

## WHO SPEAKS FOR MAN?

LIKE every other question of importance to human beings, this one is easy to evade. The evader has only to say, as elaborately as possible, "Everybody—and nobody," and then to withdraw behind the ramparts of high-toned irresponsibility—or, as he might himself put it, to the reserves of patient but persevering research. What a serious man does with this question depends largely on how he recognizes Necessity, and on the avenues through which he is inclined to take instruction from Necessity. Spartacus heard the voice of necessity through—well, if we really *knew* what moved him to organize the first great revolution of the West we would probably have the answer to our question blocked in.

We are now obliged to make belittling remarks about the evasive habits of scientific method in regard to all such questions. To use science as a whipping boy need not itself be an evasion, since scientists are a type of modern man. The question of what is Virtue with respect to the practice of science is something like the question of Righteousness in the practice of war. If you win, all is forgiven. The man who makes a great discovery by abandoning the preconceptions of his contemporaries succeeds in resetting the sights of the science of his time. There *have* to be sights, and there *have* to be men daring enough to reset them. This applies not only in science, but to all human affairs. What needs attention is the fact that, by reason of different readings of Necessity, men find themselves unable to accommodate to these great changes except by wading through seas of blood.

We may learn from the activity of science since it is widely on display, and since, as George Sarton has said, science "is and will always be, for good or evil, irremediably human." So we have, let us say, a scientist going to join a number of his colleagues at a meeting. On the way he passes a

newsstand and sighs. The amount of ignorance and superstition in the world is simply incredible. Just look at the titles of those magazines! So he sighs and goes along to his meeting, where he may say something amusing but compassionate—of course compassionate—about the follies of mankind. And he and his fellows proceed to deliberate concerning what might possibly be said in behalf of Man, perhaps at the next Greek Kalends, when more of the facts are in.

Their caution is admirable, their humility just. They are expected to tell to the world only what is indubitably, demonstrably true. It is a weighty obligation, and they know it, as their grave expressions show. Scientists are supposed to tell what they are really sure of or keep quite still. They have had great responsibilities delegated to them and they need time and isolation to carry them out.

There is some confusion, however, concerning a proper public relations for the practice of science. The sanctity of research is often violated by "leaks" to the press. There are all those merchants of "indulgences" who explain scientifically that it is no longer necessary to have headaches, stomach-aches, or even *anxiety*, since remedies have been found for this, too. Defeat in war can now be avoided if the right scientific specialists are put in charge of our military undertakings. But we have no final word from the scientists on man himself, just counsels concerning policy. They don't speak for *man*; that would be pretentious; they just supply him with arms against a sea of troubles while preserving their essential modesty.

We do not complain about this modesty, but only about all the other things which the modesty does not restrain. It was those "other things" that a really great scientist, trying in his humble way to

speak for man, felt obliged at the end of his life to reject. It was Albert Einstein who said:

If I would be a young man again and had to decide how to make my living, I would not try to become a scientist or a scholar or a teacher. I would rather choose to be a plumber or a peddler in the hope to find that modest degree of independence still available under the present circumstances.

What, essentially, is the difficulty which confronts scientists in regard to Man? It may be put very simply. Scientists are obliged by their concept of truth to show finality for their scientific conclusions. They are supposed to *prove* what they say. They have this "loyalty oath" they must be true to. But man, as Plato pointed out, is a *becoming* being. This is the only "finality" you can declare about man when you speak for him. So *of course* scientists have to keep still about man.

The rule which applies to getting any conceivable knowledge of man was well put by Rabbi Tarfon:

It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task, but neither are you free to leave it off.

How could scientists let themselves get involved in a project like that? It would take all their time and produce no tangible result. In short, to say something true about man, the scientist would have to depart from the conventional image of a scientist as a man who deals in finality. This is something very difficult for a man trained in the sciences to do.

The Humanities and the great religions are a record of what it has been possible, thus far, to say about man without stultifying the project by adding a "last word." The matter has to be kept open, and the task of *keeping* it open can become the responsibility only of those who see that this must be, and why. All that need be said in criticism of scientists is that too few of them have recognized this obligation of all intelligent men, and too many of them have condemned as "unscientific" the few who, like Einstein, have tried to fulfill the obligation.

The point is that everybody *does* speak for man. The scientist who does not make himself heard as a man. as Einstein made himself heard, nonetheless speaks, but by default. He delegates his speaking to a lot of people with less training and often no responsibility. It isn't that these people should not have their "say"; at issue is whether what they say should be heard in a vacuum because of the modesty or inhibitions of men who know they can pronounce no final word.

