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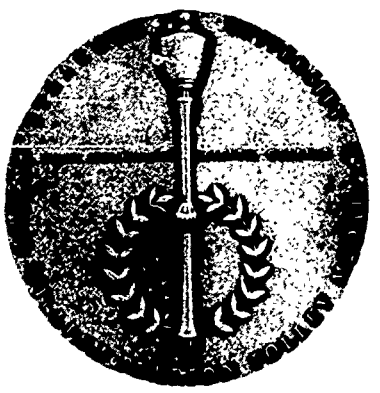
ABSTRACT

UPON RECEPTION OF THE WILLIAM PEARSON TOLLEY MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP IN ADULT EDUCATION, MOHAN S. MEHTA, PRESIDENT OF THE INDIAN ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, SPOKE ON THE CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE OF INDIA, ITS LONG HISTORY, AND ITS MODERN PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION. IN THE FACE OF FORMIDABLE PROBLEMS IN SUCH AREAS AS ECONOMICS, NUTRITION, POPULATION, AND TECHNOLOGY, INDIA MUST DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF ADULT EDUCATION AND A METHOD FOR EFFECTIVELY COMBATTING MASS ILLITERACY. ALTHOUGH THE PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATE ADULTS WITHIN THE POPULATION IS DECREASING, THE NUMBER CONTINUES TO GROW. THE UNIVERSITY IN INDIA HAS BEEN GENERALLY UNCONCERNED WITH ITS SOCIAL MILIEU, CONSERVATIVE ON PROVIDING COMMUNITY SERVICES, AND APATHETIC ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS. AS IN ANY SOCIETY, THIS ATTITUDE MUST BE OVERCOME IF ENOUGH MATURE LEADERSHIP IS TO BE FOUND. THE WORLD WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE IF THE CULTURAL VALUES AND NORMS ON WHICH ADULT EDUCATION IS BASED BECAME THE DOMINANT VALUES. (MF)

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

MOHAN S. MEHTA



THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

Address delivered by Dr. Mohan S. Mehta, president of the Indian Adult Education Association, upon being awarded the William Pearson Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Adult Education.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

MAY 19, 1969

CITATION ACCOMPANYING THE WILLIAM PEARSON TOLLEY MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP IN ADULT EDUCATION

MOHAN SINHA MEHTA, statesman, diplomat, and educator, you have a long and distinguished career of service to your country and the world.

You received your Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Allahabad. You then became a lecturer in economics at Agra College and following that an assistant professor at Government College in Ajmer. After you received your doctorate from the London School of Economics and Political Science, you entered the administrative service of the Mawar State and later served as Chief Minister of Diwan Banswara State. As representative of Mawar to the constituent assembly, you helped frame the constitution under which India became a sovereign republic.

You were also the founder and president of the Vidya Bhawan Society, now an important rural university at Udaipur.

You have served India as a member of her delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, as her Ambassador to the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, and to the Vatican, and her high commissioner in Pakistan.

During your years as vice chancellor of the University of Rajasthan, you established a department of adult education, the first of its kind in an Indian university, and you conceived and carried out a cooperative program in adult education with the University of Rajasthan and the University of British Columbia as part of the Colombo Plan. You are president and a daily worker in the Seva Mandir. Since 1958 you have been president of the Indian Adult Education Association where you continue to exercise the leadership which has enabled the adult education movement to become a dynamic social force in India.

In recognition of your great service to continuing education, Syracuse University is proud to add to your already impressive honors The William Pearson Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Adult Education.

GORDON D. HOOPLE
CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

ALEXANDER N. CHARTERS
VICE PRESIDENT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

May 19, 1969

FOREWORD

Syracuse University established the William Pearson Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Adult Education to acknowledge outstanding contributions by national and international leaders in the field. In so doing, the Board of Trustees paid honor to a man whose own interest was expressed in consistent personal support of the Syracuse program, and of adult education activities throughout the world. Chancellor Tolley retired after twenty-seven years of service just a few months following presentation of the second Medal.

