ALL-INDIA SHIA CONFERENCE

I am glad to be here today and inaugurate the thirty-ninth session of the All-India Shia Conference. We are meeting on Christmas Day, known throughout the world for its spirit of goodwill and fellowship. It is that spirit which is India’s supreme need today. We are living at a time when we should subordinate all considerations to the great cause of building up India. The people inhabiting this vast land may differ in a number of ways, but they are bound together by an essential unity. The history of India, even as that of the city of Delhi where this Conference is being held, is ample proof that whatever worth-while the present generation has inherited from the past is not exclusive but composite. Contributions to it have been made at different points of history by people belonging to different religions and races. Many Shia religious teachers and men of letters brought the refinement and culture of West Asia to the heritage of India; and it is this universal nature of our heritage that we must seek to keep alive.

Ours is a Secular State. This does not mean that we believe only in material values and have scant regard for the spiritual. Happiness should not be confused with material comfort or sense of satisfaction. It is really intellectual refinement and spiritual joy. The ideal of secularism means that we abandon the inhumanity of fanaticism and give up the futile hatred of others. In a Secular State there will be the spirit of true religion, and the environment necessary for the development of a gentle and considerate way of life. The saints of the world, belonging to all religions, including Shia saints, were leaders of redemptive work, of voluntary sacrifice and of steadfastness against tremendous odds.

The existence of various religions, communities and languages in India should not come in the way of its solidarity. The problems facing the Shia community—social, economic, spiritual—are by no means peculiar to them. Everybody in this country, irrespective of his caste or creed, stands in some need of spiritual or material rehabilitation. Let the Shias therefore not look upon themselves as being in competition with others for this or that facility. While it is your aim to work for the social betterment and the cultural advance of the members of the Shia community, you
must guard against the danger, which all community consciousness has, of militating against national solidarity. Whether we are Shia or Sunni, Hindu or Moslem, we all face the same problems and I hope you will work as devoted citizens of this country, which is now engaged in the noble enterprise of building a great and prosperous nation. We are all partners in the task of national reconstruction. We here could look with profit to the example of Yugoslavia, whose President, Marshal Tito, was in Delhi recently. With a population of less than twenty million, Yugoslavia has two scripts, three religions, four languages, five nationalities and six republics—and yet it is one nation. It is to achieve national solidarity in the truest sense of the term that all efforts in this country should be canalized.

If religions are to continue to have their original appeal, they must adapt themselves to the needs of the times. For religion as for many other things there is no such thing as standing still. Stagnation is bound to overtake a religion unless it is alive to the changes taking place around it. In the Middle Ages, the days of its vigour, Islam produced great thinkers and humanitarians who profoundly affected contemporary human thought. But if a religion aspires to immortality it has to be constantly young, which is only another way of saying that it must be alive to the demands of the times. I have said it at Al-Azar in Egypt and elsewhere and I say it here, that Moslems would do well to examine the need of making some changes in customs and manners while adhering to the two fundamental precepts of Islam—faith in God and the welfare of humanity.

MAHAVIRA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS
NEW DELHI

The period between 800 to 200 B.C. has been characterized as an axial period of history. In her words, the axis of world’s thought shifted from a study of nature to a study of the life of man. In China, Lao Tse and Confucius; in India, the seers of the Upaniṣads, Mahāvīra and Gautama the Buddha; in Iran, Zoroaster; in Judea, the great prophets; and in Greece, the

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philosophers Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato; all of them turned their attention from outward nature to the study of the human self.

Today, we are celebrating the jayanti of one of those great figures of humanity, Mahāvīra. He is called the Jina, the conqueror. He did not conquer kingdoms; but he conquered his own self. He is called Mahāvīra, the great hero, not of the battles of the world but of the battles of the inward life. By a steady process of austerity, discipline, self-purification and understanding he raised himself to the position of a man who had attained divine status. We are therefore celebrating his jayanti because his example is an incentive to others to pursue the same ideal of self-conquest.

This country has from the beginning of its history down till today stood for this great ideal. When you look at the symbols, the statues, and other relics which have come down to us from the time of Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa down to our own day, we are reminded of the tradition that he who establishes the supremacy of spirit and its superiority to matter is the ideal man. This ideal has haunted the religious landscape of our country for four or five millennia.

The great statement by which the Upaniṣads are known to the world is tat tvam asi—that art thou. The potential divinity of the human soul is asserted thereby. We are called upon to understand that the soul is not to be confused with the body which can be broken, or the mind which can be moulded, but it is something which is superior to the relics of the body or the fluctuations of the mind—something which each individual has, which is unseizable so to say, which cannot be merely objectified. The human being is not something thrown off, as it were, in a cosmic whirl. As a spirit he is lifted above the natural and the social world. Unless we are able to realize the inwardness of the human self, the principle of subjectivity, we lose ourselves. Most of us are always lost in the pursuits of the world. We lose ourselves in the things of the world—health, wealth, possessions, houses, property—we let them possess us, we do not possess them. Such people are those who kill their own selves. They are called ātma-hano janāḥ, so it is that in our country we have been asked to possess the soul.

Of all sciences the science of the self is the greatest. adhyātma-
vidyā vidyānām. The Upaniṣad tells us: ātmānam viddhi, know thyself. Śaṅkara lays down as an essential condition of spiritual
life, ātma-anātma-vastu viveka: the knowledge of the distinction between the soul and the non-soul. There is nothing higher in this world than the possession of one's soul. So it has been said to us by different writers that the true man is he who uses all the possessions of the world for the purpose of realizing the innate dignity of the soul. The Upaniṣad in a series of passages tells us that husband or wife or property—these are opportunities for the realization of one's own self: ātmanastu kāmāya. He who achieves through discipline, through a blameless life his highest status is a paramātman. He who achieves complete freedom is an arhat, free from all chances of rebirth or subjection to time.

In Mahāvīra we have an example of a man who renounced the things of the world, who was not entangled in the bonds of matter but who was able to realize the inward dignity of his own self. How can we pursue this ideal? What are the ways by which we can attain this self-realization, this self-possession? Our scriptures tell us, if we wish to know the self, śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana are to be practised. The Bhagavadgītā says: tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā. The same three great principles were asserted by Mahāvīra when he mentioned darśana, jñāna, caritra. We must have viśvāsa, faith, śrāddhā, that there is something superior to the things of this world. Mere faith, blind unthinking faith, will not do. We must have knowledge, manana. By reflection we convert the product of faith into a product of enlightenment. But mere theoretical knowledge is not enough. vākyārtha jñānamātreṇa na amṛtam—we cannot get life eternal by mere textual learning. We must embody these great principles in our own life. caritra, conduct is equally essential. We start with darśana, praṇipāta, or śravaṇa. We come to jñāna, manana, or paripraśna; then we come to nididhyāsana, sevā, or caritra. As the Jain thinkers put it, these are essential.

What are the principles of caritra, or good conduct, sadācarana? The Jain teachers ask us to undertake different vows. Every Jain has to take five vows: not to kill anything, not to lie, not to take what is not given, to preserve chastity and to renounce pleasure in external things. But the most important of them all is the vow of ahimsā, the vow of non-violence, of non-injury to living beings. Some even renounce agriculture for it tears up the soil and crushes insects. In this world it is not possible for us to abstain from
violence altogether. As the Mahābhārata has it, jīvo jīvasya jīvanam—'Life is the food of life.'

What we are called upon to do is to increase the scope, so to say, of non-violence—yatnāt alpatarā bhavet. By our self-effort we must reduce the scope of force and increase the scope of persuasion. So ahimsā is the ideal which we have set before ourselves.

If we adopt that ideal we will get another consequence of it which is framed in the Jain doctrine of anekāntavāda. The Jains tell us that the absolute truth or kevala-jñāna is our ideal. But so far as we are concerned we know only part of the truth. vastu is anekadharmaṭmakam; it has got many sides to it; it is complex; it has many qualities. People begin to realize this side of it or that side of it, but their views are partial, tentative, hypothetical. The complete truth is not to be found in these views. It is only realizable by the souls who have overcome their own passions. This fosters the spirit which makes us believe that what we think right may not after all be right. It makes us aware of the uncertainties of human hypotheses. It makes us believe that our deepest convictions may be changeable and passing. The Jains use the fable of the six blind men dealing with the elephant. One takes hold of the ears and says it is a winnowing fan. Another embraces it and says it is a pillar. But each of them gives us only one partial aspect of the ultimate truth. The aspects are not to be regarded as opposed to each other. They are not related to each other as light is related to darkness; they are related to each other as the different colours of the spectrum are related to one another. They are not to be regarded as contradictories, they are to be taken merely as contraries. They are alternative readings of reality.

The world today is, in the throes of a new birth. While we aim at one world, division rather than unity characterizes our age. In a two-world pattern there is a temptation for many of us to think that this is right and that is wrong and we must therefore repudiate the other. Well, these are to be regarded as alternatives, so to say, as varying aspects of one fundamental reality. Over-emphasis on any one aspect of reality is analogous to the attitude of the blind men in the fable each of whom described the shape of the elephant according to the part of the animal he touched.

Individual freedom and social justice are both essential for human welfare. We may exaggerate the one or underestimate the other. But he who follows the Jain concept of anekāntavāda,
saptabhaṅgīnaya, or syādvāda, will not adopt that kind of cultural regimentation. He will have the spirit to discriminate between the right and the wrong in his own and in the opposite views, and try to work for a greater synthesis. That should be the attitude which we should adopt. So the necessity for self-control, the practice of ahiṃsā and also tolerance and appreciation of others' point of view—these are some of the lessons which we can acquire from the great life of Mahāvīra. We would have paid a small part of the debt which we owe him if we remember these things and go away from here with these principles implanted in our hearts.

UNION FOR THE STUDY OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS
(INDIA BRANCH)

The world has been shrinking at an increasing pace, with the advance of communications and technology. We have now the physical basis for a unified world community. We do not any more live in separate worlds. Asia and Africa cannot raise the living standards of their peoples without technical aid from Europe and America. These latter cannot subsist without the commodities and raw materials of other parts of the world. Besides, science and technology have put great powers in the hands of men, which rightly used can give strength, freedom and better life to millions of human beings, or abused will bring chaos and destruction. Professor Adrian, President of the Royal Society of England, in his inaugural address on 'Science and Human Nature' at the 116th annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, said that the control achieved over the forces of nature was so complete 'that we might soon become able to destroy two-thirds of the world by pressing a button.' The destructive power now in the hands of men has reached such terrifying proportions that we cannot afford to take any risks. World solidarity, lokasamgraha, is no more a pious dream. It is an urgent practical necessity. The unity of the world is being shaped through the logic of events, material, economic and political. If it is to endure, it must find

Inaugural Address, 29 May, 1955
psychological unity, spiritual coherence. The world, unified as a body, is groping for its soul. If mankind is to save itself, it must change the axis of its thought and life. There is throughout the world an increasing spread of materialism, mechanical or Marxist. A few of us who happened to be in Oxford some years ago felt that the contemporary religious situation was like a house divided against itself and so long as sectarian jealousies and religious rivalries continued, it would be difficult to ward off the growing evil of materialism. Convinced of the need for religion and the equal need for co-operation among religions, this Union for the study of the Great Religions of the World was started. It has no partisan or propagandist objectives. It calls for a sympathetic study and understanding of the great faiths which count millions of adherents and which possess, in spite of obvious defects, elements of strength and vitality. There are several centres of this Union in different parts of the world and I am happy to be here today and inaugurate the Indian centre.

The need for religion, for a system of thought, for devotion to a cause which will give our fragile and fugitive existence significance and value does not require much elaborate argument. It is an intrinsic element of human nature. The question is, what kind of religion? Is it a religion of love and brotherhood or of power and hate? Secular ideologies ask us to worship wealth and comfort, class or nation. The question is therefore not, religion or no religion, but what kind of religion.

So long as any religious system is capable of responding creatively to every fresh challenge, whether it comes by the way of outer events or of ideas, it is healthy and progressive. When it fails to do so it is on the decline. The break-down of a society is generally due to a failure to devise adequate responses to new challenges, to a failure to retain the voluntary allegiance of the common people who, exposed to new winds of thought and criticism, are destitute of faith, though afraid of scepticism. Unless religions reckon with the forces at work and deal with them creatively, they are likely to fade away.

We live in an age of science and we cannot be called upon to accept incredible dogmas or exclusive revelations. It is again an age of humanism. Religions which are insensitive to human ills and social crimes do not appeal to the modern man. Religions which make for division, discord and disintegration and do not
foster unity, understanding and coherence, play into the hands of the opponents of religion.

The general impression that the spirit of science is opposed to that of religion is unfortunate and untrue. One of the main arguments for the religious thesis is the objective consideration of the cosmos. What is called natural theology is based on the study of the empirically observable facts and not from authoritative sources such as revelations or traditions. Those who attempt to construct by reasoned argument a theory of ultimate being from a survey of the facts of nature are adopting the scientific method. The Brahma Sūtra which opens with the sūtra, athāto brahmajijñāsā, now therefore the desire to know Brahman, is followed by the other, janmādyasya yataḥ. Brahman is that from which the origin of this world (along with subsistence and dissolution) proceeds. The sūtra refers to the account in the third chapter of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad. There has been a steady ascent from the inorganic to the organic, from the organic to the sentient, from the sentient to the rational life. The rational has to grow into the spiritual which is as far above the purely rational as the rational is above the purely sentient. A spiritual fellowship is the meaning of history. The purpose of the cosmic process is the city of God in and out of time. Earth is the seed ground of the new life of spirit. Earth and heaven are intermingled.¹

The spirit of science does not suggest that the ultimate beginning is matter. We may split the atom. The mind of man which splits it is superior to the atom. The achievements of science stand as witnesses to the spirit in man. The nature of the cosmic evolution with its order and progress, suggests the reality of underlying spirit. I need not refer to the metaphysicians trained in science like Lloyd Morgan, Alexander, Whitehead, and others. Albert Einstein in his book, The World As I see It, observes that the scientist’s ‘religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such

¹ The vision of a renewed creation finds poignant expression in the Apocalypse of St. John: ‘Behold the tabernacle of God with men; and He will dwell with them and they shall be his people; and God Himself with them shall be their God.

‘And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and death shall be no more. Nor shall mourning nor crying nor sorrow be any more, for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne said: “Behold, I make all things new.” ’
superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of his life and work, in so far as he succeeds in keeping himself from the shackles of selfish desire. It is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious geniuses of all ages.' Scientists are men dedicated, set apart. They have renounced the life of action. Their life as the pursuit of truth is service of God, who is Truth: satya svarūpa, satyanārāyaṇa. Erasmus delivered the great dictum: 'Wherever you encounter truth, look upon it as Christianity.'

The spirit of science leads to the refinement of religion. Religion is not magic or witchcraft, quackery or superstition. It is not to be confused with outdated dogmas, incredible superstitions, which are hindrances and barriers, which spoil the simplicity of spiritual life. Intellectual authority should be treated with respect and not merely inherited authority. Besides, science requires us to adopt an empirical attitude. Experience is not limited to the data of perception or introspection. It embraces para-normal phenomena and spiritual states. All religions are rooted in experience.

Among the relics of the Indus civilization are found figures which are the prototype of Śiva, suggesting that he who explores his inward nature and integrates it is the ideal man. This image has haunted the spiritual landscape of this country from those early times till today. The Upaniṣads require us to acquire brahma-vidyā or ātm-vidyā. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad says that man is turned outward by his senses and so loses contact with himself. He has lost his way. His soul has become immersed in outer things, in power and possessions. It must turn round, āvṛtt-caksuḥ, to find its right direction and discover the meaning and reality it has lost. The Jina is one who conquers his self. He is the mahāvīra, one who has battled with his inward nature and triumphed over it. The Buddha asks us to seek enlightenment, bodhi. These different religions ask us to change our unregenerate nature, to replace avidyā, ignorance by vidyā or wisdom.

Of course, they do not mean by vidyā textual learning. The

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1 Some aspects of Greek religion emphasize self-knowledge. Heraclitus said: 'I sought myself.' The injunction to know the self was written over the porch at Delphi. Socrates started his quest by becoming aware that he does not know himself and indeed, that he does not know anything. When we know that we do not know, we begin to know ourselves.
man who knows all about the texts is *mantravit*, not *ätmvit*. *nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā, na bahunā śrutena.*

'This self cannot be attained by instruction nor by intellectual power nor through much hearing.' Religion is not mere intellectual conformity or ceremonial piety; it is spiritual adventure. It is not theology but practice. To assume that we have discovered final truth is the fatal error. The human mind is sadly crippled in its religious thinking by the belief that truth has been found, embodied, standardized and nothing remains for us to do except to reproduce feebly some precious features of an immutable perfection. Religion is fulfilment of man's life, an experience in which every aspect of his being is raised to its highest extent. What is needed is a change of consciousness, a rebornness, an inner evolution, a change in understanding.

The distinction between time and eternity is qualitative. No quantity of time can produce eternity—*nāsty akṛtah kṛtenā*. Our thought must be lifted to another order of reality above time.

The change from reason to spirit is a qualitative one.

There is no such thing as an automatic evolution of man, something that happens according to the laws of heredity and natural selection. Man's evolution is bound up with his conscious effort. As he is, man is an unfinished being. He has to grow into a regenerate being and permit the currents of universal life to flow through him. Those who have evolved, who have realized their latent possibilities, who are reborn, serve as examples and guides to others.

This is the teaching of Christianity. Jesus asks us to bring about this rebirth, the second birth, to become a new man. The change takes place by inner contemplation, not outer life. When Jesus rebukes the Pharisees, he is condemning the man of pretences who keeps up appearances, who conforms to the letter of the law.

