

SĀDHANĀ OF SERVICE

Ek Nath Ranade



A VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PUBLICATION

Sadhana of Service

A Compilation of lectures delivered by

EKNATH RANADE,

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PRAKASHAN

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FOREWORD

It is with a head bowed in humility and reverence that I am writing this foreword to late Ma. Eknathji's collection of lectures brought together in this book entitled 'Sadhana of Service'. This foreword is only a small candle-light leading the way to a sunlit field.

To a society which no longer understands the beauty of Sadhana and has forgotten its habit of service this book comes as an eye-opener revealing the wonderful potentialities of the *Sadhana of Service*. Disciplined as Ma. Eknathji was in his life and to a way of service, his own life stands as a monumental illustration of the strength, nobility, vitality, dynamism, will-power and a host of other enriching qualities which naturally flow into such a life of dedication, integrity and surrender. It is with a heart filled with wonder, appreciation and prayerful thanks that this Nation would remember Ma. Eknathji's great contributions to the stream of National life.

His association since childhood with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha, specially with its illustrious Founder Dr. Hedgewar and later with Param Poojaneeya Guruji Golwalkar laid the foundation for his own disciplined life of *brahmacharya* and *sadhana* and was largely instrumental in bringing out his immense potentialities for the service of our Motherland. The qualities of will-power, industry, perseverance, fearlessness, forthrightness and integrity combined with his tremendous organising capacity acquired in those early years marked him out during the Vivekananda Centenary Year to be the potential builder of the national monument, the Vivekananda Rock Memorial. In paying homage to the great Swamiji by compiling his messages into the book "Rousing Call to the Hindu Nation" he added a new spirit and lustre to his life which made him worthier to undertake the task of not only constructing a granite memorial but also of establishing a living, ever-growing, dynamic memorial to Swamiji in the form of the Service Mission, Vivekananda Kendra based on Swamiji's famous call: "A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length

and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up and the gospel of equality”.

These talks have as their theme and object the man-making and nation- building mission of Swami Vivekananda and were prepared and delivered by Shri Eknathji to inspire the life-worker trainees of Vivekananda Kendra and mould them to be worthy vehicles and fit instruments for the fulfilment of this great mission. Today when he is with us only in spirit , these words come as his Last Will and Testament, not only to the workers and well-wishers of the progressively growing and steadily expanding Vivekananda Kendra but also to all those sincerely interested in nation-building activities wherever they may be.

The book is an excellent treatise on the art and science of organisation. It analyses the essentials and ideals of an organisation, and outlines the characteristics and qualities of an ideal worker. As the matter unfolds, we are taken from mere technicalities to the more rewarding and fulfilling results of discipline, dedication and surrender through which service becomes a vehicle for self-unfoldment and gathers to it the beauty and effectiveness of true *Karmayoga*. It was this *Karmayoga* which was adopted as the central theme by Vivekananda Kendra. This whole philosophy later found expression in the beautiful and meaningful Vivekananda Kendra Prayer, the daily chanting of which has raised it to the level of a pledge..

A tree is best known by its fruits. The worth and value, the inspiring, moulding, man-making capacity and power of these talks are best evidenced and truly testified in the impact his words made on the trainees and how they have been able to translate his message into action, in their various fields of activity in the farflung areas of the country. These talks are his heritage to all social workers in every organisation. They are based on his lifetime experiences in selfless service of the Nation. Small though the book is in size, it is great in content and powerful in its application. It comes as Ma. Eknathji's gift to those who love this great Nation, worship this Motherland, and would readily volunteer for selfless service in any field of activity in Vivekananda Kendra or in any other service organisation.

Nine years have rolled by since we brought out the first edition of this book. These were indeed years of great struggle and turmoil for our nation and to Kendra too, as we were growing and consolidating on the wonderfully solid foundation which Late Ma. Eknathji laid. Today Vivekananda Kendra has emerged as a very positive Youth Movement

and won the sympathy and appreciation of the whole country. It is this faith reposed in us by our youth and our elders that has given us the courage and strength to embark at the national level on a programme of far-reaching consequences on the occasion of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's meditation on the Rock at Kanyakumari.

Regeneration of our Youth-force through the highly potent ideals of *Tyaga* and *Seva* and integration of our country enhancing the awareness among them of the spiritual uniqueness and wholeness of our nation, were themes dear to both Swami Vivekananda and Ma. Eknathji. "*Sadhana of Service*" embodies these ideals in a remarkably practical way.

May the Eternal Spirit of our Great Masters inspire and guide us in our efforts in the years ahead. Vivekananda Kendra is specially proud and happy to bring out this third edition of 'Sadhana of Service' on 19th November, Ma. Eknathji's 77th Birthday, coinciding with our *Vivekananda Bharat Parikrama*, 1992.

M. Lakshmi Kumari,
President.

Vivekananda Kendra,
Vivekanandapuram,
Kanyakumari.
19th November, 1991.

**He who does not sacrifice his soul for the good of others
is indeed a living corpse.**

Bhagawan Shankara

**They alone live who live for others; the rest are more
dead than alive.**

Swami Vivekananda



Eknath Ranade

BORN : 19 - 11 - 1914

DIED : 22 - 8 - 1982

THREE PRESUMPTIONS

Today I will deal with just a few preliminary things which are essential for your training and studies. The very fact that you have come over here, at the farthest end of our country, leaving behind your family ties, indicates certain things. One thing which can safely be presumed is that you have an urge for some kind of service; service, not in the conventional but in a wider and nobler sense. That urge is a positive one.

The urge itself can have three aspects, viz. (1) an urge for social service, (2) an urge for political service, and (3) an urge for spiritual service. Out of these, the urge for social service can develop out of the evils afflicting Indian society such as dowry, superstition, untouchability, alcoholism, social inequality and the rest. A sympathetic outlook and a sense of fellow-feeling will make you feel that you should dedicate your life and energy to social service and try to eradicate the social evils.

You have read something of history. You also read about the past glory of our motherland. You have doubtless noticed the weaknesses in our national life which have brought this country down to its present miserable state. You take pride in this country of ours but at the same time you are filled with sorrow for certain vicious traits you notice in our people. You entertain the idea of doing something to restore our country to its former greatness. This is the patriotic urge.

If you study the world around you in proper perspective, you will realize the transitoriness of worldly life. You will not see any fulfilment in running after the material trivialities. You will develop an urge to serve and find real fulfilment in serving your brethren.

One of these three urges must have brought you here.

Almost as the corollary of the urge to serve, there is an innate urge to transform yourself as a fit instrument to serve. The transformation is necessary in a number of ways. It can be physical,

intellectual, emotional and also pertaining to personal habits. Unless you have this transformation, you cannot serve. Let us analyse this from various angles.

1. *Physical:* You must possess a healthy, strong body, full of stamina and vitality, to enable you to undertake any hard work when circumstances demand it. Not only you must be physically fit, but you must also be prepared to keep fit. A weak body prone to indolence and ailments, and physical disability will be grave handicaps.

2. *Intellectual:* You must have a capacity to understand things and situations in their right perspective. For this you must have a sharp intellect. You must possess the know-how and you must be able to handle men and matters in the correct way when you serve. You must be well-informed in the technique of administration. You will be expected to present your point of view correctly and effectively. The ability to speak and to write well is essential. You must possess the capacity to plan not only programmes and items of expenditure but also to execute the schemes and maintain accounts properly. In short, your mental faculties and your whole intellectual apparatus have their part to play.

3. *Emotional:* The emotional make-up also needs transformation. If you are irritable or excitable it will harm your work. If you have a bad temper and if people shun you because of lack of grace and tact in your speech and behaviour, you will not be fit to serve. Social service implies composure of mind, fine sentiments coupled with complete control over your mind.

In short, in service your outer and inner life has to undergo transformation. It is important that you are mentally prepared to discipline your body, mind and emotions. It becomes painful to those whose desire to transform themselves suitably is not intense. Even to get up at 4 or 4.30 a.m. may be painful to them. All habits including those of food and drink may have to be changed.

So this also can be presumed that you are mentally prepared for an all-round transformation of your own self.

Thus two urges are taken for granted viz. (1) that you have an urge to serve and (2) that you have an urge for self-transformation.

But I must qualify this urge to serve. This urge must be positive. It should not have been born out of reaction to something or out

of frustration. The other day a prospective candidate wrote a letter to me. He was preparing for a nice job. The medical examination revealed that he had cardiac symptoms and was unfit for the job. He therefore felt that he was not fit even for a married life. So he wanted to join the Kendra and dedicate his life to the service of the people. That he took a wise decision is no doubt to be appreciated, but he took it out of compulsion or frustration.

I am reminded of a funny incident. At about 12 o'clock at midnight some friends went to a restaurant while returning from a meeting. The restaurant owner began to show some extra favour while serving dishes. He said he would not charge them for rasagollas. While pressing them to eat rasagollas one remark which escaped his mouth was, "We shall have had to give the remnant to the dog". This needs no comment.

Taking to service when all other avenues to material life have been blocked is not an example of positive urge to service. Similarly, when I say that you can get a chance to transform yourself, it does not mean that we undertake to reform the illformed persons. We presume that you are the right raw material for transformation into finished products. Cotton can be transformed into cloth by processing it. But you cannot get cloth out of mud or sand. Ours is not a reformatory school, nor is this course meant for abnormals. For example, one may be different from normal in the sense that one is "other-worldly". Those who want to serve this world cannot be "other-worldly". They must be of this world, concerned with this world, though they may have mentally transcended it.

One more presumption is that you have attained a degree of detachment from your family. If you think of home ten times a day, I think you should just go home.

I have said all this to make you look within and to discover for yourselves whether you are the right type of persons for receiving the training here. This is the most important period of your life. The course has been designed to strengthen all the good qualities in you. This is, in fact, a motivation course, for which you will normally require years, but we have condensed the same to suit our purpose. Here you will get enough time to study, to meditate and to equip yourself suitably. I would not mind if some person leaves this place realising that he has come to the wrong address. But I feel that I shall have the pleasure to see that those who are here mean business and are sincere and true. I wish that strict adherence to time-table and proper discipline and decorum are observed.

II

THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MUNDANE

Today I desire to give certain hints about your stay at the centre. There will be some lectures which will be highly philosophical and spiritual and at the same time there will be some discussions about the burning problems of our country. Problems of social life will be dealt with. But these are mundane topics as compared with spiritual discussions. One is material, while the other is metaphysical. There should be no confusion in your mind even though there is a likelihood of it. पातञ्जलयोगसूत्र has many things contained in it and there are some odd things too in it. But we have to remember the motto always. It is आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च. This motto is equally applicable to the trainees.

There is utter poverty and there exist manifold evils in the country. We have to prove ourselves useful to the country. We must lead a purposeful life. These two things, the spiritual and the practical life appear to be not only different, but opposed to each other. But there should be no confusion in our minds. We should be clear about our purposes. We know that when we speak of Brahman, our feet are not on the ground. People steeped in spiritual life think very highly of themselves and refuse to come down to the earthly level. On the other hand, there are people who do not bother about spiritual problems. This world is too much with them and they hardly think of another world. They think only of the hard realities of this world. As a matter of fact, both kinds of people are fanatics. We forget that we are both body and soul. The soul cannot exist without a body and a body cannot live without a soul. We cannot think of the one without the other. In speaking about both of them, we must remember that different yardsticks must be used. You cannot measure the problems of the one with the same yardstick used for the other. The verse says :

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।

“Brahman is the only Truth and the world is only an appearance, an illusion. The individual soul is no other than the Highest soul.” Very unkind criticism has been levelled against Adi Shankaracharya. They narrate a parable about Shankara’s running away when an elephant was coming towards him, in one of those notorious small lanes of Banaras. Somebody mischievously asked him “किं पलायनम् । गजः मिथ्या ।” “Why run away! The elephant is just an appearance!” The ready-witted Shankara replied, “गजोऽपि मिथ्या, पलायनमपि मिथ्या ।” “If the elephant is just an appearance, the running away is equally an appearance!” Things spiritual cannot and should not be measured by the yardstick of worldly life. We see a cinema show, we enjoy the same, but we leave the things there only in the cinema theatre, as they are useless in the world outside. We never confuse the cinema show and the actual environment in which we live. There is a wise proverb of practical life. It says:

“Work while you work, play while you play.”

We must keep the two things apart. We must play the role that we have accepted perfectly well, knowing what we are about. If you neglect the realities of life we will fail. Keep the goal before you and be firm on the ground. Those people who are dedicated to the realm of spiritual life only, are unfit for social life. Realizing the hard realities of life around us, we must lead a purposeful life and achieve a sense of fulfilment in life. If the realities are not understood and if the roles are not properly understood, then there is much harm. At Nagpur, an amateur company was performing the drama of “*Keechaka-vadha*”. During the play the actor playing the Bheema role forgot that he was playing the role and he was so much agitated and furious, that he was about to kill the person playing the role of Keechaka. The people from the auditorium had to run to rescue the poor actor. Thus we must not confuse stage acting with reality. We should identify ourselves with the role no doubt, but there are limitations to it. We must always be conscious of the role we play. Always play the game in the spirit of the game. We should not be slothful with the wrong notion that it is just a game, that after all somebody will win and somebody will lose. This is not the spirit of the game. There are certain rules and norms of conduct and still we must be highly spiritual and at the same time highly practical. We must be very careful not to lose a sense of proportion. We must always

remember that the world is neither purely spiritual nor wholly material. We must endeavour to have peace in both the worlds. That is an important truth.

There is a superhuman plane where one has to reach through real knowledge, but real knowledge is not easily attainable. We must open all the windows of the mind to know the best in the world. We are fortunate in having five sense-organs, but there are limitations to their powers. Mind, no doubt, has great capacities, but the knowledge it gains through the sense-organs is limited. And with this limited knowledge we cannot have even the conception of eternity. We are bound by time and space. Such ideas as eternity are words only. They indicate certain symbols but even these cannot be understood by the intellect as it has also limitations. Our mind and intellect are conditioned and hence they cannot go beyond certain limitations. There is the theory of causation. Every effect must have a cause and every cause has an effect. But there are problems where human intellect and mind are baffled. For example, we have the eternal question as to which is the first cause, the hen or the egg and so on. Unfortunately, we do not have any access to the pure knowledge of time and space. Taking these limitations into consideration, we have to make a steady progress from human level to the superhuman level by patient exertion and effort. We must always remain on the human plane. As a matter of fact, God has been kind in bestowing the blessing of limitations on the powers of the sense-organs. It is good that we can hear the sound up to a certain distance only. If we were to listen to sounds from far-off places, life would have been miserable. Our memory is also limited, but it is good to a certain extent that we forget useless things. To remember all good and evil incidents will be to court misery.

In executing certain things, there should be no compulsion from outside. There should be an urge and compulsion from within, on the human plane only. For this we must increase the intellectual power, by which we reach a higher level. It is a problem to decide what the higher level is, but we prepare ourselves to live on a higher level which is a rich way of living. We live on this earth. We are indebted to Mother Earth. Remembering such realities of life, we have ample opportunities to attain to a higher level of living. There are layers in realities too. But we must

live and work in peace. That is the skill in activity:

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।

We have to remember the role allotted and must work accordingly. There should be no confusion or interchange of the roles. In performing an आरति, the devotee has the lighted lamp in his right hand by which he waves round the idol, but he has a bell in his left hand which he moves to make the tinkling sound. But he does not change the duties of both hands nor does he do the same action by both the hands. He maintains that skill and sustains the different roles of both the hands. This is important. There is not the least confusion in his mind.

You will be instructed in different disciplines, but you must have the proper perspective and work accordingly. Do not lose a sense of proportion at any time. All this is God's creation and we are living in this world like the travellers. We have to leave this world some day or other. So we should not have special attachment to this world. Use all things around you in the best possible way but for a higher purpose only. We should not forget either of the two worlds, but keeping our attention on both the worlds simultaneously, we must lead a purposeful life.

THE PASSAGE TO ADULTHOOD

It is very interesting and instructive to analyze and note the different stages in the development of a child into its adulthood. When a child is born it is only a piece of flesh so delicate and tender that we cannot even handle it properly. It is only in a nebular state and the different limbs of the body are not properly differentiated. Its mental apparatus is almost absent in that state. The sense-organs also are not clearly and properly developed. The hungers which are predominant at a later stage are not noticed. The child weeps, plays, smiles, eats and sleeps. By itself it cannot express its wants also. It simply weeps and it is the mother who has to judge whether the child is hungry or sleepy or needs something else. Weeping is the only indication of its discomfort; it may be due to hunger or sleep or some ailment. Slowly it develops one feeling and that is for eating. Everything is meant for eating only and whatever it sees or comes to its hand, it puts into its mouth. This one appetite for food alone is seen and other hungers manifest later on. Gradually the child grows, it takes form and some minor faculties are in the process of development. All the faculties of adulthood are not yet to be seen.

At this stage it becomes an independent unit in certain respects only. It still does not understand what is good or bad, what is right or wrong, what is congenial or not congenial. It is not capable of taking any decision by itself. It is only at the age of twenty-one when it has reached adulthood, according to law, that it is taken for granted that its faculties are fully developed. As a matter of fact, until the wisdom-tooth (called as *akkal-dadh* in Marathi) is cut, a child is hardly a grown-up person. But the law has to decide on some age and arbitrarily it has been fixed as twenty-one. When a child becomes a major, it can then sign contracts and enter into other practical business agreements. But till then it is not capable of valid discrimination and therefore all its actions are

taken to be legally invalid. The minor does not understand what is congenial to its self-interest and what is detrimental. Worldly wisdom has not still dawned on him and he is quite ignorant of the proprieties. The real man of the world must know how to behave and to safeguard his interest. So long as this worldly wisdom has not been learnt by anybody, he is under-developed. A man of worldly wisdom knows how to speak, what to speak and where and to whom to speak and also whom to approach for proper guidance.

A child, when it reaches adulthood, adds a new dimension to its life. Adulthood is a landmark in the development of the child into manhood. His physical and mental powers are fairly well developed. He now knows how to handle a situation. Now he has become a rational animal. He can take care of himself without anybody's help. As is said in Hindi now he has reached the age where it is said, "अब इसने होश संभाले"

("He can guard his own interest.")

Man is an animal no doubt, but he is a rational animal. Reason is something which is a special gift to him as compared with other animals. As is said in Sanskrit Subhashita.

आहारनिद्राभयमैथुनं च सामान्यमेतत्पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।

बुद्धिर्हि तेषामधिको विशेषो बुद्ध्या विहीनाः पशुभिः समानाः ॥

"Eating food to satisfy hunger, to sleep in order to have rest, protection from fear as an instinct for self-preservation against dangers and multiplication through fulfilment of sexual desire — these are four instincts which are common to man and animal. But intelligence is the special prerogative of mankind. Without intellect they are as good as animals." But this intellect is a double-edged sword. If properly used, it leads a man to become a superman, but if wrongly handled, it makes a man more ferocious than an animal. Animals also possess intelligence, but it is just to satisfy their four natural instincts. When they are satisfied, animals do not care for the world. But with his intelligence, man plays havoc. Animals do not think of tomorrow, but man thinks of storing up not only for tomorrow, but for day after tomorrow also, and in order to satisfy this desire of self-preservation, he indulges in exploitation of every kind. Animals fortunately have no logical faculty. They do not imagine nor do they infer. But man, with the sovereign reason generously bestowed on him by God, misuses

it and by his logic, imagination and inference finds out multifarious ways and means to satisfy his desires. And what a wonder! With all this, he is still dissatisfied. Man's desires and hungers of multifarious kinds have increased to such an extent that in order to find new means of satisfaction he has yoked science to serve him and thus he is making numerous inventions day by day. He has started exploiting nature in an unimaginable manner and the exploitation of man also in different ways. But the intelligence goes on inventing still new desires and, as a matter of fact, the desires of man have become limitless. There is no end to the sense of pleasure in man. The primary needs of every human being are only a few, but his desires multiply in countless forms, as the primary seven colours have a huge variety of shades created out of them or like the simple emotions expressing in hundreds of ways. The hunger of man has multiplied and it has not remained the simple original one for food as in the childhood. His development of mental apparatus and intelligence has completely changed that one crude hunger into innumerable desires and he aspires to satisfy all of them. These desires have qualitative and quantitative aspects whereby he desires to raise his standard of living. Surprisingly enough, this standard of living is measured by the wants one has. The more one has, the more one wants and in order to satisfy his increasing wants he has to spend more. So the position of the so-called civilized person depends upon how extravagant he is, how much more he can spend. A few clothes are just enough for a person. But in order to make an exhibition of their social position, people possess hundreds of suits and as many pairs of shoes. This is not because the body wants them, but because the person desires to parade his position and riches to the people.

But this is not worldly wisdom. To enjoy by oneself is selfishness, but to enjoy along with others is enlightened happiness. How to live with the world is basic wisdom. If the society is saved, I am saved; my safety depends upon the safety of the society. Therefore I must learn to share happiness with others. I want to enjoy the pleasure, but I cannot enjoy unless the society assures my safety. Therefore to ensure my safety, I enjoy along with others. This is selfishness no doubt, but this is "enlightened selfishness". In business, man maintains honesty not only believing firmly, that 'honesty is the best policy', but he follows that honesty because

he can win the favour of the customers and the more the customers, the more will be his profits. So also, one must have the worldly wisdom in not increasing one's hungers because they remain not only confined to the physical level but they reach the mental level also and as a result one starts hankering for name and fame, for power and position, and so on and so forth. Thus the 'hunger' multiplies in adulthood as a result of intelligence. It is an artificial development of hunger which prevails. Therefore, proper knowledge is most essential and this knowledge forms the second landmark in the growth from the childhood to the adulthood.

IV

THE QUEST FOR THE ETERNAL

While tracing the significance of the various landmarks in the life of a man from his childhood, we have seen that the child completely depends on elders for the satisfaction of its crude hungers. It does not even understand its wants. It only sleeps, eats, weeps and smiles. Its needs are to be discovered and attended to by others. Its desires do not have a distinct form. As the child grows there is some development in its mental faculties. Mechanically it goes to school and returns home. A sense of independence is developed in the child.

It gradually attains adulthood and becomes confident to take care of itself. Now he is a rational animal. He can think for himself and can determine what is right and wrong, proper and improper, good and bad as also beneficial and harmful. He does not depend upon his parents for guidance. He enters into contracts and also manages his business. At this stage, all persons are governed by desires. Some new desires are developed in a person, such as sexual pleasure, which was completely absent in childhood. The desires grow with the age and they take various forms. A man is called *Dehi* (one having a body). But here we find that he is always demanding something (*Dehi*- 'give me') to satisfy his desires, which go on increasing. All normal routine duties have one object only and that is to fulfil the desires which have taken countless forms.

But again these desires do not remain constant. One set of desires is substituted by another set of desires. The substratum of enjoyment and pleasure derived from it goes on changing. There is a fascination for one sport, but later on there is liking for another game. Then the man changes his realm of desires and we find that physical desires are transformed into mental desires. Even bodily joy does not have any intensity. We feel that we derive the best joy from a particular dish or sweetmeat, but after some time our

taste changes and one does not reap the same pleasure from it. The potency in the physical pleasures also deteriorates. One may be fond of eating, no doubt; but when he has developed the mental faculties, he finds more pleasure in, say, reading and he either forgets or hesitates to give up this joy for eating. Sometimes, it is our experience that, one forgets to eat, when one is engrossed in reading an enchanting book. The physical hunger does not disappear, but it has ceased to be predominant and physical craving is kept away by the intellectual pursuit.

It can be said that these desires which end in pleasures are the cause of all grief and joy in life. The entire growth of man, one way or the other, completely depends on desires. It is these desires which mould and shape the personality of man. We find that when a train moves, all the wheels of the carriages start rotating. But they are moved by the prime-mover to which the first motion is given by the engine. So also the desire is the prime-mover of the entire human activity. In lower animals and insects, we find tremendous effort being made by them to satisfy their very crude and primary desire, e.g. physical hunger. Desire can work wonders. As Israel needs food and aspires to be self-sufficient in it, it has made efforts to cultivate the crops even in deserts. Human beings are in the grip of desires. Desire by itself is not bad at all. It is only when it takes an adverse turn, that it becomes a vice. Otherwise it is as sublime as God Himself. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna declares desire as one of the distinguished manifestations of His own Self.

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ । Bhagavadgita VII.11.

“O Best of Bharatas, in the beings, I am काम “the desire” which is consistent with social order.” This desire has a most significant role to play in human life and it is a great power.

Just as one kind of energy can be transformed into another kind of energy or even as energy can be changed into matter and vice versa, so also one type of desire can be transformed into another sublime desire. Desire has done immense good to human life and it also has caused the greatest harm to society. Tulsidas was an ordinary man with desires and lusts but because of the scolding of his wife, he repented and his lust for animal pleasure was transformed into the highest devotion for God. It was a turning point in his life and Sant Tulsidas was born out of it. Thus the energy was converted, just as in physics we have light

changed into heat and heat transformed into energy. Desire for a crude work can be used for a noble work. Desire, intelligence, strength and power are all potential energies, but if they are used to satisfy the crude desires, they deteriorate the very rationality of man. Thus, as an individual grows from childhood to boyhood and from boyhood to adulthood there is a progressive growth in his desires. It is the intellectual powers that finally determine his future.