There are a great many ways to speak for man. One way is to offer generalizations about the time in which we live—generalizations which reflect widespread attitudes about man, and therefore represent the "speaking" of a great many. The poet, Archibald MacLeish, did this in the *Saturday Review* for Oct. 14. He pointed out the frightening contrast between the views of scientific technologists and those of artists in the present. He wrote:

Despair has become the literary fashion. . . . Hundreds of young writers whose natural inclination is to cheerfulness and wonder emulate the existential philosophers and practice nausea in a mirror, but the nausea is real enough notwithstanding.

There is, in truth, a terror in the world, and the arts have heard it as they always do. Under the hum of the miraculous machines and the ceaseless publications of the brilliant physicists a silence waits and listens and is heard.

It is the silence of apprehension. We do not trust our time, and the reason we do not trust our time is because it is we who have made our time and we do not trust ourselves. . . . we do not trust ourselves as gods. We know what we are.

Does Mr. MacLeish speak for man? Can a single person speak for man?

It is no use saying that one man does not, cannot, speak for man. We all do. And if wise and good men do not speak, then ignorant and angry men are the only ones to be heard. There is no escaping the fact that *everyone* speaks for man.

What shall we make of the fact that today, when an artist speaks, it is either a confession or a cry of pain? Marc Chagall wrote in 1963:

While I pretend to no philosophic calling, I cannot fail to feel today what is strangling art and culture and sometimes life itself. . . . I cannot refrain from saying that so-called scientific art, or the art of pleasure-seeking, like that of cooking, is not a vital value.

They say that a good man may be a bad artist. But he isn't and will never be an artist who is not a great and therefore a "good" man.

I know that in our times certain people discredit nature. After Cézanne, Monet, Gauguin, there seems to be no genius to reflect it.

It is a kind of convention now to avoid nature as much as possible. This convention evokes in me the impression I receive from those persons who never want to look you in the eyes; they frighten me and I avert my eyes from them.

There are certain revolutionary people who wish, by means of science, to introduce order into the economic and social life of our world. But as time passes, all theories that have a scientific character come into partial collision with other theories. . . . Are there not revolutionary methods other than those in the shadow of which we have been living?

From Picasso, in the translation of Joseph Wood Krutch, we have this:

When I was young I was possessed by the religion of great art. But, as the years passed, I realized that art as one conceived it up to the end of the 1880's was, from then on, dying condemned, and finished and that the pretended artistic activity of today, despite all its superabundance, was nothing but a manifestation of its agony. . . . Despite appearances our contemporaries have given their heart to the machine, to scientific discovery, to wealth, to the control of natural forces, and of the world. . . .

As for me, from cubism on I have satisfied these gentlemen (rich people who are looking for something extravagant) and the critics also with all the many bizarre notions which have come into my head and the less they understood the more they admired them. . . . I am only the entertainer of a public which understands its age.

These are not the voices of men jaundiced by personal failure. They are artists—some would call them great—who speak out of their perception of the sickness of the world and of mankind. It is a sickness brought on by the failure

of a great many other men to speak for Man. There is really no excuse, no adequate apology, for this failure. We cannot plead the necessity of "time out for research." In the duty to speak for man, no one is "free to leave it off." In this there can be no specialists, no qualified authorities. The man who remains silent shouts his abdication. The man who declares his certainty exposes his pretense.

Tolstoy, in his *Confession*, speaks for man. On the eve of the decline of which Picasso wrote, in 1882, Tolstoy brooded over his own dissatisfactions:

Life is a meaningless evil,—that was incontestable, I said to myself. But I have lived, still live, and all humanity has lived. How is that? Why does it live, since it can refuse to live? Is it possible Schopenhauer and I alone are so wise as to have comprehended the meaninglessness and evil of life. . . .

And it occurred to me that there might be something I did not know, for ignorance acts in precisely that manner. Ignorance always says the same. When it does not know it says that what it does not know is stupid. In reality it turns out that there is a human entity which has lived as though understanding the meaning of its life, for if it did not understand it, it could not live, and I say that the whole life is meaningless, and that I cannot live. . . .

Indeed, ever since those most ancient, ancient times since when life has existed, of which I know anything, there have lived men who knew the reflection on the vanity of life, which has shown me the meaninglessness of life, and yet they lived, ascribing some kind of meaning to it.

