

VALUES

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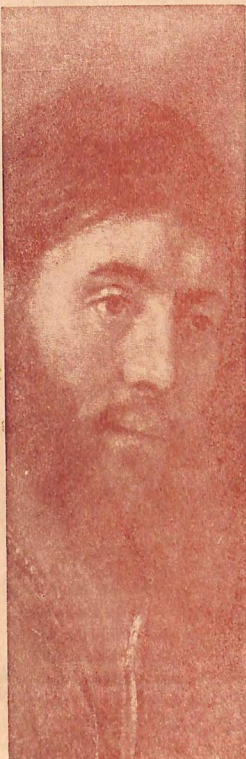
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PLANNING ONE WORLD

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Editorial: The Future of Christianity

LIKE everything else in our changing world, the Christian mode of thought and way of life, which is mainly important because it still prevails in the dominating civilization of our time, if it is not to wither away or become another fossil in the museum of life, must also be revalued in terms of the global conditions of life which press upon us. This can only be accomplished within the terms of an absolutist frame of reference.

To any wise man the survival of any relativistic form of religion is a matter of indifference. Fortunately however, Christianity does contain its absolutist core and therefore, even though burdened by many relativistic features, there is no reason why the vertical or universal aspect of Christianity should not be understood.

The Personal Ego-God : Jesus belongs to the order of absolutist lovers of truth who have lived and taught from prehistoric times. Those who claim exclusiveness in however exalted a form are guilty of creating a dualistic rivalry which rebounds to their own destruction. Doctrines clash, but truth is not a doctrine. The belief that truth is a doctrine has been the great theological error which has split, not only Christianity, but many other religions, such as Islam and Buddhism, resulting in both cold and hot religious wars. As Narayana Guru put it, the upholders of such an attitude of disadoption of others' faiths fall into a hellfire of their own making.

The blunder arises when God or the Guru figure is treated as a relativistic object or person, rather than as the symbol or representative of an absolute Principle. The symbol " ∞ " represents infinity, but the mark is not really infinity. God and the person of any teacher, no matter how holy, are also only representations of a vertical principle, although the variations and affiliations may be personally very dear to the individual. The wise man looks beyond the many variations towards the one common Principle indicated.

Except for a handful of brilliant mystics, the interpreters of Christianity, the priests and theologians, have all been exponents of the relativistic or horizontal aspects of religion. They have cared more for the letter than the spirit, more for the mark than the principle. The results have been disastrous, a record of warring crusades, inquisitions, witch-burnings, forced conversions, and countless unhappy childhoods. The gentlest

of missionaries, of the sweetest and most blameless personal character, who would not hurt a fly, have very often preached eternal damnation and hellfire alongside a God of infinite love and compassion. Their spiritual conflicts must be severe indeed. No wonder the kindly natured missionaries invariably look like frightened mice, while the hard natured ones have faces like granite.

The relativistic God is just a super-bloated ego. Such a God is said to exult proudly in his own good works, but punishes his devotees for the least signs of self-pride. He never forgives even the slightest offence but at the same time insists on his devotees forgiving all. This is the result of horizontalizing or objectifying the deity.

The deity-principle which is the Absolute is not an object. It is no more an ego than is the true self of man. The understanding of this Christ-principle is the great truth that sets men free. The real task of the Christian is to find this secret within, to discover within the kingdom of heaven and happiness, and to shake off all forms of relativism and to live and move with all his being in the way of the Absolute. Mumbling a creed, thundering out dogmas, and doing good works are no substitutes for this proper internal revolution which is the true "conversion"—whatever the religion a man holds, Christian or pagan.

Principle of Mutual Adoption : The form of religion which gives consolation to the seeker does not matter, for under the wise and understanding teacher every form can be vertically related to the Absolute. Both in the world without and in the worlds within, the entire cosmos is permeated with absolutist values. They stretch like Jacob's Ladder from earth to heaven.

There is nothing ridiculous, contemptible or superstitious in a poor Mexican Indian (as Aldous Huxley relates in the article we publish this month) pouring out a libation of wine on the floor of a church.* An absolutist pattern of Christianity can borrow values from all sources, from other religions and from pre-Christian pagan sources, and give them all due recognition, thus opening its portals until finally it ceases to be exclusive in any way at all; just as in India, in far more homes than missionaries have perhaps a chance of seeing, there are pictures of Jesus and Mary alongside the especially dear form of a Siva, a Krishna or a Buddha.

Similarly Jesus will be honoured throughout the world, not by the aggressiveness of the average missionary, but when Christians everywhere themselves honour the teachers and divine personages of other faiths. This is the true path to the abolition of rivalry in religion and the global recognition of the common nature of all faiths. In this respect we refer you to this admirable feature—which is the principle of mutual adoption—of the Unitarian Church, and described by the Rev. Fritchman in his article in this issue.

Any form of proselitizing can only be considered unmannerly interference with the spiritual freedom of another. Instead of rivalry, the principle of mutual adoption can lead to mutual aid. Aspects perhaps

* In his book *Brazil, Land of the Future* the late Stefan Zweig describes in detail the modifications made to the Catholic religion by the Negroes in Bahia, a Christianity full of merry-making. (pp. 258-267).

over-stressed here can be balanced by others emphasized there. Thus each religion can help the other. Or if that is not possible, then at least there must be non-interference.

Science and Christmas: If the absolutist core is to emerge, many low values in the Christian relativistic form of religion will have to be surmounted. The notion that sex is sinful, the cult of the dead, of weeping Mater Dolorosas, of bleeding hearts and ugly crucifixes, of gloomy dank churches, of dismal sepulchral sermons, the conversion campaigns at a vulgar soapbox level, alongside the shameless commercial rackets, must be questioned as to whether they are worthy of a noble religion intended to improve human beings, to bring joy and light and love to mankind. Most of these expressions of relativistic religion would seem to be far below even the average common standard of human intelligence.

An absolutist Christianity has nothing to fear from the advances of the physical sciences. While there are relativistic approaches in science also, in a too-facile addiction to theories, even to the most prized one of evolution which can assume the dimensions of a dogma, there are also absolutist approaches, particularly in the science of mathematics. Just as religion draws attention to the place of the spiritual virtues of kindliness and goodwill, so science draws our attention to the need for sound disciplines which keep the mind open and alert. Like religion, the physical sciences can find their place within the common framework of absolutist wisdom. The Master Science however, stands above the physical sciences, and above religions, being centred or grounded in the Absolute, and dealing consequently with all values, material and spiritual, with empirical and with intuitional truth, marking off the relative clearly from the Absolute.

Although Christmas on the surface is little more than a commercial orgy of salesmanship with the dreadful massacre of millions of birds for gluttonous feasting, it can also be restored to a place of dignity in western civilization. Some lesson might be adopted from India, where traditional reverence for life is such that on religious festivals even meat-eaters abstain from flesh on such occasions.

In the northern hemisphere Christmas more or less comes at the time of the winter solstice. The point of mid-winter is passed on that day. From the Christian point of view it is the recognition of the victory of the Absolute over the relative. It is a preparatory event for the glorious Easter festival when the whole of life is resurrected from the grip of winter. The earth goddess Demeter in the Greek religious myth, once again finds her daughter Persephone released from Hades, the underworld, just as the Christian Mary-mother rejoices when Jesus the absolutist "rises from the dead." The glory of the Absolute is visibly reasserted:

And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover

Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

And just as mankind the world over is of one kind, despite all appearances to the contrary, so God in the Absolute sense is one and the same for all; and so too, all religions have one common nature, Christianity no less than others. It is our hope that Christianity, rid of all its relativistic accumulations, and basing itself on such supreme unitive values, will be worthy of survival.

[END]

Rudeness on the Dutch Border

WHILE tons of expensive ironmongery go careering in free solar space, ignoring the paper world of passports and every border created by the bad habit of nationalism, down here on earth the menace and trouble of visas and borders continues.

We are reminded of this in a letter received from G. Rajagopal who is at present with Nataraja Guru in Belgium.

They were both holding valid visas on their Indian passports, issued by the Dutch Consul in Brussels, and yet were detained for three hours, kept out in the open on a very cold day, on the Belgian-Dutch border, by an almost illiterate Dutch frontier official, who could not even read a passport! This incident took place on October 11, 1959, at a little place called Zundert in Zuid Holland. Neither reason nor explanation was given for the detention, and the official, and his assistant behaved most rudely. It is not our desire to have these officials penalized, but for the Dutch authorities to see that courtesy is maintained within the system.