The selfishness in the fulfilment of one's desires becomes the 'enlightened selfishness' when one takes cognizance of the society. It is for the individual benefit only, but one follows certain norms of the society. There is in every society, whether civilized or otherwise, a social law and order. All individuals have their manifold desires to be satisfied and it is in order to avoid the conflict in the interests of all individuals that laws are made to govern the society in a proper way. The noble preaching of the Bible: "Do unto others what thou wouldst have done unto thee" incorporates the same principle. This social order ultimately results in the Government of a nation. All individuals in the society enter into a social contract for their mutual benefit. There is an understanding amongst the individuals and this higher form of social order is called Dharma. God and spirituality are not the unavoidable essentials of Dharma. According to the Hindu culture, every one has to attain the four पुरुषार्थs "the principal objectives of human life". They are धर्म, अर्थ, काम and मोक्ष. But of all these काम is the first. The desire forms the primary and principal instinct of man. Next comes अर्थ, the means for achievement of these desires. There are desires of body and mind of the common people. When many individuals come together, a social order binding and guiding the behaviour of all of them for mutual satisfaction has to be evolved. This social order is धर्म. But it is found that after the satisfaction of the primary needs of body and mind, which is an earlier stage in human development, there arises the desire for a higher type of pleasure, which marks another landmark in human life. This is intellectual pleasure.

After fulfilling the crude desires, man looks around him and studies nature and applies his mind to it. He observes that everything in nature is conforming to some definite principle. It is not by an accident that the world exists. There is order in nature. The sun rises, the rivers flow, the trees grow, yield flowers and fruits

and the mountains preserve their steadiness. The vast solar system has the same type of arrangement as is found in an atom. The whole tree with its manifold potentialities is incorporated in a very small seed and the whole universe in an atom. The wide variety of natural phenomena indicates that there is a plan behind all its movements and if it is a plan, it must have a purpose behind it. We also do not understand why scorpions should be there or why serpents should exist. We feel something odd about such a fine smelling and beautiful flower as rose having thorns. If we do not understand, it does not mean that there is no purpose behind all this. There must be some definite purpose behind everything in the universe. It is a cosmos and not a chaos. We fail to grasp the purpose behind the small insects, flying round the lamp and jumping over it committing hara-kiri. As a matter of fact, we are ignorant. The more we try to learn, the more our ignorance comes to light. There is a purpose behind this plan and nothing is purposeless. Thousands of unexpected mysteries stand before us when we try to solve one mystery. Thus, in this universe all existing things have a purpose to fulfil. If that be so, what is the purpose of my existence? Recognition of such a question is a remarkable and significant landmark in the growth of man. What is the goal of my life? What is the meaning of my life? Such questions are the most vital questions; all other questions so far discussed or thought about are merely secondary. Till this question is not recognized, man, even though an adult and possessed of high education and abundant wealth, is like a boy who believes that it is the tap that gives water. But when he grows up and has become intelligent he starts the queries from where the water comes and going backward to find the source of the water reaches the Himalayas from where the river Jumna originates and flows bringing all the water for the towns and the cities on her banks. When questions like why, wherefrom, for what purpose and to what end arise in man's mind he is on the right path. If we can imagine the moment when man first became conscious of his own self, we feel that it was the first landmark in the evolution of man. Man feels astonished when he observes that nothing in this world is permanent; everything vanishes and then what about one's own self? Yesterday, today and tomorrow also do not exist. Then is there anything that is eternal and if it is, what is it? How can it be obtained? A new hunger arises in him. This

is the supreme hunger of man, the hunger for the knowledge of the Eternal. This becomes the question of questions in his mind and all others become ancillary.

It is worthwhile devoting one's full life to the satisfaction of this hunger. As man develops and makes progress in the right direction, finer and finer desires arise in his mind. Such a noble hunger arose in the mind of Buddha. Amidst incalculable affluence and sources of enjoyment he renounced the worldly life to attain the greatest desire in human life. With the recognition of such a question, the true human being is born and starts the life that is really worth living. Thereafter he lives life; before that he was merely subsisting. This real and vital question marks the beginning of a true human life. Unless and until such a question has occurred to anybody, whatever his age, he has not begun his life at all.

V

THE DESTINY OF MAN

As we all experience, it is a long journey from birth to death in the case of every individual. And howsoever painful, difficult and long the road may be, still there is a constant urge or hunger to go to the end of it. It is true of the history of mankind in the whole world that there is a continuous uninterrupted march to complete this journey. Man goes on making an upward progress from very crude and gross hunger to the highest type of hunger, the hunger for immortality — for liberation. He may not realize this, but for ages together he has been continuously striving for that highest goal, for that is the goal of human life. The world must follow this path only, as there is no other way. Rivers, wherever they may have their origin and in whichever direction they may flow, with whatever obstacles in the way, have to reach the ocean. The Sanskrit Subhashita has declared categorically that every drop of water that falls from the sky has ultimately to reach the ocean in one form or other. (आकाशात्पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।) Human destiny shows this direction only and there is no short cut to it. Every individual has his hunger for spiritual awakening. If this awakening is there, then a man truly becomes Man. As Swami Vivekananda has once remarked in one of his speeches, unless there is such an awakening, an individual continues to be a child only. At the most, he can be a grown-up baby, but he is not a human being, even though he may have added years to his life. With all the crude hungers, he continues to be an animal, perhaps a rational animal but not a man. One must realize the goal of human life and must stand face to face with it. It is the destiny of man. Birth after birth he arrives and goes back and again returns but he does not become a real adult unless he has the experience of that awakening, at least that awakening only. Without the knowledge of this goal, our life is only an aimless wandering.

Every individual has self-interest but this self-interest must

develop into an enlightened selfishness. Physiological hunger must transform itself into a higher variety of hunger and the enlightened selfishness must lead him to share all his joys with others in the society in order to reap more joy. There are ethical laws and rules of conduct prescribed by every society to satisfy this selfishness only. But the word 'self' changes its connotation in this context. The self does not remain limited to one's physical and mental entities only, but it goes on expanding its sphere of selfishness from individual to family, from family to society, from society to nation and ultimately from nation to the whole world. Education, culture and vision offer this new sight to look at things and one realizes that real joy does not lie in the fulfilment of the physical desires. Thus, the concept of self expands. It becomes more enlightened. It rises still higher for the interest of the SELF. This can be described in short as a march from काम to मोक्ष. The काम, as we have seen previously, covers all gross desires. अर्थ covers all the available and possible means with which we are equipped for the fulfilment of these desires. धर्म indicates the social order, the norms for the peaceful and easy development of the society, whether it is a crude or highly civilized society. All the members have to come to terms and adjust themselves to rules of conduct for the satisfaction of mutual desires. These norms or rules become more and more complex as the society develops. The काम gives way to अर्थ and this leads to धर्म. But the main purpose of all of the three is the final emancipation, freedom and release of man. This is the divine hunger for मोक्ष. Thus the whole of life's journey is from selfishness to self-realization. By selfishness we understand a person's fulfilment of his individual desires and hungers. He has little thought or care for anybody else or even for the society in which he lives. But this selfishness broadens as indicated above and reaches the highest desire for self-realization. It can be described in Sanskrit as a progress from बुभुक्षा (desire for enjoyment) to मुमुक्षा (desire for liberation).

Hunger is the most important instinct in man. As a matter of fact, it is the propelling energy of his life. There must be some hunger in every individual, for, even the gross hunger will gradually lead him to higher kind of hunger. A person without any hunger whatsoever is a dangerous creature in the society. A man must always be striving for something. An individual's highest desire

may for the time being, appear most insignificant to others, but he moves heaven and earth to achieve the same. People may strive for affluence, power, position and what not. Let them strive for the fulfilment of these desires for they are sure to go higher. It is a natural process and must happen. Thus hunger is a crucial factor in man's progress. Even though in the earlier stages, bread is the only goal for a person, later he discovers that man does not live by bread alone. If he were not to strive for bread and if it is assured to him, it is sure that his progress will stop there only. He does not strive and therefore does not reach the stage where he starts thinking of higher things. He will think of other people striving to earn their bread, as foolish people. But he forgets that he is no better than a dog to live only for bread. Hunger and striving definitely lead to higher ideas. If a man's hunger is to be elevated and sublimated, he must strive even for the smallest hunger, for it is the starting point. The usual वित्तेषणा, पुत्रेषणा, लोकेषणा and even आधिकारेषणा for the matter of that, may be there, but when one has amassed enough of wealth and has also enough of progeny, he naturally feels having a name, the लोकेषणा, but even that may not suffice and he may strive hard for power. Sometimes he may lose in this struggle and may become a pauper; but that is also an eye-opener; it is an experience leading to a still higher ideal. By now he realizes the futility of earthly enjoyments and turns his energies to other aim. All the faculties in a man are for satisfying his hunger only. It is the type of the hunger that decides his early or later progress. But if there be no hunger at all there is definitely a regress in human life. The person has lost all chances of progress.

An unambitious man is a curse to the society. Every man must become mad after something and then only he can achieve something, that may be divine or mundane. The object may be small or big, but one must strive to achieve it and go ahead. Choice of the object is essential for this madness and it is such mad men only that have brought about all-round progress in the world. Madness is unavoidable. And when all other things of the world are meaningless to you, the highest hunger seizes you and your real life starts.

Hunger has no chronological or hierarchial order. It is not that the hunger will arise only when certain worldly things are enjoyed by you. The princehood, an empire, a beautiful wife and

children, when all have been enjoyed, one thinks of the other world! No, it does not happen in this way. As we have already seen, human hungers have no end; and the variety of hungers in each type is so enormous that one will not be in a position to enjoy them even in one life. But when the thought of the higher realm rises in mind, only then it is possible to change the course of one hunger into another form. Otherwise enjoyment of hunger is not going to satisfy one's desire; on the contrary, it goes on shooting up. Fire is not quenched by the addition of fuel; instead, it blazes forth more vigorously.¹ The same is true of hungers. The only way is to transform the hunger into a higher form just as energy is transformed from one type to another. The sublimation is possible provided there is hunger. If there is no hunger at all what is to be converted? Thus the conversion of hunger into any other noble form can be accomplished if there be any hunger, even of a gross type.

Darwin propounded the theory of evolution, according to which this world has evolved by certain stages. In Indian philosophy, there is no evolution but unfoldment. The world is being unfolded, gradually leading it to perfection. There is progressive striving towards perfection. The potential "becoming" is leading towards "Being". The superman has to be transformed into a divine person and for that we are unfolding ourselves. These two ideas of evolution and unfoldment are diametrically opposite. Swami Vivekananda therefore declared in a forceful manner, "Each soul is potentially Divine. The goal of life is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do it by work or worship, philosophy or psychic control, by one or more or all of them and be free." Think over it again and again — digest it inwardly. It is the most important statement and every word of it is used advisedly. Either out of ignorance or hesitation or disregard, one may avoid to bestow thought on it and act accordingly; but ultimately one has to come to it. There is no other way out. This is the quintessence of Indian philosophy in a nutshell.

When some V.I.Ps. come, I have to accompany them to the

¹न जातु कामः कामानाम् उपभोगेन शाम्यति ।

हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥ M.Bh.

¹Verily the desire does not quench by the enjoyment of desires. It increases enormously like the fire by offering.

Rock Memorial. And after having observed all the things they sometimes remark, "How fine it is! We find three oceans coming together and we also see the different colours of three oceans, the Arabian sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal." I do appreciate their remark. I wonder whether there are really three oceans. The ocean is one only. It is for our convenience that we have named them differently and the colour of all of them is the same. The water of the ocean has one colour only, but due to the depth or shallowness of the waters or due to the reflection of the sky we speak of their having different colours. So also all forms of life are one. One can just name them differently to distinguish one from the other. We name also abstract things. We call गुण by different names, but there is no watertight compartmentation as such. Every गुण has the mixture of two other गुण also but to show the predominance of one particular quality, we name it by that quality. By which attribute can we label Swami Vivekananda? Was he a ज्ञानयोगी or कर्मयोगी or भक्तियोगी or राजयोगी? As a matter of fact, no yoga is complete without the presence of other yogas. It is by the comparative preponderance of the one over the rest of them, that entitles it to be named by that yoga. God is one but we have so many deities and so many stotras on each one of them. This is not multiplicity, but it is unity in diversity.

Thus we have seen that the goal of human life is one and one only. There are no two opinions nor is there any discussion or question about it. It is decided once and for all. One may take cognizance of it today, 25 years later or even 25 births after, but it is one and constant. Why do we not do it today? The journey will be less tedious. Final liberation is the goal for all and there is no choice left to anybody. It has been declared by our ancient seers, long, long back for the benefit of the world and our elders have realized and experienced the same.

Every nation, as Swamiji affirmed, has to fulfil its mission. The destiny of this nation was also seen by him and it is to give a lead to the rest of the world. In what manner are we going to achieve this goal? What am I expected to do in this? What is the purpose of my life? What is the mission of my life? We have taken the decision and have already started on the path. We have to utilize the full span of life to achieve the goal of our life, the mission of our existence in this world!

VI

LIVE A PURPOSEFUL LIFE

In the previous lecture we have seen what may be stated as "pilgrim's progress" from mere physical hunger to hunger for immortality or from काम to मोक्ष or from human to superhuman and from there to Divine or otherwise, as from selfishness to enlightened selfishness and to enlightenment itself. This has been clearly stated in Swamiji's well-known words which were quoted in the previous lecture by stating that the goal or purpose of life is to realize that eternity or divinity which is within every individual. It has to be realized only by oneself. Different avenues for the achievement of that goal have also been clearly indicated by Swamiji. It is left to us as to which avenue one should follow to reach the goal. This goal cannot be achieved in one life. The journey is too long, but one has to perform it. If we come across anybody achieving this eternity in this very life, it means that he must have lived thousands and millions of lives before; he must have striven very hard before and this was his last halt to reach the destination. As Tukaram, the celebrated Marathi saint has affirmed

याचि देहीं याचीं डोळां । पाहीन मुक्तीचा सोहळा ॥

"In this very body and with these very eyes, I shall enjoy the great festival of final liberation." It is the birthright of every individual to enjoy this, provided proper care is taken to see that his rationality is not lost and he does not regress to animality. This life must pave for the next higher life. But this life is also very short. One has to utilize it in the best possible way, with powers granted to him by God, within the short period at one's disposal. One has to march on the life's way towards the end with the help of five ज्ञानेंद्रियः (the sense-organs) and five कर्मेंद्रियः (the organs of action). Life is a gymnasium where you have to display the best that you possess within the short time allotted to you. You have to be extremely careful to see that the time and the

energy are not wasted and that the way for the next higher life is paved by you.

Human life is a combination of time and energy. The five sense-organs viz. ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose consume energy for listening, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling and the organs of action viz. hands, feet, speech and the two senses of excretion also utilize the energy for their activity. Thus the organs of understanding and of action are instruments. There is also the eleventh organ, mind. But all these organs are time-bound, there is a limited time for them and they have to do their best in the allotted span of life. They have to pave the way for the next life and build one's future. The goal is not to be reached in one life, so one must move from target to target and therefore a master plan for this life is most essential. We should live for a specific purpose, lead a purposeful life. Are we living a purposeful life or a moment-to-moment life? A dog's life is a moment-to-moment life. It is propelled by the desires and has no purpose in life. The instinct which is predominant for the moment is satisfied by a dog. It feels hungry, it goes in search of food, finds it somehow, somewhere and the hunger is appeased; it has nothing to do thereafter. It feels sleepy, it sleeps; it feels like enjoying, it enjoys; thus the desire for the moment is sought to be satisfied. There is no purpose or goal of life for which a dog strives and lives. Thus, the four natural instincts or hungers are satisfied by a dog. "Am I to lead a dog's life? What should I do? I am a human being and I must know how to live for a purpose. Why do I live?" These are the questions that every youth must ask himself. If you ask any Indian youth today why he lives, the reply will be "because he does not die". One must have something to live for and to die for. The pursuit to achieve the goal will not be lost even if one dies. This is the difference between the two types of lives referred to above. A purposeful life is a planned life and there is no importance to personal instincts. Man should not be a product of atmosphere, he should not be at the mercy of circumstances. If the river flows from east to west and if one has to go to the east, he must go against the current. One's life should not be like that of the stray cattle in the cities, moving here and there and finding a way to escape from being pounded in the cattle-pound. It has no goal, it has an instinct only of self-preservation. Many young men are

creatures of circumstances. They try to make their way where circumstances are favourable. They aspire to go to medical faculty ; if that is not possible, try for engineering side, if not, then be a B.Com., if that is not favourable, then try something else. If the road to one aspiration is blocked, leave it and try another like the cattle and the dog which go by the way they find easy. You must always remember that you are a man, a rational animal and you must pave your way for liberation. Strive hard, build up your future and reach the final goal. You have the power and faculties to live a purposeful life. Think always how you can contribute to the betterment of the world. What account of your life are you going to render ?

You must refuse to be a slave of circumstances. You must create circumstances. Time at your disposal is very short. There are hundreds of Arts and Sciences ; we cannot even think of them, leave alone the idea of even knowing them and much less the idea of mastering them. Life is short and knowledge is vast. So we must choose the proper mission and utilize the whole life for it. "One life, one mission" should be the ideal. There are a number of attractive things in life, but if they do not fit in with the master-plan that we prepare for the accomplishment of the mission, we must refuse them, however good they may be. Thus, we must possess the discrimination of selection and election in life. There are many people who have not decided about their goal even at the age of sixty, when it is the evening of life and death is just knocking at their doors. Life should not be like a person who goes to a huge library, sees so many books, reads none and gathers no knowledge. "A rolling stone gathers no moss" they say. Only fortunate people decide their goal at the dawn of their life. They have the satisfaction in the evening of life, that, they had not lived vaguely, and wasted time in searching for the goal. Life should be like an arrow hitting the target directly and not going off the mark. Life is like the game of *Kabaddi*. One can show his skill and play a fruitful game only as long as the breath lasts. Otherwise one moves about here and there, shouts, dances and returns empty-handed. Futile is his play. One must have the full satisfaction of having accomplished one's goal when one breathes one's last. Otherwise, embittered by frustration, one will exclaim "life's morning and

noon have already gone, the evening has crept in and now the sun is about to set. What have I gained?"

Swamiji understood the goal of life at the feet of his Guru. There are hard days and easy days too. But it is the time that will decide the exact mission of one's life. There is no compromise and no concession in that. Life is full of obstacles and difficulties. It is like the river which has to reach its destination, the ocean. It is not an airlight. So, Swamiji also doubted and doubted, and ultimately at this southernmost end of the country, at Kanyakumari, he discovered his mission. As a matter of fact, the mission dawned upon him. When such a mission is fixed for anybody there is only one road to reach it, all other roads are blocked for him. Like a commander, decide the mission to be fulfilled and then plan the strategy, taking into consideration the power, the potentialities and the limitations. Think of the best manner in which the goal is to be achieved. 'Ifs' and 'buts' have no place in this. After a stern determination, not only the goal and the mission are fixed, but a master-plan will have to be prepared and all the strategy necessary to accomplish it must be settled. Then and then alone something noble can be achieved.

VII

MISSION OF LIFE

We have seen that the human destiny or goal is a settled fact and that there is no compromise in that. Individual mission has to be fixed for reaching that destiny and we do not believe that it can be acquired in one life only. We admit that there is a long chain of births and this is only one link in it. Life after life, this soul is marching on a great pilgrimage. The human goal is for the human life consisting of all lives taken together and the mission is for this span of life only. Swamiji had realized the human destiny; it had dawned on him. But he was not aware of his mission to reach the goal. He discovered it here at Kanyakumari. Every individual has to discover the mission, one day or the other. I have purposely used the word "discover" because it is not to be found out after a search from outside. It is within you, it is covered because of the absence of a definite goal. You fix upon the goal, evaluate your powers and potentialities thoroughly and the mission dawns upon you as it dawned upon Swamiji. As we have remarked previously, everything in this world is purposeful. Nothing is without a purpose, even an atom has its own purpose in this expansive, vast and endless universe. There is nothing accidental. Because we do not know the purpose of the causation, we feel the futility of germs, mosquitoes, flies and insects; but the creator of the universe has a purpose set for them also. We know the parable of the mountain and the squirrel. The mountain first scoffed at the squirrel saying "What is the use of your insignificant existence?" The squirrel smiled and replied, "That I do not carry forest on my back like you, is a fact. That you cannot crack a nut like me, is also a fact." Thus everybody has a purpose to fulfil.

Our present life is the outcome of the actions in the past lives, either good or bad. The chain of life is without a beginning and the present life is just a link in the chain. One should think, "I have been provided with desires, thoughts, environment and other

necessary things. My life must not be purposeless. What is the purpose for which I have come in this world? It must have been ordained by the Divine Power for me. I have to discover it." Discovering this purpose of life is the vital point. Life begins for us when we come across the mission face to face and get to the core of it. The body is the energy-generating dynamo. We have a machine which operates a certain function. We maintain the machine very meticulously. Day by day, week by week, we open the machine, clean the parts, again put it in order, oil the same and cover it carefully to protect the same from dust. The upkeep is ideal. But this does not serve the purpose if the machine is not operated to perform its function. What is the output of the machine? Motor car, sewing machine, generator, these are all maintained very nicely to serve some purpose. This body is an energy-generating machine. We maintain it very carefully. We brush the teeth early morning and we call it a morning duty. Thus maintenance is a duty. We give food and water to this body for its upkeep and so many other things are done for the same purpose. But what is the output? We maintain the body throughout the entire life. But no work, no operation, no function, no output? Why are these eyes, teeth, ears, etc. given? What is the purpose? Have I realized the purpose? And if so what steps have I taken to serve the purpose? Why I have been born in India only and why not in Africa or in some other country? This land has given me so much, what is my contribution in return?" One must be in a position to say at the last breath, "I have not lived in vain. I have given much more than I have received. There is no liability on me. On the contrary, I have assets to my credit". In childhood question of the mission does not arise, but in youth, after so many queries the mission is discovered, then the real life starts. There we must start planning in right earnest.

There are four types of people in the world. The first type is represented mostly by tribals. They plan for the day only. If there is at least some food for the day, they will not go out of the house to get more but will sleep. They do not think of the morrow. The second type includes merchants and businessmen. They plan for one year only. They are indifferent to next year's business or profits. The next year, according to them, will take care of itself. People who plan for this life only, belong to the third category. These people enjoy this life with utmost pleasures and happiness

and do not even believe that there was a past life or there will be a future life. This life is their only concern. In the Maha-Bharata in the Aranyaka Parva there is Yaksha-Yudhishtira conversation; Yaksha asks the question, "What is the most wonderful thing in this world?" And Yudhishtira replies,

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्तीह यमालये ।

शेषाः स्थिरत्वमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥ M.Bh.A.P. 312.114

"In this world every day people go to the house of death, but still the remaining people believe that they are eternal. What greater wonder than this can there be?" So people of this category believe that they are immortal and they have been born just to eat, drink and make merry. The fourth variety of the people think seriously. They believe that there was a past birth for them and there is also a reincarnation for them. They look at the animals, birds, reptiles and other creatures and think that they have also been created by God, but He has made human beings having intelligence. Why? What use of that intelligence they have made and they are to make? After many such queries the purpose of their life dawns upon them. They awaken from a long dream, as it were, and remember that life is very short and the energy given to them is limited. They determine that every ounce of energy should be very carefully utilized for the fulfilment of the purpose. They plan very scrupulously and see that only that which is beneficial to their plan is accepted and that which is detrimental is summarily rejected. The life's mission is fixed. What is useful, suitable, congenial and contributory to the mission will only be done and the rest will be simply neglected. This is the touchstone of the life. It gives an insight for acceptance and rejection of worldly things and behaviours. If there be many trains in a big junction going in various directions, a person who does not know his destination will be perplexed. But one who knows, will not be confused. He knows the train, the platform and the time of his train and he moves accordingly. There are many arts, sciences, books and branches of knowledge, but their utility will be decided by the touchstone of the purpose before us. We have a central project. There is a centre i.e. the main purpose and all activities will move around this centre. If there is no goal in life, a man thinks of being a musician today, an athlete tomorrow, an orator on the third day and even may think of being a sermonizer giving religious discourses. Like a grass-hopper he will hop from one thing to another

and will gather nothing. One must wisely judge one's aptitude, competency and potentialities. Then he can make a selection and an election. Otherwise a person is labelled as eccentric and whimsical. His behaviour is unpredictable as he has no goal of life. Our life must be properly organized round one firm centre.

There are two types of people travelling in train. There are travellers and there are wanderers. Travellers have a destination. They have the necessary ticket and other things for the journey. They will travel only by the train which takes them to their destination, whatever difficulties and troubles may arise on their journey. The wanderers have no aim. They board any train, and when driven out, for want of a ticket they will get down at any station and catch any other train, wherever it may go. Their destination is not fixed, for, there is none for them. Thus, if the goal or destination is determined, we travel purposefully, otherwise it is a meaningless, useless and worthless wandering only.

VIII

VALUES OF LIFE

When the destination of human life is once fixed and the mission of this life decided, the scheme for the fulfilment of the mission comes into existence. If there is no destination, problems do not arise; but when the destination is determined, even when a person is confronted by hundreds of difficulties and thousands of problems he faces them with great courage even at the risk of his life. His mission gives him a definite direction and in following it one finds that there are good many things to be rejected rather than to be selected. We know that it is humanly impossible to undertake all things and we are forced to reject many things as they are of no advantage to our mission.