'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'

We must act not from the idea of reward but for the sake of what is good in itself. To attain heaven which is the higher level of understanding, of being, one has to undergo

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1 *Katha Upaniṣad*, I, 2.33
2 Cf. Spinoza: 'Eternity cannot be defined by time or have any relation to it.'
3 *Matthew*, V, 20
inner growth, growth in wisdom and stature through prayer and fasting, through meditation and self-control. Jesus says of John the Baptist that he is 'the best of those born of women but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he.'¹ John speaks to us of salvation through moral life. He tells us what to do, not what to be. Jesus insists on inner transformation. John symbolizes the man of external piety, Jesus, the man of inner understanding.² John asks us to become better, Jesus asks us to become different, new. John the Baptist was puzzled when he heard that Jesus and his disciples ate and drank and did not fast. They plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day. Jesus healed on the Sabbath day. John is still a man born of woman; he has not experienced rebirth. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'³ The writer to the Ephesians says: 'Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead.'⁴ We are like dead people; we should wake up. Christian teaching in its origin, before it became externalized and organized, was about awakening from sleep through the light shed by the inner wisdom. Jesus was one who had awakened and taught others the way of awakening. In this way, says the writer to the Ephesians, 'you will redeem the time.'⁵

The Kingdom of Heaven is the highest state attainable by man. It is within us.⁶ 'He hath set eternity in the heart of man.'⁷ Man stands between the visible and the invisible worlds. Our ordinary level of consciousness is not the highest form or the sole mode of experience possible to man. To get at the inner experience we must abstract from the outer. We must get away from the tumult of sense impressions, the riot of thoughts, the surgings

¹ Matthew, III, 2: Luke, III, 10-14
² Luke, XVII, 20
³ John, III, 3
⁴ IV. 14
⁵ V, 16. William Law following Böehme writes: 'Do but suppose a man to know himself, that he comes into this world on no other errand but to arise out of the vanity of time. Do but suppose him to govern his inward thought and outward action by this view of himself and then to him every day has lost all its evil; prosperity and adversity have no difference, because he receives them and uses them in the same spirit.' The Works of William Law (1749), reprinted in 1893, Vol. VII, p. 1
⁶ John, III, 3
⁷ Ecclesiastes, III, II
of emotions, the throbs of desires. Böehme says that we come into the reality of our being and perceive everything in a new relation, ‘if we can stand still from self-thinking and self-willing and stop the wheel of imagination and the senses’. Karl Barth observes: ‘Men suffer, because bearing within them an invisible, they find this unobservable inner world met by the tangible, foreign, other outer world, desperately visible, dislocated, its fragments jostling one another, yet mightily powerful and strangely menacing and hostile.’

The great scriptures are the records of the sayings of the prophets, āpta-vacana. We do not prove the truth of an idea by demonstrating that its author lived or that he was a respectable man. The evidence of truth lies in man’s experience of it when it enters into him. The Buddha asks us to accept his words after examining them and not merely out of regard for him.

All religions require us to look upon life as an opportunity for self-realization—ātmanastu kāmāya. They call upon us to strive incessantly and wrest the immortal from the mortal. God is the universal reality, wisdom and love and we are His children irrespective of race or religious belief. Within each incarnate soul dwells the god-consciousness which we must seek out and awaken. When mankind awakes to the truth, universal brotherhood will follow, the at-one-ment with the great fountain-head of all creation. One whose life is rooted in the experience of the Supreme spontaneously develops love for all creation. He will be free from hatred for any man. He will not look upon human beings as though they were irresponsible things, means to other peoples’ interests. He will boldly work for a society in which man can be free and fearless, a subject, not an object. He will oppose terror and cruelty and stand by the outcast and the refugee. He will give voice to those who have no voice. What gives Marxism its immense vitality is the vision of injustice made good, of the poor raised to power and the proud brought low.

Religion in this sense will be the binding force which will deepen the solidarity of human society. The encounter of the different religions has brought up the question whether they could live side by side or whether one of them would supersede the others. Mankind at each period of its history cherishes the illusion of the

1 Commentary on Romans, p. 306
2 parikṣya bhikṣavo grāhyam madvaco na tu gauravāt.
finality of its existing modes of knowledge. This illusion breeds intolerance and fanaticism. The world has bled and suffered from the disease of dogmatism, of conformity. Those who are conscious of a mission to bring the rest of humanity to their own way of life have been aggressive towards other ways of life. This ambition to make disciples of all nations is not the invention of the Communists. If we look upon our dogmatic formulations as approximations to the truth and not truth itself, then we must be prepared to modify them if we find other propositions which enter deeper into reality. On such a view it will be illogical for us to hold that any system of theology is an official, orthodox, obligatory and final presentation of truth. Reality is larger than any system of theology, however large.

All great religions preach respect for other ways of life, whatever their practices may be. It is well known that in the East religious feuds have been relatively unknown. Early Christianity was not authoritarian. It was humanistic and tolerant so long as it was the religion of the poor and humble peasants, artisans and slaves, but when it became the religion of the Roman Empire authoritarianism became more prominent. The tension between the two never ceased. It is illustrated by the conflict between Augustine and Pelagius, between the Catholic civilization and the many heretical groups and between the various sects within Protestantism. So long as this attitude persists, intolerance is inevitable. Faith without wisdom, without tolerance and respect for others’ ways of life is a dangerous thing. The Crusaders who marched their armies eastward could not conceive it to be possible that the God of Islam might be the same God on whom they themselves relied. The historian of the Crusades, Mr Steven Runciman, concludes his account with very significant words which have a bearing on the contemporary world situation.

In the long sequence of interaction and fusion between Orient and Occident out of which our civilization has grown, the Crusades were a tragic and destructive episode. The historian, as he gazes back across the centuries, must find his admiration overcast by sorrow at the witness that it bears to the limitations of human nature. There was so much courage and so little honour, so much devotion and so little understanding. High ideals were

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1 Cf. Charles E. Raven: 'It is precisely this claim to an absolute finality whether in the Church or the Scriptures or in Jesus Christ or in anything else, this claim that revelation belongs to a totally different order of reality from discovery or that a creed is something more than a working hypothesis, that perplexes and affronts those of us who have a proper sense of our own limitations.'
besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness; and the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost.¹

The Qurān asks us 'not to revile those whom others worship besides Allāh lest they, out of spite, revile Allāh in their ignorance.'² The Qurān says: 'We believe in God and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus and that given to other Apostles from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them, for we bow to Allāh.'³ Muhammad thought of himself as one who purified the ancient faith and rid it of the extravagances that had crept into it. The Qurān says: 'The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah, which we have sent by inspiration to thee. And that which we enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus, namely that you should remain steadfast in religion and make no divisions therein.'⁴

A religion which brings together the divine revelation in nature and history with the inner revelation in the life of the spirit can serve as the basis of the world order, as the religion of the future. Whatever point of view we start from, Hindu or Muslim, Buddhist or Christian, if we are sincere in our intention and earnest in our effort, we get to the Supreme. We are members of the one Invisible Church of God or one Fellowship of the Spirit, though we may belong to this or that visible Church.

In all countries and in all religions, there are creative minorities who are working for a religion of spirit. We feel the first tremors of the rebirth of the world. There are several organizations working in the world today—World Congress of Faiths (1936), World Alliance for Friendship through Religion and Church Peace Union (1914), World Brotherhood (1950), World Spiritual Council (1946), Society for the Study of Religions (1924).

Inter-religious understanding which is the aim of this Organization, is native to this country. Aśoka in his twelfth edict proclaimed:

He who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging the sects of others, wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the glory of his own sect, in reality, by such conduct, inflicts the severest injury on

² VI, 108
³ II, 136
⁴ XLII, 13
his own sect. Concord, therefore, is meritorious, to wit, hearkening and hearkening willingly to the law of piety as accepted by other people.

Gandhi said: 'I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the Scriptures of the world. A friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty.' We must have the richness of the various traditions. We are the heirs of the heritage of the whole of humanity and not merely of our nation or religion. This view is being increasingly stressed in western religious circles. Archbishop William Temple puts it in a different way:

All that is noble in the non-Christian systems of thought or conduct or worship is the work of Christ upon them and within them. By the Word of God—that is to say, by Jesus Christ—Isaiah and Plato and Zoroaster and [the] Buddha and Confucius conceived and uttered such truth as they declared. There is only one divine light, and every man in his measure is enlightened by it. Yet, each has only a few rays of that light, which needs all the wisdom of all the human traditions to manifest the entire compass of its spectrum.¹

Dr Albert Schweitzer observes: 'Western and Indian philosophers must not contend, in the spirit that aims at the one proving itself right in opposition to the other. Both must be moving towards a way of thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind.'² Professor Arnold Toynbee writes that he would 'express his personal belief that the four higher religions that were alive in the age in which he was living were four variations on a single theme and that, if all the four components of this heavenly music of the spheres could be audible on each simultaneously, and with equal clarity to one pair of human ears, the happy hearer would find himself listening, not to a discord, but to a harmony.'³

In an article in The Observer, October 24, 1954, he writes that 'this Catholic-minded Indian religious spirit is the way of salvation for human beings of all religions in an age in which we have to learn to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves.' This Union does not wish any religion to compromise or capitulate. It wishes to treat all religions as friendly partners in the supreme task of nourishing the spiritual life of mankind. When they begin to fertilize one another, they will supply the soul for which this world is seeking.

¹ Readings in Saint John's Gospel, First Series (1939)
² George Seaver: Albert Schweitzer (1947), p. 276
SHRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI CELEBRATIONS CALCUTTA

It is always a pleasure for me to come to Calcutta and I am specially happy to be here on this sacred occasion. Yesterday I had the pleasure of opening the Durgapur barrage which will help to increase the food production of West Bengal. Many of our schemes of the Second Five Year Plan are calculated to effect our economic prosperity. But we must improve not only the circumstances of man but man himself. If we look at what man has done to man, we will find that the task of his regeneration is a vital necessity.

We are impressed by the great achievements of the modern world, the achievements of Welfare States—Justice, equality before law, universal education, telephones and radio, trains that run in time, etc. etc., but we cannot forget that these great advances in scientific progress have not prevented our descending into depths of horror—submarine warfare, napalm and atom bombs, obliteration air attacks, liquidation of millions in camps of death. All this shows that we seem to be concerned more about the mastery of the environment than the mastery of our desires. We seem to be aiming at power and more power, mechanical, nuclear. In spite of many centuries of progress and enlightenment, we find great nations, leaders of civilization practise cruelty, persecution and superstition. But this does not mean that human nature cannot be changed. The power of Governments over men’s beliefs has increased of late. We can inspire men with an ardent desire to kill one another or we can help to make them sane and reasonable people. Governments can turn large masses of men this way or that as they choose. We can generate collective enthusiasm for good or bad.

This country from its early beginnings has looked upon the human being as a spark of spirit, an apiśa or fragment of God. To realize the divine destiny in him is his task. It has therefore worshipped the monk meditating in the cave and preferred him to the prince living in luxury in a palace or a military hero or an industrial magnate. A Sanskrit verse says: 'Holy is the family and blessed the mother, nay, the earth itself becomes sanctified by him whose mind is absorbed in the Supreme Brahman, the ocean of infinite knowledge and bliss.' The aim of every human being is to
attain this unity, this communion with the Supreme Spiritual Reality.

Shri Krishna in the Bhagavadgītā tells us how best we can attain to this final end of man. We are not asked to accept anything on trust, take anything on authority but discover for ourselves the truth of things. The cosmic process which takes us from matter to life, life to mind, mind to intelligence, and intelligence to spirit, requires an underlying Reality to support and sustain it. As it is something which transcends the intellectual level, we cannot describe it by words. We indulge in contradictory descriptions to indicate the immensity of the mystery.

The avatāra, the incarnation, is not an event which happened once upon a time. Shri Krishna is not a long forgotten figure of a distant past, but a living presence. The birth of God, the manifestation of God takes place, when we are able to break down the obstacles which shut in the divine splendour. The Bhāgavata says: Devaki is a devarūpinī. Each of us has a divine nature which is covered over by the undivine. If we are able to break down the shell, the outer walls, the imprisoned splendour reveals itself. There is the birth of God, the God who is with us, who is our friend, suhṛt.

How are we to realize the God in us? Different methods suited to different temperaments are suggested but devotion to the Supreme Lord is the easiest. The Nārada Bhakti Sūtra says that among the devotees there are no distinctions of caste, learning, external appearance, birth, possessions, occupations, etc. No religion can justify or accept with equanimity these tragic distortions of human dignity.

India’s centuries span some five millennia. The message India holds for mankind that this world is not all and that it is sustained by a supreme spirit which can be defined and approached in various ways has still meaning for us. India did not believe in exclusive nationalism or chosen people. These are romantic myths. Above all nations is humanity, civilization, vārāṇasī medini. The whole world is our sacred home. We are asked to work for world solidarity, loka-samgraha.

A culture is never static when alive. It is always seeking a stable equilibrium, a harmony, a stillness where all tensions—social, spiritual and personal—are resolved, a state of balancing where men are at peace with themselves, with their fellow-men and with forces of nature.
Our minds today are greatly confused, *aneka-cittavibhrānta*. There is an irrationality, an impulsiveness among people, a moral and a spiritual vacuum. Strange voices are heard. If we are not to be seduced by false notes, if we are to preserve our national chastity, the message which has come down to us from ancient times will have to be revitalized. We must remind ourselves of the teaching of our prophet souls, Rāma, Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya. All of us may not be called to be saints, but whatever work we undertake, trade, business, or industry, teaching, or healing, we should undertake it in a spirit of worship. Our whole life, all our activity must become a vocation.

Plato once remarked that when the modes of music change, the walls of the city are shaken. A change in the modes of our thought and beliefs is the first symptom of growing uneasiness and will soon manifest itself in political and economic arrangements leading to the shaking of walls. While we should respond to the changing conditions of the world, we should do so within the framework of our cultural heritage.

**GANDHI AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

I am glad to be here today and inaugurate a symposium on Gandhiji’s teachings and the United Nations. Gandhiji is essentially a religious man. He has faith in the essential unity of mankind. We are the children of the One Supreme whatever be our caste or sex, creed or country. Every religious man believes that he has kinship with the whole of humanity. Socrates, for example, declared on his death-bed that he was not an Athenian or a Greek but a citizen of the world. Every authentically religious man looks upon the whole world as his home. The central features of religion are *abhaya* and *ahimsā*, freedom from fear and freedom from violence or hate. *Ahimsā* is *vaira-tyāga*. These are the teachings of all religions. Buddha calls them *prajñā* and *karunā*. ‘Let a man overcome anger by non-anger; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the miser by liberality; let him overcome the liar by truth.’ Jesus names them truth and freedom. Truth

   *akrodhena jayet krodham asādhūṁ sādhuṁ jayet jayet kadaryam dānena satyenālika-vādinam.*
will make us free. Our conduct to be right should be based on non-violence. Love overcomes and endures and hatred destroys.

\begin{quote}
arihīṇa-lakṣaṇo dharmah,
himsā ca adharma-lakṣaṇaḥ.
dayā dharmakā mūla hai.
\end{quote}

If we are all children of the One Supreme, it follows that all wars are civil strife and all misunderstandings require to be cleared up not by violence but by peaceful methods. ‘Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you “love your enemies.”’

Gandhi asks us to recognize evil and combat it but he recognizes no enemy, for all men are brethren. So Gandhi advocated the method of peaceful persuasion. He held up to us the power of non-violence, of gentleness.

\begin{quote}
ṃrdūnā dāruṇaṃ hanti mṛdunā hanty adāruṇam,
nāsādhyam mṛdunā kiñcit tasmāt tīkṣṇataram hi mṛduḥ.
\end{quote}

Though we have been relying on force all these years, gradually we are tending to displace force by persuasion, coercion by consent. In the relations of parent and child, teacher and pupil, warden and ward, employer and employee we are revising our notions and using sympathetic understanding in place of enforced obedience. In the field of international relations, violence has been the usual method of settling disputes. Reliance on military power has been an integral feature of the international policies of powerful nations. Recent developments in the weapons of war are making us rethink our traditional opinions. We stand today on the edge of a razor which divides the past from the future. We have reached a dead end on the military road. If we adopt the military methods, we will effect the death of civilization. There is heavy concentration of military power including the atom and hydrogen bombs in two centres and there is a perception that a war in this context will not serve any national, ideological, or human interests or values. If we hang on to old methods of security in the new world we will die.

It is clear that peace is not for the strong but for the just. \textit{yato dharmah tato jayaḥ}. There will not be peace until men learn to be just and they will not learn to be just until they learn to renounce reliance on force.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Matthew, V, 43-44
\item kṣurasya dhārā niśtā duratayā.—Kāṭha Upaniṣad, 1, 3
\end{enumerate}
The United Nations Organization requires us to adopt peaceful methods of negotiation, adjustment, and agreement. The United Nations Organization and its specialized agencies are trying to remove the causes which breed wars. When science has enabled us to provide the benefits of civilization for the whole human race, why is it that we have the great contrasts of poverty and wealth, hunger and food, insecurity and great power, bondage and freedom? Our hope remains in removing these paradoxes by radical changes. The conquest of physical poverty, the removal of misunderstandings and the liberation of the human spirit are the aims of the United Nations.

If the United Nations is unable to achieve its objectives, it is because nations who have subscribed to the Charter are unwilling, unready, or unable to carry out their obligations. They are still obsessed by their national interests and security by military power. Instead of using the United Nations as an instrument for mediation and peace-making, we use it for the implementation of cold war strategy. When aggression takes place, in some cases collective action is encouraged, and in others it is discouraged. Military assistance through pacts to some countries is accepted as reasonable while even sale of arms to others is deplored as unreasonable. It is unfortunate that strategic considerations supersede adherence to principles. This weakens the moral authority of the United Nations. Again, the United Nations loses much of its value because many countries who should be its members are refused admission. Millions of men still under colonial rule are not represented in it.

The universality of the United Nations is impaired by discriminating treatment. Policies of race discrimination, colonial domination are practised by many countries and though they are gross violations of human rights, the United Nations is unable to enforce the provisions of the Charter. The trouble in United Nations Assembly today about the Algerian issue is one evidence of it. All this is possible because powerful nations of the West set the course of debate and influence decisions and the largest Asian nation has no place in it.

In human history it is often the days of great tribulation and deepest despair that are the prelude to a time of enlightenment. The scale of our distress is sufficient to prompt the question whether we have not, on the presumption of nationalism and pride of material achievements, brought the world towards the verge of annihilation. We have followed false roads in blind confidence.
What the world needs today is not political or military unification but re-education. The individual should be trained to think in terms of humanity as a whole instead of in terms of this or that particular clan or country. Modern means of communication have widened inter-cultural and inter-racial contacts and sympathies. The time when different races and nations lived in comparative isolation under their own distinctive laws and institutions is over. We have to adjust ourselves to the new world. The differences are not to be fought out of existence.

The United Nations, in spite of all its defects, represents a unique and valuable contribution to the cause of peace. It is a bridge between the two groups into which the world is divided. It is a platform for the debate of issues which divide men and a rallying point for co-operation concerning issues on which there is unity. It is an agency dedicated to the purpose of developing mutual understanding. It should be our endeavour to make it approximate to a world organization with faith in democratic and social progress. True democracy and peace are organically related. Gandhi who pleaded for the adoption of non-violence in international relations was the greatest servant of the cause of man which the world has had in recent times.

INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND MODERN CIVILIZATION

I

I am greatly honoured by the invitation to preside over this session of the Oriental Conference. I received it with a certain surprise for I have not taken an active part in the deliberations of the Oriental Conference. I attended the Oriental Conference which was held in Calcutta in 1922 and had the honour of welcoming the Conference at Banaras in 1943. So it is extremely kind of you to have thought of me for this exalted position.