A course of politeness in world citizenship seems imperative as our one world draws closer together. We had thought this ancient prestige snootiness at frontiers was the prerogative of recently formed post-war states, over-proud of their sovereign independent status....Many of our American friends, for instance, have had to wait six or more months to get a simple visa for India, in spite of their having excellent credentials from police and banks and what not. One American Negro family have just written to tell us they had to wait for seven months for a bit of official paper with the simple rubber stamp....It is all irritating and humiliating.

But whether in "over developed" countries, boasting of their 20th century modernity, or in "under-developed" countries, anxious to prove their equality by a harsh imitation of the red-tape world, this absurd, wholly unnecessary and unjust passport system is the same. It gives status and power to wholly superfluous and unworthy people. The pay-off is double, first in so-called prestige and secondly in actual income from the robbery of paying for visas.

It is surely high time this passport racket was ended and all travel papers destroyed. It makes a mockery of Clause XIII (2) of the U. N. Declaration of Human Rights which reads "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country," to which most countries, including India, America and the Netherlands are signatories. In spite of all the big talk of human rights, it would seem that the Passport System is there, not for the protection of the individual, but for his harassment by any Tom, Dick or Harry wearing a national uniform.

[END]

One World Comment

Himalayan Trouble: Nehru had another Himalayan holiday for his birthday. He will be 70 on Nov. 14. When he holidayed in Bhutan one year ago, he found it "another world." He said, "If I was a Bhutanese I would be very anxious to avoid the flow of civilization—traders going in, money-economy coming, and poverty." Considering that statement, no comment is needed on the following facts. Dr. Tulsi Giri, Nepal's Development Minister, returned in October from Peking where he had been discussing the balance of Rs. 40,000,000 (\$8,000,000) out of the Rs. 60,000,000 (\$12,000,000) aid for Nepal from China. On Oct. 20, 1959, during the Tibetan debate at the United Nations in New York, Nepal's Home Minister, opposed the discussion of the issue and questioned the human rights of the Tibetans. Another item of news reports the visit to Kathmandu in Nepal of China's Indian Ambassador.

Looking for Reasons: That Tibet is rich in copper and gold and that there is oil in Naga Land and in Assam are also facts. That China has very little oil is another fact. The Chinese are also a people with a practical outlook. Their furious haste to show the world (the white world; inclusive of Russia) just what they can do to transform China into an industrial civilization is another line. Tibetans, Nepalese, Bhutanese and other Himalayan peoples are seeing the beginning of the "flow of civilization" which Nehru deplors but cannot stop. Though why he should deplore it in Bhutan and encourage it in India is for his own ambivalent mind to determine. At any rate China is claiming land with seemingly economic promise.

Buddhism and Politics: A Ceylon premier is murdered by a "Buddhist priest." Western readers must wonder what sort of Buddhism flourishes in Ceylon. Many Hinayana or Theravada Buddhists in Ceylon itself must be deploring the degenerate state of affairs. As one Buddhist, Bhikshu Sangharakshita, observes in his fine book, *A Survey of Buddhism*, "the Theravada Sangha has become a veritable hothouse for hypocrisy." The rules insist on one meal a day and on not handling money. Robes are supposed to be patchy made from rags. However, the monks get round these rules by having three meals before noon, technically considered as one meal; they do their fiscal business through banks; and they wear costly robes, often of silk, cut into rectangles and then stitched together. He concludes: "the monastic life . . . becomes little more than a convenient means of livelihood for idle people." Total revaluation of the entire meaning of Buddhism would seem to be the lesson most needed in Ceylon, the reputed home of "pure" Buddhism. Institutionalism and relativism anywhere produces the degeneration of religion. The same writer reports: "Strange as the fact may seem, the monastic life, in the way in which the Buddha, according to the Pali scriptures themselves, intended it to be lived, can be more faithfully pursued in a country such as India, where Buddhism in the institutional sense no longer exists, than in Ceylon, or Burma or Siam."

Fallout and Fallin : In the East they talk of the danger of having a pet cobra. Americans are awaking to the fact that making stockpiles of atom bombs can be far more risky than the venom of a little reptile. They have sixty million gallons of thoroughly poisonous "hot" atomic waste and are having a nightmare wondering what to do with it. Most of the ordinary muck left over from big chemical industry goes into "new" drugs, and there is the dreadful fluoridization of drinking water, the weed-killer industry, etc. all of which gives fine new markets and added profits for the chemical producers. But nobody wants this atomic waste. This hellbrew costs \$2 a gallon, a total expense of Rs. 50 crores. Presumably Russia (and come other countries) have the same cesspool problem. This is not fall-out. It is fall-in. Boomerang!

Homogenized : Taking his cue from the titles of recent books, e.g. *The Affluent Society*, *The Organization Man*, *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Great Audience*, *The Waist-High Culture*, *The Quest for Identity*, *Man's Search for Himself*—Prof. A. Schlesinger of Harvard writing in the *Saturday Evening Post* is concerned about the steady increase of uniformity for which he blames television and the loss of the habit of reading. The impression, he says, is that "modern science and technology have decreed the abundance of consumers' goods as the end of life and the great organization as the means; and where, in consequence, the ordinary man, bewildered, distracted, wearied, sated and drained by the processes of the mass-production society, loses his sense of individual purpose and ultimately of identity itself." There is one answer to all this — take protective measures. Don't have a T-V, refuse to have a telephone at home. Quite a few people we know have adopted these measures and thus manage to preserve their identity in the homogeneous society.

Robot World Again : In a scathing letter to the *New York Times* of June 23, author Lewis Mumford, commenting on the US Congressional Atomic Energy Subcommittee's disclosures about a possible atom-war toll of fifty million dead in the USA and the "permissible" number of victims of nuclear warfare diseases, put his finger on the spot when he wrote: "The fact is that these scientific advisers our Government chooses to listen to, and the politicians who accept their judgment, live in an underdimensioned and distorted world. Having meticulously eliminated the 'human element' from their thought, they are equally capable of sanctioning its elimination from this planet. Their limited methodology has driven out the feelings, anxieties and hopes that alone could bring us to our senses. As a nation, we have, I submit, been subjugated and enslaved by our commitment to nuclear weapons. We still vainly try to find mechanical, electronic and radioactive answers to problems that can be solved only by human proposals addressed to a human end — mankind's survival."

"Fiercely Nationalistic" : Such is the description of South American states by Edwin Tetlow, London's *Daily Telegraph* Special Correspondent in a recent series of articles. He says "Obtaining a visa and then getting into a South American State can be a wearying experience."

Sometimes you need four photographs, your mother's maiden name, and a letter testifying that you are worthy of a visa. In other cases you need no photographs but a certificate of good health from a doctor who will give it to you for a fee but without an examination, and one of good conduct from the police. Formalities at an airport can take up to an hour. Disembarking passengers are herded alongside their aircraft and eventually led by somebody in uniform into the bureaucratic mill. Luggage is always examined, but not always thoroughly. Let every traveller be warned never to lose any of the pieces of paper stuck into his passport; it may cost him anything from his liberty downwards."

Latest for Happy Zombies: Hire-purchase holidays have been drawn up by the Eastbourne Hotels Association, England. Play now, pay later, but pay and pay, happy robots!

Moon Names and Claims: Surely nobody is going to be so churlish as to deny top credit to Russian pioneers for their great achievements in space-science, in photographing the hidden side of the moon. At the same time all this has nothing to do with any national predatory claims. The long familiar face of the moon has been mapped and named after famous figures of the past, both in science and philosophy — its "craters" named after Plato, Archimedes, Tycho and Copernicus etc., and the dry "seas" given names of a poetic character, such as Maria Imbrium (Showery), Serenitatis (Clear), Tranquilitatis (Calm), Nubium (Cloudy) etc. Serious, sober fuss was made about the danger of conveying earth bacteria to the moon. But at least equally serious is the danger of carrying earth ideologies. And nationalism is not the least of these. The moon belongs to everybody and nobody. It is like the sea. The joy that people get in dipping and swimming in the ocean is partly because it is non-national. One tastes freedom. The same thing so far has applied to the moon, whose value to poets and lovers has been universal. The moon like the sea is absolutely neutral. So was the earth once before this madness of nationalism. The moon's neutrality must be maintained. National flags, which are the ugly symbols of caste distinctions dividing the human race, must be rigorously kept off the moon. The moon is there for all, without distinction. Attempts by Russians to plant flags there, and to give a Russian topography to the other side of the moon, must be as much deplored as their scientific victory is acclaimed.

[END]

INCOMPREHENSIBLE? But because you cannot understand a thing, it does not cease to exist.

—PASCAL.