Ever since any life began with men, they had that meaning of life, and they have carried on the life that has reached me. Everything which is in me and about me,—everything carnal and non-carnal,—all that is the fruit of their knowledge of life. All the tools of thought, with which I judge this life and condemn it,—all that was done by them, and not by me. I was born, educated, and grew up, thanks to them. They mined the iron, taught how to cut down the forest, domesticated cows and horses, taught how to sow, how to live together, and arranged our life; they taught me to think and to speak. And I, their product, nurtured and fed by them, taught by them, thinking their thoughts, and speaking their words,—I

have proved to them that they are meaningless! "There is something wrong there," I said to myself. "I must have made a mistake somewhere." But where the mistake was, I was unable to discover.

But Tolstoy did not give up. He went on and discovered something. He attempted to explain what he had found, and if he sorely tried his contemporaries who could not agree with him, he nonetheless spoke in unforgettable language for man. He became old and people made fun of him. He was unable to practice what he preached. His own weakness, he felt, interfered. He had no patience with himself. He died in shame and regret.

Tolstoy's own world laughed condescendingly at him. The world still laughs at him. Here was this rich old man trying to behave like a peasant. An intellectual gone to seed, made captive by sentimental, utopian dreams. But the situation of Tolstoy was also as Ortega has described it:

The hero anticipates the future and appeals to it. His gestures have a utopian significance. He does not say that he is but that he wants to be. . . . As something made to live in a future world, the ideal, when it is drawn back and frozen in the present, does not succeed in satisfying the most trivial functions of existence; and so people laugh. . . . The distance between the tragic and the comic is the same as that between wishing to be and believing that one already is. This is the step from the sublime to the ridiculous. The transference of the heroic character from the plane of will to that of perception causes the involution of tragedy, its disintegration—and makes comedy of it.

So, naturally enough, those who are not impelled to speak for man, who are dealing with the present in some stern but orderly fashion—while, as they point out, the better minds are "doing research" for the future—these people feel free to laugh at Tolstoy. He did not speak for man, but dreamed of impossibilities. And so, with no Greek Chorus to support him, and not enough young men to listen to him, other voices speaking for man wrote the history of that time. There was for example Nechayev. The Nihilist Nechayev spoke for man—for angry, broken-hearted,

desperate man. There were many such men in Russia. There are many of them, today, all over the world. If we think the idealist comic, and pay no attention to his thoughts for man, we have always the nihilists and their variously converted disciples to fill the emptiness of the age, to take up the slack. Then, after a terrible interval of history has had its sway, sad and anguished individuals will speak for man in a retrospective voice. There is an example of such retrospection in Milton Mayer's *What Can a Man Do?*:

"I am not a Communist, I am a Christian," says Josef Hromadka. "But I know that it is we, we Christians alone, who are responsible for Communism. We had a burden to discharge in the world, and Jesus Christ left us no room to wonder what it was. We failed. We 'said, and did not.' And now another power has arisen to take up this burden. Remember that the Communists once were Christians. If they do not believe in a just God, whose fault is it?" Hromadka is talking not in Princeton, where he once served so comfortably, but in Prague, where he serves, perhaps less comfortably as dean of the Comenius Theological Faculty. All over Eastern Europe one hears the same agonized words from churchmen: "The atheists had to come to teach us the social gospel."

#### Milton Mayer comments:

It is hard for Western Christians, proud of their innocence to understand the abjection of their brethren in the East. "So-and-so," says a prominent American theologian of a new bishop in the East, "is a man with whom I would not shake hands"—the luxury of the guiltless. "What I want to know," says an American Christian who is fighting Communism over here, "is what they are doing over there to fight communism. Nothing?" Nothing.

Tolstoy was a Christian, you could say, but he did not wait for the Communists to teach him the social gospel. He spoke for man without any pressure from history, and he bore his ridicule. Would, one wonders, an American anti-Communist care to shake his hand?

There are various ways to learn from history and various ways to speak for man. You can't learn from history if you are submerged in it, and this, let us hasten to say, gives excellent reason for

admiring scientific objectivity. To learn from history you must look at it, and in order to look at it you must stand aside. But then, like Plato's philosopher, you have to go back in, to *use* your objectivity in behalf of man. An objectivity which makes it impossible to honor the human qualities of human beings invites a history made by the inhuman qualities of human beings. One thinks of the Harvard professor of history who was unable for three years, because of pressure from his scientific colleagues, to admit to himself that the Hungarian uprising of 1956 was caused by a human love of freedom. There must, his disciplined associates told him, be a more scientific explanation. But he finally spoke for man.