You will be disappointed if you expect from me any broad survey of the work done in Oriental studies since the Conference last met. I have neither the knowledge nor the competence to

Presidential Address at All-India Oriental Conference, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, 26 December, 1955
undertake such a survey. My remarks will be limited to the subject
of Indian philosophy and religion and even there to one or two
points of contemporary interest.

The constructive ideas on which civilization is built are con-
ventionally traced to this or that country, Greece or Rome, China
or India. There is an old Talmudic saying—The Rabbis ask, why
was the Law given in the wilderness, and the answer is given:
In order that no one country could claim proprietary rights over it.
This is true of all ideas. They are by nature universal. They
may arise in individuals and may develop their power through
communities. But we cannot speak of them as belonging to this
person or that community. This would be to violate their character
as ideas. Ideas are not dead things. They have hands and feet.
They are alive and challenging. They are charged with power.
Their action is unpredictable.

II

Perhaps in this great religious centre, I may be forgiven if I refer to
the fundamental spiritual values of the Indian tradition which may
be helpful for fostering world unity. I must, however, caution that
this brief and general discussion should not be taken as a complete
or even an adequate account of the different religious traditions.

The problem of religion arises from the realization of the im-
perfect condition of man. Life is not merely a physical phenom-
enon or a biological process. Who shall save me from the body
of this death, from the snares and dangers of this world? The
need for redemption implies the presence of conditions and circum-
stances from which we seek escape or liberation.

The fundamental concepts of Indian religious life may be briefly
indicated. The goal of life is communion with the Supreme. It is
a life of realization, a *gnosis*, an inner intuitive vision of God, when
man achieves absolute freedom and escapes from the blind servitude
to ordinary experience. It is a subtle interwovenness with the reali-
ties of the spiritual world. It is not knowledge or the recognition of
universal ideas through a dialectical process or analysis of empirical
data. It is analogous to Plato’s vision of an irresistible harmony
with the deepest reality of the world inspired and sustained by the
spiritual in us.

*asti brahmeti ced veda parokṣam jñānam eva tat;*
*asmī (aham) brahmeti ced veda aparokṣam tat tu kathyate.*
This brings out the distinction between intellectual recognition and spiritual realization. We can free ourselves from the shackles of the body and in a split second we can see the truth and be overcome by it. We see God so intensely that the soul is more certain and more possessed by the sight of God than the bodily eye by the light of day.

\[
\text{tad viṣṇoh paramam padam} \\
\text{sadā paśyanti sūrayah, divīva caksur ātataṃ.}
\]

The \textit{Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad} tells us that through śrāvana, manana and nīdīhyāsana, we have to attain ātma-darśanā: ātma-darśanām uddhiṣṭa vedānta śrāvana manana nīdīhyāsanaṃ kartāvyaṁ ity arthaḥ. The \textit{Mūndaka Upaniṣad} says:

\begin{align*}
\text{praṇava dhanuḥ śaro hy ātmā brahma tal lakṣyam ucyate;} \\
\text{apramattena vedhavyāṁ śaravat tanmayo bhavet.}^2 \\
\text{vedāham etam puruṣam mahāntam ādityavarṇam tamasaḥ parastāt.}^3 \\
\text{anubhūtiṁ vinā mūḍho vrthā brahmaṇi modate.}^4
\end{align*}

Intuition is not emotion but the claim to certain knowledge. It gives us a sense of divine reality as a thing immediately certain and directly known. The sense of God penetrates the seer’s consciousness but it does not come like the light of day, something external, something out there in space. The barrier that separates the seer from the divine life is broken down. It is the aim of the seer to live in the light and inspiration of this experience, to be one with God in an abiding union.

The records of these experiences are the Vedas, ‘ever the same yet changing ever’. The Vedas which constitute the essential foundation of the entire spiritual tradition of India are based on integral experience. The term Veda, derived from the root \textit{vid} refers to a doctrine based not on faith or revelation but on a higher knowledge attained—through a process of intuition or seeing. The Vedas are seen by the rṣis, the seers of the earliest time. The Vedas do not give us theories or theologies. The hymns contain reflection of a consciousness that is in communion with metaphysical reality. The gods themselves are not mere images but projections of the experience of significance, of forces directly perceived in man, in nature, or beyond. The Vedas are neither infallible nor all-inclusive.

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1 IV, 4-5
2 II, 2-4
3 See \textit{Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad}, III. 8; see also III. 21
4 \textit{Maitreyopanishad}, 2
Spiritual truth is a far greater thing than the scriptures. We recognize the truth and value of much that has been proclaimed by non-Vedic prophets and we are led equally to perceive the insight of many religious teachers in later centuries. The Veda is a record of inspired wisdom and deep inner experience.\(^1\)

The second factor is the emphasis on the divine possibilities of man. The great text, tat tvam asi stresses this truth. The Supreme is in the soul of man. For the Upaniṣads, as for Plato\(^2\) and Philo,\(^3\) man is a celestial plant.

Godhead can be described and approached in various ways. The Hindu thinkers were conscious of the immensity, the infinity, the inexhaustibility and the mysteriousness of the Supreme Spirit. A negative theology develops. Brahman is a reality which transcends space and time and so is greater than human understanding can grasp. śānto’yam ātmā. Brahman is silence. Yet Brahman is the continuing power which pervades and upholds the world. He is the real of the real, the foundation on which the world rests. He is essential freedom. His different functions of creation, preservation and perfection are personalized in the forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. The individual deities are affiliated to one or the other. When approaching the different conceptions and representations of the Supreme, the Hindu has a sense of humility, a deep awareness of human frailty. Even if religions claim to be the results of divine revelation, the forms and contents are necessarily the products of the human mind.

\(\text{eṣa devo viśvakarma mahātmā sadā janānāṁ hṛdaye sannivīśtaḥ} \)
\(\text{hṛdayā maṇiśā manasābhiklāpto ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti.}^4\)

Religion reflects both God and man. As religion is a life to be lived, not a theory to be accepted or a belief to be adhered to, it allows scope and validity to varied approaches to the Divine. There may be different revelations of the Divine but they are all forms of the Supreme. If we surround our souls with a shell, national pride, racial superiority, frozen articles of faith and empty presumption of castes and classes, we stifle and suppress the breath of the spirit. The Upaniṣads are clear that the flame is the same even though the

\(^1\) tad vacanād āmnāyasya prāmāṇyam.—Vaiśeṣika Sūtra

\(^2\) Timaeus, 90

\(^3\) De plantatione, sec. 17 ; cf. Seneca : ‘The place which God occupies in this world is filled by the spirit in man.’

\(^4\) Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad, IV 17
types of fuel used may vary. Though cows are of many colours, their milk is of one colour; the truth is one like the milk while the forms used are many like the cows.\textsuperscript{1} Again, the Bhāgavata says even as the several senses discern the different qualities of one object, so also the different scriptures indicate the many aspects of the one Supreme.\textsuperscript{2}

In the Upaniṣads we find a four-fold status of the Supreme Reality—ātmā catuṣpāti, Brahma, Iśvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virāj. While the world is the form of the divine, viṣvarūpa, the cause is three-fold. pādo’sya sarvā bhūtāni tripādasyaāmṛtaṁ divi.\textsuperscript{3}

The problem facing man is the conflict between the divine and the undivine in him. Yoga-sūtra-bhāṣya says that the stream of mind flows in two directions, the one leading to virtue, the other to vice: citta-nādi nāma udbhayato vāhini, vahati kalyāṇāya, vahati ca papāya.\textsuperscript{4} To overcome the conflict and integrate the personality is the aim of religion. This problem has no meaning for beasts and gods, as Aristotle says. It concerns the human predicament.\textsuperscript{5}

There are different recognized pathways by which the duality is overcome and perfection reached. In order to see in the world of spiritual reality, we must close our eyes to the world of nature. The Katha Upaniṣad says that man is turned outward by his senses and so loses contact with his own deepest self. His soul has become immersed in outer things, in power and possessions. It must turn round to find its right direction and find the meanings and realities it has missed.\textsuperscript{6} To hear the melodies of spirit, we must shut off the noise of the world. This is not to renounce the powers of sight, hearing and speech. It is to open the inner eye to spiritual realities, capture the sounds that come from the world of spirit, sing in silence the hymn of praise to the Supreme Being.

True religious life must express itself in love and aim at the unity

\textsuperscript{1} gavām aneka varṇānām kṣirasyāsty eka varṇatā
kṣiravat paśyate jñānāṁ linginas tu gavān yathā.
\textsuperscript{2} yathendraiyah prthag dvāraḥ artho bahu-gunāśrayah
eko nānā iyate tadvat bhagavān śāstra-vartmabhīḥ.
\textsuperscript{3} Rg Veda
\textsuperscript{4} I, 1, 12
\textsuperscript{5} dvau eva cintayā muktau paramānande āplutau
yo vimūḍho jaḍo bālo yo guṇeṣbhyaḥ param gataḥ.
Two are free from care and steeped in bliss: the child inert and ignorant and he who goes beyond the (three-fold) attributes.
Cf. Śaṁkara: nistaiguṇye pathi vicaratāṁ ko vidhiḥ ko niṣedhaḥ.
\textsuperscript{6} II, 1, 1
of mankind. Bead necklaces, rosaries, triple paint on forehead, or putting on ashes, pilgrimages, baths in holy rivers, meditation, or image worship do not purify a man as service of fellow-creatures does.\footnote{1} The Hindu dreamed of universal peace and clothed his dreams in imperishable language

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
mātā ca pārvatī devī pītā devo maheśvarah \\
bāndhavāḥ śivabhaktāś ca svadeśo bhuvana-trayam. \\
uḍāra-caritānām tu vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam \\
vārāṇaśī medini.
\end{align*}
\end{quote}

The goal of world unity is to be achieved by ahiṁsā which is insisted on by Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

The fact that the Tamil classic Tirukkural is claimed by different religious sects indicates its catholicity. Its emphasis on ahiṁsā or non-violence in its varied applications, ethical, economic and social, shows the importance which ancient Tamil culture gave to it. Tirukkural is used by the Buddhists and the Jains, the Śaivites and the Vaiṣṇavites. It is called podumurai or common scripture.

The other two works of Tamil literature Silappathikāram and Manimekhalai, exalt the virtues of chastity and renunciation.

Even Manu intended the message of India to be of universal application.

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
etad deśa-prasūtasya sakāśād agrajanmanāḥ \\
svam svāṁ caritram śikṣeran prthivyāṁ sarva-mānavāḥ.
\end{align*}
\end{quote}

All the people of the world would learn from the leaders of this country the lessons for their behaviour.

There is a persistent misunderstanding that we look upon the world as an illusion and this view is attributed to Śaṅkara. The Brahma Sūtra clearly makes out that the world is not non-existent, nābhāva upalabdheḥ, that it is not a mental aberration, na svapnā-dīvat. Of course Śaṅkara affirms that the world is not Brahman. As the manifestation of Brahman it is real only in a secondary sense; it has what is called vyāvahārika sattā. By no means is it to be dismissed as utterly unreal. It is different from prātibhāsika sattā or illusory existence. Śaṅkara makes out that the world is a progressive manifestation of the Supreme:

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
ekasyāpi kūṭasthasya citta-tāratamyāt jñānaiśvaryānām \\
abhivyaktiḥ pareṇa pareṇa bhūyasī bhavati.
\end{align*}
\end{quote}
In this sacred centre, I may mention the following verse:

\[
\text{jagat trayaṁ śāmbhava-nartana sthalī}
\text{naṭādhirājōtra paraḥ śivaḥ svayam}
\text{sabhā nāto raṅga iti vyavasthitih}
\text{svarūpataḥ śakti-yutāt prapañcitā.}
\]

The three words are but the dancing hall of God Śiva. The king of dancers is the Supreme God himself. The audience, actors and the stage are evolved and ordered by the Lord from his own self in association with his Śakti.¹

Though there was no missionary motive, no attempt to convert others to the Hindu faith, its influence extended to other regions like Java, Bali, where we still have a Hindu colony, and other parts of the East. Greek leaders like Heliodorus became devotees of the Hindu faith. While missionary religions carry out propaganda and are interested in the increase of the number of their followers, Hindu religion was not what we call a proselytizing religion, though in its great days it had no objection to foreigners accepting the Hindu faith.

III

Buddhism which arose in India was an attempt to achieve a purer Hinduism. It may be called a heresy of Hinduism or a reform within Hinduism. The formative years of Buddhism were spent in the Hindu religious environment. It shares in a large measure the basic presuppositions of Hinduism. It is a product of the Hindu religious ethos. But soon it established itself as a distinctive religious tradition. It split early into two branches, though the nature of its thought and teaching is common to its different expressions. The Hīnayāna is the southern, Pali or Theravāda Buddhism; the Mahāyāna is the northern, mainly Sanskrit Buddhism. Both groups claim that they are loyal to the teachings of the Buddha. The former is more monastic than the latter. Mahāyāna has been more sensitive to the religious yearnings of the people. While Hīnayāna places its emphasis on individual attainment of salvation, the Mahāyāna emphasizes the grace of the Divine. It is sometimes contended that the Mahāyāna Buddhism reveals a stage of truth greater than that which the Buddha gave to his followers in the Pali scriptures as they

¹ Soma-stava-rāja, verse 40. Cf. also Śrīharṣa: \text{tad eva rūpam rama-
niyatāyāh kṣane kṣane yan navatām vidhate} : That beautiful form appears fresh and different every moment.—\text{Naiṣadhā}
were not spiritually mature to receive the higher stage of truth.

The name Buddha means the Awakened One, from the root _budh_ to awaken. The Buddha is one who attained spiritual realization. He gives us a way based on clear knowledge, or awakening. Buddhism is a system of spiritual realization. So in Buddhism personal realization is the starting point. The religious experience of the Buddha is the fundamental source of the religious knowledge of the Buddhists. _Udāna_ says that he who attains final knowledge fulfils the vow of celibacy, he is the Brāhmaṇa who has the right to declare the truth.¹

From his experience of enlightenment, _bodhi_, the Buddha derived his doctrines. The four-fold truth, the nature of man and the character of the world, the cause of his predicament, the way by which man may rise above it and the state of enlightenment or release from subjection to time are the results of his own experience of truth. The Buddha shared with men those aspects of his experience which can be expressed in words. The state of enlightenment is beyond definition or description. The Buddha refused to speculate on the nature of transcendent reality. Each of us has to follow in the footsteps of the Buddha who blazed the path. Each individual has to attain the experience by his own individual effort. Only when the individual himself experiences enlightenment, he is said to know the truth or be enlightened. He is then freed from the shackles of earth-bound existence and becomes divine. The scriptures, the Pali _Tripiṭakas_, are the sources for the knowledge of truth, since they record the Buddha’s teachings. They are Buddha-vacana. The seekers of the past and the masters of the present attained salvation by devotion to the path revealed by the Buddha and placing their trust in him.

The Buddha stresses the possibility and need for each individual attaining the truth. Hinayāna holds that the experience of enlightenment which was realized by the Buddha is attainable by other human individuals if they follow the path in his footsteps. Every individual has in him the possibility of becoming an _arhat_, who is superior to time and has conquered the world. The Mahāyāna adopts the ideal of _Bodhisattva_ who, though he has attained release, out of concern and love for mankind lived in the world where he may serve men by bestowing hope and guiding their steps. It preaches universal salvation. In Hinayāna the founder of Buddhism

¹ _vedānta-gu viṣita-brahma-cariyo. dharmeṇa sa brahmavādam vadeyya._
is worshipped as the Divine. The other deities worshipped by men pay homage to the Buddha. He is said to be the instructor not only of men but of gods. He is to be adored as the saviour of men through the truth which he exemplified in his life. In the Mahāyāna, the earthly Buddha is the eternal Buddha who reveals himself in all worlds. Gautama Śākyamuni is an earthly incarnation of the Eternal Buddha who exists in countless worlds. All things are subject to him. All existences are the results of his creation. The nature of Godhead which has developed in the Mahāyāna is analogous to the Hindu conception. According to the doctrine of the Trikāya, the Dharmakāya or the body of Dharma is the ultimate first principle, the Divine from which all things proceed and to which they all return. It is the ultimate Godhead completely transcendent to the world. The next category of the Divine is the Sambhogakāya, the body of bliss or enlightenment. This answers to the personal God, who is the creator and preserver of the universe. He is the deity worshipped by man. Nirmānakāya is the manifestation of the Divine on earth. It is the Divine incarnate in human life and history for the purpose of making the Divine known to man. Mahāyāna Buddhism has scope for the gracious saving power of the Divine. It is not merely by human effort but by divine grace that man attains salvation.

The Buddha recognizes diverse ways to reach the truth. But when the truth is attained, the way falls away. One need not insist that it is the only way to reach the truth. The Buddha gives us the parable of the raft. Any person who wishes to cross a dangerous river having built a raft for this purpose would indeed be a fool if, when he had crossed, he were to put the raft on his shoulders and take it with him on his journey.\(^1\) In China when the followers of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism meet and exalt their own religion, they conclude with the chorus: ‘Religions are many, reason is one; we are all brothers.’\(^2\) Prince Shotuko of Japan (seventh

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\(^1\) Majjhima Nikāya, XXII. Cf. the Upaniṣad:

\[ śāstrāṇy abhyasya medhāvi jñāna-vijñāna tat paraḥ
palālam iva dhānyārtht tyajet granthān aśeṣataḥ. \]

The wise one studies the scriptures intent on understanding their significance and (having found it) throws away the books as he who seeks the grain throws away the chaff.

\(^2\) J. Estlin Carpenter: *The Place of Christianity in the Religions of the World*, p. 60
century A.D.) reconciled Shintoism, Confucianism and Buddhism:

Shinto is the source and root of the Way, and shot up with the sky and the earth, teaches man the Primal Way; Confucianism is the branch and foliage of the way, and bursting forth with man, it teaches him the Middle Way; Buddhism is the flower and fruit of the Way, and appearing after man’s mental powers matured, teaches him the Final Way. Hence to love one in preference to another, only shows man’s selfish passion....indeed each new creed enlightens the old.¹

According to the Buddha’s Four-fold Truth, the nature of human existence is said to be of a fugitive and fragile character. This did not mean for the Buddha a world-negating creed with no concern for temporal affairs. The Buddha is not only the discoverer of truth but also its revealer to mankind. He shares with men the truth which he has attained. He shows men the way by which truth may be found. The middle path of religious realization is not only the end of religion but also the means by which truth is attained. The means of attaining the goal participates in the nature of the goal itself. The ethical means and the spiritual end cannot be separated. The end of enlightenment enters into the means. It is impossible for a people who despise the world to produce the art and culture which enriches our world. Buddhism does not cause men to turn from the pursuits and endeavours of human life.