Pagan Catholicism in Central America

by ALDOUS HUXLEY

With the control of the Catholic Church weakened by anti-clerical legislation, the Indians of Mexico and Central America are bringing pagan religious practices into Christianity in a novel blend.

THE reason why the Spaniards impressed themselves upon their subject races so much more profoundly than did the other colonizing peoples is not far to seek; the *Conquistadores* were also missionaries. For them, conquest was not enough; there had to be conversion as well. They imposed Catholicism on their defeated enemies. The English either exterminated their enemies or chased them out of sight, as in North America; or else left them, as in India and Africa, to the undisturbed practice of their own religions.

No measure of large-scale conversion can be successful, unless the converters are prepared to make a more or less considerable number of concessions, in the matter of ritual and church practice, to their converts. Thus Christianity converted Pagan Europe, but could only do so by adopting and Christianizing, so far as that was possible, popular pagan rites, festivals and deities. The old holy days were observed and the name of some Christian personage or event attached to them; local rites lingered on, thinly veneered with Christian significance; pagan deities, even those endowed with the embarrassing characteristics of fertility gods, got themselves dressed up in mitres and chasubles and figured, a bit incongruously, as local variants of perfectly respectable Christian saints.

Exactly the same thing happened in the Spanish colonies. A journey to Central America and Mexico is, among other things, a journey back into European history. Four hundred years ago in America, as in Europe a thousand years before that, the missionaries had to baptize the local deities, had to preserve popular local customs under other, Christian names, had to varnish native superstitions with a Christian significance. It was only on these conditions that the mass conversion of the population could be accomplished. And even these conditions were not fully acceptable to the converts. Just as, in Europe, elements of the old fertility religions lingered on for centuries in the witch cult, so in America, side by side with official Catholicism and, in the minds of the natives, intimately associated with it, there lingered, and still linger, considerable traces of the pre-conquest religions.

Guatemalan Jungle Altars: In Guatemala, and to a lesser extent in Mexico, I had occasion to catch fleeting glimpses of pagan survivals and the pseudo-Catholic religion practised by priestless Indians. The few examples which follow will give an idea of the sort of thing one

can find going on in the more remote parts of these absorbingly interesting countries.

There is a township in Northern Guatemala called Momostenango. Like every other Central American town or village, it possesses a considerable church, well-frequented by the Indians, who come to pray and burn candles in the way I shall describe in a later paragraph. But in the woods and open country all round the town stand several hundreds of rustic altars—rude heaps, for the most part, of potsherds—dedicated to the cult of a deity called by the Indians *Mundo*, the World, and almost certainly identical with an ancient Quiche-Maya god, whose name, Huracan, meant 'Heart of the World.' (Momostenango and the other centres of Indian population lie in the Guatemalan highlands. The seat of the Old Empire Maya civilization was in the lowlands between the mountains and the Caribbean—a district that was at the time of the *Conquistadores* and still is almost completely uninhabited. The Quiche and Cakchiquel people subjugated by Alvarado were, so to say, poor relations of the Mayas, having a culture based on theirs, but greatly inferior to it. Archaeological sites in the highlands are very numerous; but none is comparable to the splendid Old Empire ruins of the lowlands.) No images stand on the Momostenango altars: *Mundo*, as his name implies, is an abstraction. But he is regularly worshipped and prayed to, and has a kind of hereditary priesthood of sorcerers or medicine-men, who play an extremely important part in the life of the town. Every two hundred and sixty days—the sacred, as opposed to the astronomical, year of the Mayas—there is a great three-day festival in honour of *Mundo*. Thousands of Indians come from long distances to celebrate the feast. There is worshipping at the altars and also (for the Indians see no inconsistency in this) at the church, where the devotees of *Mundo* go in large numbers to make confession to the parish priest.

Idols and Crosses: Elsewhere the mingling of Christian and pagan tradition may be seen symbolically represented on the altars themselves. In the woods near Chichicastenango, I saw an altar on which stood a roughly carved Quiche idol flanked by two stone crosses—all equally and indifferently blackened with the smoke of copal incense. Prayer bundles, made of pine needles neatly tied up into little bouquets, were piled up in a niche behind the altar, like so many letters posted to the divinity and awaiting his consideration and favourable reply. Many altars stand in extremely inaccessible places, high up in the forest-covered mountains, in the depths of precipitous ravines. For the white investigator, access to these is made difficult or impossible. The Indians do not want these specially sacred places to be looked at.

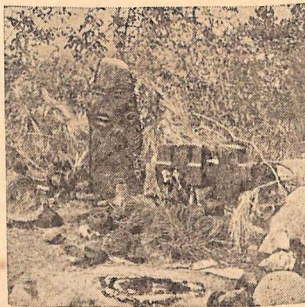
The pagan tradition also survives in the great dance festivals celebrated periodically in the different Indian townships. Some of these dances were prohibited by the Church when it had the power to prohibit, and used therefore to be performed in secret. Anti-clericalism has resulted in their being performed openly in the village plazas. They are pre-conquest dances—but danced by men in 17th-century Spanish costume and to music that is definitely European.

Libations in Church: Meanwhile, what goes on in the churches? In parishes where there are priests, there are, of course, regular

services. But the Indians hardly ever go to Mass, which is attended only by such more or less educated *mestizos* and whites as may happen to live in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the Indians almost never have themselves married or even buried by the Catholic priest, preferring their own rites, which are cheaper and, in their view, just as good. Nevertheless, they spend a great deal of time in their churches. You may see them, praying for hours at a stretch to astounding local versions of the counter-Reformation saints, who gesticulate from every altar. In front of them, on the floor, they will have as many as a score of candles burning; and their prayers are accompanied by a curious ritual of lighting and extinguishing, of taking up and setting down the candles. To the observer, it is evident that they are making some kind of elaborate ceremonial magic; but I never found anyone who could tell me its rules. From time to time, the worshipper will scatter the petals of flowers in a circle round his group of candles; and occasionally, if the priest is safely out of the way, he will produce from his knapsack a bottle of one of the frightful distilled liquors consumed by the Indians, and pour a libation on the church floor.

Hardly less important than the church itself are the meeting places of the various religious confraternities. Each confraternity is devoted to the cult of a particular saint and has a kind of prescriptive right to the image of that particular saint in the parish church. On grand occasions, the image is transported in procession from the church to the confraternity's house and remains there for some hours or even days. In the intervals, the members of the guild meet more or less regularly. What rites they perform at these assemblies I was unable to find out. But one is pretty safe in assuming that, in spite of their nominal connection with a Christian saint, they would hardly be regarded as orthodox in Rome. What do the Christian saints mean to their Indian worshippers? It is not easy to find out. (All that I myself can contribute towards the solution of the problem is the curious fact, vouched for by the half-caste 'secretary' of the village, that, at Jocopilas, in Guatemala, the sorcerers regard St. Peter as their special patron.) A complete answer to this and the many other questions raised by the religious behaviour of the Mexican and Central American Indians can be provided only by systematically co-ordinated anthropological research. [END]

Out in the forests, at secret altars, symbols of Paganism and Christianity are worshipped together. An idol and crosses, both blackened with the soot of incense and sacrificial fires, in a clearing near Chichicastenango.



What Unitarians Believe

by THE REV. STEPHEN H. FRITCHMAN

The author is the Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, California. This is an excerpt from one of his sermons. It will no doubt be refreshing to many of our Indian readers to know of a thoroughly open and revalued form of western religious thought which is non-missionary, non-creedal, open and rational. It perhaps represents the extreme heterodox pole from that of closed Christian orthodoxy.

As Unitarians we begin with believing in man, and this today for many Americans is the ultimate heresy.

Let me state some of the things that men and women of the twentieth-century Unitarian societies say with a great deal of common conviction.

Enrichment of Human Life: 1. We believe that human life is lived out in the arena of an orderly universe. It is a universe of cause and effect. As man understands the natural forces which seem always to have been here in changing forms and patterns, he is able to live with greater satisfaction and mutuality with the other people who share this home of ours...

2. Regarding the idea of God, so long a central concept in much religion, we hold to no single agreement because we ask each person to honor his own convictions on the evidence he finds. We are not so much against the idea of God as we are against being anti-man in the name of God. Some Unitarians hold to a view of an impersonal, non-parental conception of God. Most of us agree that the cosmos is largely unknown to us, though science is disclosing more of its nature than ever before...

