does not deserve to survive, should we not plan education with this in mind? I have myself been

rather indiscreet in expressing my inability to admire the village or the villager, and have desired for both the best that the town can give. I would advise you to be more tactful, but I do think it a matter of national concern that this issue should be frankly discussed.

Another example of evasion is our fear of discussing all that comes under belief. I realise the danger of raising religious controversies. But the acceptance of all that exists sets limits to education which may ultimately strangle education itself. If you examine the religious thought and practice among the Muslims during the last 150 years, you will find that all movements have found their grave in a greater emphasis on praying five times a day, greater attention to meaningless details, a more meticulous elimination of all habits and customs borrowed from the Hindus and a more irrational admiration for everything Islamic or Muslim. I cannot think of a better method of injecting frustration and decay into any society than the reduction of all its spiritual and moral idealism to external forms. On the other hand, I see Hinduism being reduced to festivals and the repetition of myths. If you think I am exaggerating, please study the items we include in the cultural programmes of our social education centres. You will find it is the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* over and over again. You will say these are part of the people's life. I agree. But are they the whole of the people's life? Is there nothing else, nothing beyond?

Ours is a secular state. Does this mean that we leave all religious beliefs alone, or does it mean that the state has thrown a challenge to all religions to find a new expression, a new life? Does secularism teach us to stop thinking about religion, to make it a private affair, of no social significance, or to keep it as an ornament for the mantle-piece? Does the '*farz*', the absolute obligation of the Muslim, consist only in certain observances, and the repeti-

tion of certain formulas? Has the Hindu concept of the *dharma* no value except as prescription of ritualistic duties for castes and sub-castes? These questions have to be considered by all of us, but specially by those whose main interest or concern is social education. Otherwise, such concepts as civic duty, tolerance, goodness will remain just abstract terms; we shall never be able to understand or explain what we mean by 'personality', the fully developed human person, the reading of text-books and tracts and the evaluation reports on special experiments will be the sum total of our intellectual effort and technical discussions will be the kitchen from which we serve out our spiritual food.

I was thinking of all this when I suggested just now that we need social education centres for the educated and the employed. It is they whom we should induce to think along with us, for it is they who are at the moment lost in democracy as in a wilderness. They have no compelling beliefs, no guiding principles, no standards for the judgement of right and wrong, no taste, no culture. It is true that justice requires us to give of what we have first to those who have nothing. But perhaps we shall have more to give, and more people willing and able to give, if we spend a good part of what we have in the first place among those who are better able to understand and more likely to be responsive. A mentally active and morally responsible lower middle class can make a great difference in a democracy as young as ours, with the masses still steeped in the darkness of ignorance.

PRODUCTION OF READING MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

THE need for specially prepared literature for adults was felt when, over thirty years ago, the first night schools for adults were started. Since independence, increasing interest of the Government of India and UNESCO has given great encouragement to the production of reading material and, as a result, there are now a number of agencies which specialise in this particular field.

Literature for adults is not just literature. It is reading material with a pre-set purpose for a predetermined audience. If the product does not serve its specific aim, it is worthless. Writing for adults has, therefore, to be considered both an art and a science.

Before the 'book' reaches the intended audience as a finished product it has to pass through a number of stages, where it is handled by qualified and trained persons. A brief description of some of these stages will give an idea of the elaborate procedure that has to be adopted.

The process of production begins with what is called 'topic study'. Who is to decide on what topics the material is to be prepared? The authors? No. The producers? No. It should be the privilege of the readers only. The object of producing the material is not fully served unless the topics selected are in accordance with the preferences shown by the intended readers. Although this is an accepted principle, yet like many other principles it is not generally adhered to. However, scientifically speaking, this is the point where the production process should start, because

unless the selection of topics is based on the known needs and interests of readers it will be an arbitrary and hit-or-miss affair.

After selecting the topic, the preparation for writing the manuscript begins. An author is chosen who draws up a plan of the book. Those agencies which can afford to work on scientific lines generally have a team of writers, illustrators and editors, and all of these are actively associated in the programme of opinion survey. This gives them some idea not only about the needs and interests but also about the cultural and economic background of the would-be readers. In such agencies, the job of selecting the author is easy. Generally, one of the authors, who have participated in opinion survey, volunteers to write the manuscript. If the proposed topic is a technical subject, then advice has to be taken from an expert also. If, fortunately, the expert himself can write the manuscript, that is ideal; generally, a discussion is held in which author, editor, and expert participate and thus the author is able to obtain maximum information on technical points.

Having collected and assimilated the material, the author, in consultation with the editors, chooses the form. It is up to him to decide whether the matter could be presented most effectively in the form of a story, a dialogue or a narrative.

The quality of the material produced by the author depends entirely on the labour and care that he devotes to the task. He has to operate under a strict discipline. His audience is a special category of people whose education is very limited and who are not expected to know much of matters outside the interest and concern of their own local community. This condition restricts the author's freedom. He cannot indulge in any form of 'self-expression'. In order to produce what is technically called readable material, he has to be simple and clear and to adapt his vocabulary

strictly to the cultural background of his readers. He has to avoid technical words and limit the use of new or difficult words. His success depends on how far he has been able to observe this discipline of writing.

When the manuscript is ready from author's point of view, it is sent to the editor, whose job is as specialised as that of the author. He reads and re-reads the manuscript with the eyes of the intended audience. He checks every word, every phrase and every expression, changing and even re-writing what according to this judgement is inappropriate. After editing, the manuscript is sent back to the author to find out whether he agrees to the alterations and changes. In case of difference of opinion there is a discussion, and although the final decision rests with the editor, it is not to be exercised arbitrarily. Then the expert examines the manuscript to see that the factual information is correct. The final judge is not the editor but the group of would-be readers to which the manuscript is carried for testing.

Taking the manuscript to the field is the step which gives to the art of production of literature a scientific basis. It is here that the author and editor are brought face to face with representative members of their intended audiences, and they try to find out their reactions through a series of questions. These questions are carefully prepared for eliciting reactions about each and every aspect of the manuscript, so that it may be revised in the light of these reactions. It is only when the manuscript has been tested and suitably revised that it is ready for the press.

Generally, the illustrations are prepared when the manuscript is in the editing stage, and by the time the text is ready for testing, the illustrations also are ready and are put to a test along with the manuscript.

After this the manuscript stage is over. Now a number of decisions have to be taken regarding the printing of the

book—the size, the cover design, the type, the number of lines to a page, the margin, the arrangement of the illustrations, etc. All these things contribute towards making a book readable and attractive.

This, in short, is the procedure involved in the production of reading material. It cannot be claimed that all the agencies who are engaged in the production of such material follow it strictly. That, however, is a different matter.

Although, during the last ten years, a considerable quantity of reading material has been produced, yet the need for more and better produced material has not diminished. The audience for this type of material and with it demand for quality books is fast expanding. In order to ensure that future development will be on scientific lines and that the quality of the material will constantly improve, an elaborate programme of research and training has to be undertaken in the many problems involved in the preparation, production and utilisation of reading materials, the methods and techniques of teaching and the promotion of reading habits. The work of the producers is not over after the book has been put on the market. Evaluation of the material produced is as important at this stage as at any other. The process of production is not complete until it has been ascertained how far the product has served its purpose. It is only in the light of an evaluation report that future production can be improved.

Realising the need for a permanent research programme some agencies, like the Bombay City Social Education Committee, the Mysore Adult Education Council, Literacy House, Lucknow, and the Jamia Millia have set up research units. This is a healthy trend which needs more encouragement in the form of financial assistance and assignment of projects.

There is also need for training more and more authors, editors, book designers and illustrators. More literacy

workshops should be organised to train the authors and illustrators already working with voluntary agencies and private publishers. In these workshops emphasis should be not only on the technique of writing but also on testing and evaluation.

Distribution and sale is the base on which the whole programme of book production rests. Unfortunately, this happens to be our weakest point and demands immediate attention. There is need, not only for research in the problems of promotion of sale but also in methods of developing alternative means for reaching the readers. The economic condition of the people in general is a great obstacle which is not likely to be removed in the near future and there is little chance that the sale of these books to individuals will substantially increase. To some extent sales could be increased if the prices were substantially reduced through large-scale production. But large-scale production itself depends on the extent of the demand. There are two ways out of this vicious circle. One is to subsidise production, so that the prices can be reduced ; the other is to develop a library service to reach the maximum number of readers. The Central and State Governments are already assisting promotion of sale in the form of cash awards and purchase of selected books. In compliance with the recommendation of the Murree Seminar, held in 1956, UNESCO also has recently instituted some awards for encouraging authors. In spite of all this, there is no doubt that encouragement and assistance is needed on a far bigger scale.

It is also necessary to ensure that the books purchased by the Central and State Governments are put to the maximum possible use. The channels of distribution being under the direct control of the state, it should be possible to ensure that the books reach the intended readers and help to create a demand for more and better books.

LITERATURE FOR NEO-LITERATES

QUITE some time ago, I gave a talk on *Production of Literature for Neo-literates*. I described in detail the techniques of production, the test of a good book, the possible methods of effective distribution. Being unwilling to repeat myself, I read the text of the previous talk before sitting down to write this one, and was struck by its irrelevance. We have since discovered that for one reason or another all the decisions we had taken need to be discussed over again, so that they may be revised. Literacy is important, but should it be given absolute or only relative priority? If its priority is only relative, what should take precedence? Why is it that so much effort to make people literate produces so little result? Why is it that people do not buy, or if they get them free, do not read good books on topics which they themselves declare are of the greatest interest to them? Why is the progress in literacy so slow, its reality so doubtful? It is only when these questions have been answered that we need to consider who is to prepare, who is to judge, who is to obtain and distribute books for neo-literates. There does not need to be any literature unless there are readers who habitually read.

Adult and social education has itself been in the melting-pot for some time, a poor relative whom two powerful benefactors wish to appropriate, less out of love than the desire to earn political merit. At the Annual Conference on Community Development at Hyderabad, the Ministries of Education and Community Development thought things over and issued a joint note. It is an elaborate plan for keeping the Ministries out of each other's

way, of shifting the responsibility from cabinets and ministers to panchayats, from the head of democracy to its feet. The existing duties of the community development officers have been considered, but not those of the primary school, its headmaster and teachers. Awareness of civic needs has been presumed among those who have so far been with difficulty able to follow the guidance of others, and the exercise of initiative has been expected, but from no one in particular. If I were a primary school teacher anxious to run a social education centre for public benefit or my own, there would be a procedure for rejecting or redirecting my requests; community development or education officers would not be taken to task for having wrongly complied with my requests. But if I were not interested, there would be no social education centre, no problems of literacy, no need for books. Those who desire the rapid promotion of literacy feel that the latest decisions of ministries and the Planning Commission have cold-shouldered them and their philosophy; those who think that these decisions have adjusted the balance between literacy and economic development have no precise plans for the eradication of illiteracy.

The case for giving the highest priority to literacy is weak and is growing weaker. We have really not succeeded in convincing the illiterate that they gain much by following our advice and learning to read. What we have done so far can be justified by the results, but we must now admit that if we do not take the illiterate far enough, he might decline to go with us even a few steps. It was with this in mind that the Union Ministry of Education and the Jamia Millia drew up in 1957 a scheme of Adult Schools. These schools were intended to be an informal means of providing formal education up to the secondary or higher secondary level, and those who studied in them were to be examined at different stages by the Directorate of Education. They

would thus offer the prospect not only of literacy but of education. The number attending these schools would of course be much smaller than those who, theoretically, would acquire literacy through mass campaigns, and these schools would have to be in urban or industrial areas in the first instance. But they could spread out into adjoining rural areas also, and along with the progressive decentralisation of industry that is now contemplated, become a system of purposeful adult education. Experimental schools of this kind have been established in Delhi and some other states, and those who joined them have been gradually animated with a desire for thorough and continuing study.

If adult schools are established on a large scale, then what we have so far called literature for new literates will be of two kinds, one to meet the needs and wishes of those who cannot join adult schools and must increase their competence themselves, and another kind for those who desire to increase their knowledge through supplementary reading. The adult schools will naturally set the standard. There will no longer be a need, in their case, for that delicate adjustment of reading material to an undependable if not hypothetical understanding, that wheedling and coaxing of dull minds which has so far dictated the technique of literature production for neo-literates. Students of adult schools will be interested in the contents, the substance of a book, in the amount of knowledge it imparts; they will want the maximum of information in the least possible space. Of course we cannot ignore their capacity to assimilate information, and give them more at a time than their minds can cope with. But the problem of approach and presentation will be considerably simplified.

The neo-literate who is not in the adult school will have to keep pace with the school-going. He will feel, far more keenly than he does now, that he is a drag on the commu-

nity, that because of his illiteracy everything takes longer to explain and procedures get involved, that even at the lowest level social thought and action remain handicapped by the inertness of his illiterate mind. The impulse to learn will then come from him and come naturally; it will not be dropped into his mind three or four times a day like some alcohol of enthusiasm.

If the present tendency—or decision—to give priority to economic development is followed, literature for neo-literates in the rural and urban areas will have to follow new patterns. It will have to be mainly technical, the techniques dealt with being agricultural, mechanical, procedural or political. It will consist, generally speaking, of directions how to utilise soil, water, seed, manure, tools and implements, machinery, opportunities, civic rights. The style will be dictated by the need, not of the person reading, but of the object described. The literature will not have the physical form and character of books but of leaflets, plans, instructions.

It would be quite wrong to assume that there is any conflict between the ideas of universal literacy, adult schools and economic development. Indeed, it is obvious that they go together. It is the persons concerned who want everything done their own way. As the procedures are involved and the funds available inadequate, the desire for absolute decisions one way or another is irrepressible. We also believe it to be undemocratic to displease persons, and as soon as there is any disagreement, we plan further discussions in seminars and conferences. This makes production of good literature for neo-literates very difficult, and its assessment generally one-sided and unfair. If we could be large-hearted with ourselves and more generous with labour and funds, much better literature would be produced in much larger quantity. A series of books on general knowledge, of which two have appeared, which was

intended for the advanced neo-literate has proved immensely popular with secondary school students and primary school teachers, because nothing else of that kind has so far been published. Literature production is not a question of hitting the bull's eye or being declared unsuccessful.

We should not be self-satisfied. The pace of economic growth and educational expansion is not fast enough, and yet we are conscious of a fall in the standards of competence and efficiency. That is true. But it is also the first time in history that economic development and educational expansion have been attempted on this scale and with such methods among a people so handicapped by ignorance and poverty. We should not expect spectacular or substantial results; let us aim only at excellence in whatever we do, even though it may appear infinitesimal. Literature for new literates is a wonderful field for experiment. The most highly educated among us are ignorant of most things that are outside their special subject. They could all take up topics which are new to them, and present them in an elementary form—the result would be literature for new literates, and a wider competence among the literates. I know the expert will frown—production of literature for new literates has to follow particular techniques; haphazard writing will lead nowhere. But I can smile back to say that I do not know for whom I am writing. I have only taken a subject of which I know nothing, and have begun by presenting it in the most elementary form imaginable. All I want is to write simply and to write well. Later, as my knowledge increases, I shall discuss my subject differently. What I write now or later may go anywhere—to the social education centre, the adult school, the farmer or the small-scale industries worker. I only want it to be welcome.

TO ART TEACHERS

I WELCOME you most heartily to the Jamia Millia and to the Institute of Arts Education, where your new course is to begin. The Jamia Millia has considered it a duty and a privilege to undertake refresher courses whenever possible, because the organisation of such courses in other institutions, which may be otherwise better provided, is a tedious process. It is not so with us, because we, perhaps, more than other institutions, believe that we must go out of our way to meet requirements and to bring people from different parts of the country together in an atmosphere of educative activity. That is why we are most happy to have you here. On the other hand, I am deeply conscious of the hardships to which you will be put, because our idealism often overreaches itself, and the ends we seek to achieve are a greater burden than our means can bear. But I am sure you will not judge the arrangements we have made too severely when you have seen that many of us here live in varying conditions of discomfort or improvised comfort, side by side with people who have no reasonable grounds for complaint. We live here in an atmosphere of social equality modified by material inequalities that are unavoidable, and though logically we may not be able to justify the co-existence of the comfort and discomfort, advantage and disadvantage which you see here, we believe that our situation reflects the world as it is, and that it equips us much better not only to bear but also to understand inequalities and vicissitudes, and to maintain, in spite of them, an attitude of cheerful optimism and willingness to work.