There is really no tried and true way of speaking for man. No sooner does one get established than somebody finds a way of turning it into a commercial, a national anthem, or a religious creed. Speaking for man always has the quality of original conviction. It *cannot* be an echo. If men suppose it can be made unambiguous by separating it, in some objectivizing fashion, from its subjective ground, it turns into a voice against man.

Yet there seem to be plateaus of awareness concerning the nature of man and for speaking for him. There is such a thing as a cultural atmosphere of respect for the potentialities of human beings. There *is* greatness in the vision human beings have of each other and of themselves, and it somehow survives, although there are also long ages of history made very dark by dreadful certainties no man will dare to question—not out loud.

Today, for example, is a time when questioning is allowed only because it seems to have no practical effect. A vast passivity of mind gives dissent a merely bohemian quality. Yet what if the intuitions of Chagall and Picasso, of Einstein, and of other men who have no power, but speak for man, are actually a measure of the human situation? What if they understand truly

that the springs of the existing society have dried up, and that the world will die if it is not genuinely reborn?

What if they know, from having kept in touch with man, that great changes will shake off the existing forms of antihuman authority as surely as comets return in their periods and sap runs in the spring? What if all those old sayings about the Dignity of Man turn out to be *true*?

How shall we know when the voices speaking for man have become only echoes? Well, usually, the echoing voices say that we must be prepared to hate lies. Living voices put it differently. They say we must love the truth, that hating lies is of no use since other men's truths always seem false until we learn to look through other men's eyes. Speaking for man means speaking for all men, and you cannot do this except as yourself. Speaking for man never submits to convention and it loses all human resonance under party discipline. In an imperfect world it may be necessary to give some hostages to power, but when that power is able to silence, muzzle, or pervert the voices which speak for man, then only heart-broken murmurs and shrill imitations fill the air. The man who recognizes this is able to predict the future. He reads it off as you would a total on a tape. In time, people learn to understand and agree. Then, by the means available, or what is left to them, they try to make a new plateau.

## *REVIEW*

### A LOST INHERITANCE

To read Arthur Schopenhauer is to renew the melancholy discovery that of the making of books there is no end. For in the work of this brilliant, articulate, and somewhat embittered man one finds familiar things said with a penetration and wholeness that should have made their later repetition entirely unnecessary. It seems a terrible pity that the Western world has assimilated so little of its intellectual past that men honestly seeking the best in thought are routinely condemned to reading a vast amount of unimportant material, only because it is "current," while the few books which are really valuable are neglected and forgotten.

We take it as a compliment that Dover should have sent us for review a two-volume edition of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation (Idea)* in a new translation by E. F. J. Payne. For how many reviewers can be expected to read a total of some 1100 pages of profound and sometimes difficult thinking in order to put together seven or eight hundred words of comment or appreciation?

Schopenhauer writes in a great tradition, shaped by Plato, Kant, . . . and Schopenhauer. He is filled with ringing truth. He is a vastly literate man who finds telling illustrations of his points in the classics. He is, considering the subject, easy to read. He draws you on. He is seriously concerned with helping the reader to *see*. His egotism, which is plain enough, is more the impatience of a serious thinker with triviality than an annoying vanity. He readily and gratefully acknowledges what he has learned from others. You wish, at times, he weren't so downright *mean* to his contemporaries, but that is Schopenhauer, and he is not the only distinguished thinker who practiced something less than Christ-like patience toward the follies he saw all around. (He is often extremely unjust, of course, since he ignores all symmetries of thought but his own.)

The sweep of Schopenhauer's thought is well illustrated by a passage from his "Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy":