3. While mankind has shaped its definitions of religion a thousand times a thousand, in logic and poetry, in art and in doctrine, we Unitarians start with a widely shared conviction that religion is the enrichment of human life. With Erich Fromm we say religion is "to think truth and live love." Many people will want to embroider on this theme with ritual and ceremony, but the heart of the matter is the thinking of truth and the living of love at every point, however hard and costly. We hold to a covenant with our fellow men to search unshackled by any ecclesiastical tradition, to accept whatever comes from our search. We hide behind no taboos or sanctioned habits of lip service to tradition. We see children as examples of honesty as often as adults, or more often. We like the little girl who returned from visiting her cousins and informed her parents: "You know, over there they pray to God to make them good little boys." "That is nice," replied the parents appreciatively. "Yes," responded the little girl, "but he hasn't done it yet."

We have no illusion that the capacity to doubt and to endure doubt for extended periods of time is one of the rarest things on the planet. On the positive side we say: Man with his drives towards fulfilment has the moral and intellectual competence to achieve many of his goals. We therefore reject the traditional concept of sin. We believe that man, with all his limitations and contradictions emotionally and morally, is learning the disciplines of his humanity. We assert that mental health, emotional maturity, love, reason and co-operation are as real and usable as hate, fear and competition.

Religion, we believe, if properly used, helps men to be the judges of their own lives, to accept or reject what can make for a full and happy life. Such religion calls for no supernatural aids or supports. Character and brotherhood are central goals within our grasp. For the kingdom of God we would substitute the commonwealth of man, not in a distant future, but in the living present. We believe that hell is real, and that it has been made and unmade on earth by men and women in every age.

No Single Holy Book : 4. We hold to a radical view of man. For four hundred years Unitarians have been stating with increasing precision what they mean by a belief in man. We believe that moral progress and spiritual maturity begin with accepting man as a product of evolution, still changing, capable of vast evil and equally vast good. We trust human nature ultimately to find the proper objects of human loyalty. The worst action possible in this world is the violation of man's nature, in economic exploitation, in war, in suppression of mind, in all forms of tyranny and division. The positive principle of the dignity of human nature is our rallying thought over the centuries. Its implications in our social institutions change and grow through experience, often costly and cruel, but the principle remains our most unifying concept.

5. We honor particular men and women who demonstrate the power of reason and love in every age, but we do so without deifying them. Historically we are a mixed tradition and our chief exemplars illustrate our rich variety of past experience. We find inspiration in the Jewish prophets and lawgivers, including Jesus of Nazareth, a teacher and reformer lost almost beyond recognition behind the construction of theologians and ecclesiastics. We have deep roots in the Greek and Roman ethical traditions, with the philosophers like Socrates, the Stoics like Marcus Aurelius, the Humanists like Erasmus, the fathers of the French, English and American Enlightenment. We have no holy men apart. Past and present people, obscure or famed, who embody the ideals we cherish give us courage for our present life.

6. Likewise we limit ourselves to no single holy book. We see history replete with Bibles, some far more inspired than others, all to be used with a critical eye and an open spirit. We look forward to a period in the future when men will not use Bibles or Korans, Vedas or Analects as more than clues to be taken on their merits, without idolatrous worship involved, without rigid interpretations forced upon frightened minds. We

believe the literatures of the past have been and are still abused, tortured and venerated out of all proportion to their value in a new age of learning, and in a new era of universal hungers for brotherhood and peace.

No Commandments : 7. We hold to a liberal view of the religious society, the church. We believe no sect or cult or faith has a monopoly on truth and we reject vigorously all exclusiveness in church organizations. We find the varieties of experience in religious practice a desirable thing, and know that new patterns will be found, probably at great variance with the most progressive yet found. Professional clergy, forms of worship, sacraments, practices of church government are due for radical revision and rejection in the years ahead as education catches up with sanctioned habits of the centuries.

8. We believe in life, but confess we know nothing of its individual survival after death. Hence most Unitarians are agnostic regarding immortality, the bodily resurrection, transmigration of souls, reincarnation and other theories advanced in culture after culture during past millenia. We anticipate great advances in the prolongation of human life on earth in years ahead and its increased felicity for the aged in comparison with past experience. We find less reason than our ancestors, living under cruel and hazardous terms of existence, to postulate heavens and hells and new worlds for a second chance to win what was lost in this one.

9. We substitute for scriptural codes and commandments, for church encyclicals and other authoritarian programs for society, the democratic process in human life. For four centuries the Unitarians have advocated a vigorous, practical ethical program for all their members. Ours is a tradition of service to those in immediate need as well as a reform of all-too-human institutions which have frozen into outmoded forms. The Unitarian has not ten commandments, but ten thousand tasks to perform, in concert with others of good will. The shaping of an ethic fit for a nuclear age seems far more commanding to us than the literal practice of an ancient code, however useful it has been during man's struggle toward social sanity. As Thomas Mann said : " Unitarians are aggressively bent on bettering man's condition." We believe in a heroic commitment to human values, and know that our greatest foes are not the Devil or Original Sin, but complacency and indecision. Unitarians hesitate to indulge in those lofty ethical abstractions which so often have cut men off from the crisis of man's present inhumanity to man.

Here I end this summary of answers for people in a hurry. These are a few of the assertions of one free mind in a free church. They can, obviously, be no man's statement but my own. . . . There are few capsule answers, but there are many basic ones that can be spoken with relative brevity. . . if we know what we are talking about. And if we don't, wisdom dictates a glorious silence. . . sometimes the crowning virtue of a Unitarian character.

[END]

Causerie - 4

The Journal and Reflections of an Absolutist

by NATARAJA GURU

In the present instalment of these memoirs, the author describes his visit to a summer holiday resort in the French Alps where he gave a course of lectures and also got lost. and then revisited Geneva, with its lovely lake, villas and gardens, full of memories of Rousseau.

THE shores of England receded from me while I slept in the hold of the ship, on my return to Ostend from Dover. Couchettes for sleeping were available in the beautiful ship as it rocked me within its commodious interior.

The younger people preferred to sleep on deck chairs or in the smoking-room, passing the time in drinking or mixing socially in various ways. Ostend was the dialectical counterpart of Dover when seen without the homesickness of the Englishman. The creeks which were navigable on this side of the continent still held those discarded craft called the Victory Ships, remaining in their hundreds, from the time of the last war and now considered as scrap and going for a song. One could see lines of them standing like unwanted reminders of excess and strife, implicit in the horizontal accentuation of life in all wars. How many man-hours and precious material made meaningless!

War-worn Flanders had however recovered, to put on its "new look" elsewhere, on the roads, as I viewed the scenery between Ostend and Ghent in one of those neat trains much more perfectly designed than their counterparts in good old England. Although the English themselves have something of a contempt for continental life, European civilization is perhaps more evident in its solid though severe majesty on the continent. The buses were better designed and gardens and fences better laid out with less of the "muddle-through and lick-it-into-shape" attitude of the self-sufficient and cocksure Englishman, to describe them in the jargon they themselves have tried to describe themselves. It is true that European civilization is fast approaching a climax, in which it might begin to deny itself practically whatever glory might have been attributed to it. All might prove a vanity and a meaningless passing show. As the Guru would put it, "like unto the city infernal, even as such did the Great Lord create all this ominous and empty world." ("Darshana Mala I.8).

A Drive to the Alps: At 7 p.m. on Sunday, July 12, I found myself on a never-to-be-forgotten long journey by car of 900 kilometres (560 miles) across the continent towards the Lake of Geneva and the Alps beyond it.

M. and his sister C. took the steering-wheel alternately as we passed Valenciennes, Riems, Troyes and Dijon successively with their cathedrals, historic monuments and literary associations. It was at Dijon that Rousseau found first entry into his fame through his first essay on the evils of science. He was the solitary wanderer who raised his voice against the false lure of what began to be called progress or civilization, in the Europe of his days. It was this call which was taken up by Tolstoi and echoed in Gandhi though in a much watered-down and distorted form. We shall return to these reveries soon . . .

Driving throughout the night following arrows on signboards leading into by-paths, and sometimes stopping to look at the map properly, the dawn found us at a river-side among the hills of the Jura mountains of France. At eight in the morning we reached Besancon associated with the birth of the author of *Les Miserables* with its Gavroche and Cosette of universal, immortal fame. We stopped for coffee and *brioches*. (buffalo-horn shaped buns) here and then continued our journey with road pointers already announcing the Dole and the Lake of Geneva.

Fernay of Voltaire associations and Diderot's home were among the interesting little French towns which still retain that flavour and atmosphere of the days of the French Revolution. All had their town halls and monuments with fountains and flag-posts with those unforgettable peculiarities of quaint, antique and interesting French country life.