I welcome you to this refresher course also because, having seen the programme prepared for you, I feel that it will impress upon you the value of two qualities which I believe to be the basis of civilisation. The first is drudgery. Except for one or two holidays, for which the Director of this course has not bargained, you have hardly any breathing space. In our country we complain so often and so unreasonably of overwork. Your activities here will be an example of industry which you can hold up with pride in any part of the country and among any set of people. But for this pride you must pay the price. I call it drudgery to put the matter in the worst light and to remove all possibility of illusion. You will see it in the best light when you have finished the course. The other value to which I have given a name that makes some people resentful and amuses others is humility. I place this value before you without any hesitation, because it is indispensable, and because we can never have enough of it.

Let me explain this. There are two attitudes towards life, one of the intelligent person, who looks around and sees his advantage, exercises his mind as required for the achievement of limited ends, and thinks he has succeeded. The other attitude is of the man who begins with the awareness that he does not know, that he will not know until he has gone through a certain discipline, that even with all the discipline of which he is capable, he might ultimately not know enough. This is the attitude of humility, of a consciousness of shortcomings, of a reverence for knowledge and for those who possess knowledge. The intelligent man feels that he has succeeded when in fact he may have done nothing at all, the person with proper humility never thinks that he has succeeded, because he feels there is a competence higher than the highest he can attain, and a knowledge beyond the highest level of existing knowledge.

You may consider these views curious. Perhaps you will. But I would like you to examine them even if ultimately you think they ought to be rejected. But when you examine these views, please remember the context in which they have been expressed. Please count the people who are willing to bear their full share of our national burden, who have strengthened their shoulders so that they can cheerfully take up on themselves the burden of others. At the same time, please remind yourselves of how much the maintenance of civilised social life depends upon drudgery, how much the conscientious home maker, man or woman, has to drudge before a home looks like a home, before an atmosphere is created in which a man realises that he has ideals and values to live for. Please also remind yourselves of the unsparing demands of what we call the essential services upon those who are responsible for them. There are many who would not consider education among the essential services, many who think that whatever the rights of children, whatever the needs of the adolescent, however pressing the need of society for educated and competent young men or women, they can still bargain, they can still go on a sort of spiritual strike, which may be invisible but is far more damaging than an actual downing of tools or refusal to work. If you are to become teachers desirous of fully recognising and performing the service of education, it must be an axiom for you that the teacher is a drudge, that his satisfaction, his fulfilment, derives from his drudgery, that he is full of love and sympathy and solicitude because he can drudge.

As you are, or desire to become, art teachers and art is based on a special intelligence, a special aptitude for self-expression which cannot be correlated with humility even as I have defined it, you may be surprised that I place it before you as a desirable value. But here again I would request you to look around. Look at the nakedness of our

homes, our schools, our villages and our cities, look at the confusion of tastes, the unforgivable carelessness with which we accept the inaesthetic and positively ugly as an ornament. Look at the selfishness with which we seek to beautify our persons without any thought of the drabness of our environment. I am not an artist and I cannot talk to you of styles or colours or forms. But it seems to me that in our country the artist has gone ahead like the intelligent man, that if he succeeds, he does not count the cost of his success, and that in any case he does not feel that a thing of beauty loses its meaning in an environment lacking in beauty. If you agree with my idea of humility, you will not seek only self-expression. You will look around, in the first instance, for material and immaterial things whose inner beauty demands your reverence, you will place yourselves at the service of those aesthetic ideals which have gone to the making of Indian and human civilisation, you will accept your surroundings and feel at home in them only when you have contributed your full share towards making them beautiful. Your special field will be the multipurpose school. I cannot tell you how to teach art or to preach art. It is something beyond my competence. But if I understand it aright, the multipurpose school will provide you excellent opportunities of taking art out of the classroom, and of extending its influence over the whole school and all its varied activities. The multipurpose school is not meant only to adapt education to aptitude. One of its most important aims is to integrate, or rather re-integrate education. It will provide an environment in which teachers and students of different special aptitudes will work together, and if they are reasonably responsive, the values of one type of education will be shared by other types, so that we can have what may be called the highest common factor of general education, ability to appraise and appreciate, a desire to assimilate,

and finally a system of acquiring knowledge which will be an organic unity comprehending in itself all the diversities of intelligence, taste and ambition. Your contribution will be the building up, or if that is the wrong word, of awakening all the potentialities of aesthetic expression and self-expression. On you will devolve the enviable task of representing beauty and harmony, colour and form. You may not be concerned with psychology and philosophy, you will be in yourselves the response to the ineradicable desire for beauty and grace.

Let me welcome you again to the Jamia Millia, and wish you a fruitful course of study, which I have great pleasure in inaugurating.

THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

HISTORY is the story of the past, the study of events, situations, conditions of human life, the causes and effects of human actions. In its widest sense, history comprehends all knowledge, the urge which leads to philosophical speculation or scientific discovery being as much a part of the human record as the creation of an empire. But in practice the scope of history is confined to political events, social and economic life and culture. It is, therefore, either a neutral statement of known facts, implying that such facts are the only value in history, or a statement that is also an interpretation, a combination of facts and judgements. A neutral statement only conveys information, and can be as far from a true representation as a tree stripped of its leaves and smaller branches is from a normal tree. To acquire meaning, facts have to be interpreted. This interpretation can be inspired by national or ideological interest, or it can aim at understanding. Since we can understand only that with which we are able in some measure to identify ourselves, the historian as narrator has to merge himself in his narrative, as judge in his judgement. This does not mean that the personality of the historian or the student of history remains in abeyance. We may abhor warfare and destruction, but to discover the reasons why men fought against each other we have to look at things with their eyes, to identify ourselves with them for the time being. We must not only sympathise with those who suffered, but also put ourselves in the place of those who inflicted sufferings. For, like us, men have at all times

believed in justice and goodness and have committed wrongs out of ignorance, hope or despair. To be understood, the past has to be lived over again, history has to be made contemporary.

If the teaching of history is to be in accord with the purpose underlying its study, we must begin with world history. The method of proceeding from the known to the unknown, from the local to the national and the universal has its justification, but considering the vastness of what, in this method, is regarded as the unknown, and the possibly catastrophic consequences of people becoming habituated to thinking within the framework only of what is known, we must adopt other methods. Human history is not the sum total of national histories, and may cease to have any meaning if the judgements of nationalist historians are taken at their face value. We have to establish the principle of the unity of human life, and to avoid everything that induces us to look upon mankind as a mass of disintegrated units*. There is particular danger in teaching Indian history by distinguishing between the country as the unknown or less known factor and the region, state or linguistic area as the known, as it may end ultimately in reducing Indian history to just the background of regional histories, which will constitute the element that is part of experience, the history that is felt to be real.

The overriding importance of world history may be agreed to in principle and what we teach as history may nevertheless continue to be a lifeless account of dynasties and wars, a list of names, events and dates. History has ceased to be a popular subject with Indian students not only because it does not offer any attractive prospects but

* The Internationales Schulbuchinstitut in Brunswick has made a valuable contribution to the rewriting of national histories so as to eliminate bitterness and misunderstanding. The histories of several European and some Asian countries have already been revised.

because it is taught without conviction and without method. Conviction is lacking because, consciously or subconsciously, we regard only a part of Indian history as our own, depending on whether we are Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs, northerners or southerners, Bengalis or Maharashtrians. What does not belong to us is studied as part of an academic routine. One could not name one Indian historian of standing who has identified himself in sentiment with all Indians and the whole of India, to whom all the constituent elements of our heritage have equal value, because he has evolved standards of judgement unaffected by prejudices and irrelevant considerations. The result is that history has become just information, unrelated to either sentiment or need, junk stored up in a godown. There are set phrases, epithets hallowed by repeated use about all the outstanding figures of our history, set criticisms and encomiums of policies. No thought has been given to methods of teaching history at any stage, though in school teaching methods are talked about as if they were more important than knowledge of the subject. History has been left as dull as it ever was, a collection of names, dates, events, policies, opinions. At the university level, the examination governs the whole process of teaching and learning. Nothing has value unless examiners usually ask questions about it, and teachers and books are esteemed in proportion to their ability to provide beforehand answers to questions likely to be set at the examination. The popular teacher is one who furnishes students with copious and useful notes; the most widely read book is the key. History does not, therefore, exercise or stimulate the mind and has lost all appeal. If history cannot be taught in a better way, it would be better to eliminate it altogether from the school and university courses. But that also cannot be done. We all feel that we should be proud of our history, that its study should promote integration, patriot-

ism, self-sacrifice. We must teach history, even if there is no joy in its study, even if it is make-believe, or mere information passed on from teachers to students as part of the day's work.

We shall have to wait—let us hope, not in vain—for the historian who will unify the fragments of Indian history into a self-consistent whole, without ignoring established facts or deviating from the truth. But we can do much by way of preparing the ground through the adoption of methods that will make history interesting as a study and a means of promoting thoughtfulness and objectivity.

The educative value of history is reduced because it is offered only in a pre-digested form. The historian studies source-material, draws conclusions and sets them down for the student to learn and remember. It is true that references are made to the sources, conflicting versions are discussed, and reasons for regarding one source as more reliable than another are given. But the student, except at the latest stage, sees problems only through other eyes, and by the time he comes to the last stage of post-graduate study, he has become used to remembering the arguments of others rather than thinking for himself. The situation would be quite different if source material could be made the starting-point of history teaching at the university. Source material is archaeological, numismatic, epigraphic or documentary; whichever of these it may be, it will bring the student into direct relationship with the working of the human mind during a past age. But of course the selection of the source material must be carefully made. It may be necessary to follow a logical and not a chronological order, to make jumps from one to another aspect of life, from the significant facts of one period to those of another, to use the sequence of political events as the link in one case, and in another the transformations of an idea. The main consideration in the selection of a source for study should

be the number of questions it poses, and the leads it offers in different directions.

Let us take a few examples. The Rig Veda is one of the oldest human documents, and of immense value in itself and for a comparative study of beliefs. An extract from it would serve as a good introduction to the Rig Veda itself, and to the beliefs and religious practices of the period. An extract from Manu would raise a number of questions relating to law and custom, because of the changes that have taken place between the time when Manu's code was compiled and our own. Reference would naturally be to law and custom in other countries, parallels could be pointed out, reasons for the differences discussed. The extract would thus bring a whole aspect of life vividly to the forefront. The photograph* of one of the important edicts of Ashoka would raise many more questions; the edicts themselves, their number and geographical distribution, their author, the language and the script, the political and social institutions of the Mauryan period, Buddhism, the idea of a religion common to all men, and so on. Whatever order is followed in discussing them, the questions will all be relevant and interesting, and the information required for elucidation and discussion will be available in the books of any college or university library that is not below the average.

The method of using source material could make the teaching of world history during the first year at the university an excellent means of general education. There is hardly any university in India which has not in its neighbourhood archaeological sites of importance, and the Department of Archaeology would, perhaps, willingly cooperate in establishing small museums where methods of digging up the past as well as the various artifacts excavated

* Such photographs are given in many books of an academic standard, but not in a way to serve any educative purpose.

could be studied. Extracts from Langdon's *Sumerian Liturgical Texts*, Barton's *Sumerian Administrative Documents*, Erman's *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, from the Old Testament, from Vedic texts, would provide an insight into the working of the human mind, the organisation of society, of trade and industry during the earliest period; a law of Archimedes could become an introduction to Egyptian, Greek, Indian and Muslim science, extracts from the laws of Hammurabi, Solon, Manu and the Twelve Tables would offer illuminating parallels and contrasts in ideas of justice, of public, commercial and private law; the study of an early coin would serve to illustrate the need and the social and economic results of the introduction of coinage; an extract from the *Periplus* would lead straight into the labyrinth of trade-routes and complexities of those commercial and industrial relationships which are the invisible influences controlling and directing political forces. It is not necessary to multiply examples. Source material becomes more varied and plentiful as we approach the modern age, and the whole field of knowledge and political and economic activity could be covered by a judicious selection of extracts and illustrations.

History teaching at the post-graduate level is, even now, based largely on original sources. As stated earlier, confrontation with the sources should not be something new at this stage, something in dealing with which the student has no experience. In post-graduate study there should be a much wider acquaintance with the sources, a stimulation of the desire for discovering fresh evidence and for a revaluation of accepted conclusions and judgements. The student can do his work with the necessary confidence only if he has a sufficiently intimate previous knowledge of the types of source-material and of the methods of studying them.

Perhaps the highest value of study based directly on the

sources of historical knowledge would be the development of the faculty of consequent thinking, the cultivation of the scientific attitude. The conflict in the early modern age between the Christian churches and the desire for a wider and more reliable knowledge of the physical world has resulted in an approach to problems which is the only correct approach in all fields of knowledge being called 'scientific', as if it applied only to science. There are many scientists who do not possess a 'scientific' attitude, but only follow the methods of their own science, and there will be found many people having no knowledge of any of the natural sciences whose way of dealing with everyday matters is 'scientific'. Education will have fulfilled its main function if it can produce men and women animated with the desire to know the truth, who can examine the evidence available, who do not accept statements unless there is sufficient relevant and material evidence supporting them, and who are open-minded enough to consider fresh evidence even if it conflicts with conclusions they have arrived at already. At the present time, it does not seem that those who are awarded research degrees in history are capable of thinking scientifically. But they would, of course, throw the ball back to those who guide them, and these in turn would blame the system which promotes the successful evasion rather than the effective acquisition of knowledge. It would be best, perhaps, to begin reconstruction at the point where we are most exposed to the attacks of self-deception and prejudice—the teaching of history.

Reference has already been made to Indian history being taught without conviction, and to the failure of historiography to offer a synthesis of existing historical knowledge. If we attempt a synthesis now, we shall have to begin with an examination of most of the prevalent divisions of race, religion and culture and the assumptions on which they are based. Examination does not mean

acceptance or rejection; it only means an objective study based on as complete knowledge as possible. It means that we divest simplifications of all their misleading qualities, that we rely only on proper evidence and while we judge others we also judge ourselves, to see that we have not selected evidence to prove a preconceived theory. The function of the historian is different from that of a moralist, of a political preacher, of a devotee to any cause except that of truth. And yet the historian must breathe life into the past, clothe figures with flesh and blood, make the problems of history contemporary issues demanding our interest and concern.

We have now, in the fundamental principles of our Constitution, a standard of judgement. These principles represent an ideal, no doubt, but an ideal which we proudly acknowledge, and to the realisation of which we are morally committed, an ideal which is not national but human, the lesson as well as the decree of world history. A historian who believes it imperative to deduce his attitude to Indian history from these principles will find himself enjoying the freedom to use his imagination and his judgement, his sense of justice and his human sympathy, and he will be in a much better position to understand men and problems than those who are under the spell of misleading simplifications. Our history, like the history of most peoples of the world, is full of the accounts of aggression, warfare and bloodshed and, as everywhere else, historians and students of history fall into the trap of identifying themselves with one party or another, of allowing themselves to be influenced by politicians into regarding persons of their generation as responsible for what their ancestors did or were supposed to have done in the past; in other words, to buttress contemporary prejudices with historical evidence. The results of allowing prejudices to colour our history are obvious and emphasise the need for an objective treatment of our

history.