Locke had established from the thing-in-itself the share that the sense-organs have in its phenomena, but Kant further abstracted the share of the brain-functions (although not under this name). In this way the thing-in-itself obtained an infinitely greater significance, and a very much deeper meaning. . . . Now as Kant's separation of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself, arrived at in the manner previously explained, far surpassed in the profundity and thoughtfulness of its argument all that had ever existed, it was infinitely important in its results. For in it he propounded, quite originally and in an entirely new way, the same truth, found from a new aspect and on a new path, which Plato untiringly repeats, and generally expresses in his language as follows. This world that appears to the senses has no true being, but only a ceaseless becoming; it is, and it also is not; and its comprehension is not so much a knowledge as an illusion. This is what he expresses in a myth at the beginning of the seventh book of the *Republic*, the most important passage in all his works, . . . He says that men, firmly chained in a dark cave, see neither the genuine or original light nor actual things, but only the inadequate light of the fire in the cave, and the shadows of actual things passing by the fire behind their backs. Yet they imagine that the shadows are the reality, and that determining the succession of these shadows is true wisdom. The same truth, though presented quite differently, is also a principal teaching of the *Vedas* and *Puranas*, namely the doctrine of *Maya*, by which is understood nothing but what Kant calls the phenomenon as opposed to the thing-in-itself. For the work of *Maya* is stated to be precisely this visible world in which we are a magic effect called into being, an unstable and inconstant illusion without substance, comparable to the optical illusion and the dream, a veil enveloping human consciousness, a something of which it is equally false to say that it is and that it is not. Now Kant not only expressed the same doctrine in an entirely new and original way, but made of it a proved and incontestable truth through the most calm and dispassionate presentation. . . . Such clear knowledge and calm, deliberate presentation of this dreamlike quality of the whole world is really the basis of the whole Kantian philosophy, it is its soul and its greatest merit. He achieved it by taking to pieces the whole machinery of our cognitive faculty, by means of which the phantasmagoria of the objective world is

brought about, and presenting it piecemeal with marvellous insight and ability. All previous Western philosophy, appearing unspeakably clumsy when compared with the Kantian, had failed to recognize that truth, and had therefore in reality always spoken as if in a dream. Kant first suddenly wakened it from this dream therefore the last sleepers (Mendelssohn) called him the all-pulverizer. He showed that the laws which rule with inviolable necessity in existence, i.e., in experience generally, are not to be applied to deduce and explain *existence itself*; that their validity is therefore only relative, in other words, begins only after existence, the world of experience generally, is already settled and established; that in consequence these laws cannot be our guiding line when we come to the explanation of the existence of the world and of ourselves.

. . . the objective world as we know it does not belong to the true being of things-in-themselves, but is its mere *phenomenon*, conditioned by those very forms that lie *a priori* in the human intellect (i.e., the brain); hence the world cannot contain anything but phenomena.

It is true that Kant did not arrive at the knowledge that the phenomenon is the world as representation and that the thing-in-itself is the will.

This latter task Schopenhauer himself set out to perform.

If we stipulate that Plato, Kant, and Schopenhauer were on the right track, and that they disclosed truths essential to the life of reason and goodness, the most important question, one would think, is why they have not been more attentively followed. How is it that Schopenhauer's thought, despite its influence, was covered up by far less worthy doctrines? Many answers might be drawn from the history of modern thought, but the most pertinent, we think, is the one implied by Leonard Nelson in his small volume (also published by Dover), *Socratic Method and Critical Philosophy*. In the title essay on the Dialectic, Nelson endeavors to show that teachers of philosophy continually violate their task by leading students beyond the level of their actual understanding with the glamorous appeal of intellectual abstractions. The teacher can't *wait* for authentic realization and self-realization. He can't wait for knowledge to be

individually verified by the laborious process through which learning is acquired as true Knowledge—by becoming only the formal aspect of Virtue. Nelson makes this point in a criticism of Fries, whom he otherwise much admires:

Fries, the one man who actually completed critical philosophy and restored the Socratic-Platonic doctrine of reminiscence and the self-certainty of intelligence, Fries, the most genuine of all Socrateans, gave the Socratic method only qualified recognition because he considered it inadequate for achieving complete self-examination of the intellect. He acknowledged its capacity to guide the novice in its early stages. . . . But as soon as higher truths, further removed from intuition and everyday experience, are involved, Fries did not approve of letting the students find these truths by themselves. "Here the instructor must employ a language molded upon subtle abstractions, of which the student does not yet have complete command, and to which he must be educated by instruction."

This was a crucial break with the intent of Socrates, making it possible for students to "inherit" their ideas of truth. As Nelson says, "it offers no assurance that the students will accept the invitation [to critical verification] or, if made to stand on their own feet, that they will master such difficulties as they encounter on their way." Of a work by Fries, Nelson said:

Have your students study the fine and instructive chapter on "The Sources of Certainty," and I stand ready to demonstrate in a Socratic discussion that those students will still lack everything that would enable them to defend what they have learned. The key to this riddle is to be found in Goethe's words. "One sees only what one already knows."

Ortega's similar point may be repeated here:

. . . the man who is already heir to a cultural system accustoms himself progressively generation after generation, to having no contact with basic problems, to feeling none of the needs which make up his life; and on the other hand, to using mental processes—concepts, evaluations, enthusiasms—for which he has no evidence because they were not born out of the depths of himself.