The first award was conferred in 1966 upon Professor Cyril O. Houle, a faculty member of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, who was cited for "uncommon contributions as philosopher, teacher, and innovator." Three years later the second Medal was presented to Dr. Mohan S. Mehta, president of the Indian Adult Education Association, author of the manuscript that follows.

ALEXANDER N. CHARTERS
VICE PRESIDENT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY

Among the numerous and varied events of my life, this evening's simple function and its cordial and hospitable atmosphere will always stand out as one of my most pleasant and memorable experiences. Your decision to call me here, a rather generous gesture, came as a surprise to me. I could not easily believe that you would wish the William Pearson Tolley Award to go to an obscure individual now living in retirement in a distant land. This distinction is much to be honoured both in its conceptual and practical associations. From my side I feel most gratified.

My uppermost feeling at this moment is to pay a tribute of respect, admiration, and gratitude to your distinguished Chancellor for establishing this Award. It is an evidence—though no evidence is needed —of his vision, intellectual power, and historical perspective. With one bold stroke of imagination, followed by a broad-minded act, he has lifted into prominence the concept of life-long education, whose value is worthy of much greater recognition in society than it generally receives. Then again, in selecting an Indian for this honour, you have brought into relief the universality of your concept and the need for its world-wide application—a proper and time-honoured function of a University. The Award was presented first to Professor Cyril Houle who had been engaged, over a number of years, both by his writings and his teaching functions at the University of Chicago, in raising the dignity of Adult Education as a discipline, a proper part of University curriculum. Now by conferring the honour on a field worker in a remote corner of the globe, your University has further stressed the social significance of adult education in its numerous ways and aspects, as the practical need of the hour for the general all-round advancement of the world community.

Your call to me for coming here, particularly the occasion for it, stirs up deep emotions within me. I have traveled nearly half the circumference of the planet to present myself before you. For very

good reasons I welcome this opportunity of entering on an enquiry as to whether and to what extent this community of thought and aspiration in educational purposefulness between us, that is between the American and Indian fellow-workers, brings us closer in understanding the great idea.

It is true that thousands of miles of land and water separate our two countries. You are an affluent society, whereas the mass of India's people have about the lowest standard of material life and comfort among the civilized countries of the world. The achievement of your people in science and technology staggers the imagination. Indeed, you have become a super-power and have reached the post-industrial stage. We are steadily moving forward in industrial growth and yet remain backward in the process of development. Your achievement in building up from heterogeneous elements an integrated nation-society is one of the marvels of recorded history. We are at once the youngest and the largest democracy on earth, still going through the teething stage of a big political and economic change.

As the premier nuclear power you have the tremendously difficult responsibility for the peace of the world. Our country is, on the other hand, working for the integration of its vast population and for raising its economic and educational levels. India's population increases at a frightening rate. It can be said that we add every year one Australia in terms of our population numbers! Food production, family planning, education, social and economic disparity are, therefore, problems which are stern challenges for our leaders. We carry on our back the "Burden of Ages," to use Tagore's significant expression. With the development of fast transport systems and means of communication, the peoples of the world are coming much closer to one another and are becoming more and more independent. Our planet seems to be steadily shrinking in size. And yet the hard facts of history and geography, of social and economic differences, of national sentiments and ideological attitudes do hinder the speedy growth of a closely knit world community. This factor has to be kept in view and should remain under continuous study. Isolationism has

lost its relevance. National pride and prejudices will soon become indefensible.