A defect which is also quite common among our historians is their ignoring an age-old principle that men should be judged according to their own laws, or according to a law which could be called the law of nations or equity or commonsense. This makes it incumbent on the judge to know more than one law, to understand opposing points of view, to decide according to equity and commonsense. In political history, the motives and the means for the exercise of power and the acquisition of territory are so obvious and make so much of a story by themselves that it appears unnecessary to probe further into the matter. But here, as in other spheres of life, there are laws which operate, disregard of which has known consequences. Water that flows into a depression does not commit an act of aggression, nor do the fish that happen to be in it encroach upon foreign territory. True, men have wills of their own and cannot be compared to water. But their wills are also influenced by circumstances, and the operation of historical laws will become clearer if all the circumstances are studied. It is difficult, no doubt, to regard objectively the fact of people coming from outside and taking possession of a country which one looks upon as one's own, no matter how long ago that may have happened. Many text-books of British history written by Englishmen who may themselves have Norman blood in their veins regard the Saxons as the rightful owners of the land and the Norman as foreign conquerors, although the Saxons were also foreigners in the same sense, but had settled earlier in the country. There are no Normans and Saxons in Great Britain now and sympathy with one or the other is and has been for centuries irrelevant to political and social life in Great Britain. It would be, perhaps, more difficult to trace Turkish blood in India today than it would be to establish Norman ancestry in Great Britain, but we have fallen into

the error of accepting racial and religious divisions as something precise and definable, and transformed an accident that occurred more than seven hundred years ago into an emotionally continuing event. The reason, it would be pointed out, is that the Indian Muslims insisted on maintaining their separate identity as a religious and political community. But are they the only community in India that has done so? Was not the whole caste system a means of maintaining religious, ritualistic, social, professional, even geographical identity? The need for the historian to judge men by the laws which they believe in becomes more imperative if we consider other aspects of the same problem. Muslim rulers, and Muslims generally, have been accused of intolerance. There are scholars who know Persian, and many Muslim religious and theological texts have been translated into English. How many scholars have taken the trouble to examine objectively what is called the 'religious' policy of Muslim rulers in the light of Islamic teaching? How many are aware that the most intense and positive expression to tolerance has been given in Persian and Urdu literature? How many realise that, the political interest of ruling minorities apart—and the claim of these minorities to be Muslim would most often not bear close examination—there was a continuous struggle between the forces of isolation and assimilation in social life and, but for the rigidity of the caste system, the assimilation might have been almost complete? Such questions can be frowned upon as raising 'communal' issues. They are, however, not only significant problems for the historian; they constitute the romance of Indian history, the story, fateful but illuminating, of the human spirit 'releasing itself from one bondage to fall into another'. The case of the Indian Muslims is something which comes first to mind. All movements of reform in India, from Buddhism onwards, repeat the same story of the universal becoming individual,

sectarian, a new form of bondage.

Does this mean that the historian should aim at being as completely impartial and detached as is humanly possible? And if it does, what would be the historian's response, say, to the Chinese aggression? The historian's detachment is not the hermit's escape from the realities of life. It is based on fulness of knowledge. The historian with knowledge and detachment would have warned against the rush to become members of India-China Friendship Associations, because the Chinese have always been culturally and politically imperialistic, against leaving frontiers inadequately guarded, against peaceful intentions which make people lax and gullible. In fact, the detached historian, not being influenced by the dictates of diplomacy, would have pointed out in addition that the frontiers of West Pakistan are almost identical with those of Mahmud of Ghazni's territory in India, that Rawalpindi is not far from his first outposts and the first battlefields. The detached historian will also remind us that all wars among Indians have to be regarded as civil wars, that the Maurya, Gupta, Khilji and Mughal attempts to conquer the Deccan and the South are essentially of the same character, events to be related, if not with regret, at least without a feeling of triumph; that we cannot make national heroes out of the participants in any of our civil wars without endangering the edifice of national unity, because this unity is not built of brick and mortar but sentiment, and sentiments are not strengthened by being hurt.

The history of India will now have to be rewritten for high schools and universities in over fourteen different languages. To those interested in cultivating all those sentiments which promote goodwill and unity, this should be a matter of grave concern. There are differences enough in attitude and methods of expression when histories are written in one language; can we hope that an objective

view of Indian history will emerge if the differences are multiplied fourteen times and more? The detached historian can only ask the question. It is for the centres of higher learning to provide the answer.

METHODS OF TEACHING INDIAN HISTORY

IN my previous talk, which I confess was too brief and incoherent, I mentioned a few difficulties in establishing a proper approach to the study of Indian history and suggested a few basic assumptions on which this approach could be based, such as recognisable tendencies in human life throughout its known course, the continuity of history, the unity of India and the universal ideal of the attainment of human welfare in its widest sense. This indicates, of course, that I believe that a philosophy of history must underlie its study and teaching, but this philosophy must evolve out of history and not be imposed upon it as an *a priori* belief. The advancement of historical knowledge must not only be accepted as desirable in principle; the study of history must aim at a continuous increase in knowledge. We can, therefore, without all of us committing ourselves to any particular philosophy of history, adopt methods of study that will equip us with the capacity to make fruitful contributions towards a synthesis of the past and the present, and of some kind of accord between values as such and values as seen in history.

Educators no longer allow knowledge to be equated with information, but though our historians and teachers of history accept this in principle, still when they sit down to frame a syllabus, they insist on the student being given as much information as possible at that particular stage in his education. It must be said in fairness that this failing is a very common one, and I have seen syllabuses of what was

called an introduction to rural sociology and rural engineering that were advanced courses requiring more than two years of study. The framers of history syllabuses also feel that any omissions they make may create the impression that they have been inspired by narrow political interests or cultural or communal malice. But the most earnest desire to accommodate every interest and sentiment cannot transform information into knowledge, and make history meaningful. Moreover, as there is an examination at the end, and examiners have to be sure as to what questions they should ask, and examinees as to what questions they should expect, there is a tendency to concentrate on particular topics and even on the pages in which they are dealt with in text-books, so that the whole process of teaching and learning is vitiated. As a result, history disintegrates into dates and events, policies and achievements, set questions and set answers. The attempt to give history a cultural bias by the introduction of papers on cultural and social history has not so far improved matters; there has only been an addition to the set questions and answers.

A change has been made in the school curriculum which could be useful in promoting the correct approach to history. This is the introduction of social studies. But it is doubtful if many teachers and schools have succeeded in combining history, geography, economics and civics into a unified whole, and where they do not succeed, social studies become an abbreviated form of four different subjects. Apart from this, social studies do not provide a satisfactory answer to the question where and how to begin the teaching of history.

Should we proceed from the known to the unknown, from the familiar to something that exercises the imagination, from the local and contemporary environment to ancient India and Egypt and the Stone Age, or begin from

the Stone Age and follow the chronological sequence? Should we first create an interest in the child or the youth's particular town or village, in the area around it, in the nation and the state and then go on to the world, or begin with the world and then come to countries and localities, and endeavour to place them in their world context? This question can be debated endlessly, and I have no answer that will meet all objections. But judging from the consequences of overdeveloped patriotic sentiments, it seems unwise to begin from any concept other than that of the world as a whole. And we must emphasise that by world we mean literally the whole world. Western historians till quite recently regarded the world as consisting of the intellectual and cultural area of Greek and Roman civilisation, Christianity, highly developed industry, and the political systems that have grown out of the economic and political revolutions of Europe and America. Nothing less than the bloodshed and suffering of two world wars and the terrifying possibility of the employment of nuclear weapons has brought about a change. But there are other worlds also, quite as closed as the Western—the Chinese and Far-Eastern, the Islamic, the Indian—which have set up barriers around themselves quite as difficult for the human mind to cross as the Western world. So, even at the risk of creating educational and psychological problems, we must begin the teaching of social studies, or history, geography and civics by impressing upon the growing mind the meaning of one human world.

The teaching of history, as of other subjects, requires the application of the same general methods; the awakening of curiosity, the satisfaction of this curiosity in one way so as to stimulate it in another, the gradual disciplining of the mind so that it becomes self-directing and the cultivation of the power of judgement. It is essential for the effective utilisation of these methods in the field of historical know-

ledge that the student should be made aware as soon as possible of the materials out of which history is made—artifacts, monuments, coins, inscriptions, written records of all kinds. He should also be made to realise that history comprehends all that relates to the past, and styles of pottery, textiles, dress, dwellings, architecture are quite as much history as kings and kingdoms, wars and revolutions. It is not enough for this purpose that the teacher or the text-book should say so. The method of teaching should itself be based on a study of the sources. This can be done at the primary stage in a limited sense. It must be taken up systematically at the secondary stage, when the student has formed notions about human life and society and can grasp the meaning of growth and development. It requires too much exercise of imagination to appreciate the significance of the earliest artifacts, but use can be made of any early source material of a documentary nature.

Let us take two examples. We begin Indian history in the ninth class not with the Stone Age or the Indus Valley civilisation or the accounts of legendary heroes and kings, but with the picture of one of Asoka's edicts. Several questions will suggest themselves and the answers will lead to other questions. We explain the picture as an inscription on a rock or pillar, state how many such inscriptions have been found and where, what their geographical distribution indicates, and how it was discovered, who had got the edicts inscribed; we give a background of political history, introducing at the same time an account of the Achaemenian Empire, of Alexander's conquests, of Iranian and Greek influence on India. The script of the edict will be the starting-point of another series of questions: why man could not do without some system of writing, where and how writing began, how it spread and improved, the scripts first used in India, the scripts in use today. The subject of the edict will provide a means of introducing religion and

religious history, and here again the whole background of Indian history could be covered from another angle. It would not be at all difficult for a teacher with even ordinary competence to impress upon the student the meaning of development and time, and also how important it is to base opinions on historical evidence, search for such evidence being search for truth.

The second example that occurs to me would be an extract from the *Periplus*. This would serve to throw light on many other aspects of activity, enabling the teacher to trace the growth of trade and the development of the means of transport from the earliest times till the beginning of the Christian era. The *Periplus* gives the names of ports and the main articles of commerce handled at these ports. The natural products as well as manufactured goods exported from and to India are mentioned, and since the most outstanding feature of the Gupta period is the expansion of trade, and the resulting prosperity, India's participation in international trade and commerce would be a better introduction to this period than the usual account of an ambitious chieftain of Bihar founding an imperial dynasty. The influence of trade-routes on political developments could be particularly emphasised, for armies have followed trade-routes almost as inevitably as water flows along depressions. Islam was first brought into India by Arab traders, and the invasion of Sindh was primarily an attempt to ensure the security of ships engaged in the coastal trade between the Persian Gulf and Ceylon. The Turkish armies from the north-west came with a different purpose, but they also followed the routes trade had discovered and used for over 1500 years. The expansion of the sultanate and the Mughal empire was along the internal trade-routes, and western supremacy in South Asia was the result of the sea-passage around Africa becoming known to European sailors. I cannot think of any better

method of showing how India forms part of a larger world and how events and movements outside have, in the past, determined the course of events in India than a study of trade-routes.

The so-called Muslim or medieval period is extremely rich in documentary sources, extracts from which could be easily selected not only for the purpose of providing a starting-point but of bringing school children face to face with problems of misunderstanding and hostility between followers of different faiths. An evil that has existed for centuries and is a part of our heritage along with all that is good and beautiful cannot be ignored without making our history teaching unrealistic. And since the documents where this evil is most evident will have to be studied more extensively later on, it is best to lay the foundation for an objective attitude as soon as possible. The age to which these documents belong is also the age of the bhakti movement, of Tulsi Das, of Akbar, of sufism, of the belief in the Unity of Existence, and of a common Indian culture. We could easily balance all that causes pain and sorrow with all that gives hope and pride, and the composition that results will, because of its sharp contrasts, broaden the mind and strengthen tolerance. If history is to be a means also of moral instruction, it is better, in my opinion, to create an awareness of the coexistence of the good and the evil, than to foster the illusion that the good are absolutely good and the bad absolutely bad.

In the modern period we have, again, documents and live problems. Here we could also introduce the moral motive and make history teaching a means of inculcating the ideals of citizenship. In this way, by the time the history course in the school is completed, the student will not be filled with information which really means nothing to him but with questions for which he will be seeking satisfying answers.

I realise that this method of making history the result of answers to questions and not a statement of facts places a great responsibility on the teacher, but it is a responsibility for the fulfilment of which material in the form of published books is even now available and could be provided in the school library. History has been called a literary study ; it has also been called a great story nobly told. But the teacher who has to follow a text-book which itself has to follow a pattern of prescribed topics cannot offer his students the opportunity for literary expression, because he cannot make the study of history into any kind of adventure. He cannot allow himself to be led by the interest of his students, to satisfy their curiosity rather than cover the syllabus. The concept of history has to be expanded to include what the student is curious to know about the past, and if his desire for knowledge is the impelling force, the urge to give literary form to his ideas will arise of itself. The story of India cannot be told in the same style as that of England, France or Germany. But it should not be regarded a disadvantage that we cannot do so. Nationalism is not old enough to be considered a part of human nature, like belief in a Providence or in mercy and justice ; it has led to political and economic advancement, but we already see that it would be catastrophic to stop or to stop too long at this stage in our progress. The story of India is a human story, with all the vicissitudes that force upon us the conviction that truth and justice lie somewhere beyond the confining walls of race, religion and social systems. If we have to make a choice, it would be wiser and more in accord with our professed beliefs to base our patriotic activity on concepts of duty and service rather than to start from a current political fashion and try to prove that it was followed by our ancestors. If it is a fact that the temple of Somnath was destroyed by Muslims, that Akbar fought against Rana Pratap and that at the third battle of Panipat

Hindus fought against Muslims, it is equally significant that there were Arab Muslim soldiers among the defenders of Somnath, that at the famous battle of Haldighati between the armies of Mewar and the Mughal Emperor, the Mughal army was commanded by a Rajput and one of the wings of the Mewar army was commanded by a Muslim and that at Panipat the Marhatta artillery was under the command of a Muslim. If history is a great story nobly told, our history has many stories to tell. It is we who do not aspire to tell them as nobly as we should.

At the university level, during the first year, history should be, as Trevelyan puts it, not a subject but a house in which other subjects dwell. It should comprehend the origin and development of beliefs, of political and social organisation, of science, literature, art and technique, in order to give knowledge a form so closely and firmly integrated that later, more specialised study does not tip the mental balance on any side. The sources can, at this stage, be selected with the object of enabling comparative study, and of bringing the critical faculty more openly into play.

Beyond this first year the aim of history teaching should be, if I may put it very briefly, to promote thoughtfulness, which means the habit of looking at all aspects of a problem and of clear and consequent thinking. All disciplines depend, no doubt, on clear thinking, and in history clarity and consistency of thought can be applied to specific problems without becoming a mental habit. But if the sources studied are not of one type only, the critical faculty will be more versatile and will not shirk problems and situations to which it is not accustomed. I remember the Director of Adult Education of the state of Wurttemberg telling me that he had thought for years over the question how an educated, intelligent and alert people like the Germans could be fooled by Hitler, and he had come to the

conclusion that it was due to lack of consequent thinking in all matters outside a special field. He had, therefore, decided to establish what he called 'Denkschule' or courses in the art of clear thinking. Such courses should not be necessary, at least for those who study history in any form, if this study is based on comparison and critical appraisal of the sources of historical knowledge.

Such study will, we may hope, enable us to establish a sufficiently clear line of demarcation between fact and myth. What we call fact may or may not be the truth; indeed, it is the historian's function to keep on discovering evidence confirming or disproving what are considered facts and form the basis of opinions and generalisations. Myths, on the other hand, do not derive their origin from history and continue to exist without the support of historical evidence. But they are not all of the same kind. Some have been discovered as a part of humanistic and archaeological research, like the myths and legends of Greece, Egypt and Babylon. Some myths are creations of the adolescent human imagination of the not so early historical period, like the myths of Germany and Scandinavia. Some myths are aspects of religious belief and encroach upon the sphere of history. Some myths are not religious and are confused with history, like the fairly prevalent view that the Aryans came to India 10,000 years ago, or that the Purana Qila was built by the Kurus and Pandus, or that the Qutab Minar was put up to enable a princess to perform the 'darshan' of the Jamuna before having her meal. Some myths have been created within our own time in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. In fact, politics and patriotism are constantly generating myths through the agencies of mass communication. These may change so rapidly that criticism cannot keep pace with them, but they are the most dangerous to deal with, for while the historian who challenges a religious or pseudo-religious myth may only

offend conservative sentiment, he runs grave risks if he rejects myths whose purpose is to serve the interests of the state. Historians, however, have been creators rather than the destroyers of myths, specially where religious or national sentiment has been strong, and scepticism about the greatness of the great is of comparatively recent origin. We shall not be promoting thoughtfulness or the exercise of the critical faculty unless we ensure the mind against falling under the spell of myths, particularly those which are accepted because historians representing a particular point of view have persistently repeated them.

I know from personal experience that students are irritated if the teacher places before them a number of conflicting versions of an event or interpretations of a policy without suggesting which is nearest the truth, or giving his own opinion on any matter and asking that it should not be accepted unless found to be correct. This irritation is due, first, to the fact that the students are not used to the exercise of their own judgement, secondly, to their not being aware that differences in the interpretation of sources are inevitable, thirdly, to their not having any personal contact with the sources. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, is the hurry to complete the course, which in most cases is extensive enough. If we assume that the function of the teacher and the books recommended is to provide a given amount of information which is considered correct according to the latest research, the resistance of the student to any discussion which delays his progress will be justified. On the other hand, if we regard it to be the primary function of the teacher and the prescribed books to stimulate the desire for further study, we shall have to allow time for discussion and to alter considerably our system of teaching and examinations. I cannot say that it will be necessary to reduce the extent of the syllabus, but if that must be done, I would much rather

reduce the syllabus than ask the student to read and remember so much that he does not have the time to think.