These are the charges on which the authors of the intellectual tradition of the West must be

arraigned. They did not do enough to *prevent a mere inheritance* of what they thought. "Veracity," as Coleridge put it, "does not consist in saying, but in the intention of communicating, truth."

And intellectual—and scientific—communications too often fail to communicate anything beyond persuasive abstractions and manipulative technique. Barry Commoner summed up the situation in another context:

. . . the technical content of the issues of the modern world shields them from moral judgment. . . . The greatest moral crime of our time is the concealment of the nature of nuclear war, for it deprives humanity of the solemn right to sit in judgment on its own fate; it condemns us all, unwittingly, to the greatest dereliction of conscience.

It was just such a situation which Socrates, as he explains in the *Phaedo*, resolved to avoid:

. . . when I was worn out with physical investigations, it occurred to me that I must guard against the same sort of risk which people run when they watch and study an eclipse of the sun; they really do sometimes injure their eyes, unless they study its reflection in the water or some other medium. I conceived of something like this happening to myself, and I was afraid that by observing objects with my eyes and trying to comprehend them with each of my other senses I might blind my soul altogether.

One has the impression that Schopenhauer tried not to make this mistake. For a man born in 1788, it must be admitted that his great work, completed by the time he was thirty, was an extraordinary achievement, and that it remains so today. The Dover edition of *The World as Will and Representation* is in two volumes (paperback), \$2.50 each.



## COMMENTARY

### WHY DO WE FORGET WHAT WE KNOW?

KNOWLEDGE, it seems clear, is forgotten only by people who can't tell the difference between knowledge and hearsay. Ortega speaks of the man who accustoms himself "to using mental processes—concepts, evaluations, enthusiasms—for which he has no evidence because they were not born out of the depths of himself."

It is ironic that the influence of science is largely responsible for such habits—and, of course, the old religion which relies upon Revelation, which is hearsay of another sort. Doubtless because of our "religious" habits of mind we find it easy to believe what we are told about scientific fact and the promise of scientific progress without trying to inspect the evidence for ourselves.

This is of course now very difficult. Always demanding, the disciplines of science are now so complex that the average person feels overwhelmed by so much learning and expertise. The problem is to see clearly the difference between the complexities of elaborate technique and fundamental conceptions relating to the nature of man, human purpose, and human good. Our habits of thinking tend to ignore these matters.

Such habits, as Ortega says, prevent a man from having his own contact with "basic problems." So, quite naturally, he learns no basic solutions, but moves from one superficial attitude to another, always quoting "experts," while becoming more and more the gullible victim of fashions in opinion.

There is of course *some* truth behind these fashions—a faintly shimmering truth that is somehow felt and groped after, but can never be got at. It is this glint of truth behind fashions which holds people's attention; while, at the same time, they become unable to discuss any reality until it is confined and obscured by the stilted language of the current mode. An enormous vocabulary is required of a man who tries to keep

track of fashions in knowledge. The ardors of acquiring the words and phrases of fashionable hearsay may make him quite unable to recognize the same knowledge in less transient forms.

Take for example the ideas of Gandhian basic education. As expressed in this week's "Children," they lack sophistication. Yet they are true. They all fit together and it is really nonsense to say that an "advanced" society cannot apply them. All that is required is to give up hearsay and fashion and to teach the young what we really know.

# CHILDREN

## ... and Ourselves

### ESSENCE OF BASIC EDUCATION

[There is much in Gandhi's conception of education from which the West can learn, given recognition of its value and the ingenuity to apply its principles in an industrial society. We are grateful to Mr. K S. Acharlu, of Bangalore, India, for permission to reprint, in three parts, his translation and compilation of "the cream of Vinoba's educational thought" embodying the Gandhian view. The Indian publisher of this material, taken from Vinoba Bhave's talks and writings, is Sarvodaya Prachuralaya, Thanjavur, Madras State.]

#### 1. *Educational Reconstruction*

Education should have been the first thing to have been planned for after Independence.

The old system of education should not have been continued even for a day.

There should have been a reconstruction in education immediately after Independence.

Gandhiji planned for education of the country long before the attainment of Independence.

Our country had eminent educationists whose doctrines and educational experiments should have acted as our guide.

#### 2. *Education in Indian tradition*

Indian tradition gave the highest place to education, and the topmost importance to the teacher, the Acharya.

The State provided all facilities to the Ashram and left him full freedom in the matter of education and its organisation.

The authority of the State in matters of syllabus and text books was never heard of in olden days.

In those days the prince and the pauper were educated together. They had to do manual labour in addition to study.