I

The two pictures with their lines and patches of light and shade, of the five thousand years of Indian history and about four hundred years of America's wonderful record indeed offer much material for reflection. In a general way most of you are well acquainted with this fascinating story of mankind. I have just barely referred to it in order to take you to the core of my submission, namely, the relationship of people's education to the basic needs and values of the human family. Can the rich inspiration drawn from Greek thought and intellectual exercise in ancient India in philosophy and metaphysics, not to exclude the wisdom of Chinese thinkers and the contribution of Roman jurists, benefit humanity as a whole to such an extent and in such a manner as to break down the barriers which keep its members apart as separate, suspecting, distrusting, even hostile groups? And further, how is one to go about achieving it? Has the continuing process and plan of people's learning any contribution to make in our march toward this goal?

Between two and three thousand years ago Indian intellectual thought carried on a vigorous pursuit of truth, undertook studies in the fields of the liberal arts, philosophy, law, and humanities. Even after the peak period of its glory had passed and there came the time of decline, ample evidence is available of its achievement in the fields of arts and letters. The archeological finds also confirm this conclusion. The epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the remarkable dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna which is the world-famous Bhagawad Gita, the Puranas which were a later addition, signify the heights of the attainment of the human mind and spirit. The Ajanta and Elora cave frescoes and temples are a unique example of the synthesis of the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture at a single spot. There have been poets whose language and imagination still move the deepest emotion.

To take one such example, the moving play, Shakuntala, one of the great works of the famous and versatile Sanskrit poet, Kali Das, was first translated into German. On reading it this is what the great poet, Goethe, wrote:

> "Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms
> and the fruits of its decline,
> And all by which the soul is charmed,
> enraptured, feast and fed,
> Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself
> in one sole name combine.
> I name thee, O Shakuntala, and all at once
> is said."[1]

Before and shortly after the beginning of the Christian era, some Chinese philosophers visiting India witnessed how Indian society had developed its arts, literature, culture, and religion. Their writings are available to us. Vedas, the earliest works on Hindu religion and social organization, were introduced to the Western world through German translation. They are the basis of Hindu social life and Aryan religion.

Delivering lectures at Cambridge University, Max Muller said:

> "If I were asked to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of the choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them, which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of the Greeks and the Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a

> life not for this life only, but transfigured and eternal life, —again I should point to India." [2]

These are perhaps words of exaggeration. Indeed, it is embarrassing for an Indian to read out this passage from Max Muller's utterances. However, the main reason for inflicting on you a rather longish extract from the views of the celebrated German scholar is to indicate that Indian thought was diverted from the study of the outward and material to that "of the inward and the intellectual world . . . leading up to the beginning of rational thought . . . of the study of ourselves, of our true selves," and in this, according to him, "India occupies a place second to none in the world." [3]

Even then it should not be supposed that Indian classics, India's literature, philosophy, and sociological systems were assessed by all Western thinkers in the same way. Only a few distinguished orientalists such as Sir William Jones, Thomas Colebrooke, and some others, gathered pearls from the deep sea of Sanskrit literature. There were, on the contrary, a number of eminent persons who found nothing valuable in Indian thought and philosophy, or social tradition. In fact, they rejected it as superficial and valueless. Mention may be made, for example, of Macaulay (1800-1859), renowned as a scholar, literateur, and a jurist. He may be considered the father of the modern penal code of India. In his powerful words written in 1835 when the English East India Company was governing India from London, there is found a strong and emphatic repudiation of the views held by Max Muller. At the time of determining the future educational policy for India, Macaulay expressed himself about the quality of eastern learning as follows:

> "A single shelf of a good European
> Library was worth the whole
> Native literature of India and
> Arabia." [4]

In eulogizing the utility of English language and condemning the

languages of India, Macaulay with characteristic force and self-confidence wrote:

> "The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared with our own, whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, wherever they differ from those of Europe differ for the worse, and whether when we can patronise sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns a thousand years long, and geography made of seas of treacle and seas of butter." [5]

It may be perhaps interesting to quote the great Sanskritist, Sir William Jones (1756-1794), on the language issue. Regarding Sanskrit, Sir William considered its

> "Wonderful structure more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either." [6]