Buddhism purports to be a universal religion applicable to all mankind. In the Mahāyāna, not only one’s personal salvation but that of all creatures is stressed. Through their infinite love for struggling humanity, the Bodhisattvas elect to postpone the final bliss of nirvāṇa to which they are entitled so that they may continue the unending labour of saving the souls of all since all are destined for Buddhahood.

The Buddha entrusted to his followers the propagation of his doctrine. Under the patronage of Aśoka who became a convert to Buddhism, repenting bitterly the carnage involved in the conquest of Kalinga, Buddhism became widespread in India. Aśoka ordered to be carved in stone columns and rocks the precepts of Buddhism. He enjoined his ‘children’, i.e. his people, to love one another, to be kind to animals, to respect all religions. This zealous Emperor ‘beloved of the gods’, devānāṃ priya, had relations with the countries of the Mediterranean and West Asia. He sent abroad missionaries to spread the Buddhist gospel. Tradition has it that his own son carried the doctrine to Ceylon. It has spread to many other lands from

¹ Inazo Nitobe: *Japan* (1931), p. 370
Afghanistan to Japan. It is a supra-regional religion. In the process of its expansion Buddhism absorbed into itself the traditions and cultures of the different areas which have accepted its message. While accepting the beliefs and practices of the native peoples, it has helped to refine them.

IV

According to Jainism, a Tîrthankara is one who provides the ship to cross the world of samsāra. The ship is the dharma. The Tîrthankara is the arhat, the object of worship. Such a person revitalizes the dharma of the world. By destroying the four karmas, he attains the four eminent qualities of ananta-jñāna, infinite knowledge, ananta-darśana or infinite perception, ananta-vīrya or infinite power, ananta-sukha or infinite bliss. Endowed with these qualities he becomes an omniscient being who spends the rest of his life in the world for the good of mankind. When the self realizes its true nature it is freed from subjection to time or as it is said, it is released from rebirth. He becomes siddha parameṣṭi, the perfect being. The siddha is worshipped because he represents the final spiritual perfection. The arhat, the siddha, the sangha and the dharma are the four objects of supreme value worthy of adoration. Jainism emphasizes the potential divine stature of man and its teaching claims to be of universal application.

V

In Zoroastrianism there is a dualism, an open struggle between two forces. Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu are the two warring principles and in their struggle is grounded the drama of cosmic life and human history. The one is the principle of light, justice and the good; the other is the principle of darkness, injustice and evil. The battle between these two is decided by the victory of the good. Before the triumph of light over darkness is complete, the universe and mankind must pass through endless cycles of exhausting torment and untiring strife. Man in the world is confronted by the choice between the two principles. Since the conflict between the two principles is universal as to space and time, the choice which man must make is not differentiated and delimited by empirical boundary stones. As a matter of course, those who are called to be followers of Ahura Mazda form among themselves bonds of spiritual solidarity, having nothing to do with empirical relations between them, relations derived from considerations of race, political
allegiance and racial groups. The doctrine is a universalist one. The Avesta says:

The souls of the faithful of both sexes in the Aryan countries, the Turanian countries, the Sarmatian countries, the Syrian countries, the Dacian countries, in all countries—all these we venerate.¹

Here we have an explicit definition of a universal religious community which supersedes all distinctions of race, caste and nationality. A believer wheresoever he be found, is an object of veneration. In the Zoroastrian sense, a believer is one who, irrespective of his political allegiance and earthly origin, becomes a follower of Ahura Mazda in the pursuit of justice and peace.

Zarathustra teaches: 'And we worship the former religions of the world devoted to righteousness.'²

VI

Persia, though defeated at Marathon and Salamis, exerted a powerful influence on the post-exilic Hebrew prophets and the Hellenic world. Immediately after the two great Athenian victories over the army and the navy of the Persians, a vast transformation is apparent in Hellenic religious life, due to the penetration of Indian and Zoroastrian ideas. Professor Flinders Petrie, the great Egyptologist, in his excavation of Memphis, the capital of ancient Egypt, discovered in the Persian strata of the city, pottery, beads and figures of Indian type. Commenting on it, he writes: 'The importance of the Indian colony in Memphis under the Persian empire lies in its bearing on its importation of Indian thought and the rise of the ascetic movement before Christ which culminated in western monachism.' Reverend Frank Knight writes: 'Monasteries or groups of ascetic devotees living together in a communal form and ordering their lives on rules laid down by Indians were established in Egypt by 340 B.C. It is in many ways probable that Greek Stoicism was not an indigenous Hellenic product, but merely infiltration via Egypt of beliefs derived from the Buddhist priests of India.'³ According to Plato, Socrates says:

When the soul returning into itself reflects, it goes straight to what is pure, everlasting and impartial and like unto itself and being related to this cleaves unto it when the soul is alone and is not hindered. And then the soul rests from its mistakes and is like unto itself even as the Eternal is with whom the soul is now in touch.

¹ Yast, XIII, 143, 144
² Yasna, XVI, 3
³ Quoted in G. S. Ghurye: Indian Sādhus (1953), p. 11
This state of the soul is called ‘wisdom’, what we call jñāna. Dionysius who plays a relatively minor role in the epics of Homer now appears among the Olympian gods on the friezes of the Parthenon. Between the two dates the incursion of the Dionysius mysteries and the transformation of Greek religious life must be placed. This introduces a new mystical element into the traditional religion of the Hellenic world.

The dualism of the Zoroastrian philosophy underlies the Orphic attitude. The empirical world, the world of sense, of existence, is confused and tormented. Through music, contemplation, love, man can liberate himself from the sphere of sensory experience and earn spiritual immortality even now. Thus the religious world of the Greeks became familiar with the concept of spiritual community. The *ecclesia spiritualis* has been a historical reality throughout the centuries. Communities of men who recognize a solidarity unrelated to race, nation, blood, politics, class, or caste, who are bound by a common belief in transcendental values and participation in divine grace sprang up. Heraclitus calls every man a barbarian who heeds only the testimony of his senses to the exclusion of the spiritual harmonies which remain inaccessible to the corporeal ear. The Stoic thinkers declare that all men are brothers by an inescapable law of nature.

VII

The Jewish Bible does not begin with the Jews. It starts with the story of Adam which in Hebrew means man, *admi*. *Genesis* (V.I.) says: ‘This is the book of the generations of man.’ It does not speak of the Levite, the priest, or the Jew but of men. The children of earth are viewed as one family. They have one ancestor who is the father of all. Distinctions of caste and class differentiation by blood or descent do not supersede the primary fact of human equality. ‘Why was man created one?’ ask the Rabbis and answer: ‘In order that no man should say to another, “My father was greater than thine.”’

Though the Jews are said to lay great stress on ceremonial piety, there is also stress on a different attitude to life. Man is made in the image of God. In his ultimate nature man partakes of the divine essence. The *Proverbs* describe the spirit of man as the candle of the Lord, a candle which has to be lit with a divine flame.

Though man is made in the ‘image of God’, ‘the Fall of man’ represents the lapse from the state of close relationship with God.
Now, man possesses the image of God only potentially and not actually. To conform to the will of the Supreme, personal sanctification is essential. The flame of spirit must be kindled in each human soul. 'Thus saith the Lord God. I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them an heart of flesh.'¹ 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' It is the aim of the Jews to create a broken and a contrite heart for God will not despise it.

For creating a new man and a new world, a 'turning of the soul' is essential. The soul of man is seen as 'the lamp of God, searching out all the recesses of the inward parts'. God said to Moses, according to Exodus: 'Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.' When the Covenant of God is written in the heart of man, the transcendent will become completely immanent. 'I have said, ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High.' (Psalms)

The Hebrew Bible will not compromise with idolatry. 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me.' Tacitus says: 'The Jews condemn as impious all who, with perishable materials wrought into the human shape, form representations of the deity. That Being, they say, is above all and eternal, given neither to change or decay.'² Philo quotes a letter written to Caligula by king Agrippa of Judaea in which it is said:

'O my Lord and master, Gaius, this temple has never, from the time of its original foundation till now, admitted any form made by hands, because it has been the abode of God. Now pictures and images are only imitations of those gods who are perceptible to the outward senses; but it was not considered by our ancestors to be consistent with the reverence due to God to make any image or representation of the Invisible God.'³

The Jews do not admit into their temple any image or representation made by hands, no visible likeness of him who is Invisible Spirit. They stress the transcendence of God.

The great Commandment of the Jews is to 'love thy neighbour as thyself.' In Leviticus XIX, where we find a commentary on this principle, it is said:

Let there be no hate in your heart for your brother; but you may make a protest to your neighbour so that he may be stopped from doing evil.

¹ Ezekiel, II, 16, 19
² Hist., V, 5
³ Quoted by Leon Roth: Jewish Thought as a Factor in Civilization (1955). p. 25
Do not make attempts to get equal with one who has done you wrong, or keep hard feelings against the children of your people, but have love for your neighbour as for yourself. I am the Lord.

This principle applies not only to one's brothers or kinsmen or neighbours but to all. 'And if a man from another country is living in your land with you, do not make life hard for him; let him be to you as one of your countrymen and have love for him as for yourself; for you were living in a strange land, in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.' Micah asks: 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.' Moses uttered the prayer: 'Would that all God's people were prophets.' Isaiah says: 'He shall judge between the nations and they shall beat their swords to ploughshares. . . . Neither shall they learn war any more.' The weapons of war should be turned to the service of peace. The nations form one family and they are inter-responsible.

VIII

Christianity is the religion based on the life and experience of Jesus. The Cross becomes significant only when we make it our own, when we undergo crucifixion. Jesus bids us to walk the path which he trod, that we may share the union with God which he attained. 'Seek and ye shall find.' Each one must seek for himself if he is to find. The truth latent in every soul must become manifest in the awakened spiritual consciousness. It is Jesus 'risen in the hearts of men'. Then shall we be able to 'work in the newness of life'. All things are then made new. Those who raise themselves above their unregenerate condition are the god-men who are the manifestations of the new creation, the promise and pledge of the destiny in store for humanity. There is no one way by which spiritual rebornness is attained. 'Marvel not that I have said unto thee, ye must be born again. . . . The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.' In the same spirit it is said: 'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.'

1 John, III
2 II Timothy, III, 16-17
St. Paul says: 'Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you.'¹ 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.'² 'Ye are the temple of the living God.'³ For Origen, there is a blood-relationship between God and man. Though God is the source of our being, everlasting, transcendent, he is also close to our hearts, the universal Father in whom we live, move and have our being. 'Be ye therefore perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect.'⁴ Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, says: 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, both to will and to do his good pleasure.'⁵ 'Be assured of this as a certain truth, that, corrupt and earthly as human nature is, there is nevertheless in the soul of every man the fire, light, and love of God.' (William Law) 'He who inwardly enters and intimately penetrates into himself gets above and beyond himself and truly mounts up to God.' The vital thing for us is not to hold the creed but to enter into the experience out of which it was developed. Man is an unfinished creation. He is left to seek and achieve completion. 'For this purpose the Son of God appeared that he might destroy the works of the devil.'⁶ It is a war that shakes the whole cosmos; it is waged in the innermost soul of man. Love of God is the easiest way to reach salvation. John says: 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.' This love is a new birth, being begotten of God. 'Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin because His seed abideth in him and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God,' says John. Love conquers the world, all its fears and anxieties. The practice of love is the natural result of awareness of God. Jesus looks upon the least of God's children as oneself. 'And all ye are brethren.' 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.' We must love even our enemies. 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.'⁷

The Cross means physical suffering, earthly defeat but spiritual victory. Through suffering lies the way to liberation. Pasca

¹ I Corinthians, VI, 19  
² Ibid, III, 16  
³ II Corinthians, VI, 16  
⁴ Matthew, V, 48  
⁵ II, 12-13  
⁶ I John, III, 8  
⁷ John, VIII, 7
says that Jesus struggles with death until the end of the world. In this boundless Gethsemane which is the life of the universe, we have to struggle on unto death wherever a tear falls, wherever a heart is seized with despair, wherever an injustice or an act of violence is committed. ‘Hast thou seen thy brother? Then thou hast seen God.’ This was the motto which the early Christians had, as reported by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. The message is of universal applicability. ‘God that made the world and all things therein...hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. For in Him we live, we move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are all His offspring.’ (St. Paul)

Existentialism first used by Kirkegaard in the technical sense is the doctrine which stresses subjectivity. He holds that subjectivity is truth. It is a protest against Hegelianism which holds that we can reason our way to truth. The riddles of existence cannot be solved by speculative means. For Kirkegaard, truth can be found only by passionate search, by the existential commitment of the whole personality. Truth is inwardness. Kirkegaard says in his Journals: ‘The purpose of this life is...to be brought to the highest pitch of world-weariness.’ Heidegger asks us to pass from unauthentic existence to authentic existence, from saṁsāra to mokṣa or nirvāṇa. For Marcel the goal is self-knowledge. It is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be entered upon reverently.

IX

Islam affirms that the spread of materialism brings about the downfall of great nations. The decline of the Greeks and of the Persians is ascribed to the spread of godless materialism. Theological controversies divided Christendom, and problems of social justice and brotherhood were neglected. Muhammad affirms the unity of God and the brotherhood of man. The Muslim feels deeply man’s insignificance, the uncertainty of his fate, and the supremacy of God. Their poets, prophets and preachers enlarged on the abyss between the Creator and the creature. Though Allah is a being without form and without parts, without beginning or end and without equal, He must be described partially at least if He is to be apprehended by man. He is viewed as a personal being, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and compassionate.
If one has to live a truly human life, i.e. a religious life he must surrender his thoughts and actions to God.

O man, Thou must strive to attain to thy Lord a hard striving until thou meet Him.

They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allah.

They will perish indeed who call the meeting of Allah to be a lie.

He regulates the affairs, making clear the sign that you may be certain of meeting your Lord.

The Qurān says: ‘Whomsoever He willeth, Allah sendeth astray, and whomsoever he willeth He setteth on a straight path.’

His transforming grace is essential for our effort to draw near to God.

The domestication of foreign elements has been in process throughout the history of Islam. While the barbarians relegated Greek thought to a few monasteries, Muslim scholars translated Greek classics, absorbed Greek thought and transmitted it later to the West where, in the twelfth century, it produced a great intellectual revival. We generally say that the European mind is made by three elements: Greek culture with its contribution of science, art and literature; Roman civilization with its code of political conduct, law and institutions; and Christianity. The first two are common to Islam and Christianity and Islam believes that it has perfected and completed Christianity.

Muhammad recognized the fact that each religious teacher has faith in his own mission, and his vision and experience fulfil the needs of his people.

There is not a people but a warner has gone among them
And every nation had a messenger.
And every nation had a guide.
And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger,
saying Serve Allah and shun the devil.
To every nation we appointed acts of devotion which they observe.
For every one of you did We appoint a Law and a way.¹

X

If there are similarities in the religious experience of mankind, it only means that a common humanity reacts in more or less similar ways to man’s encounter with the Divine. The common points to be found in the different manifestations of religion should not lead us to think that they are organized in each religion in

¹ Qurān, XXXV, 25; XVI, 37
the same way. The manner in which these beliefs are correlated varies from one religion to another. Each religion is a living organization of doctrine, worship and practice, has an uniqueness and individuality of its own and changes as a whole in response to the needs of the age. While therefore we indicate the area of agreement, the distinctive arrangement of the basic presuppositions gives the quality to different religions. For our present purpose, it is not necessary to stress the differences which are important and fundamental in some points. Even though each sect of a religion claims to be the true representative of its specific religious message, yet all the followers of all the sects feel that they are bound together in a unity. As we are trying to overcome the conflict within each religion where every organized group claims to possess the truth by the recognition of the unity of religion, even so conflicts among religions require to be reconciled, if religion itself is not to be defeated.

The world has bled and suffered from the disease of dogmatism, of conformity, of intolerance. People conscious of a mission to bring humanity to their own way of life, whether in religion or politics, have been aggressive towards other ways of life. The crusading spirit has spoiled the records of religions.

In future there can be only one civilization in the world, for it is no more possible for different civilizations to live in ignorance of one another. The scientific discoveries which have penetrated all parts of the earth are making the world one though the different civilizations live by and cherish their distinctive principles of life. If the world is to be united on a religious basis, it will be not on the basis of this or that religion but by a co-operation among the different religions of the world. If the different religions strive to achieve their common ideals and seek to understand the differences in a sympathetic spirit, the world will be relieved of the misery and fear which now engulf it. The tradition of opposition to one another should yield to co-operation. The conviction of superiority which is natural should not prevent appreciation of other faiths and fruitful interchange among them. Erasmus delivered the great dictum: ‘Wherever you encounter truth, look upon it as Christianity.’ We must remember the spirit of this advice when we are wandering in the obscurity of the future. If the message of religions is to be articulated in relation to the problems of our age, we must give up the view that any one religion contains the
final, absolute and whole truth, and adopt the Eastern attitude that the faith is realized in historical patterns, though no one of these patterns should regard itself as the sole and exclusive truth for all. We must be on our guard against the enemies of truth, men of fixed ideas and fanaticisms.

Between the believers in the different historical patterns, there exists a hidden common substratum. If we overlook this, we will not be able to overcome nihilism, lack of faith and irreligion.

If we seek for a joyous reconciliation of the members of the human family, we will discern that even heretics have divined some aspect of Godhead. Just as God lets his sun shine on good and evil, He pours forth His loving kindness on all the children of mankind. The witness of the different major religions strengthens the view that religion is the hope of man and can sustain the new world.

*bahu-dvārasya dharmasya neḥāsti viphalā kriyā.*

Religion has many doors; the observance of its duties can never be useless. This view makes for the appreciation of religious knowledge, of the beliefs and practices of other peoples. This understanding makes for spiritual fellowship. Within this fellowship, each religion will have scope for full expression. Religious reflection will be stimulated by the knowledge and friendship of others of different religions. We will also have universal ethical standards. Even as the interplay of Jewish, Christian and Muslim in the West has enriched the experience of the West, that of Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian has enriched the experience in the East, so the cross fertilization of ideas among the living faiths of the world will tend to foster and enrich spiritual life. The sign of hope is the perpetual youth of religions, the way in which they renew themselves as the world changes.

Arnold Toynbee says:

As I have gone on, Religion has come to take a more and more prominent place, till in the end it stands in the centre of the picture. I have come back to a belief that Religion holds the key to the mystery of existence; but I have not come back to the belief that this key is in the hands of my ancestral Religion exclusively. The Indian religions are not exclusive-minded. They are ready to allow that there may be alternative approaches to the mystery. I feel sure that in this they are right, and that this catholic-minded Indian religious spirit is the way of salvation for all religions in an age in which we have to learn

1 *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, 174, 2*
to live as a single family if we are not to destroy ourselves.\textsuperscript{1}

The choice before humanity is either co-operation in a spirit of freedom and understanding or conflict in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and jealousy. The future of religion and mankind will depend on the choice we make. Concord, not discord, will contribute to the establishment of spiritual values in the life of mankind. Concord alone is meritorious, said Aśoka: \textit{Samavāya eva sādhuḥ}.