Of course, a student will not begin to think for himself just because he is given the time to do so. He may not be mature enough to have the self-confidence necessary to make him think for himself, or if he has the self-confidence, his effort may lead him in an entirely wrong direction. But we are assuming that the university student has become acquainted with the sources of history while at school, that he has been made to feel for years the significance of historical evidence and the need to assess and weigh it properly, and, therefore, that he will, as a matter of habit, look upon any book he reads as only one way of presenting the facts. Such a student will have made his own choice of the periods or the problems deserving most attention, and he will not ask for the reduction of the course if he is given the opportunity he desires of studying what he is interested in.

Will this method of basing the teaching of history on the original sources induce that identification with the past which is necessary to promote and strengthen the feeling that Indians belong together, and must continue to belong together in the future? The answer would have been simple if India were an island in any sense of the term, but it is not, and even two islands so close to each other as Great Britain and Ireland have not been able to create any sense of belonging together. If we begin our search for unity with the political motive of discovering ideas that can be imposed, we will not succeed in giving our unity any enduring form, unless we eliminate all that does not suit our purpose and stop collecting further evidence of any kind after we have made out our case. The alternative, which would be both intellectually sound and politically fruitful, would be to look backwards and try to understand persons, attitudes and policies by getting under their skin.

We would then look beyond the obvious, beyond what has been said and written to what was really felt. Much of the psychological confusion in the interpretation of what is called the Muslim period, for instance, is due to the fact that we look at it only from the outside and do not apply all the criteria of judgement. Muslim rulers are judged by the wrongs they inflicted upon or the good they did to the people, particularly the non-Muslims. But how far were they following the teachings of Islam or the laws of the shariah? What was the opinion about them of those who genuinely believed in Islam and felt concerned for the shariah? Did any Muslims, including even those enjoying royal favour for the time being, possess a greater sense of security and greater confidence that justice would be done to them than the non-Muslims? If opinions are to count, should greater weight be given to the court historian flaunting his command of superlatives than to the verdict of the scholar or the sufi who would not say anything against his conscience? If we examine all alike on the basis of what they profess and what they do, we shall soon discover that the distinctions we make on grounds of race and religion are misleading and that we are and have been human beings thrown together by destiny to share a common lot. An important, often a decisive part of this common lot was the use and misuse of power and opportunity by those who possessed it and of individual free-will by all. In this respect the situation has not changed, and if we urge each other today not to praise or to condemn but to understand, we can give our ancestors the benefit of the same charity and understanding. This will bring us together in spite of the intervening time and space, and make of us a community engaged in an age-old struggle for self-realisation and fulfilment.

APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY

It has been said that he who raises a fence fences out more than he fences in. Every historian with imagination and the desire to inform must be embarrassed by the feeling that no matter how comprehensive his account is, it is still only an infinitesimal part of what could be told. And he cannot write unless he prescribes limits for himself. The metaphorical fence is always and inevitably there. His only alternative is to impress in every way he can that the territory he has fenced in is part of a landscape, and is only a part of a larger whole. In other words, he must make it clear that only the history of the human world and all aspects of human life is history, and although we have to select, to write the history of particular countries or of particular periods of the history of different countries of the world or to investigate particular aspects or problems of history, we must place our subject of study as much as possible in its world context. Otherwise history may become a mere shadow-play, a tangle of silhouettes in space, unrelated to any context.

In studying and teaching Indian history, we must bear in mind the events and movements of contemporary world history. The revolt against ritual and practices that were divorced from spiritual purpose and ethical principle, which is reflected in the philosophical ideas of the Upanishads and the teachings of the Buddha, forms part of a world movement which may be called a spiritual revolution. The Maurya empire belongs to a series of empires which seem to have a close relationship with, or one may even say were

either the cause or the result of, the spiritual revolution. These empires, if we analyse them, consist, in one respect, of an administrative and military structure plus centres of trade and industry plus trade routes plus naturally irrigated agricultural land. In another respect, they consist of a union of tribal religions and cultures under the aegis of an imperial religion and culture. These empires and imperial religions, in a later phase which begins with the expansion of Islam, take the form of the religious world-state, which we could analyse as world religion plus world government. The northern races in Europe and the Turks in Asia, after a process of large-scale racial migrations, took over and maintained the idea of a world religion, but broke up world government—the Khilafat among Muslims and the Holy Roman Empire among Christians—into actually independent kingdoms. By the time this happened in the Muslim world, religious belief and practice had acquired what some would call definiteness and others rigidity, and it was one of the recognised functions of the ruler to maintain orthodoxy and to suppress heresy and anything that could be called polytheism and unbelief. But the ruler himself had no religious status and could give no opinion in matters of religious law.

In order to understand the form assumed by the Turkish state in the Indian environment, we must view the position of India in the world context from another angle. India lay between two international trade-routes, one which connected the lands around the eastern Mediterranean with China, and passed across northern Iran and Turkestan, and the other which connected the eastern Mediterranean countries with Java and Sumatra, and passed along the southern coasts of India. The Taxila-Khyber-Kabul route in the north and the western and eastern sea-ports of South India in the south were the links connecting India with the two international trade-routes. Only a power that was expand-

ing along the sea-routes would attempt control and occupation of the South Indian sea-ports. In the north, any power that was expanding along the trade-routes would find it advantageous or necessary to occupy at least the Sind valley. From 518 B.C., when it became a province of the Achaemenian empire, the Sind valley went to the winners of every contest for power in Central Asia and Iran, the Greeks, the Parthians, the Sakas, the Kushans, the Huns, the Arabs, the Turks. In some cases the momentum of expansion was exhausted after the occupation of the Sind valley, in others it carried the expanding power into the Punjab and beyond. In every case it was a trade-route that gave the direction to movements of expansion by its offer of inducement and opportunity.

It has become so commonplace to talk about the relationship of history and geography that we hardly give any serious thought to it. But even if we do, we think of mountains, rivers and plains, not of the trade-routes. We forget that these routes formed the link between the areas of raw material, production and exchange, between the field, the manufacturing centre and the market. Mountains, forests, rivers could create obstructions, but goods found ways of flowing in and out. The map of India as made by the trade-routes is not necessarily the same as that made by the mountains, rivers and plains, and certainly not the same as nationalist ideology would like us to draw. South India was, from long before medieval times, more closely connected with West Asia and the Mediterranean than with north India; the Deccan was a self-sufficient unit, and foreign travellers of the early middle ages have observed that the merchants of the Gujarat seaports concerned themselves more with the trading centres of the Persian Gulf than with north India. If we made a close study of the major and minor trade-routes of India we might come to the conclusion that the desire or the need for control of

particular trade-routes was the real instigator of expansionist policies and wars, and not religion or any abstract of power.

We must also examine, more closely than we do, the people with whom we are concerned, their character as a society, their occupations, their scale of values. If we do this, we might feel strongly inclined to reject the classification of Hindu and Muslim as having no inherent significance. The Muslims were not one mass, solidly united by a common religion and an identity of social and material interests, but a community weakened by internal tensions and conflicts of interests, and liable, at any time, to a disastrous disintegration. We might find that the Hindus could not even be called a community, because of the deep rifts produced by the working of the caste system, that the rulers and warriors, the traders, the artisans lived in almost separate worlds, without any effective means of communication. The multitude of local dialects and the size of the country strengthened the social compartmentalisation. Megasthenes noted that the Indian farmer quietly went on with his work, while armies fought around him. Would the farmer be anxious to take the side of a Hindu army against an invading force? And what would be the interest of the merchant, the money-lender and the artisan looking for employment?

An examination of the dominant ideas among those we classify as Muslims and Hindus will further clarify the position. The Muslim ruler, during the period with which we are concerned, was the guardian of the *shariah*, but his private life—his extravagance, his wives, slave-girls, concubines, his drinking and other kinds of indulgence—was not subject to the laws and conventions which applied to the generality of the Muslims. He could be admonished by reckless preachers because of sinful living, but could not be deprived of his position and authority. In his public capa-

city the ruler was looked upon as a safeguard against dissension and anarchy, and could therefore exercise an unrestricted right to reward and to punish, and to use his discretion in ensuring the security and welfare of his subjects. It is unthinkable that the despotism of such rulers should not have produced reactions. One kind of reaction is known; it is notorious: subservience. Those who had not the moral stature to resist cringed before the ruler. Among these were courtiers, government officers of all ranks, the official ulama, and all seekers after personal benefit. They were the vocal element, and they interpreted motives and events for the greater glory and power of the ruler. The ulama, apart from the theological support they gave to the ruler, clipped the wings of religion, reducing its dimensions to fit the framework of the law. This produced another kind of reaction which is identifiable, the rejection, on moral and spiritual grounds, of the ruler, his minions, his system of government through violence and terrorisation. This reaction is found among the learned and the pious, the righteous ulama and the sufis. It could not, naturally, assume a political or a recognisable social form. But there was, in all probability, a third kind of reaction which did, and which has been confused with heresy and sectarian violence. It would take me far afield if I discussed this matter at any length, but to give just one illustration: it would have been impossible for Hasan-bin-Sabbah and his organisation to find as many dedicated fanatics as he did who would assassinate persons of eminence against whom they had no personal grudge, if there had not been a widespread feeling that the political and social system of the Hanafi Sunnis was so monstrously oppressive and unjust that it deserved to be destroyed at any cost. This is, of course, a conjecture, and it may be wrong. But it would still be quite reasonable to assume that the despotism of Muslim rulers produced, as a reaction, tensions and feelings

of deep unrest within the Muslim community.

Among the Hindus, caste was something final and fatal. The isolation of the various castes was so complete that all tensions seem to have been eliminated. It was possible even to postulate a supra-social unity which would comprehend the rigid divisions of the caste system. In any case, the question how it was possible for a handful of Turks to overrun north India from the Sutlej to the estuary of the Ganges within a decade has to be answered in an objective and convincing fashion, and if the operation of the caste system is not the answer, the correct answer must be found if we are to understand medieval Indian history.

We may assume that the intrusion of a powerful foreign element would have upset the balance which the divisions of the caste system helped to maintain. But how powerful and how foreign were the Turks who established the Delhi Sultanate? Even a cursory examination of the resources of Shahabuddin Ghori in men and material would show that his empire and his hopes of survival were built on sand. The degree of foreignness of the Turks is something that has still to be investigated. If the Qutub monuments are regarded as evidence—and I would personally regard them as more valid than the statements of any contemporary historian—the understanding and cooperation between the Muslims who desired to build the mosque and the minar and the Hindu stone-masons who set up these buildings was unique and marvellously creative. As the buildings were planned and completed within four years of the occupation of Delhi, we should assume that both parties knew each other well, both by contact and hearsay, rather than the contrary. The existence of a Muslim settlement at Badaun is known. There was probably another at Ajmer. And there may have been others of which we do not have any direct evidence. The Delhi sultanate was not established by strangers, even though its establishment was

accompanied by violence and bloodshed.

Once the sultanate was there, it had to create an environment conducive to its maintenance and survival. Could it depend entirely on the Muslims? They were a very small minority, not united by any common purpose, and not dependable, according to the accounts of the Muslim historians themselves. In the army, the cavalry was mainly, if not entirely, Muslim, and it was the most effective arm. But what about the supply services? And even if the rulers, the army officers and the soldiers were all of one mind, can a government maintain itself entirely and continuously on the strength of an army? We attempt to make assessments of what may be called the national character of the sultanate and Mughal governments by counting the number of Hindus in his office, because only the high officers are mentioned in the chronicles. But many other factors have to be considered in order to make a fair assessment. Outsiders have never been looked upon with favour by the village communities of India, and we have little reason to presume that the rural chiefs would have been submissive and cooperative even when the overlords were Hindus. They would have been even more suspicious and hostile when the governors and revenue officers were Muslims. But what about the population of the towns, the artisans, the merchants, the capitalist money-lenders? Muslim civilisation has been urban, and Muslims settled mainly in the towns. It was their relations with the urban population of the Hindus that mattered most to them, and it is these that require attention and study. If I may hazard a conjecture here, such a study will most probably reveal that the Hindus derived what advantage they could from the new situation, the Muslims being dependent on the artisans, the merchants and, most of all, the capitalist money-lenders, while the normal life of the Hindus continued entrenched within the social system and established

practices, with only an occasional, even if violent, disturbance.

It would be an obvious mistake to assume that Muslim sentiments were uniformly or continuously influenced by political considerations. The rulers—Turks, Pathans, Mughals—were a minority almost always guided by their particular interest. They never felt obliged by religion or by altruistic motives to share their power with the generality of the Muslims, and the generality of Muslims were not bound to the rulers by any ideals of loyalty. They wanted employment and other benefits, of course, but they also hoped and prayed that the ruler would not inflict suffering upon them. The political division that mattered normally was the division of ruler and subjects, and this should not be confused with the division of Hindus and Muslims on grounds of belief or prejudice.

But the intrusion of a new element in Indian life did have its effects. These, were, however, mainly indirect, and they form a more interesting and more important subject of study than political developments.

We know that Islam is a missionary religion, and assume that there has been missionary activity on a large scale wherever Muslims are found. As the number of Muslims in India leads us to conclude that most of them must be converts, it is natural to suppose that there were organised efforts to convert Hindus. There are some indications that such efforts were made. Fanatical rulers also used force. But that meant an infinitesimal reduction in the number of Hindus, and would have had no other effect on their society. What we see, from the eighth century onwards, is a vast and growing ferment. This must have had many causes, but perhaps the most potent among them was a movement that arose among Muslims when conformity to one of the four schools of jurisprudence began to be insisted upon. The leaders of this movement were sufis. They

propagated what they held to be the essential doctrines of Islam among the Muslim masses. The official ulama were concerned with the maintenance of orthodoxy and the observance of religious injunctions. They were not interested in bringing to the Muslim masses or to individuals in distress the hopes and consolations of religion. This the sufis accomplished through personal contact and new liturgical forms. By the time the sultanate was established, sufism had become a fairly strong and general movement. The sufis propagated sufism, which was their version of Islam, among the people in the language of the people. There is a great deal of literature in the local and regional dialects of north India that bears witness to the extensiveness of the effort to bring religion to the people. The concept of the Unity of Existence or of Immanence, which became more and more the central feature of sufism and therefore of Islam as the vast majority of sufis preached it, helped to remove a great ideological barrier between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. The movement of taking religion to the people had two opposite results, so far as the non-Muslims are concerned. One is symbolised in the philosophy of Kabir Saheb, who questioned the right of the Hindus and Muslims to practise exclusiveness in any form; the other result is symbolised in the *Ramayana* of Tulsi Das, which was an attempt to take Hinduism to the Hindu masses, and which strengthened immensely not only the beliefs but also the social system of the Hindus. The only period comparable to the 15th and 16th centuries in spiritual ferment is the age of the Buddha, an age of great heart-searching and moral awakening, of insistence on the elimination of non-essential differences and distinctions, of a reaching out towards unity at a purely human level. The medieval period was not a period of spiritual and social hibernation of the Hindus.

Having come to this point, the historian has to answer

a very fundamental question. Whose history is the history of medieval India? Is it the history of the Indian people, whom we now see united in one state, under one Constitution, or is it the history of a large number of good and bad Muslim rulers, or of Muslims plus Hindus as unintegrated units or of Muslims only, struggling to maintain themselves in power in a land which resisted their attempts to make it their own? The answer to this question must be given clearly and without mental reservations, because it will determine our whole attitude towards Indian history. If medieval Indian history is not the history of the Indian people, it can only have an academic, antiquarian value, and we must habituate ourselves to regarding Indian history as beginning with the establishment of British rule. Otherwise we shall be following the ridiculous example of the author of *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*. If we believe, however, that medieval Indian history is the history of the Indian people, we must frankly admit the implications, and they are many.