We here are not called upon to resolve such controversies. Perhaps the truth lies, as is often the case, in the middle, if the extremes born of imbalances are left aside. What is, however, relevant for the present discussion is that after hundreds of years of all-round progress, prosperity, and intellectual achievement, the wheels of change moved the Indian chariot away from what was its golden age into a period of decline and decay. This span also covered a few centuries during which social life became rigid, customs hardened almost into superstition, intellectual stagnation and internal strife slowly sapped the strength of the society. Then comes the modern period and British influence. The story of my country during the last two hundred years is an open book before you. It is not necessary, therefore, to say anything about it. As you know, a new Chapter was added to it recently (in 1947) when, to the everlasting credit of both sides, India's independence was accepted and formally recognized by the

British. This revolutionary event came about without much violence, conflict, or bitterness. With the attainment of political freedom, the country awoke to the tremendous responsibility of consolidating that freedom in terms of people's well-being, happiness, and national progress. The mentality of protest had to give place to constructive statesmanship—a most difficult and challenging, even explosive situation. It may be appropriate to add that the hundred years which preceded Independence, when India chafed under a foreign yolk, constituted a period of social and intellectual renaissance. It will have a place of honour in the annals of India.

I feel somewhat guilty for having detained my learned audience to view the outline of this cultural story of India. In honouring me at this event you have, I venture to presume, taken notice of my country, its problems and difficulties, its aspirations and possibilities. That supposition is my defense and apology.

The post-war world has seen change and growth of knowledge which was unimaginable in the past. Centuries have been compressed, as it were, into decades, even years. Growth of scientific knowledge takes a terrific speed. They say it doubles itself in ten years. It is believed that ninety per cent of all the scientists that the world has known are living today. In this context there is a sharp contrast in the conditions existing within our two countries, India and the United States. The economic disparity, population figures, nutritional resources, technological advance, and the overtones of international relations are all formidable factors and pose serious problems. As against this, there are developing conditions and circumstances which bring the peoples of the world every day closer to one another in many ways. Besides, massive programmes of foreign aid from the richer and more advanced countries tend to reduce disparities and distances. But these and other remedies seem to fall far short of the requirement. Friends, you have no idea of the extent of poverty, ignorance, disease, and malnutrition in which masses of human beings (among them millions of Indians) live. It really is a sub-human existence. This must disturb the peace of mind of every enlightened person no matter to which creed, ideology, or country he or she may belong.

II

Through the ages, men of vision and wisdom have turned to education as the principal and effective, though long-term cure for social and economic ills from which mankind has suffered. It is the firm base from which the former can be attacked and overcome. In these extraordinary times even the educational approach has to be revolutionized in order to meet the changing situation. It has been rightly observed by Professor Richard McKeon that "the history of education reflects the history of society and the history of thought."[7] He further remarks that "wandering scholars and itinerant professors have always been familiar symptoms of change, cultural communication, and intellectual upheaval."[8] The implication of this view is passively accepted but not grasped with a conscious conviction. The whole subject is of crucial importance for man's well-being and calls for active thinking. He should not let the wind blow him about in any direction. In these times education has to be dynamic and adaptable in its content, quality, and techniques.

The education of the adult (out-of-school citizen) has assumed new dimensions and greater urgency. Scientific thought discards the view that the educational programme is meant only for young people. This approach is suicidal for society. With the rapid growth of knowledge an educated person soon becomes uneducated unless he keeps up his learning process. In fact, there are some departments of knowledge in which adults learn more easily and quickly than the young. Moreover, the citizen of a democratic society cannot discharge his civic duties unless his education is kept going continuously. The importance of education of out-of-school people is growing day by day. There is much truth in Livingstone's view that today the problem of education is the problem of adult education! In order to deserve the title, adult education has to be integrated with the most serious issues of society, such as food production, population control, peace, economic development, modernization of agriculture, proper use of leisure, particularly in the industrial areas and the conduct of international relations. All centres of educational activity, as the late