In the selection of things, for our purpose, there arises the question of values of life. One is forced to decide what is valuable and what is worthless. Here the measuring rod for the valuables is very important, for every individual has his own measuring rod, his own way of looking at the things, from his own viewpoint. This measuring rod varies according to the situation and according to the goal to be achieved. What appears to be covetable, valuable and important in one situation becomes worthless in another. Great and small, good and bad, change their form according to time, understanding and age. Swamiji once thought of becoming a coachman because the coachman of his father's *baggi* sat on a higher seat in front of the *baggi* and not only controlled the horses, but also controlled his father's departure. Whether the station-master who controls a train full of men, and allows it go at his instance after showing the green signal is greater or the head-master who controls my behaviour and conduct at the school is greater is a question before me. Sant Tukaram, it is said, went with his body to heaven. When the heavenly car arrived for him, as a good husband, he asked his wife to accompany him. But she refused to go, as heaven and Panduranga's company were insignificant for her, before the calf of the she-buffalo who was to deliver two days later. She was a very practical woman and

worldly things were of greater importance and value to her. Thus, the set of values varies with the aspirations of the individual. Not only the importance of certain activities and details are to be decided, but even their priorities are also to be fixed. Certain "musts" stand first in preference while 'shoulds', 'cans' and 'mays' can afford to wait. There are priorities in household budget too. Food-grains and clothing and luxuries have a place in the purchases. But food-grains have top priority and first preference according to a common man. Clothing will stand the next chance and luxuries, purse permitting. But for a drunkard, the purchase of his liquor is of the utmost importance; food, the family members may eat or may remain hungry. He has no consideration for that. A person who has accepted a mission and who has prepared a central scheme for it, should think about the expenditure, both of time and energy for the whole life.

Man does the things which he regards as most worthy, but that is his own valuation. A King who prostrated before a sadhu gave the explanation that sacrifice always deserves honour. The sadhu in return prostrated before the king and said, "Your sacrifice is incalculably greater than mine, because I have sacrificed the insignificant and perishable life for God's kingdom, but you have sacrificed the heaven's kingdom for this petty kingdom of yours. So you deserve more honour and better respect from me, as your sacrifice is infinitely greater". The Sadhu and the king both did the most valuable things according to each of them. *Brahma muhurta* is the best time for everything. But the sleep that one gets in the small hours of the morning has no match in the world according to one and therefore, one prefers to sleep rather than get up early in the morning and revel in nature's beauty and freshness. Thus, people's values conform to their own ideologies and aspirations. Gandhiji was ready to stake his life for the cause of Harijan uplift by declaring his fast unto death, as the cause was more valuable to him than his life. In an ordinary common man's life, we do everything for this life only, but in the eyes of mission-bound people, the noble cause stands uppermost, and they prefer to take hundreds of lives for the accomplishment of the same. For them, their mission is most valuable and life is just a means. Lives of the great revolutionary martyrs like Bhagatsingh and Madanlal Dhingra and scores of others indicate the same thing. Concepts, attitudes and way of looking at the things decide one's

conduct. It is the touchstone on which one can test one's actions. The values of life dawn upon a person immediately when his mission of life is decided.

IX

DISCIPLINE

The burden of the song on all the previous days has been the same. We have been dwelling on the same subject viz. life's mission which is the most important point in life. After the thread-ceremony a person is supposed to be born again; he is called *dwija* or a twice-born. The first birth from the mother's womb is only our existence, but after the thread-ceremony when the goal is fixed, then he is born anew. So also, when a person comes face to face with his mission, then he is born again. Till then he only subsists and his life is not begun. When the mission dawns upon him, he finds the purpose of his life and also realizes his own place in the world.

This world is a place of enjoyment (भोगभूमि). Different varieties and grades of enjoyments are all spread around us, but a person after all the enjoyments, curiously enough, finds that the enjoyments are meaningless. The objects of happiness have lost their charm and attraction and they do not yield the same happiness. Thus, he becomes a refugee of enjoyments. Poor people who cannot afford to enjoy the world, are refugees in one sense; people who have had enough of enjoyments are also refugees in another sense. Their hunger for enjoyments and for more and more enjoyments remains unsatisfied. Such persons have not started life at all. They do not find anything charming and meaningful in the world. Such individuals, in the midst of affluence, commit suicide because they find that life is monotonous. The same day and the same night, the same sun, moon, rivers, mountains, trees, flowers, seasons and fruits; this dull sameness all around brings utter dissatisfaction to them. They become fed up with the world, because they have not realized the mission of life. As they have not understood the meaning of life, everything becomes — meaningless to them. These are vegetating people, plodding on in life because they have failed to find the meaning and charm of

life. Enjoyment after enjoyment, for years together, creates a nausea in them, as in King Yayati of the Mahabharata, and they are deprived of the real charm of life, which one finds only after the mission of life has been discovered. This mission brings a new vision, it breathes a new charm into everything. It vouchsafes a new message which makes everything in the world meaningful. It brings about a qualitative change in the personality of the man and he looks towards the world with a subjective attitude. Old values change and new values arise. This emergence of new values is most important, because it brings a strict discipline to the man, not the discipline which is imposed by a higher authority, but a discipline of 'do's' and 'don'ts' in the light of his mission. विधि (what must be done) and निषेध (what must be avoided) arise in the man. The five *yamas* of the yoga philosophy अहिंसा, सत्य, अस्तेय, अपरिग्रह and ब्रह्मचर्य¹ are mostly निषेधs, and the five *Niyamas* तपः, शौच, स्वाध्याय, सन्तोष and ईश्वरप्रणिधान² are विधिs. But for the person with mission such विधिs and नियमs vary according to the aspiration one has cherished. These aspirations lead to अनुशासन ("Discipline" does not signify the exact connotation of this term) which means that one has to behave according to the set pattern of his mission which governs the rule of the conduct of the individual. Thus, life becomes a *Sadhana*, like that of a musician. The musician, in order to achieve excellence in his art, has to undergo a strenuous self-discipline. Getting up very early in the morning, keeping his body and mind fit and equipped with energy, he has to sit for the daily practice. This is not imposed by anybody but for the achievement of his goal, he has to observe this discipline. In order to maintain his voice in good order, he has to avoid spiced and fried dishes like Bhajis etc. It becomes a "nishedha", (must not do) for him. He understands, that it is the divine dispensation that he should be a renowned musician. "I have discovered my mission. I have got it and I must follow rigorously the 'do's' and 'don'ts'," he thinks. If he becomes averse to or resists or rejects this discipline, then it means that he has not discovered the mission. In the academic field, Arts and Sciences are termed disciplines, as they could never be acquired without the proper discipline, meaning thereby

¹Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, non-possession, celibacy.

²Austerity, purity, self-study, contentment, submission to God.

putting some restrictions on one's own self. Our freedom is curtailed and it is our mission that imposes this curtailment of liberty. That which is detrimental to the success of the mission has to be summarily avoided. It becomes a taboo for the person and the interesting game of 'do's' and 'don'ts' starts, the governing principle being our mission which rules the whole life. In order to be equipped for the fulfilment of the mission one has to transform oneself thoroughly, externally and internally. Many lessons about liberties and freedoms, which might have been learnt previously, have to be unlearned and forgotten. Life thus becomes a hard game incorporating a struggle in, what one is and what one aspires to be. There must be consistency in life and merely toying with the ideas and ideals does not help. There must exist a correspondence in one's mission and his social activities as well as personal behaviour. One's nature must obey the strict governance of the mission and his mental and emotional state must be tuned to harmonize with the aspirations. Many people talk of high things, but their behaviour is too low, because there is no discipline. Mind aspires but body rejects. All the physical equipments must respond to the call of the mind. The higher the aspiration, the more rigorous is the life. Mere austerity does not help. If one is neither dynamic nor static, he hangs in between like Trishanku who could neither go to heaven nor come down to the earth. Thus one loses the worldly life and does not achieve the goal. His life is described in one Sanskrit saying " इदं च नास्ति, परं न लभ्यते । " "This is not for him and the other one he does not acquire." Transform yourself by being a true *Sadhaka* whereby life becomes a *Sadhana* for the achievement of the *Sadhya*. Success is sure when there is complete harmony in the *Sadhaka*, the *Sadhya* and the *Sadhana*. When this stage is reached, the world does not become a monotony. Every act, every individual and everything round about you becomes meaningful. Things acquire a new charm. A third-rate meal, which you would not have accepted previously, becomes purposeful, because, there the taste of the tongue becomes subservient to the requirement of the fuel for the belly, as it preserves and provides the energy for the next activity in the achievement of the aim. 'Sleep anywhere and anyhow' becomes the happiest thing as it makes one fresh and energizes one for the work of the morrow. The struggle disappears and one is at peace with one's work and also with the world.

One has to shape one's life for the mission. There is nothing impossible in the world. As the Hindi proverb says, " नर करणी करे सो नरका नारायण बन जाय " "If a man acts properly, he may become divinity". But one has to strive hard for this and the full price has to be paid. There is no short cut for this. One has to change his nature and his habits if they are detrimental to the objective. One has to impose rigorous discipline on his own self. If one desires to have any concession one should feel abashed, as it will reveal that he does not desire to pay the full price. It is unworthy of a man of principles, who is aspiring for a mission in life. Therefore, transform yourself and let your life become a *Sadhana*.

X

THE STRUGGLE THAT IS LIFE

Life is described as a battle for survival or struggle for existence. The struggle for food in order to pacify the hunger is common even in animals, but the human struggle is peculiar in its nature. Because of the knowledge of the human goal, different hungers arise and the struggle to fulfil those hungers is peculiar to human beings. Not only in animals, but even in human beings, if there is no knowledge of the goal to be achieved, there is no struggle. The knowledge of the life's mission dawns and the battle emerges. This battle arises because of the consciousness of existence. The more is the consciousness, the more severe is the struggle. Thus there is, so to say, a concomitance between the knowledge and the struggle. For the successful march towards the goal, a discrimination of duties and non-duties, proper and improper, good and bad, right and wrong, even *Dharma* and *Adharma* is a must. If there is no knowledge, there is no struggle and therefore it is rightly and wisely stated "Ignorance is bliss". An irresponsible person, not aware of his duties, is free to do anything and he always lives in the seventh heaven. Every one estimates the world according to his consciousness. Therefore, we find that every community has its own concepts of metaphysics, philosophy of life and the meaning of the universe. Good and bad are relative terms. What is good for one, may be bad for another. A visit to a lunatic asylum will prove that the people there lead a blissful life, without the least tension and awareness of the world outside. There is no struggle about what is to be done and what is to be avoided. In the case of persons like Duryodhana, the struggle is still worse. He knew what was *Dharma* and what constituted *Adharma*.

“ जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः ।
केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि ॥ ”

“I know *Dharma* but I am not inclined to follow it ; I know *Adharma*, but I do not refrain from it. I do as I am goaded by a certain power

residing in my heart." Thus, the struggle is greater. Again a person knows his duties well, he struggles strenuously for the fulfilment of his duties, but the temptations intervene. The tongue allures a person to eat something which has been prohibited to him for his good. Thus, the organs both of sense and activity do not cooperate. The Gita has aptly described the situation in the verse :

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्ये बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ (III.36)

"Oh son of Vrishnis, propelled by whom does the man perform a sin, even though reluctant, but commanded, as if, by force". The individuals are forced to act otherwise by the temptations. Thus, the struggle arises because of the conscience. Remove the conscience, and there is no struggle. The better the knowledge, the sharper is the conscience and more formidable becomes the struggle. Here the struggle is not with the external world but a struggle within one's own self. The mind soars high and even higher, but we do not prove a match to it. One's own level together with the ideas of good and expectation create a keen struggle. "High thinking and plain living" is a good principle, but very difficult to practise. We know of people who can be described as "high thinking and petty living". The ideas must be translated into action. How to rise to the ideas and prove equal to them is the great problem. There arise objections and obstructions in every work that you desire to undertake. People take delight in aspiring for broad outlook and if any one starts a good work for a small group of people it appears to be narrow to them and they will go on increasing the field of work to the Hindus and then to all the Indians and above this for the universe and ultimately for the whole animal world. But what about translating the ideas that we cherish. Here the struggle starts. In 1962, we lost the battle with China because our army was not trained in mountain warfare. Thereafter a special "mountain division" was created and the necessary training was imparted to them. Germany had to fight in the hot climate of Egypt and also in the severe cold climate of Russia. So she created artificial climate and trained her troops to fight in similar climatic conditions. Thus battle demands rigorous training. So one has to train one's body and mind for the battle of life.

Every society has its ideas about God and the creation. The spiritual ideas are also evolved and they give birth to the concept

of duties. The spiritual ideas become the source of 'do's' and 'don'ts' in the society. These ideas create a critical conscience. The Jainism has the special idea of Non-violence. It gives rise to a conscience which, in its way, determines the behaviour and the activities of its followers. It is just possible to argue that if more knowledge leads to greater struggle, have less knowledge and avoid struggle. The argument is valid no doubt, but the innate hunger of the human being for more and more knowledge will not allow us to refrain from gaining knowledge. We cannot prevent knowledge as it is the very nature of human being to have knowledge. But one way is easy for us, we can try our best to translate the ideas into actuality and leave the result in God's hands. Shri Ramakrishna lived a life of high thinking and noble living. To train the mind to treat the clod of earth and money as equal, he would sit on the banks of the river, and with money in one hand and the earth in the other, he would go on repeating 'taka' (rupee) and 'mati' (earth) and ultimately throw both into the river. The great philosophical principle is that money and earth are two names for the different manifestations of the same earth and one must treat both of them as equal (समलोप्टाश्मकाञ्चनः । BG. VI, 8). His compassion for the downtrodden and the poor was not just lip-deep. When the whole populace was sleeping, he would go to the colony of scavengers and clean their latrines with his hands. Such was the rigorous *Sadhana*. If there is training for mountain warfare to mountain division, there must be a spiritual training (*sadhana*) for the spiritual struggle. Saints live for the moral and spiritual uplift of the society and they must live up to the ideas which they preach. While begging for alms, Sant Ramdas was once invited by a woman who served him *payasam*. It was tasty and he liked it very much. But this was not good. So he asked his disciples to collect as much milk as possible from the neighbouring villages and asked them to acquire a big cauldron. The fire was lighted and *payasam* was prepared. He asked them to serve him *payasam* and drank so much of it that he started vomiting. But still he did not stop and continued to drink and also to vomit. In the end, he became unconscious. When he came to himself, an allergy for *payasam* was created in his mind and this freed him from the enticement of the tongue. If one has to teach how to conquer desires, one must have control over one's desires and for this *Sadhana* has to be undergone. Such *Sadhana* proves a stepping stone to sure and glorious success.

XI

BRAVERY AND COWARDICE

There is always struggle, external as well as internal in the achievement of one's goal. Every one must face this struggle boldly. Bravery is not limited to battlefields; it is equally essential in everyday struggle. In wars, it is not the weapons that fight. Weapons are only the means; the men, with these weapons in hands, behind which are brave hearts, fight. But it is difficult to determine the dividing line between bravery and cowardice. The circus manager who can easily handle lions and tigers as cats, is mortally afraid of his wife. He is meek, submissive and tame before her. A man who can successfully fight singlehanded with hundred decoits, loses his courage at the sight of a dead body because dead body implies a ghost and the thought of ghost unnerves him. A man whose potentialities spring up at the sight of a danger is a brave man. He rises to the occasion and at the sight of a tiger, does not run away, but boldly fights with the creature singlehanded without any weapon. He is wounded by the tiger and later rescued by the travellers. But he does not know from where the strength arises in him. Behaviour in difficult and critical moments is the test. One must develop the capacity. It can be natural or acquired, but one must have it. From where it comes is not the question. Swamiji has clearly stated that every soul is potentially divine. That power is there within everyone. We are the sons of immortality. Calamities and difficulties will always be there; they demand that we must prove equal to the task. The jeep cars have a special gear to ascend a steep ascent. We are gifted with such potentiality. Adversities and difficulties are sent by the Divine power to manifest our faculties and capabilities which have been granted to us. We must channelize them for the proper cause only and never for a wrong cause. In the great battle of Panipat of 1761, between Ahmedshah Abdali and the Hindus, the Hindus lost the battle as the army lost their nerve and took to their heels.

The army was large and strong and had they not lost courage and had they used their hidden strength for the right cause, they would have won. The lesson is that, one must not lose courage and must face adversity and fight it to a finish, even at the cost of one's life. The potency of a brave man is multiplied at the nick of the moment. The inward quality of bravery is not to be developed only for the battle of armies; for the struggle in life too, it is equally essential and indispensable. Progress is nothing but the manifestation of the potency within. This potency, when transformed into bravery, wins half the battle. We must develop the faculty to channelize this potency for the right cause.

ORGANIZATION—OUR DRAWBACKS

So far we have discussed the individual equipment as regards the goal of life and the mission of the individual in the achievement of that goal. Out of the fourfold path, shown by Swamiji viz. work, worship, psychic control and philosophy, we have chosen work as the path to be followed.

We Indians have been known throughout the history as being incapable of organized work. Even though we have the dictum संघे शक्तिः कलौ युगे । (“Strength resides in this age in organization”) still we have proved our inability to be organized. This is not true of one aspect of the life or the other, but the whole history is a picture of this disappointing characteristic of Indians. In our political fields, in battles against the invaders, in sports and in business, in companies and in partnerships, in mundane activities and in spiritual attainments, there is no harmony, no cohesion anywhere. It does not appear that we Indians, forgetting all factions, have come together for a common cause and have worked successfully for the same. In fact, individuality is our national trait as against the Westerners whose very life-breath is collectivity. They always, in all spheres of life, exhibit good team-work. Their sports, their music, their prayers, all show a mass performance. The individual is subordinate and the group is predominant. Our individuality spurns this collective and disciplined work as lack of personal liberty and individuality. As they say, organization is not in the blood of Indians. In pre-Independent days, Bepin Chandra Pal observed, “if all Indians spit together, the Britishers will be drowned in that”. But we Indians not only not spit together, but think it a heroic act to spit on one another.

The East India Company was not organized by great men. It was an endeavour of just ordinary traders to carry on trade and amass wealth. But through collective efforts, Robert Clive who was an ordinary clerk in their service, could build up an empire.

We Indians believe in the incarnation of great men for great work, while Westerners achieve the goals through collective work. We require a Shivaji, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda, a Tilak, a Gandhi, or a Savarkar to achieve great goals. We have been successful in performing wonderful deeds, but only when the great men are born. We have a galaxy of great men. In the West, the common people have worked wonders by amicably coming together and putting forth combined efforts. In India, if somebody tries to make progress, our jealousy and rivalry are roused and we try to bring him down.

XIII

INDIA — THE CREATOR OF ORGANIZED LIFE

Let us examine the charge made against the Indians that organized life is an inconceivable idea to them. It is not in the blood of Indians to have a common cause and stand for it firmly in an organized manner. The people who make such a charge have, it appears, totally forgotten the glorious past of Indian culture, for, the hoary past renders clear evidence of the organized life led by Indians. Nay, even as a matter of fact, Indians are the originators of the principle of an organized life. It is not clear when the Hindu Religion began its march on this globe, but since the time it was started it has incorporated in its basic principles, the corporate life in the form of *Varnashrama* system, which is a shining example of the organized common life of the Aryans. In an age when the West was leading a savage disorganized life, Indians were living an organized life in which every individual knew his abilities and lived a very happy and contented life through *Varna* System. It is the most ancient social institution in the world. The founders of this system, those great savants and Sage-Sociologists, took into consideration two basic principles; firstly that all men are not equally talented or gifted by Nature, even though it has been generous enough to furnish a distinct and outstanding tendency to every individual. And secondly, that every individual in the society must be provided for.

Every individual in the society has some aptitude apart from somebody else, his गुण (qualities) do differ from the others. Talents gifted to all are not equal. But these talents or aptitudes are complementary and thus they serve the purpose of the society as well as of the individual. Some may possess the bright intellect to invent and to impart knowledge to the rest of the society, while some other set of people may possess the strength and the courage to stand boldly against any sudden attack and outrage on the society; still a third group of people may strive well to carry on the

trade and business of the society and improve its economic condition, while there may exist the people who do not fit in any of the above categories. But their services are also equally important in the organized life of the society. They can render valuable and essential labour to the society to keep its life going ahead and live happily. In the past as every one knew and was aware of the equipment he possessed and the limitations of his talents, he was happy with the livelihood he received. There was no sense of superiority or inferiority as everybody's talents were essential for the smooth working of the organized social life. All these varied tendencies were woven into a perfect and an ideal fabric of an organized society for thousands of years. That this institution has deteriorated into an ignoble and a scornful casteism is a natural outcome of the negligence on the part of later social leaders to breathe new air into the social life with the change of the order. The society is always progressive and the eternal principles and values, even though ideal and perfect, have to be presented in the new form in the context of the changed circumstances. Otherwise, they become fossilized and result in an unpleasant rot. The Westerners borrowed the idea of organization from India and have reoriented it to suit the new era and have presented it in a new form.

Indians are said to lack the sense of organization, but the foregoing explanation will prove the falsehood in the charge. The sense of organization did exist in the very blood of Indians in the past and it did not think only of the physical development and the intellectual progress of the individual, but even provided for the spiritual welfare; not only the mundane life on earth but even for the life after death, in the next world. The fourfold *Ashrama* system was evolved through this aim and principle and it provided enough opportunities for the individual to better his chances in the next world as well as for the next life. We Indians have forgotten that organization is the very innate quality of our social life. The social order provided for the livelihood of an individual soon after his birth; there was no need to wander from place to place with rolls of applications in hand in search of a job. Every village had the artisans and the craftsmen of varied types to fulfil the requirements of the village and thus the village was a self-sufficient and self-supporting unit. For the individual, care,

shelter, food and protection were thus assured. This mutual co-operation of complementing and supplementing the social existence was seen centuries ago in this very land. The careful planning of the ancient society is beyond our imagination. This has continued for thousands of years, simply because every individual knew his limitations and without jealousy and competition lived a happy and contented life. Every individual had an equally important position in the society like the smallest screw in a huge machine and the society worked smoothly and silently without any murmur or noise, like the enormous machine running smoothly and silently.

Thus we need not learn the art and the science of organization newly from anybody else, as it was originated and set in motion by our foreseeing forefathers in the most perfect and ideal manner, but we have forgotten it. It is our own precious heritage presented in the new fashion by the West. We have unfortunately, through the blind and irrational following of others, lost the technique of coming together and working together for the furtherance of a sacred cause. We must renovate it and try to remove the angularities from our conduct and character which prick others and keep them away from us, thus creating a hindrance in the progress of the society and of the nation. There should be no friction in work and our faces should avoid wrinkles and wryness. Only sweet and lubricant words will bring this old glory back to us again. We have lost many good sciences like the science of organization and to cope with the progress of the world, we are now forced to borrow ideas from others. Let us accept the challenge and march ahead boldly and confidently.

XIV

BE SELF-CONFIDENT AND FEARLESS

That Indians were the first who enunciated the theory of a corporate social institution and lived accordingly as an organized community for thousands of years and that it continues even today, though in a distorted form, is a proved fact which is supported by the *Varnashrama* system of Hindu way of life. Other evidence, if required, can be multiplied by saying that the sacrifice which formed the very core of the Rigvedic Aryans was a community ritual to be performed and to be participated in by the society as a whole. In the Rigveda, one hardly finds a Rik where anything is prayed and demanded for an individual. It is always "of us" (ऋः) and not "my". The well-known *Gayatri Mantra* prays for "the intellects of all of us to be illumined". The sage in the Tenth Mandala says, "You all go together, speak together and let all your minds know things together" etc., (RV X. 191.3-5). The great National Anthem of Yajurveda speaks for the whole nation and its manifold constituents simultaneously and not individually for one person. The celebrated Shantimantras of the Upanishads pray for the community as a whole and never for any one person.

The Western ideology of the social life speaks of the survival of the fittest. If this is strictly followed, then it will lead the cosmos into a chaos. The Law of the jungle, viz. 'might is right' will prevail and life will become distorted and meaningless. Our great seers of the ancient period realized the fact that differences, variations, gradations are the laws of nature and therefore, everybody, whether weak or strong, had an equal right to live in this world. The Westerners, wherever they went with the principle of life for the fittest, have exterminated the tribes and communities and have caused massacres and bloodshed. It never occurred in India, as the life itself was based on the eternal values of a perennial philosophy, firm like a rock unshaken in any cyclone. The Westerners denied the right of existence to those primitive tribes, as

according to them, the uncultured and the uncivilized brutes had no reason to live on this earth. Indians accepted everybody's right to live.

But with the passage of time, a consciousness of difference of one individual from the other dawned on the people and under one pretext or the other, people tried to form separate groups to guard their self-interest from others. The idea of community life was subordinated to self-interest. Instead of the eternal unity in diversity, they propagated a false value of diversity in unity. The principle of unionism has worked wonders and we find that not only the labour is united against the capitalist, but the patients and the nurses and the doctors in a hospital have got their respective unions to fight the cause of self-interest! The concept that hospital itself is a unit as a whole and must work smoothly for the welfare of all, is completely set aside and the conflict starts among the various constituents of the hospital. It is as ludicrous as the limbs of the body fighting amongst themselves forgetting that one cannot exist without the others, while they together constitute what is described as a body. But queer ideas of differentiation are invented by the people forgetting that differences are unavoidable in nature. Man is not manufactured and made to order as a machine. The differences are not a curse, but a boon for a corporate organized community life. Mutual cooperation and dependence create sympathy and harmony. Hindu view of *varna* system provides equal opportunity for all, making allowances for all differences.