The heights of the Jura were attained by a traverse of canyons, gorges and passing rivers by ten in the morning. The vista that spread before us on the other side of the mountains had a pale silvery gleam through the mist which I began to recognize as the dear Lac Lemman or Lake of Geneva of happy memories, whose meaning was doubly deepened for me personally because of my preference for Jean-Jacques Rousseau who is said to have wept his sheer mystic tears into this lake which has the shape of the half-open eye of a goddess. My personal associations of over thirty years ago were soon revived. This dimmed my vision from inside with gentle emotions of which the blue haze outside was but a counterpart in the language of contemplation.

Humanity Enjoying Itself: The frontier police would not let us pass from French Jura to Swiss Jura at a certain point near Fernay Voltaire and we had to take a roundabout route to find ourselves, after a picnic in the woods, still driving by Annecy, where the French people had another lake, even more sympathetic than Lac Lemman itself in many ways. One forgot the austere severity of Geneva here, and men and women were freer and easier in their ways, mixing and mingling with less fuss as they moved in bathing costumes under the sunlight by the lake shores for miles and miles. The whole population seemed to be out bathing. One could not help feeling, at least from all the colourful appearances passing before us as we drove along, that here, after all, humanity was enjoying itself. This was indeed a relief. Summer bathing let out the pent-up

feelings stored during winter months. *Homo sapiens* must touch the blue water at any cost every summer and there is an annual stampede like the deer hordes of Arctic climes, for the taste of seaweed. Men must have sunlight and fresh air besides mixed bathing joys and camp life. All this seems thrown into the bag free for people in warmer latitudes by the bounty of Mother Nature, for which they seem not to be thankful enough . .

Courchevel (our destination) which we reached at 3.30 in the afternoon, was placed at an altitude of 1550 metres (about 4,500 feet) above sea level, nestling amidst the peaks of the highest massif of the Alps. It is both a winter and a summer resort. Ski jumping has, between the upper town of Courchevel at 1850 metres altitudes and the lower Courchevel of 1850 metres, a contour and a terrain which is ideal for this sport. A *telepherique* (aerial wire ropeway) connects the two altitudes, with the small glass-windowed cabins going up and down carrying men, women and children who like to play hide and seek among the lesser peaks or points of vantage behind the main massif of the Chamonix.

Courchevel, Luxury Resort : Government finance is now opening up the place for holiday-makers and colourful or streamlined hotels and imitation antique inns of olden days are being established side by side. Apartment houses interspersed with chalets are spreading all over the hillsides with pine woods and roaring rivers. Cattle grazing on green pastures with snow mountains above and a clear blue sky likely to change its mood into a thunderstorm any time, will bring to mind the whole picture of the Alpine holiday resort where I was to give a ten-day course on Indian spirituality and allied subjects to a group of fifty men and women. They came and went during the summer camp organized by my old friend Mr. M. A. Rohrbach, founder and head of the Institution J. E. A. N. working under the auspices of the movement A. V. M. (*Artisans d'une Vie Meilleure* - "Artisans of a Better Life"). It has many groups of adherents in France and Switzerland.

The Hotel L'Adret d'Arondaz where we went, had three-storey accommodation for about seventy-five inmates at a time. The maximum of urbanistic improvement and amenities were in evidence in this Alpine resort side by side with a peasant life that might belong to the simple human context common to any part of the world whether of Siberia, Ireland, Mexico or Far East Asia. At the time I looked out of the streamlined room of the colourfully painted hotel interior with all its modern comforts, I could see the pebble-paved streets and the huts with tin or slate roofs or both, with rough stone walls and fountains without stop-cocks letting the mountain water flow forever, while the women came to wash their clothes. Heavy horses pulled carts driven by buxom country girls side by side with the heavy trucks which were transporting materials with agonizing sounds for the projects higher up.

Worlds of Opulence and Abundance: Two different worlds seemed to meet here in the remotest recesses of the Alpine resort of modern Europe, the one of opulence and the other of abundance. The polarity could not be presented in greater contrast than in the scene before me. The French peasant had to gather his haystacks in time and wait for the

sunny days to dry and store them for the cattle, to last through the winter months. He used a miniature hand motor-mower which belonged to the pole of opulence. On the other side he thought with great concern about the hay belonging to the world of nature's abundance. Most probably his mower was being paid for by the hire-purchase system and the joy of gathering in the hay was already cancelled by its own economic enumerator factor of hire purchase thus involved in the same situation. The numerator seemed to absorb and nullify the denominator, and the resultant joy, left for the present, in his life, seemed to my eyes at least, to be an economically minus factor, when measured along the vertical axis of values. Values represent abstractions from things, neither wealth nor money. Economics must evolve a mathematics of its own if these aspects have to be scientifically discussed at all. The interaction of abundance on opulence is a dialectical secret of economics which we shall not discuss here (see article on *Gold in Wisdom's Language* in *VALUES*, Vol. III, No. 4).

My talks at the morning meditation, the forenoon study class and sometimes at the evening gatherings, were as interesting to me as they seemed to my hearers. Starting with the ideas about the polarity between opulence and abundance in my very first talk on the day of my arrival at the camp, I passed on to subjects of general interest along the lines already known to readers of *VALUES* or otherwise to those who have seen the pictures and charts prepared by John and Raju bearing on the background of the perennial wisdom tradition of the World with South India as a sort of epi-centre of wisdom. They were selected and hung in the class-room each day. One could not mistake the nature of the interest which became evident, and a personal link of a very valuable spiritual order soon became established between ourselves and the group which is expected to be a lasting one.

Inner Values and Outer Expression : July 14, 1959 was the national festival of the French Republic. This was the day of significance in the whole history of western civilization for its memorable threefold watchwords of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which were formulated and adopted on a mass scale. Wise men can have theories or philosophies but they often remain impotent in the vertical aspect of life. One fine day the masses begin to respond to the content of wisdom and then results the event known as "revolution" which is the horizontalization of the pure principle in practical terms. This horizontalization implies a hardening and brutalization of values. After some time the letter becomes dead in its horizontal aspects but continues to radiate the inner content through generations. This is how *Dharma* may be said to decline, calling for an Avatar as in the context of the Bhagavata Purana of India. At the present moment the three watchwords of the French Revolution have lost their inner content, while retaining the dead outer shell as a kind of travesty of truth.

My talks at Courchevel were commented on by the founder and head of the Institution J. E. A. N. with significant acceptance in which he referred to the importance of the date as it happened to be in the history of France. A new attitude is called for in the interests of the larger world

today. All my attempts were directed to explain the two aspects involved and the subtle contradiction implicit in such a question.

Lost on the Mountains: On July 16 I left the hotel and went out for a lonely ramble, M. and his sister having left for Ghent the previous hour, nine in the morning. I was finding my way through the pine woods climbing along the steep slopes of the hill, to attain the top where I guessed that the higher Courchevel would be located. I had my walking stick given to me by friends in Singapore, my waterproof got at Harrowgate in England, a hat made in Kagadi store in India costing four rupees (while corresponding ones cost twenty times as much here).

A book of advanced mathematics in French was in my left hand. While reading this book I took the wrong short-cut up the hill. I climbed and sat down alternately to read mathematics on topology, projective geometry, Fuchsian functions and on the difference between *proper* and *improper* elements, as they were beginning to be distinguished by the latest mathematicians. It seemed to me that these improper elements now accepted were the invisible numinous elements entering into our calculations without our conscious consent. The irrational and imaginary numbers were already a puzzle to empiricist philosophers. The square root of minus one, for example, is worse than an imaginary number and like the double negation of theology, troubles the conscience of the scientist of the present day. Gauss and Russell would try to explain them away, but they still persist, like the evidence of the divine at the core of physics. Eddington and Whittaker tend to give credit to these factors.

Absorbed in this I alternately climbed and sat down till I lost my way.

It is a well known rule that mountain climbing without guides has its perils. I was warned of it by the leader of our camp two days later; but at the moment I was climbing I was innocent of this. One could climb without being able to descend. There seemed to be no end to the ascent and my ignorance of the actual danger I was in was all my consolation as I went up and up for about five kilometres without finding signs of human habitation. I also imagined that my heart was weak and that it might fail.* This was, however, a pure figment. Between a sense of insecurity and loneliness, baseless or real, I felt a new kind of happiness which one can feel only when alone with the Alone. Thoughts of life and death alternate and give you that very kind of inner joy which is of the essence of contemplation. One has to touch the zero point of absolutism at the bottom, as it were, of the vertical axis within each of us, before this peace that passeth understanding can be felt. Human society is the worst enemy of such a condition.