Prime Minister Nehru remarked, are "like lamps spreading their light more and more in the surrounding darkness." [9]

Adult education as a human institution is as old as the hills. In fact, it preceded formal schooling, it existed before the alphabet was born, or any school was established! It built up folkfore and tribal tradition. All vocational skill and knowledge required for building up the occupation of the individual and the economic organization of the community in ancient times and in the middle ages was generally transmitted by adults to adults. Socrates preferred to conduct his dialogues with young adults. Most of the ancient "ashrams" in Hindu Rishis took adults as their disciples. It seems, therefore, paradoxical that the proper recognition of the social value of adult education in society should be a recent phenomenon. It would appear that this important aspect of educational philosophy was unconsciously neglected and thus fell into oblivion. Education and proper upbringing of the young is, of course, very important and deserves adequate attention. Its constant care, improvement, and expansion is and remains a live issue in human affairs. It is, however, ridiculous to think that it covers the whole area of educational thought or activity. It is desirable for the enlightened section of public opinion to understand and support the wisdom of the professor, one of whose bright young pupils went up to receive the master's blessings, as he had "finished" his education and was leaving college on graduation. The wise teacher quietly told the young man: "My dear boy, far from finished, your education has only begun now."

The term "Adult Education," as we know it, has a comprehensive scope: it is as wide and deep as life itself. It covers all activities affecting the well-being and progress of human beings—individual and social, moral and material, cultural and intellectual. It is said that the expression was first coined in early nineteenth-century England and traveled later across the Atlantic. In the States it acquired wider meaning and greater dimensions. "Definitions of adult education are as multitudinous as the autumn leaves; yet none satisfies many workers engaged in it." The numerous forms of activity and

emphasis do not imply differences in the underlying theory. Indeed, as has been rightly observed, "Philosophical theories have, therefore, little conscious effect upon the hundreds of thousands of learning activities now being pursued by millions of people."[10] Deliberate, purposeful effort by which men and women, engaged in the ordinary business of life, voluntarily seek to increase their knowledge, is the essence of adult education. It may be related either to their personal life, profession, or their functions as a citizen. All fields of knowledge are covered. Adult education has now assumed the power and purpose of a movement. Indeed, a whole philosophy has grown around the concept and its practice.

It has been rightly observed that the education of adult people actually started in some form in North America right from the day that the first settlers landed in Jamestown in 1607. The foundation of adult education was laid in propitious conditions. Grattan would consider Benjamin Franklin as the patron-saint of the idea because of the unique discussion club of eleven other cronies which he started in 1727. It was an effective device for self-education. The whole movement slowly gathered momentum all-round.

> "The forces unleased by independence, westward expansion, the industrial revolution and the European enlightenment conspired to produce a compulsion for knowledge never before noted in the annals of history . . . the common man was mastering his new role of citizen-ruler, the world of knowledge was being illuminated by the dawn of the age of science."[11]

Thus it is most remarkable that some far-sighted humanists in America and Canada bore the cross and carried the gospel to the remote corners of society. They were the valiant crusaders of the great cause. Through different organizations and under various names the mission was continued. The Lyceums of America, the Mechanics Institutes of Canada, the educational settlements on both sides of the Atlantic ocean, the philosophical societies, the Library Associations, the Chautauqua movement, and several other efforts brought their separate but valuable contributions to this great nation-building programme.

Chautauqua with its modest beginning in 1854 has been called "one of the brightest new stars to light the adult education skies." In the whole history of people's general education, North America has been a pioneer and torch-bearer. The world owes a deep debt to your noble ancestors. In England and Wales the W.E.A. (Workers' Education Association) has also had a fine record of service, indeed of monumental importance.