We have lost such good institutions as organization ; and now if we require them, there is no shame in borrowing them from wherever they are available. Together with such systems, we have also lost certain good qualities of life. Our philosophical and secular literature is full of evidence which shows that the ancients had immense self-confidence in them. 'कृष्वन्तो विश्वम् आर्यम्।' ("We will make the whole universe noble.") was their vow. They had such immense trust in themselves that if they desired and decided, they could do or undo things. They declared the immortality of the soul and accepted the potential divinity of each soul, thus facing death boldly with as great a joy as one would change the old clothes and take new ones. What grief is there and why weep when one changes the garments? We are born and therefore we must die, and die not eternally but die to be born

again with a new body with all the vigour and lustre for a fresh life. We can mould our future. The ancient seers developed the theory of 'reap as you sow' and therefore, the future of every individual, was not the idiosyncrasy and the fanciful will of any superior master or overlord, but it was in his hands. But we have lost that. If anybody, by his efforts and firm will achieves greatness, we immediately attribute the same to his being a superhuman being, because we have lost all self-confidence in ourselves and we want to conceal the inferiority complex and the diffidence. The great man is immediately turned into an *avatara* and we try to escape the responsibility of emulating the outstanding and ideal qualities of the person. We have a large number of gods and we can borrow as many more gods if required but that will not make us theists. As Swamiji rightly observed, "He is an atheist, who does not have faith and confidence in his own self." We have to revive that potentiality and self-confidence.

Fearlessness is another superb quality which we have lost. Such enormous youth power we have, but it is wasted as our youths are chicken-hearted. They become homesick when they are away from home. There is no sense of adventure. We are terribly afraid of death. The Gita chanting and the Upanishadic recitations that we do are only a remnant of the past glory. We speak of high principle but live just the contrary. Our concepts, beliefs and faiths move in one direction and our stream of life flows just in the opposite direction. It was a very brave and fearless philosophy of our ancients, but we have forgotten it, and live a pitiable life. We must remember the glorious past of our ancients and must make bold to revive all those ideal virtues and values of life which we have lost and forgotten.

XV

FAITH — INTELLECTUAL AND PRACTICAL

The welfare of the society being the goal of social institutions, the *Varnashrama* system in one form or the other, with the name or without it, will continue to exist so long as nature has been skilful in providing a variation in the individual equipment by furnishing different aptitudes to different persons and so long as the society needs those aptitudes for its maintenance. The soundness of the *Varnashrama* system is found in its hereditary character, though it can be reckoned now as a drawback. But every social institution has its good points as well as bad points. And we look at this particular institution just to prove how organization was an integral part of our corporate social life. Its merits and demerits can be examined separately.

Indian philosophy, for the matter of that, is purely individualistic in its outlook. Every individual has his own goal and he has to achieve the same. His future is in his hands only and he can fashion his life in order to achieve that aim. Others might subscribe to his efforts, but they cannot reach the goal on his behalf. His philosophy, his goal, his worship and devotion everything from the point of view of his final goal is individualistic only and other facets of life are collective. And, therefore, in Hindu view of social organization, even the invalid person, though he might be on the lowest rung of the ladder, even below that, has a place and it provides him the opportunities for improvement. We do not discard him and deny his right to live, because he is not the fittest person to survive. His goal can be reached by a faith which helps him through introspection. The introspection rouses confidence in him that he is capable of rising high and if others have risen he can also rise to the highest rung of the ladder sooner or later and be blessed.

This faith in man is of two types : one is intellectual faith and the other is practical or real faith. A person may have an

intellectual grasp of the immortality of soul. But whether the principle has been imbibed deep enough in his heart and whether it is reflected in his day to day life, is the problem. If a man does not rise to the occasion and is not prepared to die for the most noble and ideal value in his life, being afraid of death, it clearly indicates that all his glib talk about the immortality of the soul and the nobility of life's mission and fulfilling life's goal at any cost, signifies nothing. Intellectual faith makes man a sheep, while real faith turns him into a lion. Have real faith, be lions and fight for the life's noble and sacred mission.

XVI

LOKASAMGRAHA-i

Organization is an organic institution growing in proportion to the nourishment given to it. It is woven round a nucleus which is a noble thought. A noble and auspicious thought only can be at the centre of an organization. There is no organization around a nefarious thought. If it exists, it is a conspiracy or a plot. A noble thought appeals to the mind of some person who strives to give it a concrete form. He collects individuals who share his idea and all of them work together for its fulfilment. The more the people, the better are the prospects of achievement. As more people, with bright talents and higher values of life come together, the attainment is brighter and remarkable. But organizations need men, men who are dedicated to the cause, leaving all their own interests in life.

The organization has members and they are of various classes. There are ordinary members, associate members, life members, active members, whole-timers, office-bearers and a number of them, according to the requirement of the organization. There is a technique in bringing people together. A mere collection of people is not congenial to the growth of the organization. The individuals must be competent in the sense that they must be physically sound, intellectually equipped and monetarily rich. As is said in Sanskrit or in most of the Indian languages, they should offer their *Tana* (body), *Mana* (mind) and *Dhana* (wealth) for the propagation of the cause. They must be physically prepared for the exertion and torture, mentally ready to suffer everything and monetarily unhesitating to part with their wealth for translating the noble thought into concrete form. In short, they must totally surrender everything at the altar of the sacred idea. The body and the mind together constitute what may be termed as the generator plant. It produces energies of various types and they are employed in the various actions. A man works in the factory

with his hands. Thus, he employs his physical energy in the work. Another person sitting at the office-table carries on the brain-work. He also utilizes his intellectual-mental energy for the action. Thus, the body-mind complex generates energy. This energy is to be employed for the success of the idea. Man has five instruments of understanding (*jnanendriyas*) and five instruments of action (*karmendriyas*). They are all engaged in the work of the organization. Time is an equally important factor in the furtherance of the cause. We come across people who have an enormous urge for an activity but unfortunately they do not have the time at all to work out the same. This can be said to be only an oral or lip sympathy for a cause; at the bottom of the heart, there is no urge at all. Success in a mission is proportionate to the energy employed for the same which varies according to the time devoted for the purpose by an individual. There can be some passive sympathizers. They may lend their names simply as office-bearers and serve no other purpose. Such people are also of great use to the mission for they have not turned their backs on our cause. If they are facing us, then whenever it pleases them to move ahead, it will mean that they will be coming towards the cause and nearer and nearer to it. Some other workers devote their physical, mental and monetary resources, their time and also energy, for the purpose; they form the nucleus of the organization. They have identified themselves with the organization and they form the constituents of the same. It is they who attract the people and do the *Lokasamgraha*. They present to the public the ideology in a very nice and attractive manner and by their personality and devotion, pervade the place wherever they go, maybe it is a village, a town, a metropolitan city, a college, a university or an institution. Like the fish of Manu which instantaneously occupied the container in which it was put, the devoted worker (or we may call him a life-worker, for all his life is given to the cause, there being nothing of his own individualistic concern) occupies the place. He keeps contact with all, speaks to all and convinces all. Those who are converted to the mission are received and welcomed, but he does not boycott others and dissidents or obstructors or enemies. For him, there are only two categories of people (i) those who are convinced and converted and (ii) those who are in the process of conviction and conversion. He knows no failure. There are not any individuals inimical to him. He knows

that his heart is ablaze with a mission and it is his pious and sacred duty to transmit the ideal to the people. To keep it for oneself is a sin, because it is meant for spreading among the public. For him every individual is a potential follower of his ideology. No person is to be rejected as useless, unworthy or inconvincible. As the Sanskrit Subhashita says :

नाक्षरं मन्त्ररहितं न मूलमनौषधम् ।

अयोग्यः पुरुषः नास्ति योजकस्तत्र दुर्लभः ॥

“There is no letter which cannot be used as a sacred chant, there is no root which is not medicinal, there is no person who is unworthy, only the proper organizer is difficult to find”. So no person is useless ; if not today, tomorrow he will be convinced and if not for this work, for some other work his energy can be best utilized, but every person must be contacted and must be kept on the waiting list of prospective acceptances. He is out with a missionary zeal to convert the whole world by his noble idea and it is this noble and lofty thought that offers greatness to the man. One must have an all inclusive aptitude (*Sarvasamgrahaka Vritti*). Because it is a noble thought, it must have an appeal to every heart and it is going to convert man definitely. The life-worker has to take the credit of having brought one more person into the fold of common thinkers. He must not be doubtful in his heart nor think of any failure. If the heart is blazing with a noble thought, it definitely has the capacity to kindle the hearts of others, however averse they may appear to be in the initial stage. One must have immense faith in oneself, unswerving faith in the mission that one has accepted and also the utmost faith in the people that they are always ready to receive a noble thought, and to act for it, but unfortunately, there is none to present them such a noble idea. Let us be one and do our duty perfectly well.

XVII

LOKASAMGRAHA—ii

We have seen in the last talk that it is around the noble thought of a benevolent goal to be achieved that people of the same thought are collected. Collectively, they think out the means for the achievement of the goal, and sooner or later in proportion to the dedicated human power gathered round the centre of the thought, success is achieved.

We give out the thought to others when it inspires us and makes us restless for its execution. Those others if they are open and responsive, are inspired immediately. If not, at least after a period of close contacts and discussions, they are converted to our thought and they are prepared to carry out the programme indicated, to put the thought in concrete form. Thus, they become the followers of a mission. As you go on spreading thought in people around you, you find that there are a number of people who are ready to support you. If you come still closer in contact with them, you find that they are fascinated by the thought and are prepared to employ whatever energies they possess for the fulfilment of the idea given to them. People simply rush to you, asking for some active work and intense participation; one has to assign work to everybody according to his capacity and aptitude having regard to the need of the hour. Everybody must feel that he is also contributing his mite to the great cause and that nobody is a useless person. This organization of the people is the skill of *Lokasamgraha* (The collection of the people). No person is unwanted in the huge task.

It may happen that the people in their enthusiasm may be ready to carry out any small piece of work, but they may not possess the skill and sometimes the technique of such a work. Possibly small mistakes or flaws may also creep in. But one has to be very careful and has to see that the things are handled properly and the self-respect of every person is properly looked

into. People have to be properly trained and equipped for the particular programme suited to the aims and objects of the organization. This sort of equipment varies from organization to organization and getting the followers properly equipped for a mission is called *Lokasamskara* (The equipment of the people). They have to be suitably qualified and moulded in pursuance of the mission undertaken. Thus a cadre of the people is automatically created wherein people are trained in the right manner so that they are qualified to carry out the work in the right spirit even independently, because they become more familiar with the proper working of the organization and also realize the spirit as well as the manner in which the organization is to continue and progress. Such devoted workers are taught the technique which they readily understand and grasp under the urge of the mission before them and they master the most essential things when they are imparted to them. Such equipped dedicated workers are further to be deployed in different fields of work under the guidance and supervision of a proper person. This is called *Lokavyavastha* (The deployment of the workers). These equipped workers must be prepared for any emergent work which is necessitated like the suicide squads, storm troopers and others and should possess the capacity to stand any torture or pain if required.

Every such worker must be a master organizer. He is fully inspired and convinced. He becomes the magnet and the whole atmosphere of the place is as it were under his spell. He moulds the place according to his desire in order to give it a proper shape and gives the colour of his mission. He becomes the messenger of the thought that he has received and he befriends everybody. He is all alone in the place. There is no comrade or any companion for him. But he is so well equipped and so highly inflamed that wherever he goes, he puts his mark on the place. Like the fire which creates heat in any place it is kept, he goes on spreading his message to every individual he comes across and his very presence inspires the place. As a matter of fact he is as it were a new-born person and becomes the very message incarnate. He has to spread the message of his mission and he befriends everybody. He avoids finding fault with others. He just criticizes and states the facts as they are but does not spread hatred among the people. The question will be "What are you? Are you perfect? Your duty is to deliver the message. Do it perfectly well and do

something in that way." One should behave with the people in a way in which they will love him and his cause. Everybody has potential qualities. We have to utilize them for our purpose. One must create confidence in the people and mark their aptitude for work. Your attitude towards people must be reflected in your actions, in the work that you put in. Your actions must reflect the noble cause for which you stand. One should be a real friend to all the people for all time. You must through your conduct and conversations inspire the people. The great Shalivahana inspired the lifeless and passive people and made heroes out of clay as it were. As the Subhashita says, there is no person who is basically useless. Various sounds in an orchestra are put to proper tune to create a melodious and significant musical effect. We must make proper use of the people and must channelize their energies in a proper direction at a proper time and in a proper place. Various situations arise for rendering service and even calamities can be converted into opportunities. We must put adversities to advantage.

Great men have undergone untold sufferings for their mission. They had courage, insight and organizational capacity. Urvasi called down a curse on Arjuna's head, but Arjuna welcomed even that ignoble and despicable life of a eunuch when he lived as Brihannada in Virata's court. Adversities become stepping stones to success in case of courageous people. Defeat is not to be accepted as such, but should serve as a challenge. If you possess something which the world wants and you can give, then you are not helpless. You must have confidence and the right attitude to work. You may not succeed now, but you may be re-born to fulfil your mission because it is ordained that you have to give the message to the people.

XVIII

SYSTEMATIC BENT OF MIND-i

We have seen that when a person is inspired by a noble thought, he makes it a mission of life to fulfil the same. Through the zeal of his purpose, he becomes a magnetic power to attract people with similar thought. He possesses the ability to set up an organization and during his work finds no man as useless. The Sanskrit Subhashita नाक्षरं मन्त्ररहितं etc. holds good and he does not discard anybody. He makes use of every individual at the right moment for the proper cause and assimilates every one of them. In doing so he must possess another important faculty and it is the systematic bent of mind.

We find that everything in this universe is a systematic organization. The solar system with its enormous expanse is still a system and there is not the slightest deviation from the order which has been laid down. Our sentences in the normal talk have a system. We think of music and we find that the seven notes, even though different from one another in their pitch, create a melody if they are harmoniously tuned and arranged. A machine works efficiently because its system is in order; if it deviates, we say the machine is out of order. If our physical system works harmoniously, we enjoy ease and pleasure; but if there is disorder, we get disease and it is the doctor who has to put the system into order again. Thus we learn that right from the largest solar system up to the smallest machine or plant or being, there is ORDER. There is SYSTEM everywhere in the universe and therefore it is a cosmos and not a chaos.

As the physician detects the disorder in the system of the body or as a mechanic finds out the mistake in the system of the machine, so also the organizer must be alert and watchful to detect the disorder in the system of the organization. He must be vigilant and his eyes and ears must be trained to find out the defects immediately and he must be active to set the organization

in order. If the organizer himself is organized, then only he can detect the disorder and correct it. A disorganized individual can never organize and detect defect and also cannot set it right. The organizer therefore must be a master organizer. This faculty is sometimes inherent, but if it is not so, it has to be cultivated and perfected. When a person has this systematic bent of mind, it reflects on every minute action of his life. It becomes a part and parcel of his personality. We notice that when a person is disorganized or indisciplined, the disorder is manifest in every small activity of his, in talking, writing, eating, sleeping, playing, etc.

If an office is well-organized, it shows a system, a harmony, an order. When this is lost, we find deterioration, disharmony. It may be in social life, national life or individual life or even in an organization. A social worker must know the law of the society and its working. A society in its healthy form has a sound system and if there occurs any deterioration, it must be due to some disorder which has crept into the society. The social worker must instantaneously detect it and must react to it. A disorder in a society should, in no case, escape his detection. As a proof-reader's mind and eyes are well-trained to notice any mistake in the printing, so also a social worker's ears, eyes and mind must be fully equipped to mark any small disorder in social life and he should strive to put it in order. Tolerance and liberality are noble virtues no doubt; but this tolerance can be for the person who committed the mistake and not for the mistake. The mistake must immediately be dealt with to the advantage of the organization. We have two colloquialisms, which are very harmful as they lead to disharmony and loss of efficiency in the organization. We say "by and large" the programme went all right and "broadly speaking" the programme was a great success. Such type of tolerance and liberality should not be tolerated as it leads to inefficiency in the system. The order, if disrupted due to some cause, must be restored. So the social worker must not only be self-organized and self-disciplined, but he must possess the capacity to detect the disorder and deficiency and must be capable to restore order. He must have the systematic bent of mind for this. He must utilize the proper man at the right time in a suitable place, and see that as far as possible disorder does not creep in. If there is any disorder in a group or a society or a nation, it deteriorates. An individual who aspires to be a social worker, must essentially possess

this faculty of the systematic bent of mind to detect and to put in order any disorder in the organization, either big or small, private or public and to preserve the health of the organization for its progress and perfection.

XIX

SYSTEMATIC BENT OF MIND—ii

All knowledge that human society has so far earned has evolved through the study and discovery of the system ; it may be the solar system, or plant life or human life or any machine, big or small. Thus discovery of the system is the beginning of the human progress. But it does not stop there. The system, when discovered, has to be maintained for the welfare of human society. Every good society and every cultured individual strives to maintain its system in perfect order, be it either physical or mental or intellectual. In spite of a vigilant watch, sometimes the defects crop up either through ignorance or infatuation. An ignorant person either handles the machine wrongly or behaves improperly in the society and a disorder is created. Such disorder has to be immediately dealt with. Sometimes, even wise men are infatuated and their wisdom is overpowered by extraneous factors and disharmony is the result. This disturbance caused by any factor must be removed and the order must be restored. Thus, we have four clear stages of a system, before we make any progress for the development of the same, viz. (i) A system has to be discovered (ii) It is to be maintained (iii) If any disturbance appears it is to be detected and remedied, and (iv) The system has to be restored to its normality.

But human progress shows some more facts of the system and its full use. Before the analysis of the natural phenomena, everything appeared to be a mystery and a miracle. But with advancement of knowledge, the mysteries are reduced and man has been able to discover a system or an order where, for him, there was previously none. Thus, from no order, he arrived at an order. When the first motor-car ran on the road, it was an automobile, it was a self-propelled vehicle but it had so many defects in its crude form. There used to be much noise and too much of smoke and so many other defects. It was a challenge to human ingenuity.

Man used his brain to remove the defects and make the system more orderly and efficient. Thus, more developments brought more order and now human industry and intelligence have successfully brought out the utmost imaginable perfectness in the vehicle. Thus, we get four aspects here also. (i) No order (ii) Order, (iii) More order, and (iv) Perfect or efficient order. This efficiency has led to perfection where more work is executed by less effort. Less exertion results in what is called grace or charm. And we notice that greater the efficiency, the better is the grace.

We notice that there is order in all activities of human beings; either physical or mental, external or internal. This orderliness, because it adds a new dimension of perfection and grace, creates a love for orderliness and it results in discipline. This discipline pervades the external world and also human activities. It so happens sometimes, persons are systematic in a particular activity only and indisciplined in the rest of their behaviour. It is not an all-round feature of their personality. This is not praiseworthy. The orderliness or the systematic bent of mind, must reflect in every sphere of activity and must become an all-pervading facet of one's personality. Reaction to a disorderly situation must be in a systematic and graceful way. There must be consistency, proportion and balance in systematic behaviour. Completely merging one's self or getting thoroughly assimilated with the work in hand and not thinking of anything else, is the characteristic of a systematic bent of mind. If it is not there, one's behaviour becomes inconsistent and irrelevant to one's goal and the activity becomes futile. Your mind must be yoked to the work. Otherwise there is inconsistency in behaviour and thought; the body is pursuing some activity but the mind is engrossed in a different thought. It is desirable that there is a sense of proportion and maintenance of balance in the whole activity. The body, mind and speech must co-operate in a systematic manner.

The cultivation and the development of the faculty of the systematic bent of mind leads to an organized and disciplined life. Every moment of life becomes precious and its purposeful utilization is sternly practised. Every activity, whether small or big, becomes congenial to the furtherance of one's life and there is harmony, order, system and consistency throughout. Thus a social

worker becomes successful in his duty to mobilize, to organize and to channelize the energies of the people who come in contact with him. He builds the organization on firm grounds.

ORGANIZATION AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

That the individual must have capacity to organize and that he must possess certain faculties for it is well understood. But, there arises the problem of curtailment of personal liberty. The freedom which is generally enjoyed by the common man in the society is denied to him because of his becoming the member of an organization. In a collective life, it always happens. When one is enjoying a room independently, one has the full liberty to enjoy the room at one's own sweet will, but when one has to share the room with another, there arise restrictions in one's behaviour and to that extent, one's liberty is curtailed. In principle, it is accepted that when you share your happiness, it becomes more. Man is a social animal and he cannot live independently without sharing with others, however trifling and insignificant his wants may be. For the sake of his satisfaction man has to share with his colleagues in the society. Even for a self-centred person who desires to parade his wealth, observers are essential; otherwise, where and to whom can he parade his dignity and pomp? When other people share his pleasure, then only he can enjoy. This is the reason why man has been described as a gregarious animal, an animal that lives in and enjoys through the group. Man always likes to live in company. Secluded life is meant only for the select few. Organization is created by a group of people with the same attitude, bound by an ideal and when they come together for the fulfilment of a mission, naturally they have to set aside their do's and don'ts. The curtailment of personal liberty is the natural consequence. This, as a matter of fact, is no curtailment, but according to some, it is a curtailment *in a way*. But, here arises a basic consideration about the loss of freedom everywhere in life. Is there not a denial of personal liberty when a man opts for a married life? There is disharmony and conflict even in a small organization like a family; it is but natural that more the people of various temperaments and different tastes

in an organization, there is a possibility of a greater disharmony. But, into an organization, people come together drawn by a master thought and not by any individual. The thought or the ideal which can be regarded as the *Mantra* of the organization and the *modus operandi*, the main path to be followed for the achievement of the same which can be called as the *Tantra* lead to the systematic working of the organization. The *modus operandi* is equally important. There can be many ways for the attainment of the goal but the principal path once determined, has to be seriously and rigidly followed. There is one goal or ideal for people of different temperaments who will stick to their own varied ways for the ideal. But once the path is accepted by an individual after due consideration and thorough examination of the pros and cons of all the possible ways, he has to follow it according to the rules and regulations laid down by the organization. The organization has a moral code for this which is binding on everyone who joins it. This hard discipline weighs adversely with many people and they shun the organization as they feel handicapped by the curtailment of their personal freedom.

But what is the correct concept of freedom and the curtailment of freedom? The concept of freedom of an ordinary man of the world differs very much from the idea of freedom of an individual who has organized his own life round a goal; fulfilment of his mission is the only highest thing for him and he is prepared to undergo any number of hardships and to face any adversities for the achievement of the goal. He has laid certain limitations on himself out of his free will and desires to follow only those activities or behaviours which are conducive to his goal and to discard completely those which are either detrimental or harmful to his ideal. Curtailment conveys the idea of restrictions imposed by somebody externally, according to his whims and those which are either against the law or ethics. Here, in the case of an organized person, such limitations are not the impositions of anybody externally, but they are willingly accepted by him. As such, not only the idea of freedom differs in his case, but what people call as curtailment, is not so in his case. No sooner has he chosen his goal than all selections and rejections are stopped to him and he has to follow the rigorous code of conduct, which according to others may be curtailment of personal liberty. He accepts a standard and together with it, he has accepted the limits. And this he does not,

do to favour others but to fulfil his own purpose. He has chosen a path for purposeful life and other paths are completely closed for him. What others call liberty is not liked and accepted by him. What others call bondage becomes an enlightened path for the man of idealism. Such behaviour may appear to be strange to others, but it is pleasant to him. People are prepared to stake their lives for an ideal. They choose to fast until death, which others may call as foolish. Thus, the values, the levels and the outlook differ. Life which is an expression of an ideal, is far superior to a moment-to-moment life which has no purpose at all. The man of ideal has the confidence that his life is organized and he comes forth to bind together thousands and thousands in an organization to achieve the cherished goal.

Fix an ideal, organize your own life and find who are the other people to share your thoughts. Build an organization and try to mould and organize the lives of your associates also through their own free will. In Japan, they had a suicide squad, consisting of men and women, who were ready to lay down their lives for the nation at any moment, in any way they were required to do. It is through ignorance and a poor outlook of life that people think otherwise. When a path is determined, one should not deviate from it at any cost, as it is imposed on oneself, by oneself. One must meticulously tread on the path chosen, shun all the other ways and also the so-called liberty, of the common man. Not only must we stick to the same path, but there should be created people around us, those well-wishers and sympathisers who would correct us if, through mistake, there be any deviation.

In organizations of the present day, the democratic principle is accepted and the decision taken by fifty-one people, even though wrong, becomes the gospel and has to be obeyed by forty-nine people as they are in minority. Thus the fifty-one people decide the destiny of the organization and their thought is never wrong as in olden days, it was an accepted axiom that the king could do no wrong and he was above the laws applicable to the subjects. The rule of a majority is a fiction, but it is accepted. Even religious heads, even though nominated, when they accept office, they become supreme and their word is final. There is an anomaly worth noting. Some people, in order to escape this tyranny of the rigorous rule of conduct of an organization, sometimes start their own organization and try to be the unquestionable

chief of the same. But shortly they find that an organization as such, must have a certain code of conduct even though most favourable to one's own self, and then, as a member of the organization, one must follow those rules. Thus, in abiding by the discipline, one is caught in the snares of the rules of one's own organization. Discipline, and to that extent, curtailment of the personal liberty, is a must for any organization.

But curtailment of the personal liberty is a myth. Bondage remains a bondage in one form or another, wherever one goes. The particular norms of one's family life are also a bondage. But one must always remember that, a disciplined life will always be a bondage for some people and not for one who aspires to lead a purposeful life. For a man of mission, a disciplined life is the most sacred life showering abundant delight and at the same time leading him to the success of his mission.