It will probably not be possible to avoid using the terms 'Hindu' and 'Muslim', but we must see to it that they do not imply any value judgements. Our value judgements must apply to persons, to ideas, to actions, and our criterion must be a conception of the common interest of the Indian people. This is, of course, not easy to define as yet, when we are used to thinking in terms of communities. But constant endeavour to impress upon our minds the image of the Indian people as a whole will gradually clarify our vision. The use of the terms 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' is in fact a simplification that enables us to evade the exercise of our imagination and the strain of objective thinking. If we classify the Delhi Sultans and the Mughal emperors as Muslims and judge them as such, our task is easy, and we do not need to challenge the attitude of our historians. If, on the other hand, we judge them as Indian rulers, we shall

first have to cultivate in ourselves the attitude that would give us the right and the competence to judge. We shall have also to read the minds of medieval ancestors, to examine their actions not only in the light of our documents but also in the light of what these ancestors could not state and our historians could not imagine because of their compartmentalised thinking. We shall have to restate ambitions and policies in terms of ideas, and evaluate them as ideas, even though that might lead us to express unorthodox or unpopular opinions.

I think an example or two will make my meaning clear. The causes of the downfall of the Mughal empire is a question that has been asked and answered hundreds of times. But we do not ask what this downfall meant for the country as a whole. Was it a matter of indifference to India and her people, or did it bring relief from oppression or was it a fulfilment of the desire of Providence that the British should come and rule, so that the Hindus might by and by oust them and come into their own after centuries of deprivation? Or was it a calamity from which all suffered, for which all were responsible because of what they did or failed to do, and because of which India had to suffer the consequences of alien rule? It is not my purpose here to answer this question, but this question must be posed and must be answered with all regard for historical truth, for logic and consistency. And we must also remember that the answer would matter very much in determining our future as a people.

Let us look at the period of Mughal downfall from another angle. Aurangzeb's fanaticism is listed as one of the causes of Mughal downfall. But was he a fanatic or a statesman who was caught in a relentless grip of circumstances? A religious fanatic is one who pursues some religious purpose, fiercely and recklessly. A political fanatic is one who strives to achieve a political aim, whatever the

cost to himself and to others. Was Aurangzeb a religious fanatic? If he was, is not something more than the dislike of music, the destruction of temples and the levy of *jiziya* required as evidence. The dislike of music may have been the reaction of a puritanical mind, which is not undesirable in a ruler who wishes to concentrate on administrative work. The destruction of temples was an ugly but almost routine punishment for overt rebellion or suspicion of subversive activities. As regards *jiziya*, I am sure in my own mind that it could not have been levied under a strict interpretation of Muslim religious law. In any case, the question must be considered also from this point of view. But let us set aside, for a moment, the issue of its religious validity and examine the levy of *jiziya* from a purely administrative and economic point of view. No government can dispense with taxation, and if abnormal expenditure has to be covered by taxes, much thought has to be given to the form of the additional taxes. Muslim law has determined what taxes can be levied. A new tax could have been opposed by Muslims on religious and by Hindus on economic grounds, and it may have fallen on many who did not possess the ability to pay. The *jiziya* had some traditional justification, and it could be argued that it would fall on those whose taxable capacity was highest. The levy of the *jiziya* was a serious mistake, but cannot the decision to levy it be considered as a choice between evils and not as an act of outright fanaticism. It was one of the many unjust taxes levied, but while we condemn it, let us not forget that the *chauth* levied by the Marhatta chiefs cannot be justified merely because it was secular tax and was levied indiscriminately. An administration that assumes the minimum responsibilities of government is entitled to levy taxes; where no responsibilities are assumed, taxation in any form is unjustified.

Was Aurangzeb a political fanatic? He did pursue his

expansionist aims with a fanatical persistence. But what were these aims? We have, in recent years, felt indignant at the idea of foreign powers having possessions in India, the D.M.K.'s cry for secession made us furious, and we have been angered by the demand for a Punjabi Suba. Today we do our thinking with the help of newspapers and the mouths of politicians; three hundred years ago all such thinking was the function of a few persons, or of just the ruler himself. After attempt had been made to establish outposts at Kandahar and Balkh, and there had been continuous expansion southwards, the decision to incorporate the territories of the Deccan sultans in the Mughal empire cannot be construed as extravagant ambition. The suppression of elements subversive of the empire was necessary if a unifying administration was to be maintained. Before we pass judgements, we must pause to make sure of our criteria, and also be confident that we have the courage and the objectivity to apply the same criteria to all those whom we judge. For instance, if we condemn the Mughal empire or its last effective ruler, we must be willing to consider whether those who were instrumental in crippling its administration offered something better to the country, whether the Marhattas, the Jats and the Sikhs were inspired by higher ideals, possessed the ability to realise them and therefore evoked widespread and deep sympathy among the Indian people as a whole. It is very easy to condemn failure and applaud success if we base our judgement on facts which we have ourselves selected. But do we serve the truth and our own higher interests by doing so? Have we not fortified ignorance and prejudice, blurred our perspective and weakened the moral foundations of our national life already by not looking at all facts, all aspects of situations and problems?

I am myself aware that, while claiming to be an Indian citizen, I think and feel most of the time as a north Indian.

A professor of a south Indian university accused Bengali historians of having exalted the Gupta dynasty far beyond its merits and kept the achievements of south Indian dynasties out of the picture. I felt that his way of thinking was a classic example of academic regionalism. But so is mine, even though I identify myself with a larger region, and I must confess I would resent a south Indian telling me that Akbar and his ideals meant nothing to him. In fact his statement would be justified, even if it were made in retaliation. We mention the south in connection with the first appearance of Muslim Arabs, with the origin of the *Bhakti* movement, with the military achievements of Alauddin Khilji—as if the south was unexplored enemy territory which it was a glorious thing to overrun and plunder—with the wars between the Bahmani Kingdom and the Vijayanagar empire. Does this prove that we regard the south as an integral part of India during the medieval period? I am not satisfied that it does, and therefore there must be something basically wrong with our perspective. I fear there is something wrong with my own perspective. It was only after taking classes in medieval Indian architecture for over a year that I realised I had completely omitted south Indian architecture. I have studied it, I have as high a regard for it as for Indian Muslim architecture and am deeply moved by its aesthetic values, but I have quite unconsciously allowed myself to be blinded by the tradition of ignoring the south, or still worse, of regarding it as fundamentally alien to the north. I hope my conscience will not let me rest till I have made amends.

There are, of course, many other questions that require thought. Why was there no movement in India comparable to the European renaissance; why were no attempts made to organise production on more profitable lines, when there was no shortage of capital or skilled labour and the

desire to acquire and accumulate wealth was as strong as anywhere else; why was there no development of political ideas, no cultivation of public spirit, no experimentation in political organisation, when there was no lack of moral sense or of intelligence or of a desire for ordered living? Any of these problems would be a study in itself—and of great significance for us today. But we seem reluctant to undertake such studies, and I fear the main reason is that we think of India and the Indian people in parts and have no comprehensive image of the Indian people as a whole. It is for the historians to project this image before politicians have made it difficult or impossible.

To conclude, Indian history must be studied and taught in the context of world history. We must have far more detailed knowledge than we possess of the geography of our country, and specially of the major and subsidiary trade-routes. We must not regard 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' as self-explanatory terms, but investigate the structure and character of what are called the Hindu and the Muslim communities. This investigation must comprehend not only beliefs and practices but also the dominant attitudes and ideas. The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate was the culmination of various types of relationships and contacts extending over 500 years, and we cannot have a correct perspective on the early phase of Indian Muslim history unless we have adequate knowledge of the situation in the 12th century. The influence of Hindus and Muslims on each other was both direct and indirect, and the indirect forms require to be analysed very carefully. Finally, unless we have decided in our own minds that medieval Indian history is not the history of the Indian people, we must courageously examine our present criteria of judgement and develop a perspective on persons, policies and events of the past that will enable us to understand and forgive and to obtain a clear vision of the past and the future.

TEXT-BOOKS: NEW IDEALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ONE way to a better and friendlier world is the reform of text-books which have in every country tended to reflect cultural attitude and political policy. But when an internationally representative group, animated by the greatest goodwill, sits down to discuss the problem of improving text-books, the enterprise does not appear any easier than that of peace or disarmament. After the conclusion of the last war, as German education rose out of the ruins, Germany undertook a vast programme of text-book revision. But the task could not be accomplished by Germany alone; all the countries with which Germany had, or was likely to have, economic, political and cultural relations had to be satisfied that the German text-book not only reflected goodwill but also contained adequate knowledge about them. In 1954, Unesco adopted India's proposal to take up the mutual appreciation of Eastern and Western cultures as a project, and once taken up, the project inevitably became one of Unesco's major activities. That the realisation of this project depends largely, and for the growing generation almost entirely, on the production of text-books and supplementary reading material inspired by the same aims as the project is too evident to require proof. Unesco, therefore, became closely interested in the improvement of text-books, and began to encourage and sponsor meetings of international groups, hoping that every such meeting would yield good if not precisely definable results. The improved text-book is still in the making; no one can say how long

its period of incubation is going to be. Pitfalls, barricades, stretches of mined terrain appear all of a sudden, a teacher who asks for more and better maps finds that he is in reality trying to involve publishers in political conflicts, a book on Geography which states that Germany has been divided into three parts is cited as an example of capitalist war-mongering. The discreet reply to some questions with a diplomatic smile; those who wish to be both enthusiastic and safe reserve all the adjectives that can serve as safety valves for the particular system of text-book production operating in their own country and for the ineffectiveness of their National Commissions for Cooperation with Unesco. A French-man whom I have met at two international conferences habitually describes with scathing sarcasm the obscurity of Unesco in his city of Paris.

Much can be done, however, to improve the text-book without creating diplomatic and ideological complications. At the first conference for the improvement of text-books, held in Paris in 1956, several countries submitted surprisingly frank appraisals of their history and world history text-books, and it appeared that the most common defect was inadequacy of information in the West about the East and in the East about the West. No one, of course, could make any commitment about the amount of information that could be included in text-books; but it was said that even brief references could be very misleading or form wrong attitudes unless the text-book writer possessed enough knowledge to form sound judgements or was provided with formed judgements about the country he was writing of by scholars of that country. There was a demand for a synopsis of world history in which the space to be allotted to the various civilisations was more justly apportioned; as the Indian member of the conference I was asked to suggest significant topics of Indian history along with examples of how they should be treated. A German

member of the same conference told me that he had asked for an Indian historian or a committee of historians to provide basic information about India which could be incorporated in German text-books. His request went unheeded, with the result that an Indian with an undefined position in the Unesco Secretariat and without any standing as a scholar attended the seminar or conference that had been organised and provided the basic information about India. He was grossly ignorant of Indian Muslim history, and I had, much later, to submit a separate note, which is now being utilised by text-book writers in Germany.

Most of the substantial improvement effected so far has been due to bilateral conferences of scholars for reviewing and amending text-books. Germany has organised several such conferences, and now German and French parents, for instance, feel that the history their children learn, while providing full knowledge about their countries, will not incline them to continue the hostility from which their countries have suffered. India and Pakistan could follow the same policy and circumvent tendencies to foment discord and conflict in the minds of their growing generations. But sometimes improvements have been made without consultation also. I have seen a French book on world history in which several chapters had been devoted to Islam and the Muslims, but among the illustrations was a picture of the Prophet Muhammad. The picture was not the original contribution of the French publishers; it had been taken from an illuminated Persian manuscript. But since every visual representation of the Prophet is forbidden, one may be certain that every believing Muslim will object, and might even tear off the page. What was sincerely intended to promote knowledge and understanding could thus, because of the ignorance of Muslim susceptibilities, create suspicion, if not hostility. To understand and appreciate each other, we must know that there are unreasonable

limits to our reasonableness.

The conference at Paris in 1956 was followed by a second one at Tokyo in 1958, a third at Wellington, New Zealand, in 1960, and the fourth at Goslar. Each conference seems to have been treated independently by the bodies which nominated the representatives, and there has not been sufficient continuity. Each conference has, therefore, had to devote to introductions and to study of temperaments time which could have been more usefully devoted to carrying the work one stage further. But there has been progress. The conferences at Tokyo and Wellington could recognise as an existing fact the reviewing in one country of text-books prepared by another and sent for review; they, therefore, laid down criteria for the assessment of text-books, so that all reviewers could follow one standard. They could also discuss in an uninhibited way the value of the systems established in different countries for the preparation, approval and utilisation of text-books and supplementary reading material and recommend the setting up of national and regional centres for text-book research. This recommendation has been implemented by Unesco and some member states, the greatest need being the chief factor in determining what specific activities a regional or national centre should devote itself to. The conference at Goslar was attended by representatives of publishers from Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Great Britain and the liaison officer between the largest teacher organisation and the educational publishers of the United States.

It is still not easy to keep a conference which is international in theory genuinely international in practice. The like-minded gravitate towards each other, two groups are formed, and the discussion inevitably becomes political. The law of ideological gravitation offers a unique chance to those countries which know the minds of other countries

(though not their own) to safeguard the rights of relevance and objectivity. This chance could be considerably reduced if the Soviet representative arrived in time. But at the Paris conference he was late by about four days, so that it was possible to elect the president and the vice-presidents and treat the Russian as an honoured guest rather than an active member. He was allowed to make his set speech on the universalism of Soviet culture and the perfection of Russian text-books; but unfortunately he had brought a series of text-books on world history along with him, and this provided a delegate who was mischievously inclined the opportunity to put some embarrassing questions. At the Goslar conference this year the Russian delegate arrived late; he came also as the guest of the German National Commission. But it was known that he had attended the conference at Tokyo and would not miss any opportunity for raising objections; a neutral had, therefore, to be appointed president, and a Czech to be one of the vice-presidents. No secret was made of the reason why a neutral had to be appointed, and since I was the unfortunate neutral in this case, I had to keep my fingers on the pulse of likely patients to forestall the need for sedatives. Happily, most of the delegates turned out to be like-minded, and the Russian delegate seemed to have only a watching brief. The need for sedatives did not arise.

The recommendations of the Goslar conference are very comprehensive; they even include three lists of suggested topics of world history, one for the benefit of Western text-book writers who wish to know what the eastern half of the world considers most significant in its cultural and political record, the second for similar enlightenment of eastern text-book writers, and a third, meant to assist all who write on world history by specifying movements and events which were spheres and occasions of contact between East and West. In fact, the recommendations of the conference were

so many and so diverse that they had to be grouped under separate heads : recommendations to Unesco, to the National Commissions, to National Governments, to Educational Publishers, to Teacher Organisations, and to all those interested in the improvement of text-books.

The recommendations to Unesco express the dissatisfaction which all the delegates felt at the absence of adequate information in regard to what had been done towards the implementation of the East West Major Project by the member states, the improvement of text-books by the member states and the discovery of the educational agencies in the various member states which were in the best position to further the Major Project at the class-room level. Unesco was asked to secure the support of teachers' organisations in publicising its activities and making known what services, existing and potential, it could offer to the ordinary teachers ; to arrange, through the National Commissions, to put authors and publishers of one country in touch with those of another and, where necessary, to arrange for translation ; to make available the results of scholarly study or discussion on difficult and controversial questions by historians of different countries and viewpoints ; and to ensure that member states had the basic resources for implementing programmes under the Major Project by providing the necessary material and technical assistance. Two important recommendations were made in regard to policy. Improvement of text-books was essential and indispensable, but as this could take place only slowly, Unesco was advised to recommend to member states the adoption of the following priorities : (1) background book-lets for teachers, (2) supplementary reading material about different peoples, (3) more and better audio-visual materials, and (4) improved text-books. As the agencies for producing the first three requirements could be different, the change in the order of priorities would not delay the

improvement of text-books, but rather prepare the ground for them. The other important policy recommendation was that member states should be advised to emphasise as much as possible the content of teacher training programmes and courses for practising teachers, as it was obvious that a teacher who does not himself know enough cannot utilise material which is provided for him.

The conference realised that the National Commissions and the National Governments of the member states were the arbiters of the fate of all projects and ideas. It recommended—though here ‘besought’ or ‘begged’ would be more appropriate words—that the National Governments should see whether they were giving enough financial support to their National Commissions, and whether these Commissions had direct contacts with the official bodies which could help them in their work. Only National Governments, by adopting a policy of peace and goodwill, can induce the cultivation of sentiments which counteract self-centredness, and release education from the hold which narrow syllabuses, both of public examinations and in general school courses, sometimes still have in concentrating study on the nation, specially on its political and military history. National Governments were urged to take this bold step.