Geneva Once Again: After I had brazened myself for the worst I hit upon what is called a bridle path which I decided to take instead of the higher ascent. My instinct was my better guide. I could see the higher Courchevel already hundreds of feet below me, while human voices could now be heard coming towards me. I was saved

* The author is 64—EDITOR

with my instincts and intelligence tallying one with the other. When they help each other the Absolute guides and when duality persists between their workings, one travels from one peril or doubt to another. The law of proper and improper elements in the latest mathematical language opened for me a happy vista intellectually, seemingly lending support to the vertical-horizontal correlation of all thought, on which steep hill of mathematics I was also climbing. At the same time I had been going up the actual Alpine passes, gorges and ravines. The conceptual and the perceptual worlds seemed to correspond to one another. In their unity was the secret joy of the Absolute. . . .

That I did not die, as I imagined I might, to lie unseen and unknown among the pine slopes must be already evident to the reader! and from what I have said above, to the effect that I was warned of the dangers of Alpine climbing two days later. Further proof is that I am writing these lines not mathematically, but actually!

I returned safely to the *chic* hotel and resumed my talks for several days more; and then on the afternoon of July 21, in pleasant summer weather I wended my way again through the lake city of Annecy of the high Savoy mountain country. I was just in time to get my visa for Switzerland which I had not got in London, and I entered Geneva again with a feeling that resembled very closely the sentiment expressed by Sir Walter Scott, "This is my own, my native land!" I felt a citizen of Geneva indirectly through sympathy and admiration for Rousseau and when now I think that this beautiful city holds the promise of a citizenship of the world, this "home-coming" seemed to me to have a double justification. I hope Geneva will accept me one day as a kindred spirit of Rousseau who mentions his birth there in his *Confessions* and adopted her as a foster mother in the context of wisdom as well as that of human justice and fair play. Geneva is perhaps the smallest city of its importance in the world. Yet though small, it has a world-wide political climate. It might become a New Jerusalem for world unity.

A Lakeside Drive: We reached Geneva at six in the evening at the Institution J.E.A.N. where Mr. M. A. Rohrbach works somewhat on the lines of a wisdom teacher himself, through modern methods of correspondence, contact and communication with a large body of disciples spread over all parts of the French speaking region of the continent and overseas. We have begun to understand each other more intimately than ever.

After two days of contacting friends of ten and thirty years ago, I was taken to another Alpine resort on the northern and western end of the Lake of Geneva, driven by my old friend Mr. B. with Mrs. B. sitting with her pet Brazilian miniature monkey called Kiki, who has an orange brown face and cute eyes and teeth, and who was carried in a work basket in her hand. The poor pet was full of emotions and could not contain itself at the least sign of affection, grinning and making bird-like noises at the least mention of its name. He withdrew now and then head down into the basket while the car raced at fifty miles an hour along one of the most beautiful lakeside drives in the world. The lake was sometimes hidden by the trees or houses but was bordered at other times by lawns,

homesteads or vineyards—to be laden with grapes in six weeks more. On the other side the mountains came closer and closer to the coast as we drove along. We passed versoirs, Nyon and Gland of happy memories, with surprise views of the blue waters of Lemane in all its reputed beauty, that have held many a poet's imagination enthralled.

"There we see the lake again!" was a phrase we seemed to repeat to ourselves many times as Morges, Lausanne and Vevey went past with perhaps the most luxurious hotels along the lakeside attracting people of means to this favorite playground area of Europe.

Tourism is an economic factor and a major industry round the lake. In summer, the steam launches ply from point to point all along the forty or fifty miles of the coast. Mount Blanc dominates the whole scene on the other side of the lake, like a king of kings, with his glow of pink fading sometimes into purple at dusk, clothed in all his satiny majesty, giving to this area the status of a veritable beauty spot. I cannot say that I did not enjoy the trip. It took us to Les Plans sur Bex into a mountain retreat. French and Swiss schoolchildren were enjoying a holiday camp there and I was to be guest at dinner with Dr. G. my old friend of many years ago.

A Rare Garden: Dr. G. was already down the footpath when we arrived and got into the car to negotiate the last bit of steep climbing before we pulled up before a big three-storeyed chalet where they lived. Old friends met again and when we remember that such chances separated by decades and thousands of miles distance could not happen in the normal course of human lives thrown together on this green planet that is ours, tearful glances were exchanged, which touch the heart deeper than the actual words of greeting.

Madame G. was a mountaineer of veteran status. Grey-haired and emaciated by age she sat near her bearded and alert old professor, like a picture painted on old porcelain. The happy hours went past and we again climbed another five hundred metres to an Alpine garden preserved by the University of Lausanne. The thickets abounded in blue campanulas and strange big blue thistles, and the digitalis or foxglove plant that had its natural habitat here. My old botany had gone rusty. Otherwise I would have loitered longer here. There, hidden among other hills, was a garden preserved by man to see flowers in their own setting. Botany is perhaps one of the healthiest and sanest of hobbies for over-sensitive persons. The tendency to rise up and come down within the interior vertical axis, gets in nature a point of support to steady it through the natural and subdued beauty, especially of the less pretentious flowers in their own habitat and not as hothouse exotics.

Saturday, July 25 still found me at Geneva looking at the Fourth Centenary celebrations of the University of Geneva. There I found exhibited the original, in the handwriting of Rousseau himself, of *Emile* and the *Confessions* from which I read a paragraph noticing the small clear handwriting of that unfortunate man, ill understood by his own generation, but whose fame is bound to be recognized still by a grateful humanity seeking its solidarity and freedom.

Return to Belgium: I spent the rest of the day looking at a book on the elements of Western music. My friend and host Mr. Rohrbach had recently done some research on what he called *L'Architectonic Musicale* (the Musical Architecture) in which I found strange corroboration for my own favourite theory that music like painting consists of vertical and horizontal factors mixing simultaneously or successively through sound, and blending into the confection called the good composition. The fugues of Bach are based on a subtle mathematics by which octaves and notes blend in a certain ineffable way which, connoisseurs say, brings the mind to the portals of the Absolute.

Mr. G. of Laethem-St. Martin, his son M. and C. his daughter, came all the way from Ghent in Belgium on July 30 to fetch me, and after a night spent at Geneva, we were returning again to Belgium crossing the Jura and through many famous cities and passing many cathedrals and monuments. We arrived again at midnight at Laethem.

The whole of August was spent in continuing the talks on the Gita that I had started before going to England, and in quiet studies and walks. I began to live in a beautiful balcony room, specially built after I came, which gave me much peace and isolation which is a normal necessity to a contemplative life.

I shall skip this quiet period and start from the first of September in my next instalment. I am writing these last lines of the present instalment looking over the balcony into the pine woods while the long shadows of the evening are lengthening on the greenery of the scene with its pale yellow lights and shades. No noises, even of the cars of the autostrat leading to Lille, three furlongs off from the groves of this domain, are to be heard now. Nothing is a greater blessing than peace.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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An arid desert most expansive should it become overflowed
By river water all at once—such would be the rising symphony
Falling into the ears, to open then the eye; do therefore
Daily become the best of sages endowed with Self-control.

HERE the Guru recommends a personal attitude to be constantly cultivated by one who aspires for the full attainment of wisdom or self-realization. A teacher of wisdom is constantly faced with the question of how spirituality is to be practised. On the Indian soil there is the practice of Yoga which has become, as it were, a deep rooted idiom in the popular mind. Sitting cross-legged in various postures, with the eyes shut or gazing at the tip of the nose or concentrating at the middle of the eyebrows, and various other practices, are part and parcel of accepted popular notions in the context of self-discipline with a view to attaining the goal of spirituality, however vaguely conceived it might be.

From *hatha yoga* to Patanjali yoga one has a choice of self-disciplinary systems recommending various forms of physical attitudes, breathing exercises and steps to attain to the goal. Some of these place the accent on the body while others have implicit in them a Samkhya duality between the body and the mind, Patanjali yoga itself which is sometimes called the most publicly acceptable of disciplines (and therefore perhaps called Raja Yoga) has its eight steps leading to *kaivalya* (alone-ness) which pinnacle of yoga is to be reached by the aspirant through the various intermediate steps of *yama* (reining-in), *niyama* (regulating), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (control of vital tendencies), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of outgoing impulses inwards), *dhyana* (establishing bipolar contemplation with the higher Self), *dharana* (maintaining such a relation), and *samadhi* (attaining final loneliness or peace).

It will be noticed that with the later rejection of the Samkhya duality as between means and ends, and as between *prakriti* (nature) and *purusha* (the higher Self) as implied in such a graded ascent in discipline, a revised and revalued yoga was recommended in works such as the *Yoga Vasishtha*

in which Vasishtha the Guru goes even so far as to tell his disciple Rama in so many words that the *ashtanga* (eight-limbed) yoga was repugnant to him. Yoga there was conceived on the basis of *sapta bhumikas* (seven world-grounds).