**BUDDHA AND HIS MESSAGE**

Sixth century B.C. was remarkable for the spiritual unrest and intellectual ferment in many countries. In China we had Lao Tzu and Confucius, in Greece Parmenides and Empedocles, in Iran Zarathustra, in Israel the Prophets, in India Mahāvīra and the Buddha. In that period many remarkable teachers worked upon their inheritance and developed new points of view.

The Pūrṇimā or full-moon day of the month of Vaiśākha is connected with three important events in the life of the Buddha—birth, enlightenment and parinirvāṇa. It is the most sacred day in the Buddhist calendar. According to Theravāda Buddhism, the Buddha’s parinirvāṇa occurred in 544 B.C.\textsuperscript{2} Though the other schools of Buddhism have their independent systems of chronology, they have agreed to consider the full-moon day of May 1956 to be the 2500th anniversary of the mahāparinirvāṇa of Gautama the Buddha.

The main events of the Buddha’s life are well known. He was the son of a minor ruler of Kapilavastu, grew up in luxury, married Yaśodharā, had a son, Rāhula, and led a sheltered life where the world’s miseries were hidden. On four occasions when he went out of his palace, so the legend tells us, he met an old man and felt that he was subject to the frailties of age; met a sick man

\textsuperscript{1} When the controversy was raised about Professor Arnold Toynbee’s aversion to the exclusiveness of Christianity, he affirmed that he sided “with Synmachus as against St. Ambrose, with Manglic (who said that “Even as God has given several fingers to the hand, so has he given Man several ways”) as against William of Rubruck and with Radhakrishnan as against Karl Adam, Jean Danielou and Hendrik Kraemer.”—\textit{A Study of History}, Vol. X, p. 238

Broadcast on All India Radio, Delhi, 19 May, 1956

\textsuperscript{2} The Bodh Gaya inscription gives 544 B.C. as the date of parinirvāṇa.
and felt that he was liable to sickness; met a corpse and felt that he was also subject to death; and met an ascetic with a peaceful countenance who had adopted the traditional way of the seekers of religious truth. The Buddha resolved to gain freedom from old age, sickness and death by following his example. The mendicant tells the Buddha:

\[ nara-puṅgava \textit{jana-mṛtyu bhūtah śramaṇah pravr̥jito'smi mokṣa-hetoh.}^{1} \]

I am a śramaṇa, an ascetic, who in fear of birth and death have left home-life to gain liberation.

The sight of the holy man, healthy in body, cheerful in mind, without any of the comforts of life, impressed the Buddha strongly with the conviction that the pursuit of religion was the only goal worthy of man. It makes man independent of the temporary trials and fleeting pleasures of the world. The Buddha decided to renounce the world and devote himself to a religious life. He left his home, wife and child, put on the garb and habits of a mendicant, and fled into the forest in order to meditate on human suffering, its causes and the means by which it could be overcome. He spent six years in the study of the most abstruse doctrines of religion, suffered the severest austerities, reduced himself to the verge of starvation in the hope that, by mortifying the flesh, he would surely attain to the knowledge of truth. But he came very near death without having attained the wisdom that he sought. He gave up ascetic practices, resumed normal life, refreshed himself in the waters of the river Nairāṇjanā, accepted the milk pudding offered by Sujātā: \textit{nāyam ātmā balahīnena labhyah}. After he gained bodily health and mental vigour he spent seven weeks under the shade of the Bodhi tree, sitting in a state of the deepest and most profound meditation. One night towards the dawn his understanding opened and he attained enlightenment. After the enlightenment the Buddha refers to himself in the third person as the Tathāgata: he who has arrived at the truth. He wished to preach the knowledge he gained and so said: ‘I shall go to Banaras where I will light the lamp that will bring light unto the world. I will go to Banaras and beat the drums that will awaken mankind. I shall go to Banaras and there I shall teach the Law.’ ‘Give ear, O mendicants! The Deathless (amṛta, eternal life) has been found by me. I will now instruct. I will preach the Dharma.’

\[^{1} \text{Aśvaghoṣa : Buddhacarita, V, 17}\]
He travelled from place to place, touched the lives of hundreds, high and low, princes and peasants. They all came under the spell of his great personality. He taught for forty-five years the beauty of charity and the joy of renunciation, the need for simplicity and equality.

At the age of eighty he was on his way to Kuśinagara, the town in which he passed into parinirvāṇa. Taking leave of the pleasant city of Vaiśālī with his favourite disciple, Ānanda, he rested on one of the neighbouring hills and looking at the pleasant scenery with its many shrines and sanctuaries, he said to Ānanda; citram jambūdvipam, manoramam jīvītam manusyāṇām. 'Colourful and rich is India, lovable and charming is the life of men.' On the banks of the river Hiranyavatī in a grove of sāla trees, the Buddha had a bed prepared for himself between two trees. He gently consoled his disciple, Ānanda, who was lamenting bitterly. 'Do not weep, do not despair, Ānanda. From all that he loves man must part. How could it be that what is born, what is subject to instability, should not pass? Maybe, you were thinking, 'We have no longer a master.' That must not be, O Ānanda. The doctrine I have preached to you is your master.' He repeated: 

handa dāni bhikkhave āmantayāmi vo
vayadhammā sankhūrā, appamādāna sampādetha'ṭi.

Verily, I say unto you now, O monks: All things are perishable; work out your deliverance with earnestness.

These were his last words. His spirit sank into the depths of mystic absorption and when he had attained to that degree where all thought, all conception disappears, when the consciousness of individuality ceases, he entered into the supreme nirvāṇa.

II

In the life of the Buddha, there are two sides, individual and social. The familiar Buddha-image is of a meditating sage, yogin, absorbed and withdrawn, lost in the joy of his inner meditation. This is the tradition associated with Theravāda Buddhism and Aśoka's missions. For these the Buddha is a man, not God, a teacher and not a saviour. There is the other side of the Buddha's life, when he is concerned with the sorrows of men, eager to enter their lives, heal their troubles and spread his message for the good of the many: bahu-jana-sukhāya bahu-jana-hitāya. Based on this compassion for humanity, a second tradition matured in North
India under the Kuśāṇas (70-480 A.D.) and the Guptas (320-650 A.D.). It developed the ideal of salvation for all, the discipline of devotion and the way of universal service. While the former tradition prevails in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, the latter is found in Nepal, Tibet, Korea, China and Japan.

All forms of Buddhism, however, agree that the Buddha was the founder, that he strove and attained transcendental wisdom as he sat under the Bodhi tree, that he pointed a way from the world of suffering to a beyond, the undying, and those who follow the path for liberation may also cross to the wisdom beyond. This is the root of the matter, the essential unity underlying the many differences in outlook and expression that came to characterize Buddhism as it spread from India to other parts of the world.

The essence of all religion is a change in man's nature. The conception of second birth, dvitiyam janma, is the central teaching of the Hindu and the Buddhist religions. Man is not one but a multiplicity. He is asleep, he is an automaton. He is inwardly discordant. He must wake up, become united, harmonious within himself and free. The Greek mysteries implied this change in our nature. Man himself is conceived as a grain which could die as a grain but be reborn as a plant different from the grain. A bushel of wheat has two possible destinies, to be pounded and made into flour and become bread; or to be sown in the ground, to germinate and become a plant, and give a hundred grains for one that is sown. St. Paul borrowed this idea in describing the Resurrection when he says: 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' The change is a transformation of the substance itself. Man is not a complete, final being. He is a being who can transform himself, who can be born again. To effect this change, to be reborn, to be awakened is the goal of all religions as of Buddhism.

Our subjection to time, to samsāra, is due to avidyā, unawareness, leading to infatuation, depravity, āsava. Ignorance and craving are the substratum of the empirical life. From avidyā we must rise to vidyā, bodhi, enlightenment. When we have vipassanā, knowledge by seeing, clear perception, we will acquire samatā, unshakable calm. In all this, the Buddha adopts the Vedic criterion of certainty which is rooted in actual knowledge which is attained by immediate experience, direct intellectual intuition of reality: yathā-bhūta-

ānādassana.
III

The Buddha did not feel that he was announcing a new religion. He was born, grew up, and died a Hindu. He was restating with a new emphasis the ancient ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilization. ‘Even so have I, monks, seen an ancient way, an ancient road followed by the wholly awakened ones of olden times......Along that have I gone, and the matters that I have come to know fully as I was going along it, I have told to the monks, nuns, men and women lay-followers, even monks, this Brahma-faring, brahma-cariya that is prosperous and flourishing, widespread and widely known, become popular—in short, well made manifest for gods and men.’

The quest of religious India has been for the incomparable safetys, fearlessness, ābhaya, mokṣa, nirvāṇa. It is natural for man to strive to elevate himself above earthly things, to go out from the world of sense, to free his soul from the trammels of existence and gross materiality, to break through the outer darkness into the world of light and spirit. The Buddha aims at a new spiritual existence attained through jñāna or bodhi, absolute illumination. ‘But I deem the highest goal of a man to be the stage in which there is neither old age, nor fear, nor disease, nor birth, nor death, nor anxieties and in which there is no continuous renewal of activity.’

pade tu yasmin na jarā na bhūr na ruṇ na janma naivoparamo na cādhayah

tam eva manye puruṣārtham uttamam na vidyate yatra punah punah kriyā.

The Buddha aimed at a spiritual experience in which all selfish craving is extinct and with it every fear and passion. It is a state of perfect inward peace, accompanied by the conviction of having attained spiritual freedom, a state which words cannot describe. Only he who has experienced it knows what it is. The state is not life in paradise where the gods dwell. ‘You should feel shame and indignation, if ascetics of other schools ask you if it is in order to arise in a divine world that ascetic life is practised under the ascetic Gautama.’ Even as the Upaniṣads distinguish mokṣa from life in brahmaloka, the Buddha points out that the gods belong to the world of manifestation and cannot therefore be called absolutely unconditioned. Existence has its correlative non-existence. The really unconditioned is beyond both existence and

1 Sanāyutta Nikāya
2 Āsvaghoṣa : Buddhacarita, XI, 59
non-existence. The state of the *mukta*, the Buddha, is higher than that of Brahmā. It is invisible, resplendent and eternal. There is a higher than the gods, a transcendental Absolute described in the *Udāna* as *ajāta*, unborn, *abhūta*, unbecome, *akata*, unmade, *asankhata*, uncompounded. This is the Brahman of the Upaniṣads which is characterized as *na iti, na iti*. The Buddha calls himself *brahmabhūta*, he who has become Brahman. The Buddha adopted an absolutist view of Ultimate Reality though not a theistic one. He felt that many abstained from action in the faith that God would do everything for them. They seemed to forget that spiritual realization is a growth from within. When the educated indulged in vain speculations about the Inexpressible, the uneducated treated God as a being who could be manipulated by magic rites or sorcery. If God forgives us anyway, it makes little difference how we live. The Buddha revolted against the ignorance and superstition, the dread and the horror, which accompanied popular religion. Besides, theistic views generally fill men’s minds with dogmatism and their hearts with intolerance. Doctrinal orthodoxy has filled the world with unhappiness, injustice, strife, crime, and hatred.

The conception of the world as *saṁsāra*, a stream without end, where the law of karma functions, is common to all Indian systems, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh. Nothing is permanent, not even the gods. Even death is not permanent, for it must turn to new life. The conduct of the individual in one life cannot determine his everlasting destiny. The Buddha does not accept a fatalistic view. He does not say that man has no control over his future. He can work out his future, become an *arhat*, attain nirvāṇa. The Buddha was an ardent exponent of the strenuous life. Our aim is to conquer time, overcome *saṁsāra* and the way to it is the moral path which results in illumination.

The Buddha did not concede the reality of an unchangeable self, for the self is something that can be built up by good thoughts and deeds, but yet he has to assume it. While karma relates to the world of objects, of existence, in time, nirvāṇa assumes the freedom of the subject, of inwardness. We can stand out of our existential limits. We experience the nothingness, the void of the world to get beyond it. To stand out of objective existence

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1 Cf. also: ‘From which the words turn back together with the mind, not having attained.’—*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 11, 4. In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* it is said: ‘Before the gods sprang into existence, I was.’ 11, 8, 8
there must come upon the individual a sense of crucifixion, a sense of agonizing annihilation, a sense of the bitter nothingness of all the empirical existence which is subject to the law of change, of death: maraṇāntam hi jīvitam. We cry from the depths of unyielding despair: mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya. Who shall save me from the body of this death? If death is not all, if nothingness is not all, there is something which survives death, though it cannot be described. The ‘I’ is the unconditioned, something which has nothing to do with the body, feeling, perception, formations, thought, which are all impermanent, changeable, non-substantial. When the individual knows that what is impermanent is painful, he becomes detached from them and becomes free. The indispensable prerequisite of this is a higher consciousness of an ‘I’ or something like it: attena vā attaniyena.1 This ‘I’ is the primordial essential self, the unconditioned, whose realization gives us liberty and power. The self is not body, feeling, consciousness, etc. But from this it does not follow that there is no self at all. The ego is not the only content of the self, though it is the only content that can be known objectively. There is another side to our self which helps us to attain nirvāṇa. The two selves are contrasted when the one is said to reproach the other; attāpi attānam upavadati. When the Buddha asks us to be diligent, to strive for salvation, he is referring to the inward principle which is not swept away by the current of events, which is not controlled by outward circumstances, which protects itself from the usurpations of society, which does not submit to human opinion but jealously guards its rights. The enlightened is free, having broken all bonds. The ascetic is one who has gained mastery over himself, ‘who has his heart in his power, and is not himself in the power of his heart’.2 The Buddha when he attained nirvāṇa is far from being dissolved into non-being. It is not he that becomes extinct but the passions and desires. He is no longer conditioned by the erroneous notions and selfish desires that normally go on shaping individuals. The Buddha realizes himself to be free from the characteristics that constitute an individual subject. He has vanished from the sphere of dualities. ‘Whatever thought he does not desire, that thought will he not think.’3

1 Majjhima Nikāya, XXIX
2 Ibid, XXXII
3 Aṅguttara, IV, 35; Majjhima, XX
The Buddha taught us to pursue praṇā and practise compassion, karunā. We will be judged not by the creeds we profess or the labels we wear or the slogans we shout but by our sacrificial work and brotherly outlook. Man, weak as he is, subject to old age, sickness and death, in his ignorance and pride condemns the sick, the aged and the dead. If anyone looks with disgust on any fellow-being who is sick or old or dead, he would be unjust to himself. We must not find fault with the man who limps or stumbles along the road, for we do not know the shoes he wears or the burdens he bears. If we learn what pain is, we become the brothers of all who suffer.

IV

Buddhism did not start as a new and independent religion. It was an offshoot of the more ancient faith of the Hindus, perhaps a schism or a heresy. While the Buddha agreed with the faith he inherited on the fundamentals of metaphysics and ethics, he protested against certain practices which were in vogue at the time. He refused to acquiesce in the Vedic ceremonialism. When he was asked to perform some of these rites, he said: ‘And as for your saying that for the sake of Dharma I should carry out the sacrificial ceremonies which are customary in my family and which bring the desired fruit, I do not approve of sacrifices for I do not care for happiness which is sought at the price of others’ suffering.’

It is true that the Upaniṣads also subordinate the sacrificial piety to the spiritual religion which they formulate, but they did not attack it in the way in which the Buddha did. The Buddha’s main object was to bring about a reformation in the religious practices and a return to the basic principles. All those who adhere to the essential framework of the Hindu religion and attempt to bring it into conformity with the voice of awakened conscience are treated as avatāras. It is an accepted view of the Hindus that the Supreme as Viṣṇu assumed different forms to accomplish different purposes for the good of mankind. The Buddha was accepted as an avatāra who reclaimed Hindus from sanguinary rites and erroneous

1 Cf. rudrākṣam, tulasī-kāṣṭham, tripūḍram, bhasma-dhāranam, yātrāḥ snānāni homāḥ ca, jāpā vā deva-dāraṇam, na ete punanti manujaṁ yathā bhūta-hite-ratiḥ.

2 Buddhacarita, XI, 64
  yadāṭṭha cāpiṣṭaphalām kulocitām kuruvṣya dharmāya makha-kriyām iti-namo makhebhyo na hi kāmaya sukham parasyā
duhkha-kriyād yad iṣyate.
practices and purified their religion of the numerous abuses which had crept into it. This *avatāra* doctrine helps us to retain the faith of the ancestors while effecting reforms in it. Our Purāṇas describe the Buddha as the ninth *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.

In Jayadeva’s *Aṣṭapadi* (of the *Gīta-govinda*) he refers to the different *avatāras* and mentions the Buddha as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, and gives the following account:

O you of merciful heart denounced the Veda where the slaughter of cattle is taught. O Keśava, you, in the form of the Budha, victory to you, Hari lord of the world.

*nindasi yajñavidher ahaha śruti-jātam*

*sadaya-hṛdaya, darśita paśu-ghātam*

*kesava dhṛta-buddhaśarīra jaya jagadīśa hare.*

The commentator writes:

*yajñasya-vidhāna-bodhakam veda-samūham nindasi, na tu sarvam ity arthah.*

The Buddha does not condemn the whole Śruti but only that part of it which enjoins sacrifices. Jayadeva sums up the ten *avatāras* in the next verse:

Who upheld the Vedas, supported the universe, bore up the world, destroyed the demons, deceived Bali, broke the force of the Kṣatriyas, conquered Rāvana, made the plough, spread mercy, prevailed over aliens, homage, O Kṛṣṇa who took the ten forms.