III

The Indian scene in this context is different and depressing. The old traditional lines of communication for transmitting knowledge have become weak, indeed they appear to have snapped at many points. This is a sad story. An uphill task faces the community. A vast deal of ignorance and apathy toward the whole subject has to be overcome. Considering its enormous proportions, the difficulties due to lack of resources and indifference of even the élite become indeed frightening. But there are a few persons of vision who have put their shoulders to the wheel. There is the strong will to carry on the struggle against obstacles. In fact, it seems that the dark night may not continue for long. The dawn will sooner or later break out with the first rays of light. The nation-wide Community Development Programme officially launched after Independence had "Social Education" as its integral part. The comprehensive and authoritative document—the report of the Education Commission—has (for the first time in the history of modern Education in India) devoted a whole chapter to the subject of Adult Education and its relation to national well-being.[12] Its thoughtful recommendations have, for this reason, special significance. A national organization (The Indian Adult Education Association) has been active for nearly thirty years in spreading ideas on people's education, organizing pilot projects to promote the cause, and influencing the formulation of public policy about it.

Nature and the whims of history often afflict the human tribe with strange ironies! Here is one with a rather sharp, cruel aspect. India, at this time in her history, while she is catching up with other indus-

trial and affluent countries, badly needs for this purpose the support of a comprehensive nation-wide organization for the education of its adult population. This need is much greater and far more urgent than in other progressive countries, and yet it is in India that the fundamentals of "continuing" education have to be explained and even defended. This situation is sad and depressing, but the challenge has to be, indeed, is being taken up! There are hopeful signs, but by no means are the existing conditions completely satisfying.

The obvious advantages to be gained from liberal education, understanding of civic duties, being well-informed about scientific knowledge and world affairs, and of grasping opportunities for personal enrichment and professional betterment—the ingredients of adult (or continuing) education—are indeed to be welcomed for all communities whatever their stage of growth. The enlightenment of the human spirit and the broadening of the mind of man would be undoubtedly valuable under all conditions. India needs them like any other country. Apart from this feature common to all nations and societies, the concept of adult education has very special value for India for three valid reasons. A brief reference to them will perhaps be appropriate.

At the present time, when the country is committed to a policy of planned and coordinated schemes of social and economic development, active participation of the people in them is of immense importance. Adult education has to be hopefully and purposefully undertaken with this object in view. For this reason it has to be development-oriented and also comprehensive in operation. Secondly, with the advent of political independence and the adoption of a liberal democratic Constitution—with the principle of self-government reaching down to the village—the training of leadership for carrying this great responsibility has acquired new significance and urgency. Therefore, adult education in India would have to accord to this particular requirement a prominent place in its programme. Adult educators in India are expected to bear these two factors in mind in order that people's education becomes more meaningful.

There is yet another special spot in the Indian landscape which might easily escape the attention of most Western observers. It is indeed India's serious and baffling problem—of mass illiteracy. The country carries the heavy load of about two hundred million illiterate people. There has been unprecedented expansion of primary education and we have had many literacy drives and yet illiteracy is still on the increase. While the percentage of literacy is happily going up (16 per cent in 1951, 24 per cent in 1961, and 28.6 per cent in 1966—an encouraging sign), the number of illiterates has risen by 26 million during the decade of 1951-1961. Growth of population is faster than the achievement of the primary education programme. Another tragic feature of the situation is that among the people of working age, fifteen to forty-four years—the creators and producers in society—illiteracy is considerable, to the tune of 67.4 per cent of the age group. How this retards economic progress can be easily imagined. This is a massive problem of formidable proportions. And yet it has to be tackled sooner or later. As Professor V. K. R. V. Rao, the present Education Minister of India, put it:

> "Without adult education and adult literacy, it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic or social development which we require, nor is it possible to have that content or quality or tone in our economic and social development that makes it worth while in terms of values and welfare." [13]

It may here be noted in passing that literacy as it was understood forty years ago, namely the three R's—reading, writing and simple arithmetic—is considered utterly inadequate now, indeed it will be found wasteful. It has definitely to be both functional and comprehensive. The mass of the people should be able to make use of their learning capacity for being self-reliant and competent in managing their own business whatever it might be, and also partake in the civic and social life of the country. This objective has been generally approved and accepted by the Government and voluntary organizations engaged in the field. The implication of this new approach is that the literacy campaign will be the focal point around which all

schemes of development will be woven—such as agriculture, village or town affairs, public health, cottage industries, local libraries, and school education.