National Commissions were requested (1) to set up committees including representatives of publishers to organise the machinery for the improvement of text-books, (2) to find out which bodies or agencies were best suited for promoting the Major Project, provide them with necessary information and examine from time to time how the recommendations in regard to this Project were being implemented, (3) to remove any dissatisfaction that exists regarding prescribed syllabuses, but always aim at influencing such syllabuses before they are published and text-books printed in accordance with them, (4) to examine carefully their relationship with educational publishers and teachers’

organisations in order to ensure close and continuous cooperation, (5) to try to coordinate the various interest groups working in the field of international understanding, and (6) to adapt, where necessary, Unesco information material to the particular needs of their own country.

Among the general recommendations is one suggesting that university departments or institutes should provide courses for teachers and lecturers on subjects connected with the Major Project for mutual appreciation and understanding between East and West. Another recommendation is that teachers or boards of education should draw up lists of books, booklets, pamphlets, etc. which they consider suitable or good for reading—instead of lists of undesirable reading material, as has sometimes been done. And, finally, it has been recommended that agencies for education should create an awareness of the different ways in which prejudices establish themselves in the mind and influence thought and conduct, so that misuse of the media of mass communication does not nullify efforts that are made to promote international understanding.

When the recommendations were being discussed, the Russian delegate reminded the Conference again and again that it was not an executive body and had no powers whatsoever; he even insisted that its recommendations should be called "suggestions". But none of the aims which brought the Conference together can be achieved through executive action. Only those persons and organisations who are willing to act on their own initiative can really help in the task of improving text-books till they become a means of conveying knowledge and strengthening goodwill.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR EDUCATION*

It is my privilege to offer you a most cordial welcome on behalf of the Host Committee of the All-India Association of Training Colleges to the Fourth Conference of the International Council on Education for Teaching. We may not here be the multitudes our names seem to indicate, but we represent humanity in a more significant sense than numbers ever can. Our coming together is a great occasion, an opportunity to strengthen the bonds, visible and invisible, that unite us in our thoughts and our work, and make of us a vast brotherhood. Those of you who have come from abroad are specially welcome, as you bring with yourselves that wealth and variety of knowledge and experience the sharing of which is essential for the proper fulfilment of our tasks in a world which has to be guided towards wise and cooperative living. We are not strangers here but fellow-workers, and today we are meeting not because of any fortunate accident but to fulfil our great purpose.

International cooperation for education is not an optional undertaking dependent on means and convenience but a moral command. We have to come together, and like the missionaries of old, we have to cross mountains and deserts, and to bear all hardships. Whatever the faults of method, the missionaries of the great religions were perhaps the greatest single means of making the different parts of mankind aware of each other and of establishing common

* Welcome Address.

ethical standards. We teachers assembled here are missionaries who seek to be converted as well as to convert, our aim is the realisation of the highest common good. We are agreed that we cannot allow prejudice and misunderstanding to continue to reinforce the tendencies towards disintegration, conflict and violence. Like the missionaries of other days, we have set out to achieve the salvation of humanity.

These are old and big words. But it seems that one of our foremost duties is to maintain, in our constantly changing circumstances and ideas, the continuity of moral values. This does not mean that we seek to restore conditions that existed in the past. It does not mean that we resist change. But it does mean that we do not cut ourselves loose from the times, the persons and the problems that belong to what we choose to call the past. It does mean that we impose on ourselves the responsibility of a continuous reinterpretation, that we recognise human nature as having always been a determining factor, that we believe no great moral urge which men have felt and obeyed can ever lose its creative and constructive power. We do not need to go far to discover the continuity of moral endeavour. The first missionary religion of the world sent its devotees far and wide to preach goodwill, for without goodwill towards all mankind there could be no release from sorrow. Is this something old, to be preserved in books, or something that we believe and try as far as we can to practise today? Is Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence something old or new when the United Nations Organisation has been established to maintain peace and prevent violence and war? Is the ideal of a democratic world community based on the doctrine that the physical and the spiritual, the political and the moral, the collective and the individual aspects of our life form one indivisible whole, something old or something that we now discern on the horizon? And if the old and the new are

indistinguishable except in their external, changeable forms, is not continuity the essence of history, and is not its apprehension the essence of practical wisdom?

In India today we see the old and the new in a bewildering juxtaposition. Ours is a country of problems. We see them in the richest natural manure being turned into dung-cakes and stacked for use as fuel, in the quadrupeds that ignore all signals as they chew the cud on the road, in the garbage that claims equal right to self-display with the most modern sanitary arrangements, in the thousands of marriages performed daily between a modern sense of urgency and a traditional disregard for time, in the elaborate administrative devices to foster individual initiative and self-reliance, but, above all, I think, in the attempt to achieve that self-realisation which has been our highest ideal with American techniques of education. It seems as if the old, irrational coinage of detachment is being converted into a currency of frustration based on the decimal system, without affecting the per capita income or the assets and reserves of the state. In this situation, flippancy and well-meaning cynicism are likely to be created as a mechanism of self-defence, and principle and practice to desire nothing more than a nodding acquaintance with each other.

It is not easy to discard a philosophy of life in which the supremely enlightened individual is the highest value, and adapt the utilitarian standard of the greatest good of the greatest number. For the average Indian, Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru have made the necessary change in approach more difficult. Taken together, their activities cover every aspect of life, and their achievements are so impressive as to make many of us feel that the utmost has already been done. Just as the belief that saints and prophets have redeemed humanity gave a wide latitude to the potential sinner, Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru have absolved their countrymen from many a responsibility.

Their mighty shoulders have carried the enormous burdens of intellectual, moral and political leadership with such self-confidence and success, and we have admired them with such whole-hearted enthusiasm that it seems disrespectful for anyone else to possess shoulders at all. We have excelled in hero-worship; in fact, we have thought it irrelevant to distinguish between god and the hero. And now, all of a sudden, we have to act as if there were no gods and no heroes, but only responsible citizens of a free country.

We are doing our best. There is no known type of Conference which we have not held, no known purpose for which we have not appointed a committee, no species of report that we have not published, no style of edifying speech that we have not delivered. But responsibility is still assumed to lie where it did after independence, directly on the shoulders of the Prime Minister and indirectly on the Government of India. Education has not attempted to expose the enormity of this assumption. It could prosper without doing so. Statistics in regard to the percentage of the national expenditure devoted to education, comparison of the actual with the projected expansion, and of the provision of schools, colleges, universities and technical institutes with the needs of a growing population and of a scientific age may not justify optimism or complacency, but the expansion of educational facilities has been remarkable. More and more is being planned and accomplished. The University Grants Commission and the National Council for Technical Education would compare not unfavourably with similar bodies anywhere in the world. We are able to take advantage of the facilities for higher education and scientific and technical research in other countries. There may be import restrictions on other commodities, but educational ideas and techniques can be imported freely in any quantity by direct dealings with the governments of foreign countries and the producing concerns. International experts

give concrete demonstration of the high standard of living that we should ultimately attain. Though we may not have enough, we have something of everything that exists. But, whatever we may believe in principle, the acceptance of responsibility for all that has not been done or has not been done well in the various spheres of our national life is still not a part of our education.

Tact and discretion are valuable social qualities, and the teacher cannot inculcate them if he does not possess them himself. But whose function is it, if not the teacher's, to tell the whole truth? Politicians not in power practise criticism as a profession; their art consists in confusing the part with the whole, in showing that a single mistake is in reality a disastrous policy. Newspapers tell the truth as they think it should be told; their art consists in confusing fact with facts and facts with truth. The committee that signs a report without compromises and mental reservations has yet to be constituted. Truth is never a pleasant companion or a welcome guest, and if even the teacher denies it hospitality, it may descend upon the earth as a visitation from heaven.

This Conference is one of the ways in which we can meet truth face to face. Let us not disguise ourselves, let us confess freely that we feel terribly insecure. God has ceased to be Providence, the soul has abdicated its right to exist, morality is the handmaid of success, hell is economic backwardness, heaven the affluent society. We are guided in all things by science, and science does not create values or prescribe aims. We are achieving technological progress at a rate that produces dizziness, but even in this dizzy state realise the consequences of a lack of direction. We are cultivating international goodwill as a matter of policy and a measure of security, but we dread the chaos and destruction that will follow if some technologically advanced country sees the balance of advantage in favour of an

armed conflict. We are sure that survival will depend upon each of us feeling responsible for it, and the evolution of a concept of responsibility that has roots in our innate moral sense and spreads out to cover all significant aspects of our life is a matter of the greatest urgency. But we still confuse ourselves with details. Our endeavour to formulate the concept of responsibility is still being weakened by political and economic interests.

Our aims are common, but what may be called our moral assignments are determined by our national history and the present situation in which we find ourselves. A precise definition of each national assignment and its fulfilment will be easier and of greater value if we help each other to understand what we are and what we should try to become. The spiritual culture of India has many aspects, but the most significant is embodied in the old prayer, 'From the unreal lead me to the real'. We must ask ourselves how we have interpreted this in determining the aims and methods of education, in cultivating moral responsibility. And at a Conference like this, where many cultures meet, it can be hoped that the way will be shown towards making the educational systems of the different countries a means of realising their spiritual and cultural ideals.

In conclusion, I once again bid you all a cordial welcome.

EDUCATION IN NEW CHINA

IN a world where so many examinations are held and proficiency tests have been devised, it may seem absurd at first sight, to say that education is a process most difficult to judge by its results. But it is nevertheless true. To complete a course and pass the prescribed examination is education in a very limited, mechanical sense. It does not indicate, in any meaningful way, the effect of this education on all that matters in actual living and life in its turn is subject to so many influences and circumstances and is full of such variations, depending on the character and personality of individuals that it cannot be used as a yardstick or criterion. When judging systems of education, we have to fall back on principles, to consider a system good or bad according to the principles on which it is based. It is better, therefore, to be clear about the principles, to state frankly that they constitute the criterion, than to keep them at the back of the mind, and create suspicions of antagonism and prejudice. In judging their system of education we are liable to judge a whole people, and we are not entitled to do so except on grounds of principle.

In New China the aims of education have not been left vague, as they are liable to be in countries with an established liberal tradition. 'After the victory of the Chinese people', the President of the Sun Yat-sen University in Canton told the members of an Indian Goodwill Mission in 1951, 'this University was taken over, and now we are

* The author visited China as a member of a Goodwill Mission in Sept. 1951. The present review is based on impressions then formed.

determined to carry out the policy of the Chinese Peoples Government. I have just returned from Peking. We are determined to carry out the policy of our Chairman, Mao Tse-tung. When we took over this University, the first thing we did was to have all our teachers undergo a political and ideological reorientation. We have achieved good results after two years. Hereafter we will not only continue to have our chief efforts focussed on political and ideological reorientation, but also we are to study more and more of the thoughts of our Chairman. There are several points in the educational theory of our Chairman. First, education must serve our political and economic needs. In capitalist countries, education is above politics and above economics. We think this point of view is false. Therefore, our new Chinese education must serve our new political and economic ends. Our educational theory is being led by the thought of the proletariat workers, just as our whole political system is being led by the working class. Our education is for the workers, the peasants and the soldiers, because they are the mainstay of our nation. Education must be a coordination of theory and practice. There is a close relationship between our several faculties and corresponding government departments, so that we can cooperate in building up our New China. We want to create the objective conditions to improve the welfare of our nation. Although we have financial difficulties, our whole University, including our teachers and students, want to carry on our mission, entrusted to us by our country. We have an excellent example in the Chinese Communist party in this respect. It has gone through many difficulties in the last thirty years, but at last it has achieved its end.'

There is a strength and precision in this statement of educational policy which is most stimulating. The same point of view was explained to some members of the Goodwill Mission in another form by Prof. Chang Hsi-jo, a

non-Communist member of the Chinese National Committee. When asked about the extent of academic freedom in China, he said that the question would have been relevant before the Liberation; it was not relevant now. As an intellectual fully dyed in the Anglo-Saxon traditions of liberation, he himself had believed in the value of academic freedom. It was something essential in a competitive society, where life was acknowledged to be a struggle for existence. In New China the question of academic freedom did not arise. Here Marxist philosophy would have to be accepted, with all its implications for the aims of education.

This attitude towards education is not the result of a sudden change. The Ching Hua University is an illustration of how education in China has been transformed. This university was established in 1911, as a college whose capital and other expenditure was paid out of the indemnity exacted by the U.S.A. in 1900, and its obvious aim was to help in the Americanisation of the Chinese intelligentsia. But students of this college participated in the May 4th Movement of 1919, and established a revolutionary tradition that was continued afterwards. In 1925, the college became the Ching Hua University and new departments were added from time to time. The revolutionary fervour of the students also increased. An anti-Japanese movement was started on 29th December, 1935, and students joined the Communist party. Shortly after the Japanese invasion, a part of the teachers and students of Ching Hua walked over 1000 miles to Changsha, carrying books and equipment with them. Those who remained behind organised a movement against the Kuomintang in 1945. A year later, the self-exiled part returned to Peking, and all that had been destroyed was rebuilt by the common effort of teachers and students. Till the collapse of the Kuomintang in Peking, the university was a 'Liberated Area' in miniature.

Now Ching Hua is putting into practice the policy of

the Common Program. In 1951, there were short courses for revolutionary cadres wishing to join the university, and 1600 students of the university had entered cadre schools. Several teachers had joined in the Land Reform campaign, and almost the whole body of students and teachers had participated in a propaganda campaign in the previous spring. The university had opened special classes to train students for the execution of government projects and there were 16 teachers doing research work themselves and directing research groups with a view to improve educational and organisational standards. In the hydraulic engineering section, a group of students who had undertaken to dam a neighbouring river were making preliminary experiments.

The development of a country cannot be held up out of regard for academic syllabuses. Side by side with the old institutions, transformed to meet the new requirements, new ones are being established that directly reflect the policy of the People's Government. One such institution is the Nan-fong (*i.e.* Southern) University in Canton, another the People's University at Peking, which was being built when the Goodwill Mission went in 1951, but has now been completed.

In the Nan-fong University, the number of students, boys and girls, is about 5000, one-fifth of whom are drawn from the rural areas. The students are selected by the government, their tuition, board and lodging is free and they are given clothes and pocket-money in addition. The social sciences form the larger part of the syllabus, which means that the primary object is to give instruction in the social and political doctrines of the People's Government.

Everything in the Nan-fong University is typical. The buildings are new, the roads are new, the trees planted along them are young. New wine in old bottles cannot be the same as new wine in new bottles. The teachers

of the university are most probably party men with ample experience of applying knowledge to the different situations of life. Teaching would not be a vocation for them, but a means to an end. In the students, what strikes one most is the appearance of health and happiness. They and their minds are being drilled. There is no doubt about it. But there can be situations when drilling meets mental and emotional requirements, and it is these situations that make us ponder whether a freedom that might lead to frustration because it is lacking in intellectual and moral content is more desirable than a mind-conditioning which gives a single purpose to life and is willingly accepted.

But there are aspects in the same situation that again create serious doubts. The relation between society and education is so intimate that society almost always determines the form, content as well as the aims of education. Those educators in New China who believe that they are working in the best interests of peasants and workers—workers meaning all who are not employers in the capitalist sense—should be proud rather than ashamed of the principles they follow, because the conscious identification of the individual with aims that are fundamentally social and moral is the highest kind of life, and a system of education which enables the individual to fulfil himself in society and society to fulfil itself in him is the best of all possible systems. But it always takes time for such ideals to permeate the minds of those who have become used to performing services entrusted to them without giving thought to their moral value. A process that for Prof. Chang Hsi-jo represented a great awakening would, for a man of smaller stature and lower intellectual calibre, appear to be conversion under orders from the government, because he would emphasise too much the fact of conversion and the outward changes it had produced, and make what is meant to be an idealist attitude towards education appear to be a form of

organised enslavement of the mind.

I have here in mind a speech of welcome to the members of the Goodwill Mission made by the President of the Yen Ching University in Peking. He said the University had been taken over only seven months earlier. Till then it had been a hot-bed of American cultural and other interests, and only after its conversion could a line be drawn distinguishing friends from enemies. Outwardly, Yen Ching looked more Chinese than other universities. It offered courses in the Chinese classics, and had had Chinese Presidents. But really it was part of 'the bag of tricks with which Americans carried on cultural aggression', and 'some of our teachers were cent per cent cultural lackeys'. Speeches by some headmasters of middle and primary schools were made in the same spirit, and showed that even in an idealistic atmosphere men do not remain on the same level. Heights and depths are characteristic of the configuration of every society.