XXI

THE IMPORTANCE OF A CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE

Every programme has its congenial atmosphere. The nature of the atmosphere varies according to the programme. We have noticed that a wholesome set-up invariably adds to the success of a programme and does not mar its charm. The participants as well as the spectators derive pleasure from it. It is essential to see that nothing happens to disturb the harmony of the performance. The marriage ceremony, the religious discourses or sermons, the bhajans and such other programmes are pleasantly conducted if the right atmosphere prevails. Even for the growth of a child or a plant, it is essential to provide a congenial atmosphere, in the absence of which the plant or the child suffers in its growth. Some factors are congenial while some others are detrimental. Therefore, if a congenial atmosphere could not be provided, at least the detrimental features should be meticulously avoided. If one cannot contribute to the agreeability of the programme, one should take care to see that one does not spoil the performance by one's conduct. Maintaining a congenial atmosphere and not disturbing its harmony in any way is a sign of good culture. Conscientious and organized efforts lead to a collective feeling. Such an effort on the part of every individual surcharges the whole atmosphere with a sense of collectivity and contributes to the success of the programme. The concerted effort of all gives force and beauty to the whole programme. It is of the utmost importance that every one should strive to build up a most favourable and congenial environment for the healthy growth of the organization. No one should ever be a party to creating a discordant note and spoiling the atmosphere. If you cannot contribute at least remain silent. "They also serve who only stand and wait." The co-operative effort of all results in a collective energy which is most essential for the successful progress towards the goal of the organization.

CADRE—THE BACKBONE OF ORGANIZATION

We have seen that organization has for its centre a noble thought and people of the same noble thought come together for the fulfilment of the thought. Such an organization possesses certain features of its own and they must be understood in their proper perspective, because they form, as it were, the main pillars on which the organization is based and works in proper direction. One of the features of organization is whether it is a cadre-based organization or a cadre-less organization. Our Vivekananda Kendra is a cadre-based organization. The government of a country is a cadre-based organization as the permanency of the Government depends upon the Government officers working in different cadres. The ministry may change, one party may be replaced by another, but the Government continues its working. The military is a cadre-based organization with a rigorous discipline and a hierarchy of officers. There are spiritual, social, political organizations. The Ramakrishna Mission is a spiritual organization while the RSS is a social organization. The different political parties in the country have their own organizations. All these are cadre-based.

What is a cadre? To give the idea with a simile, we can say that as the body together with its muscles, blood, veins and arteries, various organs of sense perception and activity is held together by the bone-frame or the skeleton, so also the organization is held together by the cadre. Without the bone-structure, the body cannot sustain and maintain itself; so also without the equipped cadre, the organization cannot exist and cannot make any progress. In the skeleton, the backbone occupies a higher order. A noble thought is the very backbone of the organization. We call an individual without any principle, as a person without any backbone. The backbone provides strength to the whole structure. The other bones and muscles do exist, but the backbone is the

nucleus of all. The cadre in an organization is a class of people who provide the bone-structure to it to give it strength. These are specially trained and equipped for the work of the organization. The Ramakrishna Mission has a cadre of monks. Initially there were only 12 monks but as more people were attracted by the ideals and the work of the Mission, special care was taken to see that suitable persons only were admitted and that they were properly disciplined to build up the cadre. Thus recruiting, training and gradually transforming them into the properly disciplined monks for the organization, as the finished products was most essential. This cadre of disciplined monks can be deployed at different centres for the expansion of the work of the Mission. And therefore, the Ramakrishna Mission, for the time being, is not ready to open new centres in spite of the pressing demands of various places as they do not have properly trained cadre of monks to run the centres. The Communist Party of India which is a political party has its training project, for preparing the cadre according to their own ideology.

Persons who form the cadre of the organization not only propagate the noble thought and the ideology of the organization, but meticulously live and practise the principles they profess. They create the atmosphere and spread the ideology not only by words, but through their behaviour and conduct. In an ideologically motivated organization, the cadre must *live* the message which they want to deliver to the people. In the cement concrete structure, the cement, sand and stones do not give the necessary strength. Iron bars are imbedded in the cement concrete so that it becomes reinforced cement concrete which is slightly stronger. The organization also requires such reinforcement for its strength and durability. Thus a properly trained class of devoted workers who are suited to the maintenance, stability and progress of the organization has to be created.

Such workers recruited with great care form proper human material for the work. These persons must measure up to the demands of the organization. In textile industry, even though the finished goods, namely, the cloth comes at the end, still it has to go through many processes. But initially there must be cotton which is the raw material. If the cotton is of a superior variety and of a long staple, the product will be equally superb. Thus, the persons selected must be capable of transformation through

proper process. It is only copper wire that is useful as a good conductor of electricity. One cannot use ordinary iron wire or coir rope in its place for the reason that copper is costly. In every industry and production, the suitable raw material is of the utmost importance. An organization requires participation of people who can be trained to assume control and train others later. Even though the yarn can be transformed into cloth, some yarn, which breaks again and again, is removed and used for some other purpose, as for the cloth it is not good. Such waste yarn is not thrown away; it is utilized in some other way. So a person not coming up to the standard can be maintained but not as a cadre. Thus as all the raw material does not yield the finished goods, so also all men may not be turned into a cadre. But an organization cannot work without the cadre and the process of forming one may turn out to be a very lengthy and troublesome one.

Therefore, a constant flow of raw material in the form of human element is essential. Every organization has its own devices to choose the proper raw material. As a person requiring iron, can take a big magnet and move it round about, so that the magnet attracts the iron, so the organization has to attract the workers. But utmost care has to be taken to keep away the unwanted material. Otherwise the time and the energy, taken in the efforts yield no dividends. The devices and the processes of one organization differ from those of another organization and they cannot be copied. The requirements and the objectives of organizations differ depending upon their character and complexion. Every organization has to go through the trial and error method until it ultimately comes to fix its process. The persons recruited are put to different tests such as responsibility response, way of thinking, implementation, adjustment to environments etc. and they are adjusted according to willingness, even to offer their life for the ideology they have accepted. This process of testing requires patience. Haste becomes waste and the organizations suffer. Patience pays in progress and success of the organization. The personnel of the cadre thus selected becomes the standard of the organization. Even hundred men of a lower level will not do the work of ten such people of the cadre, who can be at the helm of affairs. Thus cadre formation is a phased programme and cannot be carried out in haste. Different ordeals have to be gone through. Only persons of sterling merit, calibre and determination

should be selected to form a cadre. Such people live the ideals of the organization. Booklets, handbills, pamphlets, etc. are of much less worth when such living organizations exist. Such people give a fresh fillip to the activities of the organization. The life workers and the whole-timers of the Vivekananda Kendra who have dedicated their energies to the cause will speak better about the Kendra through their life rather than through any printed material. Words have limited concept and import; workers who live the philosophy of the Kendra will propagate the objectives of the Kendra more easily than mere printed or spoken words. We must have such workers of quality in large numbers.

XXIII

A CLOSE CONFRATERNITY

A congenial environment is essential to the growth of an organization because like a plant or like a child, having some inner principle, the organization also has an inner principle in the form of a noble thought around which it is built up. On the analogy of the same, we notice that like the plant or the child, the external environments are also equally important and essential for its manifestation. The inner principle, howsoever great and noble, cannot take a concrete form unless it is manifested through the form of the organization. For such a manifestation, apart from the inner principle, there are so many outer factors which contribute in their own way. It is interesting to see how these factors work. But neither the inner principle alone nor the outer constituents by themselves can create an organization. Both the factors are essential and complementary to each other. An organization stands for a noble cause which imparts strength to it and also ensures its healthy growth. But the outer factors are inevitable. Some of the factors are congenial while others are harmful. Of such harmful externals, some can be easily avoided, but others are unavoidable. An organization is a group of people coming together for the furtherance of a cause. These people, even though fascinated and attracted by the noble thought, have their own propensities, peculiarities, individualities, angularities etc., and so many people have to be together. The organization has to make progress taking all these into account. In such circumstances, the atmosphere is bound to be spoiled either on a big or a small difference of opinion. In a large organization, such disharmony does take place. A discordant note is struck sometimes; but this has to be skilfully and vigilantly avoided. In spite of the greater care being taken and more attention being paid, there is something in the atmosphere which spoils the situation. Even with all the utmost care, windows, window-panes and doors being locked, there appears

some dust on the superbly cleaned furniture and on the floor of the room. One has to be vigilant and must clean the room every day, to avoid the layers of dust being accumulated. Similar is the case of the saline particles accumulating on the Rock Memorial or of the white ants causing harm to the building. These have to be meticulously removed to prevent decay and destruction. So also in the organization precaution has to be alertly taken to prevent injury to it. The family is the smallest familiar organization. There also misunderstandings and dissensions are often noticed. Individuals, because of their likes and dislikes, collide with one another and a friction takes place. It is but natural and totally unavoidable. This happens even in a family where the members are from the same consanguinity and nearest relations. The disharmony in an organization where all the members are from absolutely different cultures, families and sometimes from different castes, colours, creeds and even religions and countries can well be imagined. Under the circumstances, all the constituents have to take care to see that a conflict is avoided. If it takes place, they must see that it is not aggravated and is resolved immediately. It may be a trifling friction, but precaution has to be taken to see that no storm comes out of it. All the members have to be watchful to maintain the health of the organization by a frictionless atmosphere. They should beware of dissensions and should be on the guard to see that no cliques are formed on account of insignificant doubts or grievances. The misunderstandings, grievances, doubts, whatever may be against one's own wish, should be immediately reported to the Head of the organization. Such things should not spread either to our left or to our right; they should not have horizontal and lateral growth, but they should have a vertical recourse. All good things, rejoicings, enthusiasms should always spread with all zeal on horizontal level and many people should share the joy. But the pain of an injustice or an injury should directly go to the Head only, who is the competent authority to look into such matters. As the heart purifies the blood of the body, so also the Head of the organization clarifies and removes all the doubts and ensures an atmosphere of peace. Anybody misbehaving or doing any wrong should also be reported to the Head. If any individual has caused a harm, the best course is to approach him and do what is necessary; the next person will be the Head of the organization, and in no case this should be

conveyed or discussed with other people on the same level. In doing this sometimes one is likely to malign and belittle persons. No person should be harmed directly or indirectly, because of our misunderstanding and prejudices. In the interest of the organization everybody, individually and collectively is responsible to maintain a congenial atmosphere. Thus we must endeavour to see that a constructive approach is resorted to in any problem or doubt or misconception. An organization provides a healthy attitude and an affectionate brotherhood, where every one is for all and all are for each individual. Thus it must provide for an implicit arrangement whereby it will always and invariably lead to make the organization thrive vigorously. As a matter of fact, the relations between the associates should become so close that if somebody commits an innocuous wrong we should hide it, because he happens to be our colleague. We must always remember that we are wedded to a cause and not to an individual and therefore individual considerations are out of question. The organization must have an arrangement for avoiding cliques and groups. The cause is supreme for which the smooth working of the organization is a prime necessity. If this thought always prevails in the mind, the dissensions and disagreements can be easily removed without leaving the slightest scar behind. A congenial atmosphere and a proper understanding help the speedy growth of the organization. If these are not observed, there is definitely a downfall and as we often notice, small things are magnified and misrepresented as gross mistakes and disastrous shortcomings and as a result, an unwanted displeasure is caused which is suicidal to the interests of the organization. Therefore, everyone must clearly understand: (i) WHAT TO SPEAK (ii) WHOM TO SPEAK and (iii) WHERE TO SPEAK. For want of these wholesome observances, a small wrong caused to one's own self individually may result in a great injury to the whole organization.

You may not be able to understand the implications of the thought which I have dilated upon, but you ruminate over it, if it is not digested at present. We must be willing to gulp our insults and to conceal others' wrongs. As a matter of fact, an organizer must possess a very big belly, not literally, to swallow all sorts of unpleasant things!

XXIV

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION

Ours is a cadre-based organization in which the dedicated life-workers and the whole-timers form the very backbone of the organization. A second outstanding feature of the Kendra is that it is a missionary organization. In such an organization the accent is on the total surrendering by the constituents of whatever they possess, may be wealth, knowledge, power, and other multifarious energies. The worldly transactions are based on a give-and-take system. Everything that is given is expected to bring back the corresponding approximate returns. There is nothing like an absolute giving. The teacher teaches but expects a remuneration at the end of the month. The doctor treats patients and the pleader gives legal advice but none without taking their fees. In a missionary organization, there is nothing like "returns". The word does not exist in its dictionary. Thus, it is an unadulterated giving which is not found in other organizations. Even for becoming a member of any institution or organization, the query is "What are the benefits that one can derive by being a member?" But here there are no benefits for whatever one offers. One may surrender everything that one possesses, still one does not expect any returns whatsoever. On the contrary, one is bashful or feels dejected that one can give only this much that one possesses, when there is a need to give more. With the maximum giving one is still unhappy that one is not in a position or is not able to satisfy the requirement of the people. And this discontent, of course a noble discontent, urges one to utilize all one's potentialities and to find new avenues from where one can acquire more, just only for giving more. Such giving is an absolute giving, and not a relative giving. Ordinarily, in life, we find that the duties also carry their corresponding rights with them. But in missionary service, it is the absolute duty only and that too pertaining to others and nothing

of the self. Such selfless duty we see in the mother's affection for her child. It is a continuous process of absolute giving, and in no case, at any time, for even the trifling returns. The patriot's love and duty for his motherland belongs to that category only. The patriot offers everything, even his life at the altar of the motherland and expects no returns. In recent times, a new scheme of presenting *Tamrapatras* and giving pensions to the patriots has been introduced, but this is something which is unheard of in any country, at any time, in the whole history of Patriotism. The patriot makes sacrifices for his motherland and there the matter ends.

The member of a missionary organization knows only absolute giving. He gives whatever he possesses without the least reservation and his hunger for giving grows more. At this time, his potentialities manifest themselves in earning and acquiring more, like the cloud which freely distributes what it receives.¹ The more he acquires, the more he gives and the more he gives, the more his hunger for giving increases. He offers whatever he earns, at the altar of the mission and feels happy that he is of some service to others. If he cannot give more, he feels dejected at heart. A dedicated worker is not happy and satisfied unless he has fulfilled the requirements of the people whom he desires to serve. There is always a craving in the heart to give more. In this, he unconsciously follows the directive of the *Taittiriyaopanishad* where the preceptor exhorts his disciple.² "Give according to your wealth. Give with fear (that people will laugh at you if you do not give adequately). Give in shyness (that you can give this much only when more is to be given)." Thus feeling bashful for his petty service, he puts in supreme efforts to acquire what he does not possess. He acquires and utilizes the same and then he feels happy that he could do something within his limitations. If he lacks certain quality to serve the people adequately and efficiently, he exerts rigorously to acquire that and becomes more useful. Any emotion, temperament, aptitude is wanting in him, he gets it, transforms himself and offers his services in the best possible way.

¹आदानं हि विसर्गाय सतां वारिमुचामिव ।

²श्रिया देयम् । भिया देयम् । ह्रिया देयम् । तैत्ति.उप-शिक्षा.

The second point to be remembered is that the worker puts his heart and soul into the work and his whole life is dedicated to the organization. He so completely identifies himself with the organization that he has no separate existence and goal apart from it. He himself is organization and the work of the organization is his work, and his duty of service is the objective of the organization. He merges himself in the organization and the most insignificant segment of his life is utilized for the extra-organizational work. His entire life is involved. Other people become the members of the organization and just partially devote their time, as and when possible, to the organization. The worker is not a member but he is the very core of the organization. He has no personal life as such. All his life, time, powers, possessions, etc. belong to the organization. It is a total and permanent involvement and surrender; it is neither partial nor temporary. Such other constituents also become his friends and they are bound together. But it is the cause that binds them and it is the supreme factor. He is their fellow, comrade no doubt, but this comradeship is not for any other cause, but only for furthering the aims of the organization. And thus, they are colleagues and friends, but first they are the constituents of the organization and then friends. Their mutual love is far more intense than ordinary affection and attachment. They take care of each other and they look to the convenience and welfare mutually, but this also, so far as it does not interfere with the achievements of the goal. Reaching the object is more important and not faltering in-between, only to look to the good of the comrade. The utmost care of a wounded or exhausted comrade will, no doubt, be taken but if the goal ahead is more important or the target reaching is more urgent, then the friend may be left behind, unwillingly though, but the duty must be first done. They will move hand-in-hand and can help if one of them slips down, because they are co-pilgrims to the same destination and they are also wedded to the same object. They try to reach the goal, because they receive the inspiration, directive from the goal itself. In this respect, in this particular aspect, the missionary organization is quite the anti-thesis of the trade unions.

The third important characteristic of a missionary organization is that there is a well-defined objective around which all have come together of their own will. And therefore, they all look to

the same goal. In *Navagraha* shrines, all the *grahas* (idols of the planets) are so placed that no two of them face each other. In the organization, also hardly any two constituents face each other. For their eyes are fixed on the centre and their faces are concentric. They all look to the same centre or goal. The natural consequence of this is that they all tend to more and more adjustment and accommodation. A close affinity is established and finding the faults of others is forgotten. Shortcomings, misgivings, and such other minor things are minimized and sometimes overlooked. Everybody is in a continuous process of transforming himself to accommodate himself in the group and thus helps the transformation of others also. They put in maximum effort to become a fit, useful and beneficent instrument for the fulfilment of the goal and as a result more love, mutual respect and close affinity in them is developed. Their lives become the concentric circles moving round the same points and converging towards the same goal. Though moving in different radii, in different planes, regions, directions and velocity they are all moving round the same centre of their objective.

A SERVICE MISSION

Giving food to the hungry, providing medical aid to the sick and imparting secular knowledge or information to the ignorant are generally taken to be acts of service to be rendered to others by a person who is service-minded. Offering any other help to the needy can also be included in this. But providing the basic or primary needs to the others is only a low type of service. There is a higher level of service when somebody imparts knowledge to the needy and also training to the person to make him independent and self-reliant, and thus making him stand on his own legs. But there exists a still higher level of service when a higher and a deeper knowledge is imparted which can be described as enlightenment or inward illumination. In the two earlier cases, we enable a person to gain pleasure but here we equip a person to attain real happiness. We draw his attention to the deeper human problems and strengthen his means of understanding to realize what happiness is and how it can be enjoyed individually and collectively.

Enjoyment of the higher things in life cannot be for a man whose subhuman instincts in primary needs are not satisfied. Beggars are dependent and have no personality of their own. When we make them self-reliant, they cultivate their own individuality and personality. They feel a sense of satisfaction and joy in not being a burden to the society or an object of compassion and pity. But wonderfully enough, there are beggars of poverty as well as of affluence. Rehabilitation is essential for both, the beggar as well as the affluent. The latter fails to understand where happiness lies and what happiness means. A mature understanding is essential to realize the transitory nature of the creation and through that, to achieve peace of mind. Thus we find that there are three classes of people to whom service can be rendered. These three gradations do not differ in quality only but they stand

on different levels or planes themselves. There exists a class of people in the society to whom the primary needs of life are denied, perhaps they are deprived of the needs. They do not get even one square meal a day. They become so low that they are prepared to eat any dirty thing anywhere and at any time just to fill in the cavity in the belly. Such people exist everywhere and they come and confront us at every step. Such people engage our first attention and it is essential to fulfil their needs first. In the second class, the people have their primary needs satisfied. They are not in need of help on that account. But the mind does not halt at the satisfaction of primary wants. The desires and hungers are on an increasing scale and they go on multiplying, because of lack of proper knowledge and guidance. Every time they go out from the house and return, they bring two more wants adding to their stock of already unsatisfied desires. Higher standard of living implies higher standard of wants. They consider themselves to be cultured, sophisticated and civilized only on the basis of more comforts and still more luxuries in life. The axiom for them appears to be that a multiplicity of wants indicates a higher standard of life and a better culture. Even when one set of wants is satisfied, the mind does not stop there. It goes on bringing forth a new set of wants and as a matter of fact and experience, it is well known that the desires are not satisfied by the fulfilment of them. Like the fire into which ghee is poured, the desires go on ever increasing and flaring up.¹ The wants are a quenchless fire. They are never satisfied. Satisfaction of one desire breeds new desires and this, as an unending trail, goes on. Secular knowledge can satisfy only secular wants. The desires increase *ad infinitum* and it is impossible for anybody to satisfy them.² It is reported that the Emperor Alexander was so ambitious that having conquered the whole world, he was still dissatisfied and wept because nothing was left for conquering. There is the

¹ न जातु कामः कामानाम् उपभोगेन शाम्यति ।

हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मैव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥ म.भा.

² निःस्त्रो वणिट् जनं, जनी दणजनं, लक्ष्मी महस्त्राधिपः

लक्ष्मणः क्षितिपालतां, क्षितिपतिः चक्रेशतां वाञ्छति ।

चक्रेशः सुरराज्यतां सुरपतिः ब्रह्मास्पदं वाञ्छति

ब्रह्मा विष्णुपदं, हरिः शिवपदं, आशावधि कां गतः ॥

parable of a very wealthy person, who through nature's wrath had lost his appetite. Some beggar approached him and asked, "Please give me something. I am hungry". The man surprisingly enquired, "What? Hunger? How is it? Please give me something of that hunger. For years I have not known what hunger is like. I do not relish any dish." So hunger exists everywhere, in some places it takes the shape of primary needs; in other places, it is of a higher level. It is also a great service to give enlightenment to this latter class of people. For these people, an inner illumination is necessary as their primary wants are being fully satisfied; life becomes a burden to them in the absence of proper enlightenment. They need to be instructed in what is life, what is its implication, what is meant by happiness, where does it reside and how it is to be obtained and such other fundamentals of life. There is nothing like, less important and more important or higher and lower service. The person who needs service has to be satisfied. Thus one will realize that service covers the entire field of human life. It encompasses all human activities. Nothing is excluded from this.

But how does one achieve satisfaction through service? We find that there are diametrically opposite opinions about this. But the basic reply is that one offers service just for one's own satisfaction,³ even though apparently the person to whom the service is offered is benefited by it. But service is offered for self-satisfaction and the first beneficiary is the person who offers service and not one who receives. It may be out of (i) compassion for the people or (ii) a sense of pity or (iii) even a sense of kinship, fellow-feeling or brotherhood or (iv) a desire for popularity, name and fame or (v) an ulterior motive of obliging the people for some future benefit such as election, etc. Thus it is ego-satisfaction or the feeling of superiority complex arising through patronage. Therefore, there is a give-and-take, a barter, a mathematical precision in receiving the returns approximately for the service rendered. There is a dormant desire to serve others for one reason or the other and this desire is fulfilled through the act of service. So desire is the birthplace of service.

On a consideration of such points, we come to know that there are services which are ignoble and noble. What are they? What is

³ आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति । बृह.उप.

the urge behind them? Is this urge desirable? What is the attitude behind a service, which makes it sacred or secular? What should be the prime mover in service? These considerations will ultimately lead us to *THE SERVICE* that is expected of us in this Service Mission.

XXVI

FROM SELF-INTEREST TO SELF-REALIZATION

We saw that the real and primary beneficiary in an act of giving is the giver himself. Every act has an urge behind it and it is the urge of self-interest. Whenever we work with expectation of some return, we work in slavery and not in freedom. It is the benefit to be gained which goads us to the action. Had it not been for the benefit, we would not have worked. It means that we have lost our freedom and have become the slaves of that desire for gain. Our energy, urge, desire and direction of work is for something which is outside our own self; some extraneous gain is expected and thus we enter activity. Thus desire makes a man slave.¹ This desire or gain may be in coin or in kind; it may be for fame and name; it may be applause and publicity. It can be a position or a status in the public. The gain can be big or small or it can be concrete or abstract, but it is a return which is the urge behind the action. One does not undertake to work without any purpose.² This purpose may be noble or ignoble. A servant in our office may work for pecuniary gain. A public servant may work for power, fame or wealth and such other benefits. The benefits desired differ from man to man, but that man is a slave of such benefits, is a fact. This self-interest is the first urge in the activity of any type.

One has to remember particularly that the concept of the word 'self' differs, diametrically in different references. In self-interest, it indicates the interest pertaining to the body-mind complex wherein the physical and mental pleasures are indicated. The body desires some sensual pleasures and the mind aspires

¹ आशा नाम मनुष्याणां काचिदाश्चर्यशृङ्खला ।

यया बद्धाः प्रघावन्ति मुक्ताः तिष्ठन्ति पङ्गुवत् ॥

² प्रयोजनमनुद्दिश्य न मन्दोऽपि प्रवर्तते ।

for suprasensuous happiness. But in the word— "Self-realization", the word 'self' means something different from the body-mind complex. The "SELF" here means, that energy which existed before this body came into existence and that which will continue to exist even after this body perishes and that which is the residue of the personality of a man after his body-mind has been removed. Thus this "SELF" is different from 'self'. The activity, service, work done for self-interest is of a baser type and is no service at all in the real sense of the term.