*vedān uddharate, jagan nivahate, bhūgolam udbibhrate,*

*dāityān dārayate, balim chalayate, kṣatra-kṣayam kurvate,*

*paulastyam jayate, halam kalayate, kāruṇyam ātanvate,*

*mlecchān mūrcchayate daśā-kṛṣṭi-kṛte kṛṣṇāya tubhyam namah.*

The commentator writes:

*kāruṇyam kṛpām ātanvate buddha-rūpeṇa vistārayate.*

The Buddha utilized the Hindu inheritance to correct some of its expressions. He came to fulfil, not to destroy. For us, in this country, the Buddha is an outstanding representative of our religious tradition. He left his footprints on the soil of India and his mark on the soul of the country with its habits and convictions. While the teaching of the Buddha assumed distinctive forms in the other countries of the world in conformity with their own traditions, here, in the home of the Buddha, it has entered into and become an integral part of our culture. The Brāhmaṇas and the Śramāṇas were treated alike by the Buddha and the two traditions gradually blended. In a sense the Buddha is a maker of modern Hinduism.
Occasionally humanity after an infinite number of gropings, creates itself, realizes the purposes of its existence in one great character and then again loses itself in the all too slow process of dissolution. Some of the practices associated with Buddhism are not quite consistent with the spirit of the Buddha. The Buddha aimed at the development of a new type of free man, free from prejudices, intent on working out his own future, with one's self as one's light, atta-dīpa. His humanism crossed racial and national barriers. Yet the chaotic condition of world affairs reflects the chaos in men's souls. History has become universal in spirit. Its subject matter is neither Europe nor Asia, neither East nor West, but humanity in all lands and ages. In spite of political divisions, the world is one, whether we like it or not. The fortunes of everyone are linked up with those of others. But we are suffering from an exhaustion of spirit, an increase of egoism, individual and collective, which seem to make the ideal of a world society too difficult to desire. The enemy we have to fight is within ourselves. It is no use railing against God or Destiny, for we bring disgrace on ourselves. What we need today is a spiritual view of the universe for which this country, in spite of all its blunders and follies, has stood, which may blow through life again, bursting the doors and flinging open the shutters of man's life. We must recover the lost ideal of spiritual freedom: ātma-lābhāṁ na param vidyate. If we wish to achieve peace we must maintain that inner harmony, that poise of the soul, which are the essential elements of peace. We must possess ourselves though all else be lost. The free spirit sets no bounds to its love, recognizes in all human beings a spark of the Divine, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind. It casts off all fear except that of wrong-doing, passes the bounds of time and death and finds inexhaustible power in life eternal.

BUDDHA MEMORIAL IN DELHI

It is my great privilege as the Chairman of the Working Committee to request you, Mr Prime Minister, to lay the foundation stone for the memorial which we propose to raise to mark

1 dīpa is sometimes taken as dvīpa, island.

Speech at the laying of the foundation stone of the Buddha Memorial in Delhi, 23 May, 1956
the 2500th anniversary of Gautama the Buddha’s parinirvāṇa. It is a matter of great pride to recall that the Master whose teachings have influenced a large part of the world belonged to this country, was trained in its religious background and gave consistent utterance to its deepest aspirations. Even today his teaching has an appeal to open minds and unprejudiced hearts.

The mark of a great genius is his astonishing universality. The more we think of him the more we feel that he is the contemporary of every generation.

Rationalism

The Buddha helps us to adopt a middle course between the two extremes of superstition which has answers to everything and scepticism which has answers to nothing. The influence of science is powerful and pervasive and it is unfavourable to much that passes for religion; we are not prepared to accept unquestioningly any traditional faith. The Buddha does not wish us to accept statements on authority, to be satisfied with second-hand evidence, to believe in miracles and marvels which cannot be empirically repeated. Religion cannot afford to claim exemption from enquiry and if it does so on the ground of its sanctity it will draw upon itself the suspicion that it is afraid to face the light. The Buddha does not want us to adopt theories which cannot be verified by empirical observation:

parikṣya bhikṣavo grāhyam mad-vaco na tu gauravāt.

You must accept my words after examining them and not merely out of regard for me.

The Buddha refused to accept views on the authority of others:

parasya vākyair na mamātra niścayah.

He resisted every form of tyranny over the mind of man. He insisted on clean and clear thinking, on what one may call the morality of thought. He tells his disciples to ‘speak only of that on which you yourselves have meditated, which you yourselves have known, which you yourselves have understood.’1 The Buddha tells Ānanda that he has no such thing as a closed fist, baddhamuṣṭi. The system of metaphysics and ethics which the Buddha teaches relies very little on the supernatural. He does not appeal to the irrational, sentimental, emotional sides of our nature.

Empiricism

The other characteristic of our age is its profound empiricism.

1 Majjhima Nikāya, XXXVIII
Experience is not limited to the perception of facts in the visible world of space and time. Indian religions ask us to take our stand on experience. The ṛṣis are the seers, sadā paśyanti sūrayāḥ. Religion is essentially a transforming experience, an illumined life. It is essentially a reborn-ness. A Sufi mystic says: ‘He who is born from the womb sees only this world; only he who is born out of himself sees the other world.’ The four Aryan truths, catvāri-ārya satyāṇī are the results of the Buddha’s personal experience. He expounds the truth as he has discovered it. He does not impose his ideas on others. He says: ‘I will not force you as a potter his raw clay.’ The Buddha asks us to test and see for ourselves.

Freedom from Dogmatism

In the spirit of this country, he pointed out that the highest spiritual freedom is incapable of doctrinal formulation. The end remains untold. It has no sign. It is a gnosis that cannot be adequately communicated. The Buddha has no opinions, for he has seen. His declarations come fresh and breathless, hot and glistening from the baptism of inner experience. He has a great shyness, a profound reticence. An experience is not a theory. He rejects the contending formulas of the intellect as inadequate either to lead to or express the paradoxical truth. The inward spirit of truth challenges all forms. Language makes reality more articulate than it is. Language is at best an instrument and like all instruments subject to imperfection. The doctrines are rebuked, defeated and swallowed up again in experience. We must see before we say. The Buddha condemns the tendency to dogmatize as a bond and condemns those who proclaim: ‘Only this is truth: foolishness is the rest.’ He discouraged intellectual discussions, theological controversies about ultimate problems. He looked upon those who affirmed their doctrines to be final as guilty of intellectual pride. The Buddha has great respect for other people. In the world in which he grew up he respected the various divinities and the popular cults associated with them. Any religion which induces intolerance, pride, or a sense of superiority lacks authenticity. The true God is the God of all men. He is larger than our views of him.

From ancient times in India, all religions have formed a

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1 Majjima Nikāya, CXX, II
2 Sutta Nipāta, X. 74
3 Ibid, IV. 12; XIII. 17-19
brotherhood. Their leaders and disciples communicated with one another, held conferences and contributed their share to the profound and steady movement of mankind towards a higher life. The so-called secularism of India is an acknowledgment of this truth, that spiritual life, jñāna or wisdom, bodhi or enlightenment is not one particular religion opposed to others. It is not materialism or irreligion. It does not mean that we believe in good roads and railways or radio sets and motor cars. It means that we do not believe in a religion which requires us to hate other religions or feel superior to them.

Moral Life: Social Justice

In morals, the Buddha avoided the two extremes of the pursuit of worldly desires and severe ascetic discipline culminating in the annihilation of the body. While his faith is rooted in inward experience, it demands expression in action which makes for social justice, equal rights for all races and creeds. The dignity of the individual person demands the abolition of all restrictions which injure human dignity and fracture human community. The Buddha protested against all those who protected social injustice in the name of social justice. The Buddha makes respectful references to the Brāhmaṇas who are observant of their vows and contrasts them with the jāti Brāhmaṇas, Brahmans only by birth. He classes the worthy śramaṇas with the good Brāhmaṇas.¹ The religious life was open to all men. We have yet to realize our duties to the injured and the insulted.

Buddhism does not place obstacles in the way of human progress by its rigidity in thought or legalism in morality. It encourages the development of human thought, human virtue and human beauty.

World Peace

In our troubled world, the message of the Buddha gives us a voice of hope. He tells us that peace cannot be secured by methods of war. ‘Victory breeds hatred, the conquered live in sorrow.’² War leads to a vicious circle of hatred, oppression, subversive movements, false propaganda, rearmament and new wars. Hatred cannot be conquered by hatred. It can be conquered by love. Men must cease to be warlike, and become non-violent. We require another manifestation of the spirit of love to break through the encircling

¹ See the last chapter of the Dhammapada
² Ibid, XV, 5
gloom, and bring about a new alignment of man’s relation to man, of race to race, of nation to nation.

Pañcaśīla

The Buddhist Pañcaśīla prohibits killing under any circumstances; since we cannot give life we should not take life. It insists on respecting other people’s property, detests the life of unchastity and of falsehood and forbids the use of intoxicants. Its adoption will lead to a change in man’s outlook.

The progress of Buddhism has been helped by men who did not belong officially to the Buddhist faith. Many of the Buddhist monuments, monasteries and centres of learning were built by non-Buddhists. We have believed for over forty centuries, in spite of material dangers, that what is sacred to any people is sacred to all. Our Prime Minister has been pleading for civilized, co-operative co-existence of the nations of the world as against the aggressive, armed co-existence. He today voices the spirit of reason and the ethics of compassion in national and international affairs. He stands for a robust rationalism, ethical idealism, social and racial equality and world peace. I have therefore great pleasure in inviting him on behalf of the Working Committee and the people of our country to lay the foundation stone of this twentieth century memorial to the great Buddha.

BUDDHA JAYANTI

Today, the Vaisākha Pūrṇimā completes 2500 years of the Buddhist era. It marks the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa. When we meet today, it should be our endeavour to recall the great teachings of the Master and resolve to practice them to the best of our ability. This country has been the home of many great teachers of humanity. It is great not only because great people lived in it long ago but also because great people continue to live in it. Mahatma Gandhi and others unknown to name and fame have been holding up the torch of India’s ideals. In the Mahābhārata Yudhiṣṭhirā tells Vidura:

bhavad vidhāḥ bhāgavatāḥ tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayam prabhōḥ
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāṇi svāntasthena gadābhṛtā.

Address at the public meeting to celebrate Buddha Jayanti in Delhi, 24 May, 1956
Of course, places become sacred not because once upon a
time there lived great spirits but because even now we are striving
to shape our lives on the patterns we have before us.

The very name Buddha makes out that the mark of religion is
an awakening. The Buddha is the awakened one. In the Śatapatha
Brāhmaṇa the word used for knowing is pratibuddha. The mother
of the Buddha is Māyā Devī and her father’s name is Su-prabuddha.
The Bhagavadgītā tells us: ‘What is night for all beings is the
time of waking for the disciplined soul; and what is the time of
waking for all beings is night for the sage who sees (or the sage
of vision).’

yā niśā sarvabhūtānāṁ tasyām jāgarti saṁyāmī
yasyām jāgratī bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ.¹

It is said of Jesus Christ that he was ‘the first fruits of them that
slept’.

ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāṇjana śalākayā
cakṣur unmiłitaṁ yena tasmai śrī gurave namah.

‘I bow to the divine teacher, who opens the eyes of one who
is blinded by the disease of ignorance by means of the principle
(the collyrium) of knowledge.’ The very name ‘guru’ means the
remover of ignorance; gu is andha-kāra or darkness; ru is the re-
mover of darkness. The remover of darkness is ‘guru’. Religion
gives light to those that sit in darkness and makes the darkness
comprehend the light that is shining in it.

Awakening or enlightenment, bodhi or jñāna is the achievement
of clarity of vision which expels all illusion. It is an inward renewal,
a rebirth of the creative power in the heart. The world of spirit
is not a poetic phrase but a strange kind of fact which we cannot
ignore. The Supreme is not so much an inferred theory as an
intuited fact apprehended by the total being of man. It is not the
satisfaction of any particular side of our nature, cognitive, emo-
tional, or volitional, but is the fulfilment of one’s whole being.
It is participation in the mystery of being.

Enlightenment is not something given but a task. Man is the
architect of his own future. Man has to mould himself. He must
re-group his inward resources, tidy up his mind which is generally
dispersed. The path of wisdom is not reached in an easy way.
We must reach it in solitude and labour night and day. The
Dhammapada says: ‘The Buddhas do but tell the way; it is for each

¹ 11, 69
one of us to swelter at the task.'

The way to the attainment of this goal is through the eight-fold moral path. The first step is right views. The Buddha insists on clean and clear thinking, on what we may call the morality of thought. Dāna, dāma and dayā of the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad are embodied in the eight-fold path. It is the cleansing of the heart that is called for. The Buddha insists on a clean heart, the right frame of mind. He demands the observance of religion, not religiosity. 'Monkery is not piety,' says Erasmus. Mātrceta makes the Buddha say:

\begin{quote}
What harm has your hair done? Shave off your sins. What earthly good is a monk's robe to a mind besmirched? keśāḥ kim aparādhyaṁ kleśānāṁ muṇḍanam kuru sa-kaśāyasya cittasya kāśāyaiḥ kim prayojanam.
\end{quote}

We must rid ourselves of the anxious craving, of fiery, self-devouring desire. We must become changed men before society can be changed.

The Buddha gave his message against a background of religious practice which he sought not so much to repudiate as to purify. The state of our society today requires purification. The system of caste and untouchability which we still tolerate and the absurd rites which still prevail in rural areas require to be removed. At a time like the present when we are engaged in re-building our country, we have to guard ourselves against temptations. The greed for power is as injurious as the gambling instinct or love for money. The more we have, the more we want. The country needs today men who adopt as a principle the simple, austere life and rage to suffer for the community. Small considerations of family and caste, religion and community require to be set aside.

The Buddhist Pañchaśīla calls upon us to change our nature. It prohibits killing under any circumstances; since we cannot give life, we should not take life. It insists on respecting other people's property, detests the life unchastity and of falsehood and forbids the use of intoxicants. Its adoption will lead to a change in man's outlook. This spiritual perception should be brought into the space-time world and penetrate it. All nature will then become ablaze with the inward light. It will give us an essential serenity which we retain in the depths of our soul, even when we live in midst of storms, śāntākāram bhujagaśayanam.
When transferred to the international plane, it becomes a code of international morality requiring us to practise non-aggression, non-interference, peaceful, co-operative, educative co-existence.

We must strive to bind up the wounds of the suffering world, build an abiding peace, a peace rooted in justice. For this we should be transformed, and develop love whose presence reconciles all enmities, melts all hatreds and kindles to active life all powers that seem to resist it.

The Buddha taught us to be ready to oppose injustice with courage, break down the barriers of caste and race which disfigure the human community. He fed the hungry, nursed the sick, consorted with criminals and outcasts, lifted up the down-trodden and the condemned and demanded by his teaching and example that we love even our enemies. If these meetings help us to remember his full life, celebrate his sure vision, worship his large heart which ministered to the needs of the lowly and the lost, we shall ourselves be touched a little by the Buddha’s greatness.

It is my great pleasure to request the President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, to preside over this public meeting convened to mark the 2500th anniversary of Gautama the Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa. Dr Rajendra Prasad comes from a part of our country which is rich in deep and moving memories of the Buddha’s life. In him we have one who has been greatly influenced by the different religious traditions which have found a home in our country. It is most appropriate that such an ardent lover of the deep things of spirit should take the Chair today.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF FAITHS, TOKYO

I am greatly honoured by your generous words of welcome and appreciative references to my humble work in promoting fellowship among the faiths of the world.

We should like our generation to go down in history not as the one which split the atom or made the hydrogen bomb but as the one which brought together the peoples of the world and transformed them into a world community. Now that the nations have

Inaugural Address, 3 October, 1956
come to each other’s door-steps, we have to develop new methods of human relationships. If civilization is to endure, understanding among peoples is essential. The world has got together as a body, it is groping for its soul. We need psychological unity, spiritual coherence. We are eager to promote peace and concord among men through several international agencies. The UNO, ILO, UNESCO, WHO are some of them. If we can have a United Nations Organization, cannot we have a United Religions Organization? Unfortunately, while all religions proclaim faith in righteous living, international peace and the brotherhood of men, they are unwilling to co-operate with one another. They compete with one another and keep their followers apart. The world has shrunk and different religions are facing one another. To get them into a fellowship is an imperative necessity. Though we may have our special loyalties, we may appreciate whatever is true, noble, lovely, and of good report. We do not propose an eclectic religion. We do not encourage the merging together of different faiths into a vague synthetic creed. We wish to bring the followers of different faiths together, promote goodwill and understanding among them, help them to see that each faith in its own way is attempting to transform the animal man into the Godman. The ascent of man from the animal to the human, from the human to the spiritual, from unrest to serenity, from darkness into radiance, is the aim of religion.

Eastern religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and others influenced by them have been looking upon different religions not as rivals but as friendly partners in nourishing the spiritual life of mankind. Their approach to religion has been essentially empirical. Religion is an experience. The Hindu Scriptures, the Vedas, register the experiences of seers who grappled with the fundamental reality. Their claim to acceptance does not rest on the logical validity of a set of propositions about God or the historical validity of their reports about his activities. Such statements may be shaken by scientific or historical discoveries. The claim of the Vedas rests on spiritual experience which is the birthright of every man. This experience may be gained by anyone who undergoes a certain discipline and puts forth an effort. From the time of the Rg Veda down till today the Hindus adopted an attitude of respect for other faiths. Though India suffered as a result of her tolerance, she never abandoned her attitude of respect for other religions and regarded
them as varied expressions of the religious spirit, as symbolic representations, naturally conditioned by time, place and the limitations of the human mind. The idea of fellowship of faiths is not uncongenial to the Hindu mind. The Buddha adopted a similar attitude. He called upon his followers to avoid doctrinal controversies. In his time endless disputes over theoretical inferences from undemonstrable premises confused, distracted and exasperated the seekers of truth. He wished them to look at the world and find out its character. We see the essential perishableness of things, the evanescence of nature and the consequent sorrow and suffering. The realization of the temporality of the world is the first step in the awakening of the religious spirit. After the two World Wars and the great social upheavals which they have produced, the precariousness of the human predicament is widely felt. We live in a period when we suffer from loneliness and anxiety, from a loss of certainties. How can we gain security in a world in which very little seems to be secure? How can we gain awareness which will bring freedom and courage? How can we discover a new centre of strength within ourselves which will save us from insecurity? The Buddha tells us that we can rise from darkness, ignorance, death to light, wisdom and immortality. This world of saṁśara is not all. We can know the truth by experience. Whitehead’s well-known saying that religion is what a man does with his solitariness is a comment on that central principle of Zen Buddhism, that dhyāna or devout contemplation, profound and intense, has for its result, prajñā or wisdom. This school of Buddhism founded by Bodhidharma who died in A.D. 475 asks us to reject all sūtras and śāstras, eschew all philosophy and rely entirely on mystical contemplation. Through it we have moments of vision, intimations of immortality. Man can know the truth about himself. By pondering over his ignorance and incomprehension he can vanquish them.

Awareness of the transcendent is something given in immediate experience. Religion is not doctrinal conformity or ceremonial piety, but it is participation in the mystery of being. It is wisdom or insight into reality. There cannot be any scripture or teaching of that which cannot be adequately expressed. anāksarasya dharmaṁya śrutih kā deśanā ca kā. We have the famous Rock Edict of Aśoka which asks us to respect other religions. By disparaging other religions, he tells us, we hurt our own. An injustice done to others is an injustice done to oneself.
In a variety of ways Hindu and Buddhist thinkers have laid stress on the transcendent unity of religions along with their empirical diversity. The goal of religion is one but the paths leading to it are many. The cows may be of different colours but the milk they give is of one colour, white. The lamps may be different but the light, the flame, the illumination they generate is the same. The story of the elephant and the six blind men is well known. When our eyes are opened we see that the different parts we stressed are parts of one whole, different sides of one truth.