New China has come into being because of Chairman Mao's principle of theory and practice. The struggle against Japan, against the Kuomintang, against foreign intervention; the land reform, the organisation of production, even the administration of justice, all have been used as means to education by the Communist party and its political workers, by the administrators, by the Liberation Army. Now the Common Program means Education and Education means the Common Program. That is what I realised after a good deal of inquiry about the methods of adult education, the means adopted for attaining total literacy, the coordination of the program of industrial development with urban and rural education. The People's Government is not looking at life in parts, and is not breaking up its policy into isolated aspects. What we call education will be one of the by-products of the Common Program, which comprehends the political, economic and cultural life of the people. Adult education is not now, and perhaps will never be, something

by itself. The peasants in China may not become literate in our sense of the term for another ten years, but they will be politically conscious, socially active and economically progressive, because the Common Program makes them accept certain political values, requires them to perform certain social functions to the best of their ability and to increase production to the utmost. The People's Government, for its part, continuously stimulates ambition. But the ambition of the individual is given a social background and a social objective. A complete picture of the existing political and economic condition of the country and the line of development in the near future is imprinted on his mind. The concept of national progress is too big for him to twist to his own purpose. He can only become a conscious instrument for the fulfilment of the Common Program. That is his education.

RIGHT AND WRONG IN EDUCATION

I HAVE been pleading with all and sundry to accept my statement, made in all honesty and sincerity and without any sense of false modesty, that I cannot speak with any authority on education. I have not studied the subject, I have felt I was a very poor teacher. And on me my fate and my friends have chosen to confer the singular honour of delivering the Foundation Day address of the Central Institute of Education. There is an inexplicable quality in the circumstances that has beaten me completely. I am not only honoured ; I am overwhelmed.

The Central Institute of Education is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Its record is magnificent, almost incredible. Government institutions, once the enthusiasm that led to their establishment is diverted elsewhere, survive without effort, but have all the dilatoriness of government machinery, all the lofty indifference of successors to great enterprises and achievements turned against them. The Central Institute has defied all precedent. Indeed, to me it has never looked like a government institution, its Principals and teachers have been so ardent, so full of the feeling of personal responsibility, so determined to succeed. I remember my first visit to the Institute, when it was housed in a building not much larger and far less impressive than its bus. I remember seeing the present building go up, and the look of the traveller-in-the-waiting-room on Dr. Basu's face. You can see from Dr. Pires' Report that the present building must be already too small. The Institute is more active than a bee-hive, overflowing with honey gathered

from all the flowers of the meadows and the gardens of education. Its pupils have already carried to different parts of the country the habits they learnt here. This bee-hive is producing other bee-hives, and transmitting to them its sense of urgency, its energy, its virtue of planned, persistent activity. Within ten years the Institute has not only grown, it has become an example of rapid and healthy growth. I shall not repeat here all that Dr. Pires has said about the scope of the Institute's work. But I am confident, as all who know Dr. Pires and his colleagues would be, that the Institute can carry its present burden and much more with ease and grace.

This Institute has succeeded so well, it represents trends whose forward pull is so great that slow-moving minds like mine, which assume dangers and difficulties and a certain ratio between the possible and the impossible are disturbed by an uncanny feeling of having left the stars behind. Once upon a time men set their courses by these stars. Sometimes they lost their way, and even the quickest and surest took time to reach their destination. Now we seem to have laws of space and time operating in the world of education that make it possible to arrive before being quite ready to start. We seem to have an entirely novel way of looking at things, to have changed our values without being aware of it ourselves. I have confessed already that I am not entitled to speak on education. My subject is history, which further hinders my understanding of educational problems. In a place, and on an occasion like this, I should have exercised my right to remain silent. But it is also in a place like this, where knowledge and competence and earnestness have produced an amazingly rich harvest that one can express doubts without fear of shaking the convictions of others and imagine how things might have been somewhat different without being held to have disparaged achievement or damaged illusions. It is in the hall of knowledge that it is

most appropriate to inquire into the nature of knowledge.

One reason why I feel diffident in talking about education is that I do not understand its current language. It does, indeed, bear some resemblance to a language I have learnt, but every now and then, in an otherwise intelligible context, I find ensconced a term my eyes and ears are not used to. The dictionary does not help me, being, after all, only an English dictionary. I have to seek illumination from my friends. They smile and explain. I am resentful. I feel that language has taken a short-cut to avoid and circumvent, even to obviate thought. I fear that the habit of taking these short-cuts will make a mystery of even the elementary facts of education. We may not have Pandits reciting *mantras*. We may have something very much worse—the whole of our life, our future, our humanity reduced to formulas used automatically by those who apply them and frightening the intelligence of those on whom they are applied. The educational expert might soon become something like the medical expert, diagnosing, prescribing, observing and repeating this process till the educational objective is attained. The disastrous feature of this will be that the educational expert will not treat the diseased but only those in reasonably sound health.

My study of history reminds me of parallel situations, when living ideas were reduced to concepts and concepts to technical terms, and these terms made into goods of intellectual traffic. When these goods were examined, they were found to be camouflaged emptiness. Are we not today filling our minds with things history will one day disown and philosophy brush aside? And are we not, till this reckoning has taken place, denying ourselves the pleasures and rewards of contemplation, of discovery, of intellectual fulfilment by contenting ourselves with terminology. We may say that contemplation, discovery, fulfilment are the privilege of a few, the many must depend on what language

can convey. But must the many be induced to borrow even the little they could themselves have earned? Must we add to their shortcomings the sterility of a make-believe knowledge?

The borrowing of terminology becomes a more serious issue if we see it in its historical and sociological context. We are involved in an almost world-wide movement to rationalise education. We not only produce for profit as well as need, we have fallen so completely under the spell of the bourgeois capitalist mind that in organisation, in methods, in aims we are disposed to adopt, almost for its own sake, the rational in place of the traditional, the inorganic in place of the organic. Education has become a process of transmission and reception, and the more smooth-working the machinery, the more satisfactory the results. Consider the rich variety of methods, the ever-improving techniques, the abundance of aids, grouped under the hideous word audio-visual, and it will be apparent that the tendency to mechanise education cannot be stopped. It is so convenient if education is a measurable quantity? We can prepare questionnaires that will convince us that even its quality is measurable. We are sure of things. We have proofs. We have at one end society, which is considered a knowable factor and which statistics are rapidly converting into a known factor. We have at the other end the individual, whom we analyse so constantly and so carefully at all ages and under all circumstances and collect and sort and file our findings so scientifically that there seems to be nothing more obvious and determinable than human nature. Then we coordinate the two factors, society and the individual, through education. Our difficulty is lack of statistics or of the availability of mechanical means, and of course of the financial means required for the continuation of research and the enlargement of its scope. It does not occur to us that all our assump-

tions may be only relatively true, and the little difference between truth and error may make all the difference in education.

But perhaps I am wrong in saying that we do not realise that our assumptions might be only relatively true. We do realise it. But we have no longer the freedom of choice. The bourgeois capitalist mind is a matter of history now. Applied science and technology, the creations of this mind, have become a force we can neither resist nor think of resisting. We talk of technological impact, of social change, as we would of a thundering procession of wheeled vehicles, and of almost mechanical hands steering these vehicles. It needs not only courage, but an utterly unattainable stupidity to believe, and act and think as if we were free agents, able to resist the fascination of the latest mechanical appliance and its accompanying methods, to question the value of the research which led to its invention, and to the further research that its adoption involves. Truth was long ago declared to be relative; applied science and technology do not need philosophical stilts and supports. They have become so powerful that they can do without a discussion of values. We have to accept the assumptions they require us to accept. We have to do what they require us to do.

We have to assume that society is a known factor because any other hypothesis would hamper the operation of economic and technological forces and the intellectual system they have built up. We have to assume that the individual is a knowable factor, because otherwise he does not fit into his environment. He may become a rebel, and the destructiveness of man's rebellious spirit is incalculable. It can even destroy other destructive forces, such as economies that prevent man's spiritual growth, and bombs that endanger his survival. Education must, therefore, be as precise as possible. We must have methods so sure and

measurements so accurate that education will fit a man in society as nicely as a manufactured part fits into a machine.

I cannot resist this logic. But I am sure the Central Institute can. I shall be accused of confusing history and political philosophy with existing reality if I say that society is a concept, not a physical fact; that while we must be willing to drink hemlock because of our ideal of society, we must become gadflies, if necessary, to the men among whom we actually live and move. But the Central Institute could raise the question as to whether Indian society today, meaning the actually living and thinking people, can serve as a standard for purposes of education. It would have means of showing, in a way that would accord with the prevailing methods of psychology and sociology, that there are fundamental doubts and uncertainties which must be removed, patterns of living, shattered by accident or decayed through neglect, which must be rebuilt before the Indian educator can say with any confidence that he is clear about the purposes of education. The Central Institute could advise against all glib talk about cooperation between school and community by showing how today the one tends to drag the other down. It could claim that the task of the school is to guide the community, and it should, if necessary, assert its independence. What applies to school and community applies also to education and society. It is for the Central Institute to declare that it will not allow society to dictate what standards education should accept, that it will freely exercise the right to reject. Between acceptance and rejection is the determination of what should be emphasised, and to what extent. It is not only to persons and societies living today, and not only to current educational philosophy and practice that the Institute should look for guidance in the ordering of values. Its field is all history, all philosophy, all art and, I do not hesitate to say even in this technological age, all religion. It should reach

out beyond true statements to assertion of truth, beyond books and teaching to categorical imperatives.

But is all this possible for a college of teachers' education? Would it not be accused of producing preachers instead of teachers, men attempting to perform a social and spiritual function inconsistent with their vocation, and sacrificing formal education to social reform? I admit there are grave dangers here, and I would not have suggested the possibility of change if I had not felt that our present attitude to education is leading to disaster. The teacher cannot be disinterested, indifferent, neutral. His enthusiasm for particular means and methods can only lead into a blind alley if he is incompetent to look beyond his allotted task, beyond formal education, beyond the school and beyond society. He must have something that makes him bigger than his surroundings, something that cannot be imprisoned within routine tasks and conditions of service, something that makes him feel that he is not an employee only but also a free agent, that he has not only duties to others but also to himself.

In other words, before we can have the teacher we want, we must have a different concept of society and a different concept of the individual. Education must not accept without serious qualification the view that society is the environment to which the individual must adapt himself. On the other hand, while measuring individual aptitudes, it must insist that such measurement has a purpose as limited as the calculation of normal food consumption for the organisation of a kitchen. Measurement of aptitudes should have about as much to do with the idea of personality as the amount of food consumed by a person has to do with his endurance, his physical and moral courage, his creative power. We cannot take man's measure, even for the purposes of school education, unless we look beyond the measurable to the immeasurable.

I have not heard anything more depressing in all the wise talk about education than observations on personality. I know, personality is derived from person, and everybody is a person. But I have felt that 'personality', as we use it now is only another word for the individual, for the machine-part to be fitted into a machine, for the unit to be absorbed into the mass. Sometimes my imagination paints an even darker picture. We glorify the individual as 'personality' only to induce him to accept his fate; we wrap the body in a shroud, to give an appearance of decency to the burial. I am sure our world is not yet quite as gloomy as all that. But I am afraid there is little to convince me that we are not, in our education, anticipating by quite a century what might happen if we have in India a society conforming in every detail to the technological societies of today. Before we have appreciated the moral implications of the decision, we have begun to think in terms of masses, we are already training the young to fly from their selves, from all those values which foster the moral independence of the individual, from all that acts as a normative force in society. Where tradition gave the command, 'Know thyself,' we create the fear that the external world is the only subject of study. All our knowledge is born of this fear, is nourished by this fear and lives in this fear. We impress the external world so deeply on the mind that the world within the growing individual, if it does not fade out of experience and existence, is reduced to a wilderness where the spirit feels lonely and haunted, in a country where man found the fulness of life in the solitude of his spirit, we educate as if everything not visible and tangible and conducive to the acceptance of a prescribed harmony of social relationships and a higher standard of living was tainted with decay and death.

Of course, I have nothing to say if it is argued that what was supposed to be the self within a man died years ago and

it was not considered important enough to deserve an obituary notice. But can educators seriously take up that position in this country, with all its Parsees, Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, believing, praying, hoping? Where can education begin, where can it lead, if we ignore this belief, this prayer, this hope? As citizens of a secular state we are enjoined not to vitiate and deform our citizenship through intolerance, prejudice, discrimination. We are enjoined by implication to learn to understand religious values as human values, to generalise particular interpretations of truth. Has the Central Institute of Education no function in this context? Should it not take the lead in the search for meaning, should it not consider the process of education to consist in the attempt to combine and harmonise the objective mind with the ever-unfolding, seeking, subjective spirit? God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light. We say, Let there be Research and there is Research. But must we keep Light and Research apart, merely because Light was created by God? Must we insist that research should add to knowledge, but not to wisdom, that it should be a search for truth, but should not have a moral intent?

I am not suggesting a revision of aims, but only an addition to them. The immediate addition could be a study, of personality, of those qualities in his inner struggle and growth which make man into a moral being. Applied psychology is far from enough. It is a corrective to what may be called speculative psychology, but cannot replace it. Man cannot be understood by being reduced to the smallest measure when he is already writ so large in history, in art, in religion. We may kill him but we cannot comprehend him if we cut down his personality to physical urges and physical needs. It will not be a romantic assignment but a sober performance of its function if the Central Institute devotes its experience, its desire for precision, its objectivity

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to a study of the processes of self-knowledge, of revelation and self-realisation, of the wider functions of the imagination, of the creative powers of the spirit. Such a study may or may not produce books on educational philosophy. It will have served its purpose if teachers graduating from the Institute carry with them a conception of the dignity of the individual, of the need to search within themselves for the mainsprings of the wisdom that makes suffering and sorrow a source of strength, of the love out of which, if it is great enough, is born a new man.

EDUCATION AND TRADITIONAL VALUES

I must confess to a feeling of dissatisfaction at the title of this Symposium*—Education and Traditional Values. It implies a pre-judgement in regard to the nature of values ; it implies that education can dispose of values, maintaining or discarding them as appears fit to those who determine the content of education, as if man's belief and conduct were entirely a matter of choice. There was, indeed, what might be called our traditional pattern of life. This was shattered by the political and economic changes that took place. But has our nature also undergone a similar revolution ? Are our actions now determined by moral and psychological forces that did not exist before ? Do we not throw doubt on the existence of the values themselves if we classify them as traditional and modern ?

'Traditional' might be comprehended in a definition, but what does 'modern' mean ? I remember a time when it meant arrogantly opposed to every habit, belief and practice that was not of British origin ; dressing and behaving like a European ; anxious to be regarded as eligible for English society ; reluctant to buy and use anything not made in Great Britain or Germany ; showing off knowledge of English and treating Indian languages with indifference or contempt. Now 'modern' seems to mean sophisticated ; considering all values to be utterly relative ; impatient of any tendency to insist upon accord between belief and practice ; suffering from dizziness because of the stupendous technologi-

* Organised by the Ministry of Education in 1962.

cal development in the West passionately desirous of reproducing in India all the ideas and educational practices of all countries that provide travel and maintenance grants; able to make eloquent reference to the possibility of the annihilation of mankind through nuclear warfare. The use of the word 'modern' gives all our thinking a wrong direction. It confuses truth with the novelty or the general prevalence or the market value of ideas. Certainly it cannot be regarded as synonymous with 'wise', 'appropriate' or 'reasonable'. Let us freely use the word 'modern' with reference to time, as meaning our own days or the recent past, and scrupulously avoid it in all discussions of value.