But one can work without any self-interest for the betterment of the world. There is no personal give-and-take ; it is impersonal service. But there is one point to be noticed and that is a man renders service for the most part to satisfy his ego. Ego-satisfaction is the urge behind the service. This betterment of the world takes for granted so many things. One of them is that the betterment is according to one's own ideas. Thus, it is subjective and the man feels that there are certain flaws or defects in the world created by God and that he is doing the work to set it in order. One's own ideas are reflected in the service and the ego is nourished. Of course, the service rendered is of a higher order and is not of the same crude form as in the previous one. The egoistic feelings grow by leaps and bounds and this is not desirable in any case. "I have done this", or "This was done because of me" or "This continues because I am striving for it." Such a feeling grows and it is harmful for the full growth of the individual. As a matter of fact here instead of the gross interest of the body-mind, it has been shifted to a subtle interest of the ego. The body-mind complex is eliminated. But again, the betterment is a relative idea. What may be good and beneficial according to me, may not be so according to another and what is good today may cease to be good tomorrow. In this world good and evil go together. They are just the obverse and the reverse sides of the same coin of life. What appears to be pleasure today results in pain tomorrow,³ that is the law of life. One can say with emphasis that every pleasure has a relevant pain attached to it. So long as one has no wealth, one is worried over poverty ; if suddenly one gets riches tomorrow, one is worried over preserving the same. Unalloyed pleasure as such is a rarity

³ यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विपमिव ॥ भ.गी. XVIII.38

in the world. Society is never thoroughly happy. Moreover, world betterment is never permanent. The ideas of betterment change from time to time and every good carries some evil as its appendage. This goes on *ad infinitum*. Life is a fine blending of joys and miseries. Bearing this in mind, one has to participate freely and willingly in this gymnasium of the world according to time, ability and strength. As things stand today, one feels something should be accomplished or introduced as good now, but every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Thus one good ushers in another evil. One has to think about it very seriously at the outset. That is why the Sanskrit Subhashita insists :

उपायं चिन्तयन्प्राज्ञो ह्युपायमपि चिन्तयेत् ।

(The wise man thinking of the remedy, should also think of the adverse reaction.)

Moreover, one important point has also to be considered in his respect. The world remains as it is. It is said that the world is not perfect. In one sense, we feel sorry about this, but thinking deeper we realize that had the world not been what it is, the charm would have been lost. There is joy because there has been untold suffering. If death were not there, life would be a perfect misery to anyone after some time. Moreover, there would not be accommodation for all on this globe. Death, however painful it may be, is essential and adds beauty to life. Things which appear to be bad at the outset may prove to be good in the long run. They can be beneficial to the society. We have the limitations on our sense-organs, but if the power of the eyes was increased to see piercing through the objects, the physical beauty would cease to be appreciated because the eyes would also see the bones, muscles, blood and all nasty things in the body. If the ears were to hear long range sounds, it would be difficult for us to live, as all types of good and bad, pleasant and jarring sounds would make life most miserable. Thus, the limited powers of the sense-organs is a boon. Moreover, the world has been evolved through certain rational stages and some bad things are bound to be there together with good things. If bad things are sought to be removed, the balance would end and it would be another calamity. Today somebody enjoys great happiness, heavenly happiness, after going through many an ordeal but if they are eliminated, the joy of success would be missing. Thus, there is absolutely no flaw

in the world created by God and any interference would give rise to imbalance which will be a greater calamity. To say that the imperfect world of God is being perfected by somebody would be ridiculous, because he does not know the implications thereof and if he imagines that he is doing good, it would only inflate his ego which is suicidal to him and therefore, the service for the betterment of the world, is also a myth and an unwarranted thing and thus not service in the real sense of the term.

Then what is service? That service is the best and the noblest, which is performed with the attitude of total surrender to God. "He has endowed me with all the possible capacities and I must utilize every mite of that energy, power, intellect, strength, and all other possessions to the best of my ability for the glory of my SELF. It is the divine design that I should render service on His behalf.⁴ He desires the betterment of the world and I am being used just as a tool or a means to carry out His design. I am just an instrument in His hands."⁵ We have to play our role in this world gymnasium with all vigour and enthusiasm. The best illustration of this type of service we find in the duties of a nurse. She treats the patient very kindly and sincerely. As soon as her duty is over, she hands over the charge to the next nurse and gets herself freed without any feeling of attachment. If the patient is cured and goes home she does not miss his absence, but serves the next patient with the same sense of duty. If the patient is serious, she does not feel anxious or if he dies she is not grieved. She has no attachment whatsoever nor obsession. But that does not mean that she does the duty indifferently or heartlessly. No, she puts her heart and soul into the care of the patient. But she looks to the things objectively. When we nurse a patient who is our relative, we have attachment and are visibly moved by any serious turn in his physical condition. It is because of the strong tie of relationship that binds us to the patient. It is thus clear that the action must be performed without any attachment but sincerely and honestly to the best of our ability with an attitude of being a tool only. We have been called upon to execute whatever is essential and possible as willed by God. This is *SERVICE*. We

⁴ मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि । B.G. XII.10

⁵ निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् । B.G. XI. 33

are doing His work.⁶ Such work elevates us and leads to Self-realization, which is the supreme goal of human life. This work is done in freedom and not in slavery; for it liberates us from the cycle of births and deaths. Even the most trifling desires make us slaves and degenerate us. Here there is no slavery. In doing His work there is no slavery and there is no thought of success or failure.⁷

⁶ मत्कर्मपरमो भव । B.G. XII. 10

⁷ सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ । B.G. II.38

XXVII

OURS IS A NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION WORK—i

The topic, we desire to discuss, is a very vital one and forms the core of all activities of Vivekananda Kendra. The Kendra can be called as a man-making and nation-building organization or it can be put as an organization for national reconstruction. When we speak of reconstruction, the idea strikes our mind that a construction is already existing, but in the course of time, a few defects and deficiencies have been noticed in it and hence the need for reconstruction. Building a nation indicates that there did not exist any nation thus far and due to changes in the political ideologies, a new nation has to come into existence. We find this in the case of so many new nations that have arisen during the past decade. But how can it be said about a nation, which, it is claimed by the historians as being a nation, not for a few centuries but, for many millenniums. What is true of an individual can equally be said of a nation also. A man may physically exist for years together, but he does not live a life if he has no purpose or mission in life. He is a man without personality. It is the purpose of life that yields personality to the individual. He lives a moment-to-moment life and hops from one desire to another, none of them fully satisfied or one arising out of the other. He spends all his life in fulfilling his desires and has no noble goal before him. But a man of purpose utilizes his life to accomplish his mission. Such is a purposive life; otherwise it is an aimless wanderer's life. A vagabond can be thus described. He has no destination and he has not begun his life yet, even though he breathes, eats, drinks, sleeps and does all actions for a physical existence. But he has not begun his life yet. The moment the purpose or a mission dawns upon him, he is born as a man and he acquires personality. There is a definite code of conduct for the achievement of his goal and his life becomes meaningful. The same is the case of a society. A society is a society, if it has an objective or a goal; otherwise

it is a group of people or a herd of human animals. Such a group has no committed life. The people do not stand together for a cause and thus they are not a nation. All the constituents of the group must have the group-consciousness in them and must hold together for the achievement of the goal; then only can they be called a nation — similarity of aspirations gives the society a meaning as a nation. A corporate life and a capacity to penetrate into the things around and a common goal to be reached by all are the other features. Today we find that the people who were once nomads have evolved into a nation. It is not only a desire to survive together in a group but something higher than that. Animals also live together in a group, only to survive in a group, but they do not have the group-consciousness. If a danger is seen they run away individually instead of facing it together as a group.

One more characteristic which we can mention is the capacity and desire to interpret the world around us and this life itself. The people, through their group-consciousness, evolve a philosophy of life. They formulate metaphysics and ethics and they have a common ideal. When was this world created, who created it and why, and such other topics are discussed by them and conclusions are arrived at. They develop as a nation marching towards a goal in one direction. As Swamiji has nicely put it, 'every nation has a destiny to fulfil; it has a message to deliver and a mission to accomplish.' In this light each nation has its distinct personality, aspirations, beliefs, modes of thinking, notions of propriety etc. Americans and Indians differ to a great extent in many of these matters. This mission is not created or produced, it is handed over to the nation from generation to generation. The ancient seers had given up their entire worldly life and devoted themselves to this thought of the mission. It was through their austerity and penance, discrimination and thorough search that the mission dawned upon them and they have given it to us.

People who aspire and desire to serve this nation must learn this mission, goal, destiny, message and must realize the field of their work. They should be conscious of the arena in which they have to work.

Over and above these three categories of service, there is a fourth category which is the supreme one. If a whole people in some corner of the globe successfully evolve a satisfactory social order that can provide abundant opportunities to each of the

constituents to meet the basic needs of the body-mind complex and allow him to fulfil the inner aspirations, it would be the supreme act of service.¹ It would be remembered in the pages of human history. It would be the right and perfect social order. All would be leading a community life and there would be no room for cut-throat competitions, exploitations and such other harmful traits of life. It would cooperate like the limbs of the body. The limbs of the body have no quarrel or conflict or competition amongst themselves and all strive to make the life a success. No grudge that the stomach has avarice and is exploiting the other limbs. It receives, but only for proper distribution of energy to each and every limb and particle of the body. Under such circumstances class-war has no scope at all.

People in the world are striving for such an ideal society. They want it. Herculean efforts are being made all over the world and every school of thought is trying to evolve such a society. A society in which there will be balanced social relations, happy and satisfactory social order, freedom from exploitation is most urgently wanted today. The ideal society must fulfil the needs of the body-mind complex; at the same time it must satisfy the yearnings of the inner being of man. Our ancestors had evolved such a society and with great confidence they could proclaim and invite the people of the world to come and visit this society and to follow its precepts for their well-being. Manu says:

एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः ।

स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः ॥ ॥ 20

“All men in the world should learn their own life and conduct from the Brahmin born in this region.” The Brahmins, that is the thinkers on sociology, have evolved such an ideal social order that anybody, in this world irrespective of his nationality, religion, colour, faith and creed, can follow the maxims of successful individual life as well as conflictless perfect society. China, Russia and America in the present times are trying their own ideologies, but everything is still in the experimental stage. But this is a fact accomplished by ancient sociologists of our land. Everybody must

¹ यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः । गौतम-न्याय सूत्र ।

प्राणिनामभ्युदयनिःश्रेयसहेतुः स धर्मः । शंकराचार्य-ब्रह्मसूत्रभाष्यम् ।

get food, clothing and shelter, also education and training to lead a successful life and something more. Man is not only body-mind and intellect, but something above this and as such man must be considered as a whole. The yearnings of the inner self also must be satisfied. The ancient seers, philosophers, sages visualized all this and have shown the way with full confidence that all men in the world can safely and satisfactorily follow the code of conduct. As Einstein has remarked, India will show the way. It is India's traditional ever-existing mission to show the way, for ages we were experimenting and ultimately we had succeeded in evolving the perfect social order. But our efforts to spread and perpetuate the same have been frustrated due to manifold reasons, some of them being extraneous. But we have to take courage and be on our toes to fulfil the mission. This is why ours is a nation-building service mission. The nation has lost its mission, it is to be re-instated, the nation is to be built, perhaps it is to be reconstructed.

Foreign countries and big powers in the world are in search of peace. India is the land of peace from time immemorial. Foreigners have attacked and tried to ravage the men, land and culture of this nation, but it has never attacked any country. It has sent peace mission and message of higher life to other countries. It is the ordained duty for this land to deliver this message even today to the world. A strifeless society will be the supreme and most precious gift that India can give to the world. It will be an unparalleled and inconceivable act of *SERVICE*.

XXVIII

OURS IS A NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION WORK—ii

We have seen that ours is a spiritually-oriented service mission, a National Reconstruction Organization, a Man-making and Nation-building Mission. Really speaking, India has been making a great experiment in nation-building for several centuries. An aggregate or a congregation of men does not make a nation, nor do the geographical area and duration of time qualify a society to be known as a nation. A government formed on such basis can be called a state, but not a nation. It is the common goal or mission that makes a nation. All the constituents strive collectively for something noble. They have a goal to reach, a mission to accomplish, a message to deliver and a destiny to fulfil.

When people come together and reside at a place, they think primarily about external things. Gradually they start thinking about deeper values of life and ultimately they arrive at a common goal of the people. The flight of thoughts of the Vedic seers manifested the eternal values of life. This was accomplished through their penance and austerity and not merely, by observing, thinking and pondering. They have embodied their vision of truths in specialised forms of sacred writings stated as पुरुषार्थ—चतुष्टय. "The fourfold goal of successful human life." Every activity in life is to be explained in terms of this, everything to be tested according to this criterion. The persuasion, approaches and system of thinking may differ greatly but the goal is one and the same. The ultimate and the highest goal of human life is liberation, मुक्ति. Swamiji has indicated in his well-known saying — "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this by work or worship, psychic control or philosophy — by one or more, or all of these — and be free."

Human mind is a bundle of desires. Abundant resources and plenty of material are available to satisfy these desires. These

desires altogether constitute what is called *Kama*. The material essential and the means to acquire them come under *Artha*. These two, *Kama* and *Artha* are the two legs on which the world stands. If all the desires of everyone are to be fulfilled, then there will be a chaos. Therefore, there is the controlling principle of *Dharma*. And the aim of all of these is *Moksha*. Man is born on this globe and his journey from womb to tomb is called life. He is not permanently stationed here. He had had many births prior to this and there will be many more, but the goal of the journey is *Moksha*.

All roads and ways, lanes and by-lanes lead to *Moksha* only. But the crucial point is that you have to choose your path for yourself out of many available. The pilgrimage must be made by you alone. All ties of affection and love are of no avail. Your possessions and your wealth cannot save your soul!¹ Its destiny is predetermined by your own self. Love from others cannot be of any use beyond a certain limit. "Thus far and no further", is true of everything in this case. The Pandavas marched towards heaven all together, all but one fell down at a certain point. Dharmaputra alone continued the journey along with a dog. On this path, towards the other world everybody has to go alone. There is no escape from this. Therefore, social order should be so evolved as to enable everybody to attain that goal by a suitable path. I can live my own life and die my own death. I cannot live somebody's life nor can die somebody's death, however great my desire and effort may be. This pilgrimage becomes easier in a congenial atmosphere. The sacred lore in religion and philosophy in India do proclaim this liberation as the only goal of human life. But even the secular sciences such as Politics, Dancing, Music, Medicine and many more, declare the goal of human life as salvation. Thus there is a great *UNITY OF THOUGHT* in all the sciences and arts in India which is nowhere to be found in the world. Ayurveda declares जीवेम शरदः शतम्. "We will live for a hundred years" and this life is to be healthy, long and robust life. It is bubbling with joy and happiness.² At the beginning of every text relating to a Science and Art there is what is technically called as अनुबन्धचतुष्टय (the fourfold adjuncts) stating the topic

¹ अमृतत्वस्य तु न आशा अस्ति वित्तेन । Br. Upa.

² मोदाम शरदः शतम् । नन्दाम शरदः शतम् । etc.

of the treatise, the eligible reader, the purpose and the relation between all of them. The ultimate purpose in all cases is stated to be *Moksha*, liberation. The treatise may be on warfare, statecraft, defence, astronomy, dancing, singing or grammar, the purpose is the same. A man must not only live a full life of hundred years, but he must be enabled to do proper justice to every phase of human life and ultimately to attain *Moksha*. The sages have laid down the path and a pious, honest man should proceed along the path to reach the goal unobstructed and unhindered. The discovery of the aim and its path was made by the wise through penance, austerity and scholarship. The goal of philosophy, of all human activity is the same. Every man is to be prepared and every soul is to be helped. Fine arts create higher values and fine music reveals one's own self and enables one to abide in it.

Social institutions and organizations have the object of equipping every individual in his own way according to his capacity to make him reach the goal. Every social organization, lays stress on man-making only, directly or indirectly. Man-making is the most basic of all human efforts. When man is equipped, the society and the nation also becomes fully equipped. "Take care of the pie and the rupee will take care of itself", says an old proverb. Even if it is nation-building or world-building or international-building, man-making is the fundamental process. Take care of the man and the society takes care of itself. All other arrangements and devices are but secondary.

Impersonal service with the right attitude is the only true form of service, other forms are but secondary. Ideal social order provides abundant opportunities to each and every individual in society to fulfil his goal of life. All institutions were evolved in the past for this only, but in the passage of time our efforts have been disrupted and in certain cases also distorted. The *Varnashrama* system is such an institution. The form has been so much debased and deformed that it has changed beyond recognition and it is unbelievable that it served the most essential purpose of the society once upon a time. It is an ideal institution even today for the changed times, because even though the presentation and manifestation may change, still the values remain unaltered. It is for this reason we say that our nation requires rebuilding.

Do your duty with the unshaken faith that you are an instrument in the hands of God. His creation is perfect and whatever

alterations are required according to times are made by Him. We have neither the right nor the power to amend His creation. If we are merely a service-oriented organization, we will have to pray to God to create cyclones, floods, famines and accidents to provide us opportunities of service. Service with a spiritual bias results in man-making which is invariably and inseparably connected with nation-building. It is the core of all our thoughts behind this organization.

XXIX

A NON-SANNYASI ORDER

One outstanding feature of our organization is that it is a Non-Sannyasi or Lay-Order. What is meant by *Sannyasa*? It is a Sanskrit word and it has its traditional connotation and concept. It generally means renunciation of mundane life. The total abstinence from the pursuit of the sense-pleasures and complete devotion to God-realization are the obverse and reverse sides of the coin. It is a different life from the ordinary one. Our life is projected by the basic bodily needs for sustenance such as food, and shelter is necessary to protect oneself from heat, cold, wind, rain and against dangers. These are the basic wants and vital necessities. But apart from wants, there are cravings in the life of a man and they are different from needs. Desire for a particular type of food, sexual hunger and such other hankerings are cravings and not wants. Sexual hunger is described as a biological need, but it is not a thing without which man cannot live. Wants are most essential for survival, but cravings are not; one can live without a craving. One will not die if one does not have costly, attractive dress or savings or house or similar possessions. These cravings are innumerable and a permutation and combination of them presents a good picture. They arise out of a sense of possessing or owning something. But one must remember that life which is a span between birth and death is a combination of time and energy. The Creator has given us an instrument, a dynamo, to create energy. It is this body, possessing senses of understanding and of activity. The body-mind complex is an apparatus to be used for God-realization and not for satisfaction of the cravings. Sustenance, maintenance and preservation of this apparatus is most essential so that every ounce of the energy and every moment of time at our disposal can be used in the best possible way for the human goal of God-realization. But according to the traditional content of the Sannyasa one has to wear the saffron-coloured

clothes only, follow a particular code of injunctions, follow the spiritual path and has to be initiated by a Guru to whom complete submission and obedience is necessary. We are all conversant with the traditional concept of Sannyasa. But Swamiji has already indicated that this work of manifesting the divinity in man can be done by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy. There are so many paths suited to the nature (*Prakriti*) and tendency (*Pravritti*) of the individual.

But we claim that ours is and shall be a Non-Sannyasi order. Why not call it a householder (*Grihastha*) order? There is sound reason for this. Though technically, so far as the external appearance is concerned, we shall not be Sannyasis, still we will be Sannyasis in mind. We may not have the injunctions and bans and bindings that Sannyasi has to observe, but excepting this, we shall not be less than Sannyasis in any respect. We do not even aspire to be Sannyasis at any time. Our plan of life is God-realization but it shall essentially be through work, worship, psychic control and philosophy. We do not reject Sannyasa in toto. We shall make use of it whenever and wherever possible and necessary. Our God-realization shall be predominantly through work only. Here saffron-coloured clothes command respect in society and according to convention saffron-coloured clothes deserve and demand service, but we want to mix with the people in the society as one of them and offer them the best possible service. So clothes of a Sannyasi would be an obstacle. They create a distance between the individual and the society. We want no distance, no inhibition, no separateness. Then only we can render service. We have no personal or family life, no personal career and cravings. For dedicated service to the cause, we have renounced everything and if the robes become a hindrance, we will renounce even the clothes of a Sannyasi. Our dedication shall be pure and clean as the white clothes themselves. We must be free from all bindings and hindrances, we must be as free as air so that we can move with ease and confidence. The more free we are, the more able we will be to serve. Of course, the bare necessities of life, to maintain the body in a good condition, we shall have only as an *apaddharma* (an act of urgent necessity), to enable us to achieve the goal.

We have full faith in Lord Krishna's promise when he says in the Bhagavad Gita "Of people, who worship me, meditating

upon me with single-minded devotion, I look to their needs, as they are always bent upon me.”¹ About the daily needs of a worker of our organization, he worries the least, for he believes firmly that the Lord will provide. He strictly follows the discipline of *Aparigraha* (non-possession) and *Aniketa* (non-possession of a house). A Sannyasi does not stay at any place for more than three days, lest he should develop an attachment to the place. We also must not have any special affinity for anything or any place. This mental make-up makes us fit instrument for the work.

Progressively the life-worker cultivates and develops renunciation through steady efforts. He has left his personal attachments for his near and dear relatives and friends to the extent that he is lost to every one of them. He gives a training to himself as well as to his near and dear ones, so that they also forget him in due course. Showing interest in them in the events of their life or even remembering them becomes dangerous to the work. He is absolutely unconcerned with the functions and incidents of relatives. He uses different tactics and devices to renounce worldly ties. He becomes absolutely free to pursue the path he has chosen.

Though paths are many and lead ultimately to the same goal, still everyone has to evaluate his capacities and potentialities and then select the path. In the framework of the activities to be carried out and austerities to be observed, one should not be carried away just by emotional fervour in the beginning and then be disappointed later on. There should be no occasion at all for any one to repent afterwards for the path chosen or the course followed. Therefore, one must weigh one's strength, hidden aptitudes and possibilities, and if celibacy, though desirable to keep oneself absolutely free for the maximum utilization of energies for service, is not possible, then one should choose a second line of defence and get oneself married. This course of marriage is not with any cravings, but it is just a strategy to guard oneself in the eventuality of a biological necessity. It should be regarded as such and not as embarking on the career of a married life. Lust, possession, ownership, etc., are all out of question here. It is to be treated just as a safety-valve. This married life should

¹ अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ B.G. IX. 22

be as simple as possible with a few wants, like that of a monk, with minimum necessities of life. Each desire and craving is to be tested and evaluated on the touchstone of essential necessity. It should be a life with no increase in wants and no addition to hungers. *Aparigraha* or non-possession and non-accumulation should be a solemn vow. Even in the company of the better half one must, on comparison, prove to be not less than a Sannyasi in every respect except this one minor factor. People must feel on critical scrutiny that the moral rectitude, and the essential attitude of a Sannyasi towards life are equally present in the worker. We call our order a NON-SANNYASI ORDER and not a household as well as a Sannyasi order. Taking into consideration the strength and capacity of an individual, he has done the maximum renunciation within his reach. He takes three vows (i) *Shuchita* (or purity, and not of celibacy necessarily), (ii) *Aparigraha* or non-possession, the guiding star of a life either married or celibate; and (iii) implicit obedience to the organization, a resolution of mind to follow rules, regulations, policy etc. of the organization most rigorously.

XXX

SATTVIKA KARTA

We have already seen the different shades of essential qualities of a social worker. The Bhagavad Gita has described such an ideal worker. This small verse, in a very helpful and forceful manner, provides us a peg to hang our thoughts on about a social worker. The verse gives the description of a Sattvika Karta (A pure worker)

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्माहममन्वितः ।

मिथ्यसिद्धोतिविकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ XVIII. 26

“Freed from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with courage and enthusiasm and unperturbed by success or failure, the worker is known as a pure (Sattvika) one.” Four outstanding and essential qualities of a social worker are enunciated in the verse.

(i) Freed from attachment, (ii) egoless, (iii) bubbling with fortitude and enthusiasm and (iv) indifferent to success or failure. The Western philosophy teaches us that man works through ego only. The more the attachment for the action, the more is the energy and the impetus, is the axiom accepted by it. In this verse, we have an apparent contradiction, no doubt, but herein lies the uncommon feature of our ancient culture which has been practised through ages and is even available to this day.

(i) Attachment to the worldly things is but the nature of man. We calculate three *Eshanaś* or aspirations of man. (i) *Vitteshana* or the desire for wealth, (ii) *Putreshana* or desire for a son, (iii) *Lokeshana* or desire for fame. There is a fourth aspiration, *Adhikareshana* or desire for power. The second one is for the sex instinct and for perpetuation of the family. This desire leads to adoption of a son if one has not any. As a matter of fact, one does realize that some aspiration is essential in life which provides the petrol that moves this machine to activity. But there is difference between desires and desires. The desires of the body-mind

complex are to be abandoned as they make a man extrovert and make him run after the objects of the world which are transient. But the desire for God-realization should be an attachment. The attachment for the worldly life should definitely be withdrawn. The bare necessities of life are a must and so long as there is a necessity of keeping body and soul together to achieve a mission, these cannot be abandoned. The physical and mental life must be continued but there should not be lust (*Lipsa-Lalasa*) for fulfilment of mundane hungers. The aspiration for God-realization is the yearning of the soul. It is a transcendental aspiration. The ego gives energy, strength and power to work. This ego, self, is to be merged in the Self Supreme. This "I" is liquidated and something great takes its place. Man has to evolve from *Tamas* to *Rajas* and from *Rajas* to *Sattva*. Once a visitor requested Swamiji to give him the experience of God-realization. He was such a lazy, passive and inactive person that it was essential to rouse him from subhuman *Tamas* state to *Rajas*. Swamiji asked him to steal something first and then come to him. Unfortunately, for us, many *Tamasic* things go under the name of *Sattvika* in our country. This is an insignificant "I" but it works wonders when it takes possession of a person. We are in the habit of constantly referring to the "I" in our talks and people become obsessed by it. Jnaneshwar, the Marathi saint-poet and mystic has rightly indicated that this ego is more with the intellectuals and makes them undergo many a misery. He says —

नवल अहंकाराची गोठी । नलगे अज्ञानाचिया पाठी ।

ज्ञोबे ज्ञानियाचिया कंठी । नाना संकटें नाचतीं ॥ Jnaneshwari xiii. 82

"Miraculous is the behaviour of this ego. It does not approach an ignorant person but gets upon the neck of an intellectual person and makes him dance to its tunes". It is most difficult to efface this "I". The only way to get rid of it is to treat yourself as a tool of something higher and conjoin yourself with the transcendental. Do not project yourself as the doer of any activity. We find that God having created this marvellously vast universe has hidden Himself. How much more it behoves us to be self-effacing!