If, in this country shrines and temples co-exist, if people respect all the religions, it is not due to confusion of mind. Shintoism and Buddhism are mixed up in Japan. Shinto divinities are said to be the spirits of the Buddhist pantheon and Shinto religious practices are accepted as means to enlightenment. The two faiths were treated as different expressions of the same truth. We sometimes find temples used as houses of worship by both religions. While the Greeks and the Romans adopted a similar attitude of hospitality to other religions, another attitude has also prevailed. Yahweh announced himself to Moses as a ‘jealous God’ commanding first of all that no other gods should be tolerated and he remained jealous even when his rule was extended to the whole race of men. Christianity and Islam inherited this viewpoint which equated contempt for false gods with supreme piety. This frame of mind has had terrible consequences in the long history of persecutions. When we insist on right belief, we are punished not only for the worship of other gods but for wrong views about his own unknowable nature. Petrarch wrote: ‘The Turks are enemies but the Greeks are schismatics and worse than enemies.’

Today, when we are tired of a world of unreliable faiths and intolerable beliefs we are giving up incredible dogmas and emphasizing the central truths in all religions. The prophets of Israel emphasize the simplicities of religion. Amos declared that Yahweh cared nothing for ceremonial worship but only for justice and righteousness. Hosea stressed not merely his righteousness but his love. Micah sums up the whole in these words: ‘He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.’

Christian thinkers, who occupy a leading position, are emphasizing the central truths of Jesus’ teaching. We are not inclined
to take any religious truth as an exclusive divine revelation. A revelation granted to a small group at a particular moment in history, reconstructed by fallible men in narratives which are not always consistent, does not appeal to intelligent men. The case becomes worse when we are unable to agree upon the doctrine or embody it in society. Jesus asks us to be reborn, to be renewed, to wake up from our ignorant, unregenerate condition. By their fruits and not by their beliefs ye shall know them. Augustine said that if one knows the object of his belief, then what he knows is not God. A God of love will reveal himself to all men who seek him though none would expect to know him wholly. The idea that there is no salvation except through the Christian Church has not been accepted by all Christian thinkers. There are saintly figures in classical antiquity as well as in Old Testament records. Erasmus, for example, gave a place in heaven to Socrates and Aristotle, Virgil and Cicero. Dante exemplifies this tradition when he makes Virgil his guide not only in hell but also in purgatory right into the paradise. Even in the Bible there are figures neither Jewish nor Christian who are presented as saintly.

Muhammad tells us: 'There is not a people but a warner has gone among them and every nation had a messenger.'

All the religions of mankind under the stress of modern thought are moving forward to a realization of the spirit of religion, a reaching forth to the fundamental and lasting verities of truth and love. Many of their followers are slowly realizing that exclusiveness is a blight on religion. Any religion which generates pride and a sense of intolerance is not authentic. We must develop a spirit of cooperation among the different religions. Mutual respect helps us to interpret other religions at their best and learn from them. We cannot have respect for another religion when all the time our attempt is to obliterate it. We should not try to undermine faith and allegiance of other peoples. na buddhibhedam janayet ajñānām karmasaṅginām. By preaching that we have the only method of social and religious salvation, we separate ourselves from others.

At a time like this when we live in fear of the future on account of the great advances of science and technology, it is essential for all those who have faith in the wisdom and love of God, whatever may be their religious denominations, to get together, form a sacra-
mental brotherhood and work for fellowship in which alone lies the redemption of man.

**BUDDHIST ART EXHIBITION, DELHI**

As the chairman of the Buddha Jayanti Committee, it is my great privilege to request you, Mr President, to open the Exhibition of Buddhist Art organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi in connection with the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa. This occasion is used all over the Buddhist world for the revitalizing of the message of the Buddha.

Thought and feeling, intellect and imagination work together and illuminate each other. In our country art has always been closely associated with culture. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹ says that arts are the instruments for the refinement of spirit, ātmasaṁskṛtir vēva śilpāni. It is sometimes thought that Buddhism by its emphasis on self-discipline does not encourage art. But this view is not quite correct. Even the Hinayāna says: ‘He who looks at me looks at my doctrine.’ *yo mām passati so dhammam passati*. Buddhist art has been a great instrument for the spread of Buddhist doctrine. A Mahāyāna text *Ārya-gāndha-vyūha* points out that the sight of the image of the Jina helps the growth of spiritual knowledge: *jinen-drasya darśanam jñāna-vardhanam*. The Buddha himself gives directions to Ānanda to set up caityas.² Sacred art is a vehicle for spiritual lessons.

The typical images which have come down to us from the Indus civilization about 2500 B.C. represent self-mastery and simple goodness which are the essential features of spiritual life emphasized by the Buddha in the sixth century B.C. In the first two or three centuries after the Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa he was represented symbolically from the scenes of his life. His birth was indicated by a garden in the midst of which stood a tree and his mother, his renunciation by a horse, his enlightenment by the bodhi tree, his first sermon by a wheel flanked by deer. It is interesting to find that the Buddha was born under a tree in the Lumbini garden, attained enlightenment under a tree at Bodh-Gaya and entered Parinirvāṇa in a garden at Gaya.

Inaugural Address, 10 November, 1956

¹ VI 5. 1

²*Dīgha Nikāya*, 141, 142
in the shade of a tree at Kusināra. We owe to the Emperor Aśoka (third century B.C.) the monolithic pillar and rock edicts. The finest of them all is the one at Sārnāth erected on the traditional site of the first turning of the Wheel of Dharma. We have taken our emblem of the State from it. Pictorial representations of the Jātaka tales, the stories of the lives of the Buddha in his previous existences are found in the bas-reliefs of Bhārhat and Sāñchi stupas. The many stūpas, caityas containing the relics of the Buddha or other famous teachers and the viharas were the creation of monks and nuns. These are found in all parts of India, Central, South, Eastern and Western, from Kashmir to Kanyā Kumārī, from Cutch to Orissa. Our ancestors of those days had an adequate appreciation of the oneness of our country which we are inclined to forget sometimes.

The first sculptural representations of the Buddha date from about the first century A.D. in the art of the Gāndhāra school which shows Graeco-Roman influence. Examples of this art are found at Bamiyan in North Central Afghanistan where temples were carved from the face of the cliffs and there are two great standing Buddhas 120 and 175 feet high. From Gāndhāra this art spread to Mathurā and Amarāvati. The bas-reliefs decorating the great stūpa at Amarāvati (second century A.D.) show a great development of Gāndhāra art. Buddhist art reached great heights in the Gupta period of which the Ajanta paintings and the sculptures at Mathurā and Sārnāth are lofty expressions. The figures of the Ajanta paintings may be old but they are alive and speak to our emotions directly. Spared by the chances of time we have the remains of the ancient University of Nālandā to which came many Chinese pilgrims among others after hazardous journeys, to learn from the dedicated monks the truths of Buddhism. It is a pleasure to know that an Institute for Buddhist Studies has been set up recently in Nālandā.

Impressive as the Indian monuments are, for the most moving expressions of the religious emotions of the people, we have to turn to Indonesia, Ceylon, Thailand, Cambodia, Japan and China. The stūpa of Borobudur is perhaps the greatest Buddha monument in existence. In it we have three miles of sculptured panels illustrating the story of the Buddha. In China at the great Buddhist centre of Tun-Huang, in the cave of the thousand Buddhas, Buddhist paintings from about the fourth century of the Christian era are to be found.
This exhibition has over 1,800 articles collected from different parts. We are grateful to the foreign Governments for their kind co-operation, especially the Governments of China, Bhūtan and Sikkim.

The Buddha preaches to us the doctrine of mettā, friendship, karuṇā, compassion. If we accept the Buddha’s teaching of universal love, we will find a purpose in life, a guide in action, a reason for courage. Even if we may not find happiness in life we will not know despair. The best tribute that we can pay to the Buddha is to diminish the distinctions which disrupt our society and encourage the rule of law and respect for justice, and strive to displace international anarchy by international order.

May I request you, Mr President, to open this exhibition.

BUDDHA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

It has been the practice of UNESCO to celebrate the memories of great moulders of history. I had the honour of presiding over the public meeting at the Florence UNESCO General Conference which discussed the message of Confucius. It is a fortunate coincidence that the Ninth General Conference of UNESCO is held in this country this year which marks the 2500th anniversary of Gautama the Buddha’s Parinirvāṇa. I take this opportunity to welcome all the delegates to UNESCO and those who have specially come from distant lands for the Buddha Jayanti.

Though the Buddha was born in this land, grew up in its tradition and left a permanent mark on the stream of events that expresses our culture, his message is of universal significance. In his Funeral Oration Pericles says: ‘The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on, far away without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men’s lives.’ The great makers of history are universal men, living witnesses to the spirit of profound kinship among men in a world sundered by strife and hatred.

The Buddha’s teaching has an appeal to the modern mind which is steeped in the spirit of science and is impelled to sweep away

Speech at the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations organized by UNESCO and the Buddha Jayanti Committee, in Delhi, 24 November, 1956
cant and confusion and examine the traditional faiths with a searching, analytic eye. The Buddha declined to accept views on the authority of others and wished to reach his conclusions by his own experience. He imposed no authority, welcomed all enquiry. He encouraged people to think for themselves. Aśvaghōsa tells us that the Buddha was not prepared to accept the views of others in regard to questions of existence and non-existence in this universe.

ihāsti nāstīti ya eṣa samśayah
parasya vākyair na mamātra niścayāḥ
avetya tattvam tapasā śamena ca
svayam grahiṣyāmi yad atra niścitam.

‘No decision is possible for me on the strength of others’ words. I will arrive at the truth for myself by austerity and silent contemplation and will accept what is determined accordingly in this matter.’

Man’s spiritual quest arises from the consciousness of the transience of things, time’s perpetual perishing. This is a fact of observation, not a theory or dogma. The nightmare of living in a hostile and incomprehensible world causes physical fear and intellectual disquiet. How can we escape from this world of sorrow? All great religions speak of sorrow. The Hindus speak of the sorrowful condition of man. lokam śoka-hatam ca samastam. The Buddha points to man in his unregenerate condition. Christianity speaks of the Fall, of original sin, of the vale of tears. The great teachers do not ask us to live and die in anxiety and darkness. They point a way out. The other fact is that even in this time-conditioned mode of existence, there are moments which are hints and suggestions of the eternal. These moments, intense and isolated, with no before and no after, are the moments in which one is lost in timeless contemplation. They represent the closest most of us ever get to freedom from the flux of events and bondage to time. Time and eternity are not inconsistent with each other and in man they intersect. Freedom from subjection to time, from change and becoming, from birth and death is possible. This is nirvāṇa. When we gain the perspective of the eternal, the troubles of the world do not upset us. Even as all the water in the ocean cannot sink a ship, all the griefs in the world cannot upset our life until it gets into our mind. We can overcome time.

1 IX. 73; see also IX. 74.
Nirvāṇa is something to be achieved. The path of wisdom is not reached in an easy way. We must tread it in solitude and labour night and day. To say that life is suffering is to say that life is tension. Without freeing ourselves from the craving which creates tension, the Buddha says, there is no freedom.

The Buddha was concerned with practice, not theory. He gave an exacting programme of action. He points out the organic relationship between the spiritual goal and the ethical means. Many religious people practise cruelty and violence in the name of their religion. The Buddha sets his face against these immoralities practised in the name of religion. We may utter the names of Rāma, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, or Allah but these are empty words if there is no honour, no vision, no love, no courage or character behind them. It is sad to note the distance that separates high ideals from the reality of human passions. Religious professions and immoral practices stare us in the face. Social inequalities, wars and exploitation of man by man were tolerated in the name of religion. There is some point in the saying: 'God created man but the Devil invented man's institutions.' For Buddha that religion is empty which allows immoral practices. The eight-fold path of morality helps us to realize the spiritual goal of wisdom, illumination, insight into reality. Even as we improve in virtue, we qualify for spiritual life. We transform the world order even as we prepare ourselves for eternal life.

The Buddha called himself a path-finder, a path-shower. His function was to open the eyes of others to the all-encompassing reality. He did not encourage intellectual discussions which turn us aside from the arduous moral quest. The aim of doctrine is to lead to the experience. The experience is spiritual and its expression through external ideas, time-bound and alien to the atmosphere of spiritual life, can only be symbolic. They convey or suggest the experience which lies beyond them. For he knew that the truth is one which no tongue can name and no life can express. 'The Tathāgata has no theories.' Religions preach peace, but are the causes of conflicts because they make the doctrines and practices which are a means to an end, ends in themselves. The dharma, the Buddha says, is like a raft for crossing over to the other shore; when we reach the shore we leave the raft behind. The Buddha never spoke contemptuously of others' beliefs. He did not engage in doctrinal controversies with others. 'If anyone were to find
fault or abuse me or the Doctrine or the Noble Order, do not, monks, for that matter be offended, displeased, or ruffled. If you by any means become offended or perturbed, it will be to your own harm. On the other hand, whenever people hurl abuse and criticize, you should pause and think whether what they say contains some truth or whether what they say is just slander and false. Likewise, monks, if some one were to praise and glorify me, the Doctrine, or the Noble Order, you should not for that matter, feel particularly elated or pleased. If you do so, it will be to your own harm. On the contrary, in such an event you should pause and examine the truth of the matter. You should find out whether what they say is actually to be found in us and whether they are correct.\textsuperscript{1} In Rock Edict XII, Ashoka wishes that the worthiness of all sects may increase, \textit{sāra-vṛddhiḥ}. This arises only by honouring other sects in various ways. \textit{pūjavitavyāḥ tu eva para-pāṣandāḥ tena tena prakāreṇa}. Whoever praises his own sect or blames other sects out of devotion to one's own sect, injures his own sect. Inter-communion alone is commendable, \textit{samavāya eva sādhuḥ}. What is inter-communion or \textit{samavāya}? It is to listen to and respect the doctrines of one another. \textit{anyonyasya dharmam śrṇvantu ca śuṣrūṣeran ca}. In Pillar Edict VII, he makes out that all sects should be treated alike; the Buddhist Sangha, the Brāhmaṇas, the Ājīvikas, the Nigrantha are mentioned specifically. A proper understanding of world society as it is taking shape today requires a study of the classical cultures of other peoples, and the different traditions which treat of the aspirations of mankind. UNESCO is deeply interested in this \textit{sva-dharma-samavāya} which will make for \textit{loka-samgraha} or world solidarity.

The Buddha insists that we are what we make of ourselves. If we wish to save our civilization, we should change our natures. Many great civilizations seemed in their day to be permanent and now the wind blows through their halls and stirs the dust of forgotten cities. When we study history we find everywhere the dust and litter of decayed institutions, broken purposes, ruined cities, mainly due to the outbursts of folly and fury, brutality and violence, the fatal grimness of man to man. Even today the spirit of savage intolerance is there, only new and fearfully destructive weapons are at its service. The only hope is to tame the savageness in us and

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Brahma ala Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya}
subject the world order to moral laws. Peace is our birth-right and we must win it, peace based on justice and freedom.

People like the Buddha make us wiser for ever. The best memorials to him are not the stūpas erected over his ashes but lives well lived in the dharma. If it is taken seriously, the Buddha’s teaching requires a new alignment of man’s relation to man, of nation to nation, of race to race. If we do not change our ways, the night of spiritual blindness will descend upon us, the gains of science and the glories of culture will be lost and man will revert to barbarism. The Buddha gives us hope of transforming the present world into a gentler, kinder and juster place. What we are lacking in is faith, faith in the spirit of man, in the invincibility of righteousness. yato dharmas tato jayah.

It is now my pleasure to request the President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, who is a devotee of the good life, to preside over this meeting.

UNION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

I regret very much that I am not able to be present at Madras for the meetings convened by the Indian branch of the Union for the Study of Religions. I hope the members will forgive my absence and feel that my spirit is there. I am keen that the followers of the different religions should understand one another and interpret other religions at their best and promote a spirit of harmony. In a world haunted by fear and torn by strife what is needed is a spirit of tolerance and understanding, not a mere grudging admission of other religious views but a glad recognition of the variety of the human mind.

William von Humboldt said: ‘If we want to indicate a tendency which is found throughout the course of history, and which still prevails, it is the urge to overcome the boundaries that have been malevolently drawn between men by prejudice and biased opinions of all kinds. The whole of history is permeated by the idea of regarding the whole of mankind as one vast community, and of developing its intrinsic powers. This is the ultimate goal of human societies, thus to realize the tendency inherent in man by virtue of his

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nature. Firmly rooted in the innermost nature of man, the union of all mankind is one of the great guiding ideas in the history of humanity.\(^1\) Though this ideal of world community has been proclaimed by the prophets of all religions, the factors and forces necessary for implementing this ideal are only now available, thanks to the advances of science and technology. We are living in an age of world communications, world trade, and world wars. There is a meeting of cultures and sacred traditions and we are all interested in preserving the characteristic qualities of the different traditions and not letting them merge in a grey monotony. The Union for the Study of Religions attempts not to obliterate differences but study the distinctive qualities of different religions, what they made of themselves, how they were formed and educated themselves by a process of interaction with others. Today humanity will be greatly enriched if the followers of different religions achieve justness in dealing with points of view which are not theirs and learn from one another. Spiritual fellowship is the meaning of history.

Even religions die out and lose all significance if they are not understood and conceived anew by each generation in the light of the new intellectual forces. Our modern civilization is still in the making. Its social ethics have not developed in response to the needs of the modern industrial society. The world today needs reasonableness and not fervour, an understanding that the human predicament and the human quest are the same in all religions. Many educated people find traditional forms of religion too narrow and are searching for a religion at once more rational and more tolerant to give them some anchor in a fluctuating world. Some have adopted scientific humanism; others have embraced political ideologies; some others profess psycho-analysis. Still there are many lost souls who need a religion that is suited to the spirit of the age.

The points on which religions agree are more numerous and important than those on which they differ. The differences are no doubt important but we should not forget to stress the points of agreement.

Man is not exhausted by body and mind. In the complex of human personality there is an element which uses both and yet is neither. The waxing years and the waning strength are quite powerless to dim the brightness of spirit. The spirit is not an object in the world but a subject, the active source of what a man is and

does. It is difficult to be aware of it as an object. As soon as we are aware of anything, we make it into an object of thought. In order to grasp ourselves as subjects we have to look back over our own shoulder and catch ourselves in a split second before the beginning of awareness develops into logical thought. Thus we know ourselves in our reality. This awareness is fundamental because it reveals the real self as it is.