The present system of education was gradually established in the nineteenth century and we are still suffering from the after-effects of the spirit and the manner in which the new replaced the old. It was like the young generation in a family turning an old relative, under whose guidance and care it had been brought up, out of the house with kicks and curses. Nothing in the old system appeared worth retaining because it was based on Sanskrit or Arabic and Persian, because it imparted knowledge that was extremely limited and out of date and insisted on the virtue of accepting the beliefs and practices that had remained almost unchanged for centuries. The knowledge which the new education provided was limited too, and because the knowledge came through the medium of a foreign tongue, there was hardly any question of Indians making material contributions to its advancement. The beliefs and practices, adherence to which was all-important according to the old system, were a mass of superstition, rituals and taboos. The new education fostered a feeling of intellectual superiority, the educated looked down upon the ignorant and superstitious, and thought it a blessing that they could do so. But there were obvious advantages in the Hindu continuing to call himself a Hindu and the Muslim a

Muslim. Religion was gradually converted into what we now call communalism ; and the impatient among us regard it as the cause of most of our tensions. The new education taught us to exploit religion without being religious, to be free thinkers without being thoughtful. It also transformed the loyalties which, in India, derived mainly from religion and were unconditional into formal and contractual relationships. It reduced life to a combination of colours which, no matter from which angle one looks at it, does not appear to be a picture.

Let me, before I proceed further, indicate my views about the character of the old system of education. It was not a system in our sense of the term. There were no schools and colleges and universities as we know them, no graduated courses of studies. But it was known which books should be studied, and in which order. These books were classics or commentaries on classics, and attention was concentrated on them. Their knowledge content was limited, but they were not merely books. They became powerful formative influences, moulding men into the patterns approved by society. The teacher, mainly because of personal contact with his pupils, also became a formative influence. Book, teacher and the environment together instilled into the young mind the fundamental importance of belief and of the achievement of excellence.

There is hardly anything to be said in justification of the beliefs themselves. But even if the insistence on things that were, according to our standards, patently erroneous or unjust, was almost fanatical, the underlying principle was a complete dedication of thought and action to what was believed to be true or beautiful. Let us try and visualise what this meant. Life was conceived as subject to unalterable laws ; it was the duty of the individual to obey them. He had to regard his material, intellectual and spiritual resources as property held in trust, for which there would

be a strict accounting. He had to cultivate an attitude of understanding and reverence, to grant to others the right to act according to their belief. Hindu and Muslim theologies were known to reject each other; this rejection was neutralised and converted into a means of looking beyond prevalent customs and habits to what was human and universal. As religion was not only a matter of doctrines but also of conduct, cultural forms acquired the force of religious injunctions, and the whole of life came to be governed by rules and precedents. Of course, the rules were disregarded by some people, as laws today also are, but the cultured man was he who abided by them. The difference between the old rules and modern laws is that while modern laws are essentially negative in character and concern themselves mainly with the prevention of wrongdoing, the old rules were positive prescriptions of doing the right thing. There were precedents for doing the right things, and doing them in the right way, and these precedents derived their validity from concepts that were both aesthetic and moral. It is true that they made relationships of all kinds and the routine of daily life into an elaborate ritual. They subjected the expression of opinion to a severe discipline; agreement and disagreement, love and hate, pleasure and pain could not urge intensity or necessity as an excuse for not appearing in the cultural form prescribed for them. But whoever the person and whatever the occasion, one had to aim at excellence. This ideal of excellence is reflected in the products of the period, in the textiles, the pottery, the jewellery; it is reflected in the literature; till about fifty years ago, it could be observed in the speech and manners of the scions of old families. We gave up patronage of our arts and crafts, preferring products of western machines to the products of our culture. We have convinced ourselves that we have no time to be courteous and polite, that the writer does not need to bother

about idiom if he thinks he has something to say, that refinement in behaviour can be subordinated to considerations of personal pleasure or profit. We regard the anarchy that has resulted from this attitude as a phenomenon of transition, which means that we are indifferent towards it and not anxious about what will follow.

But problems which have arisen in education are already warning us that the principle of *laissez-faire* cannot be applied any further. Committees on moral and religious education and on emotional and national integration are admissions of the need to take positive action.

The Roman Catholic Church is an example of institutional religion challenging and defeating tendencies subversive of belief. Communism has provided examples of indoctrination. But for obvious reasons these examples do not help us. Institutional religion, as we had it in India, cannot justify its claim to restoration, and revivalist movements have generally given evidence of narrowness and irrelevance to the real needs of the time. We have kept religion—but not communalism as far away as we could from our educational institutions. But now we have to ask ourselves whether organised, healthy life is possible without any commonly shared beliefs, whether the ideals embodied in our Constitution can be realised if we believe in them as tepidly as we believe in the value of truth and honesty, whether the socialist pattern of society can be established just through legislation and the rule of a particular political party. Of course, an optimistic reply can be given to any question, but even an optimist will have to give serious thought to the present situation if he does not wish to appear evasive or flippant.

A discussion of what education can do in respect of values associated with religion and ethics cannot be fruitful unless we recognise the significance of the greatest change that has taken place in our country—the establishment of

an independent nation-state, a state which is entitled to effective loyalty, competent service and that idealisation of civic duty which is essential for the cooperation of the citizens among themselves and of the citizens and the administration.

It will be obvious to anyone who is unwilling to be deceived by slogans and platitudes that we have as yet only a very vague conception of loyalty to the state. Political loyalty is not one of our traditional virtues. The Hindu and the Muslim states whose record constitutes our political history were governments by minorities in their own interest. This is true of governments all over the world till the discovery of democracy, and it cannot be said of all democracies even now that they are not governments of the majority by minorities which are able to prove that they represent the common and the genuine interest of the people. But in the Western democracies the sentiment of loyalty has become so deep-seated that in spite of differences of opinion the solidarity of the people is maintained. In India, unfortunately, that very system of education which should have created and fostered the sentiment of loyalty has been made a means of undermining it. The British Government, which introduced the new education, needed subordinate officers who knew English. The expansion of the administration and the relaxation of discriminatory rules and conventions in recruitment and promotion enabled Indians in the administrative services to push their way up...But they were not responsible to the people and they could not become full members of the ruling class. From the beginning of the present century, loyalty gradually became a term of political abuse, because it meant attachment to the interests of a foreign power. The few years preceding 1947 during which it became apparent that India would become an independent, sovereign state were quite insufficient for the revolutionary change in attitude that was

necessary. The swiftness of the change was not the only difficulty. The new education had brought with it a new interpretation of Indian history and culture which divided the people of India into Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs and Christians in such a way as to rouse feelings of hatred, fear and vindictiveness, and effectively prevent the development of a loyalty which embraced the whole Indian people and not only one particular part.

The first task which education must accomplish if it is at all to reinterpret values and thereby justify itself is to establish by all means possible the belief in India being one country and Indians being one people. Unity and integration are words that are on everybody's lips, but a cross-examination of most of the people who talk of unity and integration will at best lead us to the conclusion that we are just keeping alive a very necessary illusion. If we are historical and realistic, we will understand that to mention a few persons like Ashoka and Akbar and a few incidents from the upheaval of 1857 is no proof of unity and integration. We have to realise that the intellectual and religious isolation of small and large communities, the conflicts of states and religions has been almost continuous. We can become united only if we create within ourselves individually and in consonance with our dispositions and our tastes an overriding passion for a unity which can bear the moral burden of the wrongs we have committed and the mistakes we have made. This is the first step—the repentance from sin. We shall be aware of the nature of virtue only if our repentance is sincere.

The acceptance of this approach to unity will be a spiritual effort and can succeed only if it receives sustenance and power from the traditions of religiousness which are a part of our history. The state by declaring itself secular has thrown out a challenge to each and every citizen to show that he can enrich civic life by drawing inspiration

from the institutional religion which he professes. Secularism is a challenge to education to give tangible form to the view—or hope, or dream—that all religions are fundamentally the same. The resources of the state cannot be utilised to teach religion ; but they can be utilised to impress upon young minds the qualities of belief which make it indispensable in our life.

It would not have been necessary to mention religion, or belief amounting to what is understood by religion, so explicitly in this context if it were psychologically possible to provide a moral observation point apart from the affiliation or identification with the ethical teachings of particular religions. It is the gravity of historical associations that enables us to stand on our feet. Otherwise human beings float without any sense of direction from one hastily adopted view-point to another. If education can inculcate thoughtfulness and reverence and demonstrate the need to believe, it will have fulfilled the real objects of religious and moral instruction.

The second traditional value I have mentioned which it was the function of the old system of education to maintain was excellence, excellence in speech, in behaviour, in the cultivation and enrichment of personal relationships. We cannot restore the old not only because it has been destroyed, but because merely to seek revival of what once existed is a form of imitativeness and makes men into social anomalies. Our new concept of excellence must seek to derive inspiration from the beautiful wherever it is found, in the past or in the present, and to give the idea of the beautiful the necessary functional value.

If education undertakes the twin tasks of promoting thoughtfulness through search for personally satisfying and socially stimulative beliefs and of realising ideals of excellence in the performance of duty and in the creation and maintenance of relationships it will remain within its

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proper sphere of search, discovery and appraisal, but it will also enlarge its sphere to include essential features of life and conduct which it has so far ignored. It will not lose its value in terms of employment, and will contribute to the making of Indian citizens.

EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE

EDUCATION is inseparable from an idea of the future. Every parent plans the education of his children with an eye on the future; every society thinks of a future better than the present. But experience teaches us that the best plans miscarry—whether the plans are for individuals or for societies. In fact, we never know for certain to what extent education will succeed. Historians of education discuss in detail the ideas put forward by a great educationist or during a significant period, but they do not inquire as to how far what was desired or considered desirable was achieved. It almost appears that men have regarded it as a self-evident duty to think about the education of the next generation, but when the time for assessment comes, it is too late to do anything, because in the meantime circumstances have changed and new problems demand attention.

To understand the situation fully, let us remind ourselves that what we call the future consists of factors that are independent of our will, factors that are subject to our will, and factors to which we apply our moral judgement by determining what should and what should not be done. These three factors are closely interwoven and interdependent. We cannot consider the factors which are subject to our will, unless we assume the factors that are inevitable, and we can apply our moral judgement only when we know what is subject to our will and what is not.

Among the factors that are inevitable and therefore independent of our will are the processes of nature like

the alternation of day and night, biological processes that govern our physical existence, birth, maturity, decay, death. But, apart from the actual immutability of the laws governing our existence, there is also the question of what attitude we adopt towards them. We can attempt to fix the limits of what is beyond our will, or we can enlarge the scope of the immutable laws governing our existence so that they include everything and make our future as calculable as the operation of physical laws.

Every sensible person knows that it is useless fighting against the inevitable. Therefore, unless we assume that immutable laws control every aspect of our life, we concentrate our attention and our energies on things we consider subject to our will. The industrial revolution of the West is the most outstanding example of the union between the laws of nature and man's will.

The third factor is the most mysterious and enigmatic. We may call it the exercise of moral judgement, or the consciousness of duty with reference to the future. For the ordinary man it is the operation of the conscience, warning against evil thoughts and actions, and the adoption of wrong ideas and methods. But what is conscience? Philosophy has really not succeeded in explaining the origin and nature of what we call conscience, and therefore it is understandable that people should have tried to explain it away or to deny it altogether, or, like a modern school of psychology, to reduce it to a mechanical process, to a defect in the working of man's animal instincts.

As against this view, Spranger asserts that men are to be divided into (a) those who do, and (b) those who do not recognise moral duty as imposed 'from above'. This sense of moral duty is not of something external, something to be obeyed as the command of an authority, but as something that springs from the depths of man's innermost self and brings him face to face with God.

If we apply to education what we have said in regard to the factors that constitute the future, we find that in every way education is determined by our attitude to the future. The human will stands midway between two extremes, one of regarding the future as subject to immutable laws, and the other of attaching primary importance to moral duty. In accordance with the emphasis we place on the one or the other, we have two absolutely different types of education.

The first type is comprehended in the slogan: I shall make the man of the future will what he should will. In other words, education is to be so organised and inspired that a man exercises his will in such a manner as to accept without question and without doubt what has been determined beforehand as absolutely necessary and absolutely good for him. Spranger has given Marxist education as the purest example of this type of education, but he states also that this type has its roots deep down in man's desire for security, and has, therefore, a religious origin. Marxist ideology is the modern counterpart of religious dogma, and it derives additional strength from technological progress, which supports and confirms its dogmatic elements. It is not something entirely new in Europe; it is the product of certain cultural developments, of ideas like the super-individual Reason of Hegel, which utilises individuals, even those whom we recognise as great personalities, for its own ends and discards them when they have served its purpose. In France there was a movement, the course of which can be followed for about a hundred years, of a 'social technique', of a planned transformation of human society based on an assumed evaluation of what it was good or not good for men to desire and to have. This technique could not have the same assured results as the technique of controlling and utilising the powers of nature, but it had its origin in the same attitude. But even if we ignore such ideas and

tendencies, it is an undeniable fact that the pressures of an industrialised economy have reduced man in the western world to a mere point of transit for cultural influences—opinions, tastes, habits, reactions to external stimuli. Indeed, he does not want to have an inner life of his own. The radio, films, coffee-house music, passion for sport, crossword puzzles, betting on horses help him to avoid the necessity of looking inward. He is afraid of his own emptiness. He is no longer what he should be—the focal point for moral decisions, moral responsibility and inner strength.

What has so far been called education is only a means of enabling a person accept of his own will what he has to accept as a matter of necessity. This makes the results of education calculable, and our age is animated through and through by the spirit of calculation. If, however, we considered the human will as subject to moral command, we would have an altogether different type of education, a type geared, we might say, to help man in the exercise of free will. But freedom is a word with many implications, and it would be well to avoid it as far as possible. Let us attempt a concrete formulation of this type of education.

It will, doubtless, have an individualistic impress. Modern totalitarian systems regard individualism as a reflection of political liberalism; in fact, its roots lie much deeper. The spirit of man is a sphere with its own peculiar qualities. It is not a homogeneous pattern into nature. It is not just a link in the chain of casuality, on which alone the technicians of education would like to depend. It is a place of quite intimate experiences, in which an awareness of values is generated and values are weighed against each other. It is only in silent inwardness that a thing like the meaning of life is discoverable, the challenge of the higher life felt and the responsibilities of this higher and in the real sense human life accepted. This, history shows, is the

source of every kind of revelation, from the earliest times, because here a new dimension of existence is opened up that is quite different from biological existence in time and space. Spranger gives the examples of Socrates, Plato, Christ, St. Augustine, and of course many more examples could be given. Among philosophers, the contrast and the tension between inwardness and external circumstances has been elaborated by Kant, and by Hegel, in a more complicated manner, as the conflict between subjectivity and objectivity. The strong emphasis on human rights in our own times is only a juristic-political assertion that the sphere of man's subjection to necessity must be considered as secondary and subordinate to what experience has led us to regard as the sphere of moral duty.

If we assume this to be correct, we place man in the centre of things, and education must recognise that he occupies this position. Education will not, then, be regarded as a technique, because once we do so, all that occurs within a man's innermost self will become just a means for attaining ends, and psychology will evolve methods for controlling and directing these occurrences, just as the technologist controls natural forces and achieves results that can be exactly predicted.

Education is a very complex process, and takes a different form for each period and each stratum of a man's being. But three aspects of it are outstanding and clear. (1) Education is helping in growth, in the biological, as well as the spiritual sense; it is care and culture of the body and the mind. It is not a technique; it is tending, fostering, stimulation. (2) In its second aspect, education is the transmission of cultural goods. This does not mean filling a supposedly empty mind with supposedly necessary knowledge. This transmission should be a process in which the growing mind actively participates, selecting what conforms to its own mental structure and rejecting what

does not. (3) This suggests the third aspect of education, which is the most difficult to understand. How does one deal with this self-conscious inwardness, this growing person who is becoming aware of his own nature? Since the aim is to create sensitivity, above all sensitivity of a conscience which knows itself to be subject to higher powers, the endeavour to educate may well be called a process of awakening. The religious touch here is deliberate. Very few have been able to sound the depths of man's being. Pestalozzi passionately longed to do so during the second period of his career. But he did realise the most significant fact that the activation of the growing mind can take place only in the medium of a love which is not of this world. How different is this concept of education from that of a technique which is functionally perfect and based on sound laws of deduction!

But the questions still remain: Can education really improve our world? Can it create the future out of itself? Has it any significant influence on the future? Would it not be truer to say that education is possible only *within* a culture and in accordance with the standards laid down by this culture? Have we any examples in history of education creating a new or rejuvenating an old culture? One cannot answer these questions with any confidence. But one thing is clear: we cannot expect the processes of education to make any considerable change by themselves; this can occur only through a radical transformation that is both religious and moral, a transformation that is deep enough to purify existing culture from within. Then, perhaps, education will be able to follow up, and fulfil its aims.

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