The teacher's advice was sought by kings and emperors.

The teacher spread his influence all over the land, and he was the progenitor of social and moral revolution.

A great variety and richness of thinking prevailed in those residential communities of preceptors and pupils (gurukula).

The best treatise on education is the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

#### 3. *Principles of Nai Talim (new or basic education)*

Education should be revolutionized so as to bring an integration of jnan and karma (knowledge and action).

Knowledge and action should be integrated in the individual. This will result in the integration of personality and will contribute to the establishment of harmony in society.

Education is the integration of knowledge and action, resulting in ananda, joy.

Action and knowledge are not two different entities, one superior or inferior to the other. Basic education (Nai Talim) is based on the unity of action and knowledge.

The most natural method of acquiring knowledge is through action. No knowledge without action, and no action without knowledge.

Mental and physical work are essential for everyone. All the faculties should be developed as a harmonious whole.

In education the separation of knowledge and action is resolved. Through their harmony, self-development is obtained.

Education should consist of the philosophy of existence and crafts. The one feeds the soul and the other the body.

Basic education cannot be pursued keeping the social order of today as it is. Education is based on the principle of bread and labour. It is a revolution in social values. It is meant to create a new social order.

A new social order is impossible of achievement without the integration of work and knowledge.

A healthy society should not be divided into "heads" and "hands." Separation of learning from labour results in social injustice.

One of the chief principles of this new order is that everyone should do manual labour for his sustenance. Otherwise it results in exploitation.

The new education proposes to root out this exploitation.

The new education aims at establishing new values in society.

The new education is education for non-violence. It is founded on freedom and mutual cooperation. It ought to enable the students to claim that it can protect the country through non-violent methods.

The goal of the new education is freedom from fear.

Education should result in self-sufficiency—for bodily needs, for independent critical thinking and acquiring complete knowledge and for spiritual development.

The main end of the new education is the development of character.

Education should develop social consciousness among the students, the attitudes and habits of doing work in cooperation with others.

Education is necessary for the proper functioning of democracy.

The social principle of the new education is that all human lives are equally to be respected.

Real education is service of man.

Education should have intimate contact with nature and be in harmony with it.

Knowledge of the natural environment is essential.

Life without association of agriculture is incomplete. We have to be in touch with land, rooted to the soil.

It helps us to be one with creation.

The schools should be organised on the model of a good family.

Education is impossible in an environment of ease and comfort.

The goal of education is discipline, not self-indulgence but self-control.

Basic education is a never-ending continuous process, always fresh.

It is not stale, stereotyped and standardized.

It varies from day to day and from region to region.

It is ever new education.

The new education is not meant for the elementary grades only. It is the character of all education.

It is not meant only for the villages, but for everyone at all stages of life.

The new education is not an educational method.

It is not "activity education."

It is not an educational technique like the Dalton method or the Project method.

It is a creative idea, a way of life.

It is a new outlook, a new approach.

#### 4. *Udyog (craft)*

Schools should be occupational institutions.

Devotion to work should be developed in them.

Work is labour; work is service; work is joy and worship.

Physical labour helps to keep the mind fresh and creative and sharpens the intellect.

Through crafts the scientific attitudes of thinking should be developed.

The new education is not craft education. It is the full development of human potentialities.

A student should not only be an expert in craft, but have the capacity to study and explain scientifically all the processes.

Efficiency in crafts will be reached when the pupil has the courage and confidence to say that working for four hours a day he can feed his body.

Through craft three objectives are realized: the all-round development of all the faculties, acquisition of knowledge useful in life, acquiring skills for living.

Physical development must be obtained through craft.

Craft work should develop the power of steady application.

In the schools of the new education, how much money is earned should not be the criterion.

Agriculture produces not money but grain, vegetables and fruit. Carpentry produces not money but useful articles for the home and the community.

If all students in the country devote half an hour for spinning everyday throughout the year, the production of national wealth (khadi) will be enormous.

China's educational method of half-time academic work and half-time productive work in all schools is worthy of emulation.

In all children, the doing-type of experiences have to be encouraged.

*(To be continued)*

## *FRONTIERS*

### The American Scholar

THE Autumn *American Scholar* is an exceptionally rich source of information and understanding on the "revolt" of youth in the United States. The contributors "belong for the most part to the under-thirty generation," and a number of them are under twenty-five. Various "oldsters" also contribute, but, as with other issues of the *Scholar*, the authors are more united in the quality of their intelligence than divided by age. We hope that readers will test this view for themselves, since our brief discussion can give only random samples.