The awareness of the Supreme, the communion with the Absolute defies linguistic description or logical analysis. Each religious doctrine is an approximate statement, a symbolic description of the Absolute Reality. The most illuminating account will fall infinitely short of expressing the Reality in its plenitude. 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' saith the Lord. 'For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' 1 So far as it goes every doctrine is an expression of the Absolute truth, of unique value, standing by itself, differing from others in its degree of illumination. It is an interim provisional report which we have to use to gain the end of awareness of the Supreme. The different religious views are but the dialects of the same language of the spirit. The religious experience they all aim at transcends the differences of words. The documents and the versions may change but the truth remains for ever, unique and indisputable. This truth, these values of spirit have their roots in the most profound depths of the human soul.

Those who have felt the Divine in them have conviction but are free from dogmatism. This is not an Oriental fantasy. It has wide support in the mystic thought of the West.

The seers know that it is wrong to whittle down the sense of mystery, of infinitude into finite and limited concepts. Socrates observes: 'To find the Father and maker of all is hard, and having found him it is impossible to utter him.' Plato long ago declared that knowledge of the Divine cannot be communicated. His famous answer to Dionysius who asked for a short statement of Plato's philosophy sets out the situation in unforgettable words: 'There is no written work of my own on my philosophy, and there never will be. For this philosophy cannot possibly be put into words as other sciences can. The sole way of acquiring it is by strenuous intellectual communion and intimate personal intercourse, which

1 Deutero—Isaiah, LV, 8.9
kindle it in the soul instantaneously like a light caught from a leaping flame; and once alight, it feeds its own flame thenceforward.' The knowledge of God is an experience. About the Mystery Religions, Aristotle said: 'The initiated do not learn anything so much as feel certain emotions and are put in a certain frame of mind.' The important word we come across in the Christian gospels is 'behold'. 'Behold, I make all things new.' The end of man is a creative experience which is an immense enlargement and enrichment of life. Symmachus in his controversy with St. Ambrose observes: 'The heart of so great a mystery cannot even be reached by following one road only.' Whitehead says: 'Mysticism leads us to try to create out of the mystical experience something that will save it, or at least save the memory of it. Words do not convey it except feebly; we are aware of having been in communication with infinitude and we know that no finite form we can give can convey it.' Whitehead observes: 'There are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil.' 'The idea that religion contains a literal, not a symbolical representation of truth and life is simply an impossible idea,' according to Santayana.

Those who have this experience, whatever religion they may adopt, belong to a single spiritual fraternity. These are the saints, who live their life in God and form a spiritual nobility. They have divested themselves of everything and yet lack nothing. They face the chances of the world with equanimity and feel no void. Tulasi-dās refers to this spirit in Rāma:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{prasannatāṁ yā na gatābhisekatas} \\
\text{tathā na mamlau vanavāsa-duhkhatāḥ} \\
\text{mukhāṃbujaśri raghu-nandanasya me} \\
\text{sadāstu sā manjula-maṅgala-pradā.}
\end{align*}
\]

'May that splendour of the lotus-like face of Śrī Rāma which did not glisten with joy at the prospect of his coronation and which likewise did not fade at the sorrow of forest residence be forever the giver of sweet benediction to me.'

To attain this tranquillity, struggle, effort, discipline, personal, purity and right action are essential. The greatest of the saints have had their temptations. It is easy to fight non-human nature, forests, floods and wild beasts, but is difficult to fight the passions in our

2 Ibid, p. 14
heart, the illusions that we embrace. The greatest of the temptations we must overcome is to think that our own religion is the only true religion, our own vision of Reality is the only authentic vision, that we alone have received a revelation and we are the chosen people, the children of light and the rest of the human race lives in darkness. The saints do not believe that God is the exclusive property of any human being or a group of human beings.

Religious education depends far less on the spoken word than on the living examples set by the saints themselves, who live in God, clothed in love and immersed in service. The saints are free from a spirit of snobbery and their daily tasks are charged with meaning, their slightest movements reveal the grace within and their words are weighted with wisdom. They abhor cruelty in every form and detest exploitation of man by man.

I hope that the deliberations of the Madras meetings may help to make us slightly more religious and a little more understanding of other religions.

CRISIS OF CHARACTER

I consider it a great privilege to participate in this function organized to honour a well-known scholar. Such functions are generally organized to honour political leaders. Rarely do scholars come in for such recognition, especially those who have dedicated their lives to the study of philosophy and religion which are the life-springs of our history. The Purāna says that our sins are destroyed when we study the lives of great souls. *sadyah sādhika-pāpam uttama-śloka-varṇanam*. For some years when I was in the Banaras Hindu University Pandit Sukhlalji was the occupant of the Chair of Jaina Philosophy in that University. The way in which he acquired mastery of his subject in spite of his physical handicap is an illustration of the triumph of human spirit over apparently insuperable obstacles. His physical defect opened his inward eyes to the light within.

Pandit Sukhlalji's life is a notable example of true greatness, austere living dedicated to the pursuit of truth. He is a brahma-

Speech on presentation of a purse to Pandit Sukhlalji, Bombay, 15 June, 1957
cārin performing jñāna-yajña. He has trained a band of scholars who are a credit to him and the country. The world of scholars is indebted to him for his profound contributions on Philosophy and Religion. For nearly half a century he has led a life of single-minded devotion. He may not wear the sadhu’s robes but that is not necessary. He should feel happy that his silent, unostentatious work is appreciated not only by his fellow scholars but by the general community.

Men like Sukhlalji give us hope in a world which is witnessing a disruption of the human spirit. It is falling apart on account of its fanatic worship of fictional abstractions, of irrational slogans, of race and community, class and group, nation and religion. Conflicts are made by people who are passionately convinced that what they do is good and right. In all religious wars both sides passionately believed that they did the will of God. The world is overshadowed by the cold war between two great powers with their rival ideologies. If we persist in this attitude of ideological insanity almost all that we love and value will be imperilled.

The Jaina system of which Panditji is an adherent gives us an attitude not of mere tolerance but of appreciation of other points of view. Anekānta-vāda or looking at reality from many points of view is the philosophical ideal of Jainism. Every type of religious or philosophical view contains a part of the truth. Truth itself is higher than the dogmas and doctrines which profess to be the real, universal and final truth. Anekānta-vāda refers to the richness of reality and the relativity of human conceptions of it. To the Hindu as to the Jaina, truth presents itself in many ways. Each darśana is a vision and not complete truth. Every concept is an attempt at truth. Each contributes to human welfare. No one is complete truth. The Jainas do not believe in ekānta-vāda. To over-emphasize any particular aspect is to have an incomplete vision of reality. Reality is complex and to be known should be viewed from many aspects.

The ethical ideal of the Jainas is ahiṁsā, non-injury; positively it means reverence for all life. We are responsible for the welfare of all human beings, who are, in a sense, our brothers. This doctrine requires us to pull down the fences which have been erected between the various strata of our population. Every human being has a claim on our interest and sympathy. The Jain thinker extends the theory of ahiṁsā to the whole living creation.
Unfortunately one living existence makes its way at the expense of another but man must respect other lives. We have a responsibility to all that lives.

At a time when we have repercussions of the hydrogen bomb from different parts of the world, when heavy radio-activity is reported from Japan and elsewhere, when every country which has nuclear power believes that it is essential for its security, that it may prove the great deterrent, it is essential for us to realize that these are instruments of evil. The use of these weapons is morally evil and materially disastrous. Even the nation which uses them victoriously will be ruined. Mass destruction, the contamination of the elements we all need, the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat, the danger to the living and the imperilling of the unborn cannot be viewed with unconcern by the people of the world. The first step in any disarmament move should be an immediate international agreement to stop nuclear tests. Every day that passes without some agreement to bring this mad race to a halt should quicken our conscience. We should not allow it to be deadened by false notions of security and patriotism. Man is not called into existence just to annihilate himself. Each one should do what is in one's power to start a new pattern of life in which we can live without hatred, without greed, without false ambitions.

The Jainas rightly believe that society can be improved only with the improvement of the individual. Their ratnattraya are samyak-darśana, samyak-jñāna and samyak-cārita. The last includes the five vows: (1) ahiṁsā or non-injury to living beings; (2) satya, truthfulness; (3) a-steyya, non-stealing; (4) brahmacarya or self-control; (5) a-parigraha or abstention from greed. The test of the religion is cārita or conduct. We will be judged by our conduct. It is of no avail if our ideals are good, and our life and conduct are not good.

We live at a time when old institutions are crumbling, economic balances are altered, peoples hitherto on the peripheries of civilization, the ādivāsis, the scheduled castes and tribes, demand attention and a new and revolutionary social doctrine with an enormous emotional appeal is spread abroad by men with a religious zeal for a new order of society and with a religious conviction that their ends justify their means. In our own country moral life is shaken to its foundations. Love of wealth and power has gained
wide acceptance. The deep moral earnestness is not there. Most of us live like butterflies on the surface of life. Moral regeneration is an imperative task. It can be achieved only through self-communion. Whether in the office or the factory, whether in the Legislative Assembly or a foreign mission, whether in the village panchayat or a town council we must develop a sense of integrity. We have to develop a greater loyalty to the ideals. The present predicament is a challenge to us. It is a crisis of character. We have to subordinate our self-interest to public good, develop a conscience about public funds, effect economies in our private life and public duty. It is sad to note that we seem to be lacking in this fundamental quality. All our plans will not avail if we do not improve the quality of human beings. At a time like this when we are struggling through pain and even agony to preserve the countenance of man which seems to be breaking up, let us remember the ideals of satya and ahimsā for which Gandhiji stood and which have been the constant companions of the great scholar whom we are honouring today.

INTER-RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

I entered the city of Cleveland without obtaining the key, and I have had a very happy time, and I appreciate the honour which the City Council and the Mayor have conferred on me by giving me this key.

As he said, it is a symbol for unlocking the hearts, so to say, of other people, and establishing communion with them. Thank you, Mr Mayor, most heartily, for your kindness.

Mr Brown listed a number of my activities, and told you that I was a philosopher, and had something to do with politics. At the present time, these two things are bound up with each other.

If there is any phenomenon which is characteristic of our times, it is the mingling of peoples, races, cultures and religions. Never before has such a meeting taken place in the history of our world.

Civilizations went on in parallel lines, remote from one another, unaffected by one another, but today that is not possible. The inventions of science and technology, the political concepts, and the economic ideas are bringing the world into a close neighbourhood, and it is our great hope that this neighbourhood may be transformed into a true brotherhood. The world must become our home, if we are to save the human race.

On the one side, we see many indications which give us hope and assurance, the United Nations Organisations, the I L O, U N E S C O, W H O, and others. There are also many obstacles to world unity.

Take the Sputniks. In ordinary times, they would have been welcomed as a great demonstration of man's intellectual penetration. We would have welcomed them for the possibilities which they contained in conquering space; we would have utilized all these scientific powers for the advancement of human welfare. But the world was not very happy when these Sputniks travelled around. We were afraid as to how they were likely to be employed in this divided world.

Will the divided world degenerate into a world that will be destroyed? Or will it lead to a world which will be unified? Is it the beginning or the end of a new era? Is it the prologue or the epilogue? There are explosive forces all round, especially in Asia and Africa. We hear protests against race discrimination. We have underprivileged countries which are seeking to better their conditions.

The world is expected to be our home, yet the world is seething with explosive forces. What are we to do? Is it something which is beyond our range, to bring the world into a close unity, based on community of ideals? Is it difficult?

What is the obstacle that stands in the way of achieving the prophets' dream, one world, peace and goodwill on earth? What stands in the way is not lack of material resources, is not lack of intellectual power or skill, but a kind of cussedness in human nature, greed, vanity, prestige, honour, etcetera.

The new world is a call to us that we have to readjust ourselves to it. The old social and economic patterns will not do. We have to change, fashion a new type of human being who is relevant to the new world in which we happen to be.

This task of refashioning the individual, remaking him, is the task generally assigned to the discipline of religion. It is that
discipline which asks us to look within ourselves and to transform ourselves, to cleanse ourselves of all evil tendencies, the baser, the fallen side of human nature, and raise ourselves to a higher plane.

Unfortunately, today, religions themselves are passing through a mood of criticism. We cannot accept in this scientific age incredible dogmas, doubtful events; we want to have a religious faith which commends itself to man's understanding, to the spirit of reason.

Again, we have the other difficulty, that religious leaders somehow do not rise to the occasion when great injustices occur. It is the duty of the religious leaders to stand above national politics, to urge the people to change themselves. Religious leaders have not been able to rise to the occasion. Either we said religions and social order were divorced from each other, 'Render unto Caesar', or the penetration of the world has been so intense that religions got adjusted to the world itself. That is a thing which critics of religion urge against us.

Besides, if we want to achieve world unity, religion must have a universality of outlook. But it has become like the nation State, a bad citizen belongs to it, a good stranger is out of it, an alien. We are adopting more or less the same policy, even with regard to religions themselves.

These three formidable obstacles, the spirit of science and criticism, the awakened social conscience which protests against the inequities which are being practised in the world, and the provincialism of religions which, instead of helping one another, are competing with one another, are making intelligent people doubt the value and validity of religion. You have, in your discussions, referred to the increasing secularization of the world. Professor C. S. Lewis, in his inaugural address which he gave at Cambridge in 1954, made out that the history of Europe had three periods, the Pre-Christian, the Christian and the Post-Christian. He meant that the Europeans were pagans once, then they became Christians, but a process of de-Christianization has started. It started somewhere about the end of the seventeenth century. Now we want to check it, we want to restore the place of spiritual values in human life. That is our great concern. And if we wish to do that, we have to reckon with the great challenges which are confronting religions.
I am sure that religions which are now passing through a process of self-understanding, self-searching, self-criticism, will be able to respond adequately to these great challenges. I am a firm believer in the need for religion and the need for co-operation among religions. I feel that there is no opposition between religion and science, between religion and highest social morality, between religion and co-operation among religions.

If we take up the scientific attitude, what is it we find? The scientists look at the world and are able to observe that this world has been an ordered one, has been a progressing one, it has grown from a state of mere materiality to one of life, from life to animal consciousness, from animal consciousness to human intelligence. It has to grow from the level of human intelligence to that of spirituality. Cosmic evolution has not come to a stop with the advent of intelligence. The further evolution will not be in the physical make up of the man; it will be in his psychical nature.

It is that psyche of the human individual that has to grow, that has to expand. The purpose of religion is to help us to grow from this world of intellect, this world of divided consciousness, with its discords, dualities, to a life of harmony, of freedom, of love.

Hitherto, in the sub-human species, the progress took place automatically. But at the human level, man has to put forth effort to achieve his goal. He is no more a mere spectator, he is a participant in this process of cosmic evolution.

It is wrong for us to think that we are the victims of natural forces, that there is a kind of inevitability, that inexorable laws prevail, that man cannot help; he has only to endure whatever happens. Man is intended for something greater than confinement in this world. He can rise above it. He can defy nature.

So if we are to rise from a state of intellectuality to spirituality, it is an effort which we have to make, and it is an effort which we can make, because others have struggled, have striven, have achieved the goal, and what is possible for some is possible for all.

Religion, as an inward transformation, as a spiritual change, as the overcoming of the discords within our own nature—that has been the fundamental feature of it from the beginning of history.

In our country we say that we should transform our nature, grow from the slavish, unregenerate condition of ignorance, to a state of wisdom. The growth or the transition from the one to
the other constitutes the goal of the religious quest. From the disruption of being we must rise to the articulation of being. The Buddha said exactly the same thing. We are sunk in suffering and ignorance, and our goal is to grow into enlightenment. According to Ezekiel: ‘Thus saith the Lord God—I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them an heart of flesh.’ For the Jews, ‘the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.’ Speaking of the mystery religions of Greece, Aristotle observes: ‘The initiated do not learn anything so much as feel certain emotions and are put in a certain frame of mind.’ To live one must first die to his old life. Orpheus believed that the soul was ‘the son of the starry heaven’, that its dwelling in a body is a form of original sin, its earthly life was a source of corruption and its natural aim was to transcend this life. This view is at the heart of Plato’s idealism. Plato gives us in his image of the Cave in the Republic that we are all prisoners living in shadows. One philosopher turned round, and freed himself from his shackles. When the philosopher left the cave he saw the sun shining of which the fire in the cave was a small reflection. After having seen the great light Plato’s philosopher does not remain content with his own revelation. He returns to the cave and talks to the prisoners shackled there that what they take for reality is only a shadow cast by the light they do not see. The prisoners not having seen the light take the shadows to be the only reality and think that the philosopher is insane. Philosophy, for Plato, is the love of wisdom, the fine flower of serenity. Plotinus says: ‘Withdraw into yourself and look, and if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smoothes there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also; cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty, and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.’ The author of the Fourth Gospel makes Jesus say, ‘I am the Truth.’ The religion of truth is based on spiritual inwardness. The descent of the spirit at Jesus’s baptism or of his temptation in the wilderness

1 Proverbs, XX. 27
must have been the story of his inner experience. In their present form they are externalized. In Christianity we are called upon to follow the example of Jesus. We are to be made like unto him by bringing our natural desires and expectations into subjection to the Universal Purpose. William Law says: 'To have salvation from Christ is nothing else but to be made like unto him; it is to have his humility and meekness, his love of God, his desire of doing God's will.' Jesus asks us to free ourselves from priestly control, and undergo spiritual growth. We must be born again, born of the spirit of Truth. A Sufi mystic (twelfth century), Ayn al-qudāt al Hamadhānī (d. 1131 A.D.) says: 'He who is born from the womb sees only this world, only he who is born out of himself sees the other world.' Ibn 'Arabi (thirteenth century) says: 'I am knowledge, the known and the knower. I am wisdom, the wise man and his wiseness.' (60.16) Both the Buddha and Jesus tell us: 'Be of good courage. I have overcome the world.'

Religion is spiritual change, an inward transformation. It is a transition from darkness to light, from an unregenerate to a regenerate condition. It is an awakening, a reborn-ness. We must break the bonds that are laid on us by our first birth and rise above our original imperfection through blood and tears.

By groaning and travelling we rise from division and conflict into freedom and love. The flame of the spirit has to be kindled in each individual soul. This is not the result of the acceptance of dogmas or historic events. We must get across the frontiers of formulas and the rigidities of regulations. Religion is an experience which affects our entire being, ends our disquiet and anguish, the sense of aimlessness of our fragile and fugitive existence. This state may appear to be one of retreat, of escape from a threatening world. The mystic claims that the realization of his yearning is far richer and deeper than the deepest satisfactions of this world.

It cannot be said that man, when he feels lonely, inadequate and incomplete, in the shock of his loneliness or isolation craves union with the Ultimate Reality. When he has this contact he gets back to the world and loves and serves his fellowmen spontaneously. The cosmic process has for its goal the kingdom of free spirits where the son of man becomes the son of God. The first fruits of the new species of spiritual personality are already manifest on earth in the saints and sages of the different religions.