There is an eternal desire for the fruit of actions and it is the urge that impels a person to strive for success. If success is not desired, the student will not study his lessons. If there is no

ambition for victory in the battle, the General of the army will be inactive. But the philosophy here is that we work only for success. There is greater pleasure and blessedness in working for work's sake. The question of failure or defeat does not arise. Effort in no case is inferior to either victory or success, it is not less important. Do the work chosen by you or entrusted to you, to the best of your capacity and aspire for the highest goal. In a drama when one plays the role, one has to identify oneself with the role. It may be the role of Rama or Ravana or Hanuman. After the drama is over one does not think about the role. In your life-mission, do your duty with zeal, enthusiasm and firmness, getting neither elated by success nor dejected by failure. People may comment, criticize or appreciate. It is left to them. In fact, they have no *locus standi* to criticize or appreciate, because they do not have the proper perspective of the situation. Hence, they have no right to evaluate and to judge. It is not their sphere at all. Have delight in the work you do and be indifferent to censure and praise, success and failure.¹

¹ तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः । B.G. XII. 19

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च । B.G. IV. 22

SKILL IN BEHAVIOUR

When a life worker of Vivekananda Kendra goes to his field of work, he has to be properly equipped. We teach major items, but minor details of vital importance are sometimes neglected. The success of an individual depends much on these small matters as well. A person may be intellectually well-equipped, but if he is deficient in other qualities, success evades him. He may possess dedication, sacrifice, renunciation etc. but for want of practical knowledge he proves to be a failure. His competence depends on this knowledge. He has to deal with men and matters, but if his temperamental make-up is inadequate then he has to repent. This tact or skill in behaviour is termed as योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् । (B.G. II-50). (Skill in performance of actions, is Yoga.) For want of this skill, every effort is a waste.

When you go to a new place, you are eager to learn about the people and other relevant things and in your enthusiasm to put in your successful effort, you forget that people are equally inquisitive to learn about you. They watch your activity, your behaviour, the things that you talk about and the way you talk, the circumstances which you face and the people to whom you talk; everything is critically watched. If you are on your guard and move properly, well and good; otherwise, if you are wrong you get kicks and together with your reputation, the work also suffers.

To learn swimming there are various methods. One of them is, learning from the seniors. They tie a rope around the waist and slowly ask you to come in knee-deep water, then waist-deep water, then chest-deep water and when you get courage, they teach you and guide you properly. Gradually you learn the art of swimming. Thus, in life if there are seniors to guide, you learn more easily (प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत । कठ. उप. I.iii.14). Otherwise you have to gain knowledge the hard way. I would like to narrate my experience. As there was none to guide and advise me, I had to

learn things myself under great miseries. I had to intervene in the quarrel of a couple in which the husband had left the house in a huff. He did not return for four days and then his whereabouts were traced. I was entrusted with the responsibility of bringing the husband back. I went searching for him and fortunately I could find him in a *dharmashala* at Indore. I kept a secret watch on him and at the most opportune moment caught him in his room. But he would not allow me to stir out. Somehow I had a telegram sent to his people through a student in the adjoining room. The telegram brought the man's wife with the children. Leaving the family to themselves, I stirred out with a sigh of success. But hardly had I gone a few steps when I noticed that I was being shadowed by a policeman. He approached me and took me to the police station. And there the whole account of my secret and guarded movements was narrated to me and I was questioned, who I was. It was a time when revolutionaries were moving in the State. With great difficulty I could convince them and got myself safely out of the ordeal. But then I realized how we were being closely and secretly watched by others of which we had the least idea. The same happens in the case of a social worker. Every moment of your life, every small activity of yours is being watched by the people. Of this, one must take note. People are eager to form your image and you must be watchful. Some friend sent me a piece of silk cloth every year, and I used to wear the shirt made of that silk. This was all done inadvertently. But people formed an opinion about me that I wore only silk garments. We cannot prevent the people from forming their opinion, whether good or bad, right or wrong. We are all public workers and public opinion is of vital importance for us. We have to carry on our work of service with their cooperation and good will and therefore we must be meticulously careful not to give them any chance to misunderstand us. People have a right to watch us because we work in their midst and they have the freedom to pass adverse judgement if they choose. Our consciousness that we are public workers should not be lost sight of at any moment and it should guide and regulate our behaviour. The prestige and the image of the organization should in no case be blurred by your actions. People have a penchant for drawing conclusions about the organization from your likes and dislikes even though they are individually yours only. It affects the work of the organization.

Unintentionally if somebody grows a beard, people draw the conclusion that this appears to be a Kendra-brand. Your long faces and continuous seriousness will create a false image in the public. The organization is judged by your behaviour. Therefore, one should be simple and as common as any other citizen in the society without special feature of any type. In your dress, sentiments and behaviour be as common as anybody else. Do not be uncommon in your appearance just to catch the public eye. But be uncommon in your ability to render service and bring a name to the organization.

XXXII

ADJUSTMENT WITH CO-WORKERS

We must watch, evaluate and judge people remembering conversely that they do the same with us. We must be constantly vigilant, because if we see with two eyes, there are thousand eyes looking at us. And the responsibility multiplies in manifold ways when we remember that we do not go as an individual Shri X. Y. Z. but we represent an organization. People judge the organization by our conduct. The image of the organization should not be distorted by our speech and action. If we are able to add to the prestige of the organization it is praiseworthy, but if that is not possible at least its honour should not be sullied. The aims and objects, the programmes and activities are brought out in the printed pamphlets no doubt, but your living conduct should speak more eloquently about the organization. People can get more useful knowledge and information from the behaviour of the worker who represents the organization. His conduct speaks for the organization. It furnishes volumes of valid knowledge. Therefore, meticulous care has to be taken about one's conduct and behaviour.

The place where you go may, in some cases, have a worker already stationed to look after the work. Adjustment with this co-worker is a most important and difficult problem. Many have faced it, some are facing and some of you will face the problem. When people of different temperaments come and live together, mutual adjustment is a universal problem. In married life, we have to solve the problem. But there is a way, true or false we do not discuss to solve the problem. The astrologers compare the horoscopes and give their judgement whether the pair is adjustable or not. If the horoscopes do not tally, the marriage is not permitted. But our Kendra has no such device. There is no formula to decide the adjustability of two workers. So we have to follow the trial and error method. We are forced to transfer workers from

one place to another, though transfers are not made only on this account.

But there is a solution to the problem. Firstly, there must be a strong will to live together and work shoulder to shoulder; for, the ideology of both the persons is the same and that is the bond that holds them together in the organization. It is this bond that generates the will. In a family there is a code of conduct, a certain bundle of traditions, conventions, notions, reputations which have been handed down from generation to generation and it is the love for this family code (*Kulaneeti*) which is the strong bond that holds the family members together. Smooth working without any conflict or quarrel is the criterion of a good, cultured family. There is an understanding in the family members and the name of the family is a sacred thing for which they can withstand any obstacles, eventualities and vicissitudes.

A missionary organization is not just a group of people coming together. They have a cause, a mission that creates a bond, an affinity amongst constituents. It is the cementing factor which unites and strengthens them. There is blood-relationship between brothers. Blood is thicker than water, they say. But ideology is thicker than blood and for the call of ideology, the calls from home, from blood relations are not responded to. Ideology is the strongest bond that binds people together. In between the blood-relations, say between brothers and brothers there can be conflicts, rivalries, feuds, fights and even battles but never so in a missionary organization. The inspiration that all derive is not from any mundane object, but from higher ideals, from the transcendental. If the family members decide to live together under any circumstances, there can be no cliques and rivalries. We have to harp upon this again and again that we have to live together as members of a happy family. Nothing should disrupt or break up the solidarity. Kitchen will never be silent. One pot may just strike against another, sometimes by chance. There may be small frictions, idiosyncrasies and fads among the cooks and as such some trifling conflicts may arise. But they subside because all have to stay under the same roof and to cook on the same oven. Assertions of individuality are natural, but the thought of oneness minimizes them. The machine requires some lubricating oil to avoid friction, at least to minimize the same. The common ideal brings people of heterogeneous characteristics.

together with some design. They keep the ideal before their eyes and the conflicts are minimized. Everybody strives to take a charitable view of the small incidents. Motives are not imputed and misunderstandings are removed there and then.

Every utterance has a twofold meaning. One is direct (*Vachyārtha*) and the other implied (*Lakshyārtha* or *Bhavartha*). The sentiment or the spirit behind an utterance is to be understood and not always the direct meaning. When Rama was hunting for the golden deer, Maricha raised a cry of alarm and Sita insisted on Lakshmana going to the help of Rama. Lakshmana was sure that that was a ruse and he refused to leave his post. Thereupon, Sita rebuked and insulted him and imputed unworthy motives to Lakshmana's refusal. But wise as he was, he did not take them literally but understood that Sita was much perturbed at Rama's cry and that she wanted him to go to his brother's rescue. Harsh words are weighed in their proper perspective in a cultured family. If there is a determination to live in a family as a family, then normal frictions are no frictions. A bloated ego and a false sense of prestige are winked at. It is the human element of false ego that causes feuds. If there is mutual understanding, two incompatible and diametrically different people can stay in one room happily without friction.

The collective supreme will to live together and to work shoulder to shoulder for the chosen cause, will enable even two short-tempered workers to develop an understanding and to see things in the proper perspective. They can successfully perform the duties and propagate the idea of the mission.

XXXIII

THE NEED FOR OBEDIENCE TO THE HEAD

It is the ego that causes frictions and differences of opinion. At the slightest provocation a person flares up and there is a breach of discipline. One should exert oneself to have control over the mind. The ego of a person is present even in childhood and one feels insulted if asked to apologize for the abuses hurled at one's sister. I remember, in my childhood when an option of apologizing or eating cow-dung was open to me, I ate cow-dung but did not apologize. On introspection, we notice that it is not the external agency which provokes an individual but the human weaknesses are a cause to it. There are six adversaries of human being as narrated by our ethics viz. attachment (*Kama*), anger (*Krodha*), avarice (*Lobha*), delusion (*Moha*), conceit (*Mada*), and jealousy (*Matsara*). When a person is under the sway of any one of them, he loses his self-command. One ceases to be his normal self when he is overpowered by anger. As the Bhagavad Gita states :

क्रोधात् भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशात् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥ II. 63

Thus when vision is lost, discrimination is lost and conscience is silenced. The anger in this verse can be replaced by any one of the other five and the train of miseries follows the same way. When this vision is regained, man regains his own self. Arjuna's last words in the Bhagavad Gita are :

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ॥ XVIII. 73

“My infatuation has been lost and I have regained my memory.” Our Bible teacher used to teach us, “Virtue is vision; Vice is forgetfulness.” If you falter or slip, you get up again and stand on your legs by yourself. No wrong should be done to anybody in word or deed. But if through negligence this takes place, immediately seize the first opportunity to right the wrong.

and be friends again. People in a fit of craziness, on account of small friction, refrain from talking to one another. It is human to err but to forgive is divine.

We are a family. We live and work together for a cause. We must remember that a spring returns to its shape or position as soon as the tension is removed. So try to remove tension and maintain normalcy at all times.

If some unfortunate incident takes place in this family, do not take it to the streets or to the youngsters, but report and discuss it with the elders. We must be cautious; WHAT TO TALK, WHERE TO TALK, HOW TO TALK, WHOM TO TALK TO and WHEN. Report immediately to the Head and avoid horizontal discussions. All worries, doubts go up to the head, they have a vertical way in human body; so also in the organization all situations must be brought to the notice of the Head of the organization. It is a dis-service to the organization not to report any unhappy episode to the Head. It is the duty and the responsibility of the Head to find the way out under such circumstances. There should be no blockade in between. The Head will clear up things. He is cut out for that work. Impure blood must go to the heart for purification, for it is the only way to maintain the health of the body. The Head will check up bad blood that has flowed and maintain the health of the organization. In the organization, the brotherhood is so intense and so universal that one stands for all and all stand for one. Ours is a missionary organization and that too, an infant organization. Every individual, every constituent must have a direct relation and dialogue with the person at the top. It is his duty to do so and the duty of the Head to give him a patient hearing. This maintains a happy and congenial relation and things move on the right track. Avoid short temper and provocation. Especially people holding responsible posts must always move with ice bags on their heads to keep themselves cool and away from provocation. Our blood should not be allowed to boil at some untoward incident. We must be cool, keeping our conscience clear; must investigate, arrive at proper judgement and maintain the solidarity of the organization.

XXXIV

TOLERANCE AND LOVE

Often we meet people who have strong views about something. Some of them become fanatics. "We have a cause," they say. But we must not deal with such persons in a fanatic way or with an extremist attitude. Our Kendra is named after Vivekananda, for whom all have respect in their hearts. But still people try to interpret our activities as a cult. It is their mistake. We have accepted the name of Vivekananda for two reasons. Firstly, on the occasion of the birth-centenary of this noble patriot of our Motherland, we have erected the Rock Memorial and this Kendra is just the second phase of the same activity. Secondly, Vivekananda's name stands for universality which transcends all parochialism. His mission is as expansive as the sky. His words of wisdom still ring in our ears though more than hundred years have rolled by. He attempted to unify and to utilize the spiritual forces of the monk order. We aspire to make the Kendra as the meeting place for all the multifarious spiritual forces in the country for the cause of the nation. Vivekananda did not preach his own philosophy, he gave the thought of the Upanishads. He gave nothing new, but he poured a new life and vigour into the age-old thoughts to enlighten the new age. Many a time, the disciples have a very clever knack of cutting down their Guru to size. They manoeuvre in such a way as to prove that the endeavour of the Guru was to establish a new sect. The Arya Samaj, established by Swami Dayananda, had the objective to mobilize Hindu society as one single homogeneous people, but the result is that Arya Samaj has become one more sect in Hindu society. Guru Nanak is another illustration. He aspired to build a militant God-intoxicated Hindu society. As a result, a new community was created whose followers denied that they were Hindus. In 1938-39 there were fights between Hindus and Aryas as well as between Hindus and Sikhs. In 1940 census, the Arya Samajists declined to be classified as Hindus and

named themselves as Aryas. All efforts of uniting Hindu society by effacing communities or sects have been frustrated and defeated and we find that something is added to the sum total of existing sects. The name Vivekananda has the magic of all the spiritual forces in the country. They contributed to the effort of creating the Rock Memorial. Vivekananda Kendra is the continuation of that Rock Memorial and it is flourishing at Kanyakumari at the confluence of the three oceans. Here the East and the West meet because the sun rises in the east in the ocean and it sets in the west also in the ocean. The eastern and the western horizons are attached to the same unfathomable continuous expanses of the ocean. There is also the silken knot of the tender feelings of the North and the South. At the farthest end of the sub-continent in the South, the Goddess with a rosary in hand, is eternally practising hard penance for the hand of the Lord of Kailasa, the northernmost point in the Himalayan range. All devotees of all cults and sects are welcome here. The stalwarts of Aurobindo Ashram of Pondicherry, Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Chidananda of Divine Life Society of India and many more leading personalities of various cults and sects, being representatives of Spiritual Organizations pay visits to the Rock and also to Vivekanandapuram. They appreciate the work and bless the efforts as a mark of their co-operation and help. Thus, this is the meeting point of social and spiritual forces. We are *not* a cult and we do not have any hostility to other cults. We do not speak disparagingly about any sect or cult or person. We do not treat anybody as superior or inferior. We steer clear of all groups and we do not have special affinity for anybody. We believe in constructive work, and strong likes or dislikes for anybody are harmful to it. They are not congenial to the mental health also. Fanaticism is intolerance of other views. We must clearly understand the view-point of others also. Liberality in outlook is essential. There is a parable about a Shiva devotee. He did not relish the name of Vishnu or Narayana. While going on the way if anybody unintentionally uttered the name of Narayana or Hari or Vishnu etc., he would immediately ring the bells hanging from his ears so that by the sound of the bells the sin was washed off. On account of his having bells on the ears he was called *Ghantakarna*. While worshipping Lord Shiva the incense was burnt. But Lord Shiva to show him that such a difference as Shiva and Vishnu

did not really prevail, presented himself as half-Shiva and half-Vishnu. This Shiva devotee was so much perturbed at the strange sight that he closed the nostril on the side of Vishnu, lest the incense should be smelt by Him. Such is the fanaticism in people. People are fanatic about their own village or about vegetarianism and about so many things in the world. A certain pleader always insisted and tried to convince the people that his village was the hub of the earth. Somebody declared and started propaganda that to drink cow's milk was sin. Fanaticism existed about yoga and about meditation and what not. To yield to some good points of others is not bad. Staunch attitude about anything is not always beneficial. People are devotees of different saints but the inspiration they get is the same. Then what is the harm in accepting their right thoughts?

A worker must have no enemies but be an *Ajata-shatru*. He should not speak bad words about anybody. It spreads ill-feeling in the people. Passing verdicts on people is insane. If you have any views, at least do not broadcast them. Is it essential to spread your opinion or judgement, either mature or immature? This unnecessarily creates antagonism in the atmosphere and affects the work. We should not be at enmity with anybody. The best service you can offer to the organization is not to speak ill of anybody. People are proud to call themselves frank and blunt, but that they lack the capacity to control themselves is a fact. It is not a virtue but a vice. You must build good relations with the people so much that people must confide in you. When others speak ill of somebody do not add your share to it, but put forward the good points about him. This is *Lokasamgraha* (gathering the people). You must spread sweetness and love everywhere and win goodwill for Vivekananda Kendra. Have no relations with political parties and their controversies, demonstrations, strictures etc. Do not indulge in any of this. Then you will really be a good worker. We should not be obsessed and fanatical. We should be receptive to all shades of thought. The basic need is to be a common friend to all, even to inimical individuals. People flock together and discuss stories, scandals and rumours about other people and try to win cheap popularity. One must keep oneself away from all such things, otherwise some day people will start treating you and hating you like a leper. Control your tongue and do not pollute it at any time. It pays rich dividends in the long run.

PRACTICE AND PREACHING

In order to have a solid organization, one must, along with the co-workers, create a congenial atmosphere and goodwill in the public. One should be in a position to collect a group of sympathizers, admirers and well-wishers. But in concrete work this truck-load of sympathy is of no benefit at all. Co-workers should give their time, energy and enthusiasm to the work. They must identify themselves with the work and the organization. Their willingness to work is essential. Therefore we must be friendly with all and build very cordial social relations. Capture the place with a fund of goodwill and collect trusted competent workers who will constitute the band or team of workers to carry out the work honestly and enthusiastically. Mutual love and oneness of ideology must govern their willing acceptance of discipline. Do not create or produce the workers. It is a slippery ground, it is unstable like the house on sands. Such workers will work so long you are present and treat them respectfully; but if you are out of the place for three days and return on the fourth, there will be none. Our workers must have capacity to infuse enthusiasm, and attract the people to the cause. The power of head and heart may also be present, but if there is a lack of magnetic power in you, there is no development in the work. There is a technique in building a band of workers. Our right behaviour and capacity will be conducive to this. There is a book, "How to win friends and influence people" written by Dale Carnegie, an American writer. He has dealt with the topic from many angles stating how to talk to the people and even how to win the people who are not well disposed towards you. But the techniques are useful and workable in the highly commercialized, organized society of Americans. They are of little value to us in India and for social workers like us, whose aim is, not to influence the people, but to win the people for our cause. The word 'influence' has a bad odour attached to it.

He says, meet a person, praise and admire him, create a congenial atmosphere and take the opportunity to open the topic of the visit. But here we take the wrong advantage of human weakness. Everybody likes praise and hence to get our work done we exploit this weakness. There are general weaknesses common to all and there are particular weaknesses special to an individual. We make him bend to his weakness; we thereby strengthen the weakness. We should not desire to play upon his weakness. We should not take advantage of his weakness to bring him into our fold. We would make him our worker in the team by love, affection and communion with him. To use weakness for our purpose is inhuman. "Honesty is the best policy." "Honesty pays." "If honesty does not pay in certain cases even dishonesty can be resorted to. You take a different approach and influence him." Such and many more trade secrets and shifts are narrated in the book. Stratagem is not beneficial and is not worthy also. Our situation is different and graver. We do not want to fool the people and make them, by hook or by crook, work for the organization. A person who is fed on weakness is basically weak in his aptitude and he may not be useful to us at all. Not only we do not desire to nourish and strengthen the weakness, but whenever and wherever possible we shall try to remove it.

Then how to collect the band of workers? We must remember that workers are not made to order but they are discovered. They are already there in the society in latent form, waiting for somebody to infuse their own spirit in them. Gold and oil are not created and manufactured by man. Nature has already provided them. We have to discover them. So also about the workers. The potential workers are spread out in the field of our work, we have to lay our hand on the right person and he is there as our worker. There is abundant potentiality for good work, we must make use of the sixth sense and utilize the latent potentiality for the work. The techniques are of no avail here. Adoption of techniques can be useful for expanding publicity and goodwill, but this is all superficial. We require the proper type of workers. Creation of a band of selfless and devoted workers is a work of strenuous discovery. The good qualities of an individual are not a sufficient criterion, because they may not be of much value in actual work. We create a different community itself. Our faith in the cause is to be revealed in action. We know the incident in the life of Shri Ramakrishna.

He made a widow come to him for three consecutive weeks. The widow wanted her son to be advised suitably against eating *Sandesh*. After the third week he calmly and affectionately told the boy not to trouble his mother for *Sandesh*. The widow asked Shri Ramakrishna why he took three weeks to give such a piece of simple advice to the boy. Shri Ramakrishna replied, "I like *Sandesh* very much and I remember it quite often. Then how am I entitled to preach to the boy what I myself cannot practise. So I tried for three weeks and now I am successful in winning over the taste of *Sandesh* and hence I can now guide the boy confidently. You cannot bring about a change in others unless you have transformed yourself through constant practice." Remember one thing that whatever is inside is transmitted and spread. Good exposition, free sermon, beautiful discourse and forceful oratory is of no use at all if there is nothing inside. Flowery talk does not have effect. Your ardent love for the cause, your unflinching faith in the mission, your true transformation in your own self will have the greatest effect. One who has achieved self-transformation can only use his sixth sense and can discover the latent faculties, and potentialities in men and can help them to manifest them. There are hundreds and thousands of prospective workers of Vivekananda Kendra in this country lying dormant, waiting to be discovered and awakened. God has been kind and generous enough; we need not produce or create them. The well-known story of Ulysses discovering Achilles from the band of girls is narrated by Homer in his Iliad. The workers are already there in the field. Use your sixth sense and locate them. Talk to them, give them your schemes, take them into your confidence and let their latent capacity come out. Their subconscious mind has been already thinking about the Vivekananda Kendra and its activities. You must become a magnet to attract all these pieces of iron. This magnet is the utmost faith in the cause. This is not a career for external show. Your thought must straightway pierce the heart of the worker. If there are shortcomings in you, they also will be transmitted. So you must first be completely transformed and be pure as crystal. There is no shortcut, no technique, no stratagem. Be sacred and try to transmit all that is very sacred in you to others.¹

¹ The Sanskrit Subhashita says "यः क्रियावान् स पण्डितः"

"He who practises (and not simply preaches) is the wise man."