IV

I am speaking under the protecting roof of Syracuse University. I have also expressed my admiration for the thoughtful act of its Chancellor in recognizing the social value of adult education. This naturally leads me to deal with the role of the University in this regard. Its profound influence, in fact its obligation in this respect is now being universally acknowledged. Gone are the days—never to return, I am sure—when the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, that is, teaching and research, were alone considered to be the legitimate functions of the University. Extension work was contemptuously rejected. Abraham Flexner did not like the University to be turned into a "service station."[14] Another learned professor (Thorstein Veblen) dismissed extension work as the "edification of the unlearned."[15] In the middle of the nineteenth century, a Royal Commission on universities of Britain turned down the proposals of a Cambridge Don in favour of extension work as "premature." All this has become dead wood of history. The University as a "citadel of learning," a "closed community" of scholars, is a thing of the past. The Ivory Tower is losing its tenants.

University extension was vaguely thought of in England in the middle of the last century. The idea was soon taken to America. It has been said that the idea of taking the University to the people is English, whereas that of bringing the community to the University is American. A professor at Johns Hopkins first advocated the idea. Professor Selleman of Yale delivered a course of popular lectures on Natural Sciences in New Haven in 1830. University extension soon became institutionalized and spread from university to university. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided in the form of Land Grant Colleges "one of the principal jewels of the crown" of American public education. Honour also goes to the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching established at Philadelphia in 1892. It has

become a powerful and well-directed movement through which many leading universities of the U.S., including your own, are engaged in promoting the education of the adult citizen in innumerable fields of knowledge. It has affected and will continue to affect the progress of the country all-round.

The story of the University in India has a different flavour altogether. In the first place, our university is an exotic plant. The seats of higher learning which flourished in ancient India passed away, dying heirless. There was a clear break in the university tradition. India had some great and renowned university centres in the past. *Takshshila,* the most famous among them, carried on its scholastic activity from 1000 B.C. to 500 A.D. and had a great name for its academic standard. Although Banaras (Varanasi, also known as Kashi) was another great seat of higher studies, the king of that place sent his prince to far-off Takshshila in the North West corner of India for further education. The philosophers of Takshshila were famous in the days of King Alexander of Macedonia. It was destroyed by foreign invaders about 500 A.D.

Nalanda was another famous university centre. It promoted higher education in the country from 425 to 1205 A.D. It had a very stiff admission test; only 20 per cent of the applicants could be taken. At one time the University had 8500 students and the faculty consisted of 1510 teachers. The famous Chinese philosopher, Hiuen Tsang, visited Nalanda. It was destroyed by a Muslem King, Bakhtiyar Khlilji. *Vallabhi* (Western India) flourished from 600 to 1200 A.D. *Vikram Shila* (800 to 1200 A.D.) and *Banaras* were some of the well known seats of religious and general education. They attracted a large number of students, even from other countries. But they had all gone out of existence long before the British came on the scene.

The universities which grew up in the United States and Canada had before them the old European centres of higher learning as models —of Bologna, Padua and Paris, Oxford and Cambridge, and drew

inspiration from Greek thought and Roman jurisprudence. And when Humboldt's revolt against the European tradition brought Berlin into existence in 1809, your universities could watch the change and profit by it. The Land Grant system was itself a remarkable measure of your people to shape your own educational future. India's case was quite different. Our modern university has no Indian ancestry, nor has it an indigenous tradition. The British government established the first universities in the three Presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras in 1857. They were given the old model of London University. They have developed their own rigid system borrowing a great deal from English experience. Since independence, there has been a sudden increase in the number of universities. There are more than 72 now, including the Institutes of Technology.