When we come to the *Bhagavad Gita* we find no reference at all to these eight steps of the popularly-called "Raja Yoga." In a whole chapter (the sixth) devoted to the question of Self-discipline, it is the Self that is treated as the dialectical counterpart of the self, instead of nature and Self. As the end of verse 25 there, the simple injunction given is that the mind should find rest in the Self and that it should be emptied of all content. The dualistic agony of ascent of the Patanjali way is modified into a simpler merging of the self into the Self.

The Guru Narayana here, brushes aside, as it were, the whole question of self-discipline, by reference to the global personal attitude implied in the context of self-realization. Elsewhere, in the *Darsana Mala* of the Guru in chapter IX there, which is entirely devoted to this question of yoga, he sums up all yoga under two categories, that of the yoga of action (*karma*) and of the yoga of wisdom (*jnana*) (see *Darsana Mala*, IX, 10). Karma yoga is yoga through action dedicated to the Absolute, when a man is not able to understand the Absolute philosophically. It is given a place because it is necessary and inevitable, but neither recommended nor discussed at any length. All yoga worth the name must be also wise. Blind yoga like blind love can be disastrous. When we remember the stress in the *Bhagavad Gita* on *buddhi yoga* (unitive understanding) and its reference to *karma* (action) as a discipline of a very inferior order (in ch. II, 49) and openly recommending the higher way of wisdom, the position adopted by the Guru in this matter becomes less equivocal. Taken side by side with the fact that every chapter of the *Gita* is called a "yoga", thus making eighteen different views on yoga, ranging from necessary action levels to the high pure ones of self-realization, the nature of the self-discipline acceptable in the context of *advaita vedanta* must become clear to any one.

In the present verse the Guru gives the whole subject a summary treatment. The intellectual side and the physical side that are non-dually implied together in the attainment of wisdom, are brought together as close as could be. The dawn of knowledge is referred to in the language of a personal experience, and what pertains to the opposite or instinctive pole of global emotions is referred to by the example of a perfected man of self-discipline available in the traditional language of Indian thought. The sounds that open the eye of wisdom is an ideogram familiar in India and the recluse of full self-discipline is also a model popularly understood. The main point that we have to notice here is that wisdom gets established not by laboured graded steps, but that it happens when the personal attitude and the intelligence work together to usher in the result. No staircase is needed to ascend to wisdom. The duality between ends and means is abolished. Further, speaking as he must be from his own personal experience, this view has to be given the full credit it deserves as a direct wisdom teaching of rare value.

"Such would be the rising symphony" etc. Whether taken

as an idiom or a personal experience, these words can have only one meaning in the fully contemplative context. The ears have a very special and intermediate position among the senses. The eye is a window of the soul which is meant to look outward rather than inward. Distant noises coming to the ears of a sleeping dog or the cry of a child beside its mother in sleep, enter the subconscious efferently rather than afferently. Sounds and meanings come close together in alternation. The word and the meaning fuse together to become one event in consciousness. The conceptual and the perceptual come together closest through the eye.

Plato speaks often of the eye of the soul and of the limits of the visible and the intelligible. The circulation of the subtlest of contemplative thinking takes place by a kind of alternating figure-of-eight process within consciousness. When such an alternating process occurs between the poles that are horizontal and vertical at the same time, the resulting event tends to refer to the purest aspects of contemplative life when cultivated properly by self-discipline. The word and its meaning, the *logos* and the *nous* known in ancient Greek philosophy, would meet and merge into one meaning referring to the Absolute which is the real subject and object of all wisdom.

“Daily become the best of sages endowed with Self-control.” The terms monk, the sage, seer or pontiff in any religious or spiritual context refer to a type of person who is dedicated to a life of spiritual value. In India we have the *munis* (recluses), the *yatis* (those of self-control), the *parivrajakas* (the homeless wanderers) or the *svamis* (heads or would-be heads of religious institutions) and a large variety of other types.

Here the Guru specially selects the word *yati* to describe the type of person envisaged in the present context of self-instruction. The *yati* resembles a *sannyasi* (one of correct renunciation) which is one of the four phases or *ashrams* normal to a spiritual aspirant wherever he might be. The four *ashrams* in life according to Sanskrit and other ancient writings in India, are those of *brahmacharya*, *grihasthya*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*. The word *yati* which we have translated here as “sage” would correspond to the stage of natural *sannyasa*, not necessarily understood as having philosophical erudition or instructional affiliation.

The first stage, *brahmacharya*, which applies primarily to student life and secondarily, implicit in all the stages that remain, indicates the basic attitude involved. “One who moves or walks in the path of *brahman* (the Absolute)” would be the etymological connotation of the word *brahmachari*. The *grihastha* or householder who might have wife and children is still a *brahmachari* in principle, while in practice he might respect practical necessity incidental to social life to a greater extent. The *vanaprastha* (one who has gone out to the forest) has reached a stage where, while being a *brahmachari* still, he transcends social obligations. This third stage tends to become eliminated as civic conditions impose themselves more and more severely in modern life. The *sannyasin*, however, can and should survive if the absolutist way of living is to have a recognized pattern of behaviour at all. In its long history India has been a land of great *sannyasins* like the Buddha and Sankara. The best of sages here must conform to

this last type while retaining in principle the mental and personal and behaviour pattern that would belong to the three other types.

In the context of self-instruction the qualification of perfect self-control gains primacy over all others. The *yati* here includes in principle the yogi, the rishi, the guru, the true vedantic pandit or teacher of wisdom, those who practise quietist or active mysticism of all the varieties known to spiritual life generally, including the *parama-hansa* or *jagat-guru* which are titles given by devoted followers to most perfected ones in the context of wisdom and self-discipline taken together. The attitude meant here has further to be cultivated without any intermission as implied in the word "daily."

The unity of this verse and its construction which brings together the two poles of personal life recommended in the context of self-realization will become clear when we remember that the Guru himself must have had this form of experience. One must look out for other verses in the present text where the same personal touch will help us to make the meaning clear. The unity of the thought will become clearer by looking at the verse in this way. A constant and perfectly verticalized personal attitude is what is implied.

17.

Suffering-filled, with petals five and tiers two
Rotating beginningless, such a lamp hanging
The Self in shadow form, it burns, with prior habit traits
For oil, and function verily for its wick.

HERE we have one of the magnificent global visions of the psycho-physical reality which we often call the soul or more correctly the Self in Man.

From the previous verse it is to be understood that the Guru is not here building up the Self in any graded or piecemeal fashion but, as is natural and inevitable with such a subject belonging to the context of the Absolute, plunges into the heart of the problem of the Self by way of a global vision here presented.

A preliminary experimentally conceived indication of the nature of the Self was given by him in verses ten and eleven. Now its content is more closely viewed. It is compared to a lamp hung from high as it were from the regions of the Absolute, which is beyond all definite conception. The chain by which it might be imagined to hang gets lost, as it were in the high regions of the Platonic Intelligibles. The sensible aspect of the same abstraction is the lamp conceived not as an object but as an objective abstraction, with the actual and perceptual aspects coming together under the presiding concept of the Absolute which, by itself, is something about which we can form no definite notion.

The image employed here belongs to a schematic representation of a psychological and philosophical verity pertaining to the Self under the presiding normative notion of the Absolute which, by itself is not, strictly speaking, either a concept or a percept. It is both at the same time. The lamp with two stages or tiers is meant so suggest this ambivalence implied

in the Self, treated as an abstraction, as it should be, correctly by the mind which is capable by its mathematical faculty of making degrees of approximation to the purest notion of the Absolute, through an exactly conceived language. If mathematics can be allowed to say that *minus* multiplied by *minus* gives a *plus* and *plus* multiplied by a *plus* remains a *plus* and that one factor being *minus* the multiplication gives *minus* always, thus giving three negative and one positive of four possible operations of arithmetic, we can see that some kind of scheme of relations is implied therein. In logic we have the four syllogistic forms which correspond to the same fourfold way of conceiving reality. The mystery of the quaternion was known to the poet Milton who wrote :

Ye elements, the eldest birth

Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run.

This four-limbed Self is further known in the context of the well-known *Mandukya Upanishad* which says that this *atman* (Self) is *chatuspad* (four-limbed).

In the language of modern mathematics such terms as " the integration of the quaternion " and the existence of the " quaternion units " come nearest to the kind of schematic imagery of the Absolute here presented by the Guru as a methodological and epistemological abstraction. We cannot go into the merits of this view here (A monograph on this subject is at present under preparation by us). All we have to say here is that this image of a revolving lamp, as an analogy, has implicit in it a correctly conceived scheme of correlation of conceptual and perceptual factors belonging to the psycho-physical self as conceived in the context of a science of the Absolute.