XXXVI

BE A SELF-RELIANT WORKER

The master organizer is a resourceful and efficient personality. He encompasses the whole field of activity and gives his colour to the atmosphere. As one lamp lights another, so also he enkindles the flame of work in the workers of the region. How many co-workers he has been able to nurture so far, who can actively participate in the activity, is the measure of his success. I read a magazine in which half the articles were by the editor himself. Some feel proud about the editor and others admire his patient sustained hard labour. But the fact is that he has not been able to attract the writers to contribute to his magazine. The editor writes most of the articles but it is creditable neither to him nor to the magazine. If at a function arranged by the worker of our Kendra, he welcomes the guest and the audience, he introduces the guest and the Kendra to the public, he sings the welcome song, he conducts the Yogasana demonstrations, he looks to the arrangements and finally he proposes a vote of thanks, people may praise and admire him for his being efficient, but as an organizer he is a great failure. His work has not been creditable and praiseworthy. As the Upanishadic saying states, "एकोऽहं बहु स्याम्।" (I am one, let me be many) he works in different capacities though he is alone. But a worker must multiply himself as one lamp lights others; he must make others active participants in the work. It is not a matter of pride that when the worker is away, the activities close down. Somebody may feel puffed-up at the thought, 'I was the prime mover in the centre, the centre worked as long as I was there and it has come to a standstill when I have left.' But this is the certificate of the inefficiency of the worker. He must prepare a band of workers so that in his absence the work shall not halt or close down, but continue with vigour as before. He must keep a stamp of his work on the place. The fish, in the parable of "Manu and the fish" used to occupy the whole space whenever it was

kept in a pot, in a vessel, in a ditch, in a tank, in a lake, in a river etc. So the entire atmosphere must be enveloped by the worker. His test will be that within the shortest possible time, he has been able to bring together the maximum number of workers to cooperate and share in the work. A congenial atmosphere is an essential factor in the accomplishment of any activity as otherwise many handicaps arise in the way. At least we should meticulously take care to see that the atmosphere is not spoiled. A congenial atmosphere is indispensable; it is a necessity, we can say, it is a must, but we cannot depend only on external atmosphere for inspiration. It happens many a time that public speakers get their inspiration for oration from the applause they get from the audience. If such appreciation is not shown by the audience, the speaker is overcome by depression. He loses courage and starts faltering in speech and even perspires. This happens even in the case of public speakers of repute. There are professional speakers who have some trump cards to present to the audience and receive thunderous clapping in return. But if the audience is disciplined and does not clap at all the commanding jokes and humour, such a speaker is discouraged. Even at the thrilling incidents, if there is no clap, he remarks that the audience has no culture. As a matter of fact, one should under no circumstances, depend on external situation for inspiration. For a mature worker the source of inspiration is not without; but it is within. It is no indication of maturity, if one depends on external things. We must be prepared even for unfavourable circumstances. The problem is, are we self-propelled or externally propelled? Do we move on our own or is somebody else essential to move us? We should not be spring-propelled toys. These move only up to the moment the spring moves them, then they stop. In the case of a battery-operated machine, it stops working when the battery is down. The battery is recharged and then again it starts. But in the case of a dynamo which is self-propelled, it does not require to be charged externally. The more the vehicle moves, the more the dynamo gets charged and works more efficiently. This is self-operated and not battery operated. If we are not self-propelled or self-operated, then as soon as the congenial atmosphere ceases to exist, the depression overpowers us. Enthusiasm will have to be created afresh. We will require recharging at regular intervals. We find bogies standing in the station yard. It is written on them

“Return on 8th April 1978”. Till this date the bogies can be used any way anywhere. They may be sent to any distance whatsoever. But on the scheduled date they will have to be returned to the depot for repairs, for renovation and used thereafter. So also the worker requires to be recharged after a regular interval on the scheduled date, then only he can work, otherwise his energy is lost, his enthusiasm disappears and he works no more. Like the bogies, he also requires maintenance. A mature worker is self-operated and needs no repairs and renovation.

On certain other bogies we find “Explosives-not to be loose shunted”. Certain others have “Glass with care”; thus like these bogies, the workers require to be shunted very cautiously and to be handled very carefully. The workers are to be coaxed in a courteous way and with soft emotions. Affectionate and kind people can handle them in a smooth way. Such workers take the inspiration from outside. But we have to introspect and give a clear thought to the situation. We have taken this difficult vow of service with a definite understanding and not on the inspiration from this man or that man. ‘My enthusiasm and inspiration do not and should not depend on external situation. My battery can never be discharged and it will never require recharging. It is self-propelled and it can never bring any depression,’ such should be the attitude. We know the glorious incident from Maratha history when Tanaji with his brother Suryaji captured the difficult fort Kondana. In a duel with Udayabhanu, the converted officer of the fort, Tanaji was injured and he collapsed on the ground. The soldiers got frightened and started running to get down by the ropes with which they had climbed. Suryaji immediately cut the ropes and asked the soldiers either to jump down from the fort into the valley and die or to fight and win the battle. The soldiers had no alternative but to fight. They fought and won the battle. Tanaji died and Shivaji named the Fort as “SIMHAGADA” to commemorate the incident that the Fort was won, but the lion was lost. Do we require any Suryaji to infuse inspiration and to create enthusiasm in us or are we going to be Suryaji ourselves? When panic arises and depression overpowers there is a need of a Suryaji. Do we require him or we become Suryaji? Knowing full well that I have to fulfil my vow, I stand firm on my own ground and fight, so that no external power can frighten me. I need no help from outside nor do I borrow strength from anybody. How can we plan for our

life only on borrowings from others? It is impossible. Borrowing inspiration from others is slavery. A youthful man marries a young lady. They live together but later on the lady gets sick of the man and leaves him. He is morose, gloomy and unenergetic. Why should somebody's life be dependent upon others? He has no inspiration and does not work. Our life should not depend upon external things. We have got our inspiration from the eternal source of energy. All other sources are transitory. When we live with this faith we have no death, we are immortal. Difficulties will always be there. We should not be perplexed. No depression in any case. Reach this stage; the sooner the better.

There are people in the society who are ready to be propelled. Let the engine be there to take us, say, the bogies. Engines move the bogies, they do not require to be moved. If a super engine is necessary to move the engine then they are not engines. We are out to change the society in a particular direction. We must lead the crowd. If we become one of the crowd, then who shall be the leader? We must be the leader and not one of the crowd. Our battery gets charged as we move on and on, and we charge other batteries. Here we are, what Swamiji addresses in Upanishadic words, "Sons of immortality" (अमृतत्वस्य पुत्राः)

XXXVII

DAILY ROUTINE—i

The daily life of a worker of the Kendra is an important factor. We have to readjust our habits of living. We are accustomed to a certain way of life but now we have to change the same. We must have the will to change, and insistence that we will be what we were before, will not be beneficial. We have received a certain training, we have cultivated some habits and there has been a pattern in our development. If they continue to be the same in the changed circumstances, then, they are of no use. There is a door-mat made of coir with the words, "Use me"; we also say, "Use me". But you cannot be used unless you are changed suitably according to the situation. People are proud about their habits and boast of vegetables, different dishes, tea in the morning, etc. They claim that habit has become their second nature and that it cannot be changed. This change is essential but it cannot be brought about by any force. There must be willingness from within to give up old habits and adopt new ones. Adaptability is the best way. Intellectual people often speak of keeping late hours at night and getting up late in the morning. But there must be a conscious effort to repattern our life. People are in the habit of rejecting outright certain vegetables, but they forget that in doing so they expose a side of their personality. As a matter of fact, our attitude should be one of adjustment. We must be ready to relish all preparations with gusto. We should have no likes and dislikes when we are out for work. We will eat whatever is needed, whatever the work demands, whatever is proper. Old habits must yield place to new ones. The greatest stumbling block is food. Even Sannyasis have a taste for a particular type of food; if it is served to them, they are in their mood. Otherwise all their Gita and Upanishads go to waste-paper baskets. There must be peaceful control over the palate. We dislike certain things instinctively but this is wrong. We must win over this instinct, and not only we

must suffer the unliked food gladly, but we must start to like and even relish it. Tobacco and alcohol are not very tasteful things, but people get addicted to them. We must relish simple food prepared in a simple manner, whatever our host can afford. Ours is a poor country. If somebody tells us that the food should have so much carbohydrates and proteins and fats and so many calories should be eaten etc., it is all vain. All carbohydrates and proteins are provided by the cheerfulness with which you take food. Simple food becomes rich and vitaminized if eaten in a cheerful mood. Rich food becomes not only poor but even harmful if taken in a sullen mood. Be cheerful, receive any food with pleasure and relish it and you are more than a *yogi*. A rigid food habit is a weakness. One who is not fastidious about food has won half the battle.

People get easily upset over food of a kind different from what they like. But they forget that 80% of the people who are depressed, downtrodden and poor, not only do not get this food, but they have not even seen the food that one fortunately gets. We are lucky that we get some food and do not belong to the above 80%. Do not have an aversion for any simple food.¹

A worker of the Kendra should get up early in the morning and by sunrise he must be up and doing, having performed his ablutions. If this habit is already formed, well and good ; otherwise it is never too late to form it. We have taken this व्रतम् (vow) of "Serving the country". When people cannot cope with this hard new life, they put forward some excuses and return home. How sacred of us and of our vow ! We have willingly accepted the व्रतम् and whatever is essential for the fulfilment of the same has to be executed. We have to change old habits and cultivate new habits to suit our work. A lamb cannot be a lion nor can a lion be a lamb. The kid of the lamb even though brought up with the cubs cannot jump at the elephants and pounce upon them.² A lion, however, tamed, cannot eat grass.³ A lion is a non-vegetarian while a lamb

¹ अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । . . . अन्नं न निन्द्यात् । . . . अन्नं बहु कुर्वीत ।
तैत्ति. उप. 3.2,7,9

² शूरोऽसि कृतविद्योऽसि दर्शनीयोऽसि पुत्रक ।

यस्मिन्कुले त्वमुत्पन्नः गजस्तत्र न हन्यते ॥ पञ्चतंत्रः

³ किं जीर्णं तृणमस्ति मानमहताम् अग्रेसरः केसरी ।

lives only on grass. The nature of the species cannot be changed. A horse cannot go under water and swim and a fish cannot trot on the ground. A mouse cannot fly like a bird. But man can walk on ground, swim in water and fly in sky. He can do anything that he can conceive of. He can be a god and also a demon. But the will to change must prevail. The miserable note of "What can I do if I am not happy"? is not acceptable at all. Whatever is essential must be done. There must be willingness, a determined will to do. There is a parable that out of this strong will power man has acquired the six senses. "I will change thoroughly if necessary. I am dedicated and my work requires it. I can make my heart as large as the sky and I can banish all weaknesses which come in the way. Whatever makes me weak will be specifically avoided." This unconquerable will must be there.

Morning, noon and night, nay every day must be spent in the pursuit of the ideal. Fashion your life accordingly. Be conscious about waste of time and energy. Utilize every moment of life and every ounce of energy for the allotted work. No efforts are too great to meet the demands of the work.

XXXVIII

DAILY ROUTINE—ii

The way a life-worker begins his day and terminates it is very important. As the man's life is packed in the two termini, the womb and the tomb, and his success or otherwise, depends upon the incidents in that life, so also a life-worker's day is entrapped between the beginning of the day and the terminus thereof and his efficiency is measured on the happenings of the day. We must have a fixed time-table for the daily routine. As the budget of a country or of an organization or of an individual indicates the gross income, stating therein the recurring, the occasional revenue and the gross expenditure, mentioning the items such as recurring and incidental expenditure, so also the time and the energy at the disposal, have to be thought of and utilized very carefully. We feel that in the financial budget, the income can be increased by additional taxes or extra income; but for an individual, the life-span is very limited and the energy also not unlimited. Time and energy cannot be increased though the items of their expenditure can be enormously multiplied. Taking for granted that a man lives for one hundred years, which is of course very rare, the effective life is still less. The childhood and the period of education have to be deducted. Even in the remaining period, a man can be said to be effectively living, only till his sense-organs are working effectively and efficiently for some useful work. Otherwise, that period is not taken into account. He may have an effective and useful life for fifty years at the most. So the income side is fixed. Can it be increased? Apparently not. But we have to give serious thought and we find that we can increase the revenue. The proverb "Money saved is money gained" is well-known to you. In the same tune, we can say "Time saved is time gained". The same holds good of energy also. The time which is wasted in gossip, in sleep, in looking vacantly at the sky can be saved.

This wastage can be definitely arrested. Sleep is a rejuvenating

factor. Even a machine has to be given rest. For the maintenance of this body-mind-complex, rest is essential. Rest is a must. The body, the mind and the intellect have immense potentialities. They can render tremendous work if they are properly used. We have no idea of the hidden capacities they possess. The intellect is to be used as a servant and it should not be allowed to be the master; because it can render positive arguments to support even your weaknesses. So, rest is necessary to keep the machine efficient. But, we have to decide how much sleep is necessary for this body. Only that much should be taken, so that we save the remaining time. This is time gained and therefore an increase on the revenue side of time. Have enough exercise and *asanas* to keep the body fit, so that it works efficiently and smoothly and does not get any ailment. In the absence of a fit body, we suffer from ailments and sufferings in which time is lost again. We arrest this wastage of time and save the time as well as the energy, which otherwise would have been lost. This is again a gain. No suffering and no wastage means an abundance of energy, vitality and enthusiasm. You are धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः. Doing a thing efficiently is yet another factor adding to our credit of time and energy. If any work, may be accounts, typing or any work for that matter, is done efficiently, our time and energy in doing the same thing over and again, are definitely saved and we get so much of time and energy for other useful work. *Yogasanas* is an energy-storing process. If somebody gets exhausted and drowsy after *Yogasanas*, it indicates that something is wrong somewhere. One must necessarily practise *pranayama* and meditation for the health of the mind. The intellect does not lose energy. By rightly using it, it gets sharpened and more efficient. For this, we must have *Swadhyaya*.¹ The brain is never overworked or taxed. It is a false notion. In *Swadhyaya*, one must read thought-provoking literature like the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and other sacred texts. Knowledge when given, never decreases, but on the contrary, it increases.² It is not lost when imparted, but is multiplied like the flame of the lamp which brings in more illumination by lighting other lamps without losing its own lustre.

¹ स्वाध्यायोऽध्येतव्यः । स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् । तैत्ति.उप.शिक्षा.

² व्यये कृते वर्धते एव नित्यम् । सुभा. [When spent it (knowledge) always increases.]

Get up very early in the morning. Through practice, even an alarm-clock will not be necessary. And after exercising the body, mind and intellect, have some Self-communion or *Ishwara-pranidhana*. This inner Self did exist before it came to this land of action (*Karmabhoomi*), and it shall continue to be there, even when this body is lost.

From where have I come, where shall I go, why am I here — such questions are to be meditated upon. This earth is a temporary residence and one day, we shall have to leave it. What is this "I"? If you spend half an hour in communion with the Self, then what you do for the remaining twenty-three and a half hours is *Sadhana*. Do not be under the wrong impression about *Sadhana*, as told by others. It is all right for them. For you, *Sadhana* means this only and nothing else. If you do this ईश्वरप्रणिधान early in the morning before you start your day's schedule, you are on the right track. You get the correct perspective and you move successfully. Ours is an organization, a missionary organization, a service missionary organization and this communion with the Self makes it a spiritually-oriented mission. This communion for half an hour gives an immense strength and power, perhaps equal to that of one thousand elephants, for the rest of your *Sadhana*. We get an unparalleled delight and it removes the monotony of life. It charges you and changes you beyond recognition, not the physical form, but your outlook on life.

When you move out, keep a note-book and, of course, the money purse. Every expenditure that you incur must be immediately noted to avoid confusion later on. Note any thought or word you remember. Never miss an appointment. Others may be late, but you must be in time. Never forget or delay in answering the letters that you receive. Delay results in denial and that is harmful to the social worker. Not to reply letters is turning the back to the public and this is ungentlemanly as well as ridiculous. We cease to have a personal life and every correspondence even to parents and friends must go into the office file. It should be recorded, as it is a necessary thing for a public worker.

XXXIX

GOD PROPOSES AND MAN DISPOSES

When we do not succeed in any of our activity, we are in the habit of exclaiming, "What am I to do?" 'Man proposes and God disposes'. When we desire to do, God does not co-operate. It is an injustice. All this reasoning is sound apparently, but in reality what we notice is that God proposes and Man Disposes. Take the example of our own country. There is no other country so beautiful and variegated as ours. It has all climates, all types of people, all varieties of land, all kinds of crops, vegetation, flora and fauna, fruits and what not. From the coldest snow-clad Himalayas to the hottest deserts, from the heaviest rainfall of 700 inches at Cherapunji to rainless regions of deserts, we have all variations. In foodgrains, rice, wheat, maize and other crops, all types of vegetables, multifarious types of tender fragrant flowers, manifold varieties of large and small sweet fruits, woods and jungles, rivers and lakes, mountains and plateaus and all other conceivable varieties are found in this great land of ours. It rains incessantly and so torrentially at Cherapunji that the amount of rainfall is a record for the whole world, an annual rainfall of over 700 inches, while in other places, one has to be the proverbial *chatak* bird constantly looking skyward for a single drop of rain-water. Meghalaya is really the house of clouds. There are clouds and clouds only in the region. The roads and the houses, the fields and the lakes, the high and the low areas are all covered and enveloped by clouds, throughout the year. Looking at this panorama, it appears that God has taken a special care in showering and bedecking this land with all possible fancies of His creation and has not shown miserliness in any respect whatsoever. It is more than the *Nandanavana* of the heavens. There is no dearth of metals and minerals. In fact, the land seems to be flooded with all types of prosperity, on all sides. This land of ours was affluent to the extent that the covetous eyes of all foreigners, the Greeks and

the Ionians, the Moghuls and the Tartars, the Portuguese and the Spanish, the French and the British were on it. All of them marched into the country to plunder it in any way to their hearts' content. But God had taken special care to protect this sacred and prosperous land from such people. He created high impassable mountains in the north and unplumbed oceans on the three sides. The Hindukush, Karakorum and the Himalayas stand as natural barriers to protect the land. It was a natural defence and full protection for the prosperity and the treasures of this land from the greedy and the covetous people. Thus, the people had the feeling of complete safety and had no fear of invasion from any side. The affluent people under such circumstances naturally would get lazy and attached to sensuous pleasures only, remaining ignorant of their true self and also of the Creator. To avoid this, God sent savants after savants, saints after saints, His incarnations and emissaries and not satisfied with all these, He Himself came into this sacred land to awaken men to their true nature, duties and responsibilities. They all delivered the message of duty, what man was ordained to do, what he was expected to perform for the welfare and the final salvation of the individual and of society. Through the Vedas, the most ancient and primal lore on this globe, and the Upanishads, through the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, through the Bhagavad Gita and the manifold compositions of a number of holy saints in all languages, He preached to the people, the true essence of life. He did not send His son or a messenger, but He Himself descended among the masses, not only once, but a number of times showing manifold paths to all human beings. He endowed these people with all sorts of bounty and left nothing short whatsoever at all. But alas! What is the performance of sixty crores of human beings breathing in this land? When we think seriously about this, we have to accept that God proposes and man disposes. It appears as though these people have taken a vow, or accepted a challenge to frustrate all the plans of God. God proposed that the people of this bountiful land should live the ideal life of a human society and give a lead to the rest of the world. But they became slaves. In spite of natural defences, there were invasions after invasions and always the great populace of this land surrendered before a handful of brute invaders and allowed them either to loot this land or occupy the territory and

rule over them. The foreigners ruled over this vast country for centuries together and we, the sons of the soil, have taken great care, century after century, to dispose of the high-soaring proposals of God. Instead of attacking boldly and courageously the invaders, we have continuously and constantly used our power and strength in raising a war against the designs of the Lord. Our performance is so poor and so shameful that we cannot read history. We have to shut the book and think of what we are. If we could not overpower the invaders, we should have, at least, fought with them, so that God could have taken care to do the rest. As He ordered Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita XI.33 निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् । "Be only a means, a tool." He does not use His power separately. He uses it through somebody. For that, let us be tools in the hands of Divinity. Let us be instruments, the strong, the alert and the dexterous willing instruments. He is kind, but He is kind to those who are kind to His progeny. Let us prove to be so. He has great designs to carry out through us. Let us implement them.

When anything happens and when we are unable to trace the reason for it, we just pass the remark, "Accidentally it happened so, without rhyme or reason". But, we conveniently forget that there is a cause for everything. No effect takes place without a cause. What we stamp as an accident is really an incident, because it has a cause. That we are not capable of locating the cause properly does not make it an accident. An incident is a cumulative effect of so many things. Some of them may be visible, some invisible, some may be traceable, others may not be traceable. There is nothing like fate. It is the result of actions, if not of this life, of the past life. But the past is past, what about the future? It is in your hands. You are the architect of your future. It is no accident that you are born here in this status. It is the inexorable law of Karma, of action. "Reap as you sow" is the unchallengeable axiom. The present is the effect of the past and thus it is not in our hands as the past is past and cannot be altered. But the future will be the effect of the present and hence it is under our control to be moulded in the way we want to. What people term as good luck or fortune or providence or fate, does not exist apart from our present actions, as the future evolves from the present. Fortune has no independent relevance. It is just an idea in the mind. The main query should be, "Is it the proposition of

God?" Do not call it accident; it is desired, ordained by God. It is the divine design and we are required to implement the same. "If it is not my desire and design, it is somebody else's desire and design and that is why I am here and not accidentally". This outlook is ennobling and pleasing.

We once went to see the Bhakhra Dam. It is one of the biggest dams and we stayed there for three days. Thanks to the courtesy of the engineer, we got the chance of inspecting the different aspects of the construction work. This dam is built on a river which does not have a perennial stream of water. It is a seasonal river. But the bed of the river is so full of pebbles that the stream can better be called as a river of pebbles. But the ingenious engineer used the pebbles for better work. The huge storage of pebbles was used for the foundation of the dam. Conveyor belts were created and the pebbles were carried from the bed of the river to the place of the foundation. This was a contrivance to save time, money and energy. The pebbles are the best constituent of the concrete for the foundations. The pebbles were utilized for the more useful work of humanity and thus their life which was apparently purposeless for ages, was blessed because of their worthy use. But as the pebbles were moving on the belts, some three or four of them fell down, again to lie idle for millions of ages instead of being used for the great noble work of the dam which was to irrigate thousands of acres of cultivable land to produce the nourishment and food for mankind. Let us not be like those unfortunate pebbles. Everything is meaningful, and nothing is meaningless. The Creator has composed this great eternal book of the universe; read every page, every word, every letter of it and understand the thought underlying it. God has definitely proposed, designed something noble. We do not pay attention to it and spoil it through our ignorance. Temptations intervene and try to allure us. They also are designed to test us, to give us an opportunity to be aware of our strength and to overcome them. We must not merely surrender to everything like the deaf and the dumb, but must have an enlightened approach towards everything around us. Look around critically and you will find that every minute and insignificant thing in nature, has a message to deliver to you and that too, for your benefit and progress. One has simply to have a receptive ear and an attentive mind, to listen and to grasp the messages in the proper light and get liberated. Try to understand the meaning of

everything around us. Why all the things are there? What is the meaning and purpose of them? Why have I been born? Why have I been brought to Kanyakumari? I did not ever dream of this when I was undergoing my education. Why and by whom have I been inspired to come here? Now that it is designed that I should be here, I have to shape my future in a worthy manner. I must have the right approach to everything. Many a time have I seen people miss their bus. Let it not happen to me. I am here in this ancient sacred land, and not in America or Germany. Why? We have to look at the world around us in the right manner. Otherwise life becomes drab and boring because of the dull routine, day in and day out. It is an unrelieved monotony for many a people who lack this approach as they are not equipped with the acumen of looking through the external nature and grasping its meaning. Interpretation of the world around us and the happenings therein convey to us the eternal message which when followed in the right spirit leads to the good finale of each individual life. This is the only way to abide by the proposals of God and not to make light of them.

XL

THE ONLY SURE HELP

Today we are coming to the close of our training course and we have to take an objective survey, a bird's eye-view, of the whole training period. We had lectures and discussions. We learnt about the higher values of life from them and also understood some highly philosophical matters. We have to understand the cumulative effect of all this, leaving aside the individual reactions and various details. The very first thing which arises before us is that the Vivekananda Kendra has planned a noble scheme which is lofty and fascinating in its objectives. Secondly, we feel that schemes are good for presentation and discussion, but they are most difficult to implement. As a matter of fact, that is not a solitary individual opinion, but the uniform impression of all. The third impression is that, the expectations raised during the course of the training are so frightfully high that one feels almost depressed. I am quite aware of these three impressions. Your assessment of the project is the right one, but I have to express an eternal truth here. Every great and noble achievement in the world was just a vision in its primary stage. It was a random will, a wanton dream, and an impossible ideal. There was nothing concrete about it. Landing on the moon was originally a vision only, perhaps the wishful thinking of a few fanatic ideologist physicists, but surprisingly for us, it has materialized in this very life. It has not remained a mere ideal. So also is the story of the Rock Memorial. It was only an idea originally, now it is a concrete reality. Thoughts, ideas and broodings over, remain as such if no strenuous efforts are put in to give them a shape and make them as concrete facts. The gorgeous bronze statue of Swamiji repeats the same tale. We wanted a Swamiji who had observed the whole country himself, had entered into meditation, had finished his brooding and had with a steadfast determination marched on for the fulfilment of his

mission. For this we made a frantic search to find out a master painter who could embody our ideas in colours on canvas. We even requested the artist to read the life and literature of Swamiji in order to have a mental image and a correct insight into the life of Swamiji. For we wanted a personality who would make a real Prince amongst the Sannyasis, and not one with a feminine, tender form. The mind of the painter must be full-charged with Swamiji's sentiments and thoughts so that he could imagine Swamiji giving in stentorian voice the rejuvenating message of "उत्तिष्ठत । जाग्रत । प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।" (कठोप.) to the whole nation. When the painter successfully accomplished his duty, he was specifically requested to sit by the side of the sculptor and transmit his ideas about the details of the statue as he had by that time not only acquired a deep knowledge of Swamiji's life but had almost become one with it. Thus, the mere idea in the brain materialized in the form of a lifelike bronze statue.

The capacity for the fulfilment of an idea, however difficult, will be there if it has been once grasped correctly and stands before your mind's eye. A *genius* is a person with ideas in his mind and an immensely strong will in his heart. A genius is said to be ten per cent inspiration and ninety per cent perspiration. This perspiration is for the manifestation of the inspiration within. One has to put in all his physical, mental and intellectual energies together and work hard. The question that will confront each of you is, "Am I capable of the industry, of the perspiration that is demanded of me?" With all your flaming devotion and determination, you have to realize that the external factors on which you have to depend for the successful execution of your objectives are beyond your control. First, never think of the factors beyond your control, do not worry about them. It is true that those circumstances or factors, which we often believe to be under our control, prove to be otherwise, when we actually get into work. But with all this, there is one thing to which you can always turn for unflinching guidance and support. The dishonest, lazy, careless, disobedient people may promise and may give thousand talks but they prove to be non-coöperative, but you can safely rely at all times on your own self for the fulfilment of your mission. All other help may fail, but there is a power within you which will

never let you down. It is your own Self. Depend on it and march ahead with unceasing prayer to God to give you strength to fulfil His will.