With very minor and meagre exceptions here and there, the universities in India have been rather conservative in the matter of giving to the community the benefit of their services. The whole idea, strange as it may sound, appears new to them and somewhat remote from their thoughts. Even in this matter, efforts are being made to overcome such rigidity. The Education Commission (already referred to) has emphasized the obligation of the University to organize extra-mural education for out-of-school adults. Very recently, through the foresight and enthusiasm of some university men, an Association for University Adult Education was established, the membership of which is open to all universities and University Colleges.

It is much to be hoped that the apathy and ignorance of the universities will soon give place to an active participation of their faculties in educating the people in new knowledge, in bringing the joy and benefit of learning to those who were deprived of it, and generally in developing the intellect and civic outlook of the people as a whole. Referring to this great service of the universities, Professor Cyril Houle writes:

> "Their boldest decision has been to move directly into the main current of social life to help mature and responsible men and women find better answers to their private and public problems through the unending process of education." [16]

Then alone will the University be accepted as a "citadel of civilization" (C. Houle). John Masefield's ringing tribute to the "splendid" University will have meaningful appeal: ". . . Wherever a University stands, it shines, wherever it exists, the free minds of men, urged on to full and fair enquiry, may still bring wisdom into human affairs . . ."

According to a distinguished Canadian psychiatrist, there have never been in the world's history enough mature people in the right place and at the right time. They are needed now as ever, and it is up to the universities to provide them, through organized and thoughtful effort of a comprehensive system of "continuing" education.

V

So far I have compared, even contrasted, conditions in India with those existing in North America. I would like, in my final submission, to place before you some needs and aspirations which are common to both. There are undoubtedly great differences between us —economic, educational, philosophical, political, and cultural—for which there are historical and geographical grounds. But there remain some values—human and social values—that we on both sides of the planet desire and toward which our moral and educational effort is being directed. We and the world as a whole would be benefited, if the schemes of adult education undertaken by universities and other agencies were integrated into a general value system which the world as a whole would adopt, irrespective of political or economic disparities and geographical distances.

The classics and scriptures of every civilized society have indicated what those values and norms are. Schemes of adult education should not ignore them, as seems to be the tendency of our political sys-

tems and international relations. Today the human society is going through a crisis of moral values, and human relations are its immediate victim. The younger generation takes its cue from its elders and therefore the vicious circle goes on becoming stronger and harder. If a heroic effort is made to crack its crust by the moral and intellectual force of adult education programmes, a new hope will perhaps dawn on the family of man.

At the convocation of the ancient universities of India, this was the exhortation of the preceptor for his graduate-pupil:

> "Speak the truth, be righteous in conduct, never ignore the process of learning, never run away from duty. Never disregard the teaching of religion and its basic principles." [17]

In Mahabharat, the great saint and law-giver, Vyas has forceful verse on civic duty and the dictates of one's conscience:

> "One should sacrifice an individual for the sake of the family, family in favour of the town, and the whole world for the soul (or conscience)." [18]

If the public education of adult men and women all over the world were taken up by university leaders of courage and vision and directed on unconventional lines, the result could be of incalculable value to mankind. It will be necessary to think boldly and plan wisely —even if it means breaking away from the nineteenth-century concepts which have produced wars, violence, and separatism. That consummation seems to be a far-off ideal, perhaps beyond the view of this generation. Tagore was a great leader, educator, and poet. He was also a dreamer. I would close by sharing with you these stirring lines from his Gitanjali:

> "Where the mind is without fear, and the head
> is held high,
> Where knowledge is free,
> Where the world has not been broken up into
> fragments by narrow domestic walls,

Where words come out from the depth of truth,
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost
Its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit,
There, in the haven of Freedom,
O Father Let my country awake."[19]

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