Instead of four limbs, the Guru here contents himself with reference to two of the main ambivalent polarities implied in the concept of the Self. There is the negative or the dark side which is here the shadow. The outline of the lamp is made visible, not by the principle of light but by the principle of darkness. Light being the positive aspect where reason prevails, it cannot have any limiting outlines. All colours and forms become visible to us because pure sunlight is refracted or reflected partially. Even the sensation of light is its effect on the cells of the eye and has nothing to do with pure light as such which reaches us from millions of miles away, from the sun. Purest light is invisible when absolute and all that is visible must belong to the shadow side rather than to the side of light. This justifies the statement in the verse, that the soul burns in shadow form, which statement, though it appears in the form of a paradox, has to be positively understood, by double negation or double assertion dialectically, without contradiction. The psycho-physical implications derived from the main postulate of this verse are contained in the other phrases which we shall presently examine.

"Suffering filled" : The doctrine of human suffering (*dukkha satya*) as found in the vulgarized version of Buddhistic belief, like original sin in Christianity, has perhaps been over-stressed. Apart from such a context, it is possible to see the place of evil, sin or suffering, as applied to the necessary aspect of life, as opposed to the contingent.

This initial reference to suffering applies to life when viewed from a

pragmatic and ontological here-and-now point of view. Among European philosophers Schopenhauer represents in his writings this attitude attributed commonly to Eastern religions and philosophies.

It is true that in the Bacchanalian European context of wine and women there is to the present day, evidence of a love of the bright side of life. In India too the Vedic Aryans were also hedonists who drank wine and ate meat. To love the good things of life and participate in them with intelligence and sobriety, never violating the kindness for all living beings, would of course be normal. A philosopher, however, who is a realist and is not carried away by the superficial vanity and gaiety that is a thin superficial veneer on life merely, will be able to see that life with its multifarious wants and need for much labour in connection with them, is one of "getting and spending" and "laying waste our powers." Adversity has its "sweet uses" in teaching us to seek Happiness instead of mere pleasures.

All these considerations have to be recognized and kept in mind when we read here that the Self is filled with suffering. This epithet has to be understood in the way it is meant to be by the Guru in the given context. Life is a joy in the Absolute, but when steeped in the relativistic morass of common human existence the horizontal factors prevail instead of the vertical. At the point of insertion of the two aspects there is a conflict. The eternal problem of "to be or not to be" faces everyone from the moment of birth to the day of death and even beyond, if some sort of survival is visualized even theoretically. There is no recommendation to be a pessimist for ever in this phrase. It only represents life in its most real, pragmatic and empirical angle where the philosopher is able to recognize the factor of necessity which can mean self-suffering. The content of life is nearer to suffering than to gaiety. A wistful sense of suffering remains as an undertone in life whatever major notes might be played overtly. The contemplative who starts to understand the nature of the Self has to recognize this sub-stratum on which he could later, through wisdom, build the superstructure of Happiness in the Absolute.

"With petals five and tiers two": The five senses of perception are what are meant. Whether this five-petalled nature is applicable to the two tiers of the lamp or only to the top one, is left vague. The usual division in Vedantic literature is the *jñāna-indriyas* (organs of perception) and the *karma-indriyas* (organs of action), each referred to separately. The psycho-physical correlation here adopted is still vague in the light of modern psycho-physical notions of the relation between the mind and the bodily functions corresponding with it. The exact relation of mind with body whether through interaction, parallelism or both, whether through Cartesian occasionalism, or through the Spinozian "thinking substance" or the Leibnizian "monad" is one that would take us far into subtle discussions which we shall not undertake here.

The relation depending on the meeting of two ambivalent, reciprocal and polarized aspects of life, has to be a subtle, vague and indeterminate

one, as Heisenberg has recognized, in physics. There are certain matters where definitions become impossible, and to recognize them as such is as far as we can go without intelligence. Intuition has to step in and guide the philosopher from this point onwards. Even when intuition steps in there are laws of dialectical reasoning which have to be respected. Possibility, probability and provability meet and merge in this region of thought. The petals represent the positive side of conscious intelligent perception, while the subconscious counterpart of the same is to be sought in the lower tier mentioned later in this same verse.

In strict psycho-physical language the two tiers may be said to be respectively those dependent on efferent and afferent nervous impulses respectively. Psycho-physics has still to develop a terminology which is neither physical nor mental, for its use. Meanwhile the imagery or schematic picture of a two-storeyed lamp would be sufficient. (The five petals have also to be compared to the five birds eating five fruits, in verse eight).

“Rotating beginningless . . .” Perpetual motion is not a proper concept of empirical physics except perhaps in the context of thermodynamics or conservation of energy in the universe. Gravitational and electromagnetic theories have attained to the status of physical laws that speak in terms of billions of years. The velocity of light is also treated as a unit. The methodology of physics is at present in the melting-pot. Here in the present phrase the rotation and the beginninglessness both belong to the unitive domain of contemplation where physics meets metaphysics, as it were, on neutral ground. When the mind thinks of a duration that is indefinitely continuous, such a notion is no more quantitative but becomes qualitative. In the latter context eternal motion is epistemologically as valid as very very long enduring motion. Rotating or circular motion consisting of revolutions are natural to celestial bodies and when translated into conceptual terms can be imagined as applying to the world of the Intelligibles as well as to the sensible world. The circulation of thought as a process covering the inductive and the deductive, the qualitative and the quantitative, or the psychic and the physical, the conceptual or the actual, is a matter which the man of intuition (or *uha-poha* as Sankara would call it) has to understand by a certain mental awareness, rather than by reasoning. The image of a revolving lamp may have, as its further implication, a bilateral symmetry along two different axes, the vertical and the horizontal. The quaternion that we have referred to above would then become evident. This has to be studied separately, as we have said. Meanwhile this rotating two-storeyed lamp image must be understood here with all the secondary implications that accompany it when seen through intuitive imagination.

“Prior habit traits,” etc. : Corresponding to the chain from which the lamp might be said to be suspended from a kind of Platonic world of the Intelligibles, as it were from above hypostatically, there is the corresponding opposite pole of the soul which refers retrospectively to the past habits and associations which give meaning to percepts through memory or instinctive dispositions.

These vague urges or tendencies are called *vasanas* or *samskaras* in Sanskrit. These may have their primary and secondary causes as the various *priores* of Aristotelian philosophy, culminating in the *prius nobis*, the anterior factor to all conception.

A series of hierophantic values may be thought of as marking stages in this negatively vertical retrospective series of factors. The Guru here refers to them by comparing them to the oil and the wick of a lamp. The wick is the functional aspect while the oil is the thinking substance which enters into and feeds consciousness with a continuously flowing set of associations based on interests and instincts which unravel themselves. Bergsonian metaphysics offers to the modern reader a picture almost as good as what the Guru gives here summarily in passing on to his subject proper. (Bergson's *Essay on Consciousness* and his works on *Thought and the Moving, Matter and Memory* and the more complete treatise *Creative Evolution* may be considered as containing a fully elaborated modern version of this same image that the Guru is using here to explain the nature of the Self.)

“Function verily for its wick.” : The wick of an oil lamp, when it has fallen into the oil completely, cannot burn and give proper light. The brightest incandescence results when the liquid fuel gets completely burnt and changed into gas and water most effectively. A sluggishly burning smoky lamp is so because the capillary attraction of the wick upward is weak. As soon as the hot oil reaches the tip of the wick it becomes inflammable and the carbonization has to be most complete if the best or hottest flame is to result.

These are all true in the analogy drawn here. A dull or sluggish functioning of the higher centres of the personality tend to make the ascent of the oil weak and to that extent the lamp becomes inferior. The structure of the psyche in its psycho-physical setting, has to be visualized with all these implications. They have to be imagined intuitively before the seeker of Self-instruction can make his own person adapt itself progressively to his own Self-affiliation to the full light of bright wisdom. At the lower physiological levels as in the higher psychological ones, it is important that the normal functions are kept up to keep the machine from degenerating through disuse. The way of doing this without error, social or personal, is the art of the Yogi. Without entering into the details of how to practise such a two-sided discipline, the Guru indicates schematically the structure of the Self and stresses the need for a harmonized routine of activity for a sane spiritual life. The inner and outer tendencies have to be kept in the pure vertical line of right functioning. In the next verse he goes on to examine purer and subtler aspects of Self-instruction.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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