Alice Walker, first-prize-winner in a *Scholar* essay contest, contends that the idea that the civil rights movement is "dead" is a superficial white judgment, not the opinion of Negroes. Deprecating evaluations of the movement, she says, commonly ignore the "human attitudes among Negroes that have undergone terrific changes just during the past seven to ten years (not to mention all those years when there was a movement and only the Negroes knew about it)." Her point is that the movement helped bring Negroes to more awareness of their own dignity and being. With a poignancy that few writers have equalled, she shows that the movement has enabled Negroes to stop wishing they were *white*. To appreciate fully the impact of her conclusion, the reader needs the moving development of the whole article, but as a statement it can also stand by itself:

What good was the civil rights movement? If it had just given this country Dr. King, a leader of conscience for once in our lifetime, it would have been enough. If it had just taken black eyes off white television stories, it would have been enough. If it had fed one starving child, it would have been enough.

If the civil rights movement is "dead," and if it gave us nothing else, it gave us each other forever. It gave some of us bread, some of us shelter, some of us knowledge and pride all of us comfort. It gave us our children, our husbands, our brothers, our fathers, as

men reborn and with a purpose for living. It broke the pattern of black servitude in this country. It shattered the phony "promise" of white soap operas that sucked away so many pitiful lives. It gave us history and men far greater than Presidents. It gave us heroes, selfless men of courage and strength, for our little boys to follow. It gave us hope for tomorrow. It called us to life.

Sherman Chickering writes on "How We Got That Way," speaking for those on "the other side of the Generation Gap." His argument lends some validity to the claims of Marshall McLuhan:

The world as a global village taught us to see people in the nakedness of deeds that contradicted words. The message of the media taught us to leap into life with all five senses. The result was that we learned to see right through to the quick; we learned to distinguish thought from action in others, and learned to mesh thought and action in our own lives.

The connections between the various things this writer says seem more in the common feeling-tone than in logical sequence, although the sequence may be there. He chronicles psychic reactions and intuitively-reached judgments. *Mad Magazine* was the Word for his generation:

As Lawrence Wylie writes, "*Mad's* symbol, the insipidly smiling Alfred E. Neuman, who maintains his ghoulishly cheerful expression while the most appalling things go on around him, stands for American culture itself as the adolescent experiences it." He also stands for the adolescent who says, "What, Me Worry?—I've got it all figured out." Which he did: when we read the serious literature of social criticism we knew all about it already.

There was also The Bomb:

This was the extra-terrestrial dimension, the symbolic Armageddon. The Bomb was never right on top of us, of course. We were, in one respect, the most unravaged generation that has ever lived. Yet, almost by contrast, we felt deeply the ghoulis presence of the mushroom cloud. . . .

The Bomb became for us the equivalent of knowing at night that Boris Karloff really *was* hiding under the bed. After all, we saw the documentaries of the Bikini blasts, and we had to wear name tags around our necks back there in the late forties. And we had to lie under our desks during air raid drills, wondering whether the wooden top of our desk was

strong enough to keep out the blast. For kids this is not a game or a functional necessity; it is a reality. It is a tangible fear. It is a nightmare.

Then, on education:

We discover after we settle into college that we are not really there to learn but to get good grades and acquire a passport into the economy. To a generation raised on person-to-person peer group experience and heightened sensitivities (if not sensibilities), this sort of higher Pavlovian encampment is frustrating. . . . It does not answer to our needs.

He concludes:

We are made in America, a hundred per cent American. Yet we are a foreign country on American soil. Older Americans are just beginning to realize we are something else. Some of them sound as Nasser would if he discovered his kids were raised by an Israeli nanny.

Marilyn Noble, who was active in the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, writes a transparently accurate account of the failures of higher education in America, and concludes:

If the university expends little effort on preparing the student for the possibilities of the future, how relevant can it expect to be to him as he moves into that future? The proliferation and survival of "Free Universities" attest to the fact that there is a desire to relate to both today and tomorrow among students, which the more conventional curricula are failing to satisfy.

To expect the university to prepare students for the present and the future is in essence demanding that it have a curriculum that contains at its core certain basic philosophical tenets. First, as odd as it may sound, I think that the university must reaffirm, or perhaps even relearn, that what it does is important to the fate of man as man; that it has a kind of knowledge to impart that cannot be measured by the size of government grants or inches of printed material in professional journals.

These quotations are a very small fraction of the excellences in the Autumn issue of the *American Scholar*.