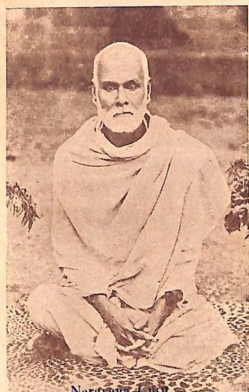
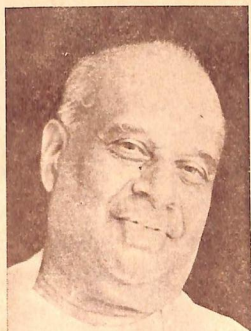


VALUES



Narayana Guru



Nataraja Guru

★ ★

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EXISTENCE

VALUES is devoted to integrating human understanding unitively,
impartially and globally in the interests of the general good.

NEXT MONTH
SUBSISTENCE

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Editorial: WARNING SIGNAL

THROUGHOUT the ages Tibet, like India, had stood for a certain kind of contemplative life. It may not always have been of a high order, yet successions of Gurus such as the renowned Milarepa have made Tibet glorious in the history of contemplative wisdom. Probably most inhabitants of this wild tableland, if not actual inmates of lamaseries or *gompas*, are at least affiliated to their abbots. Grades of lama-teachers are recognized of whom the Dalai Lama has always been the temporal representative. Now this contemplative society has been disturbed by a neighbour entirely out of sympathy with the contemplative mode of life.

This sort of interference is a world phenomenon. It is the clash between the yogi and the commissar, between the contemplative and the man of action. Sooner or later it will reach India and every other region where contemplative life still flourishes.

The contemplative life irks a lot of people of active disposition. Modern governments don't like contemplatives. They regard them as lazy parasites who consume their revenue and divert popular loyalty. Renunciation of action and of social interests is felt to be reprehensive. The contemplative wants nothing from society. When society demands that he contributes to the general well-being, he can answer that he is a teacher, but that he is certainly not going to save governments more money to spend on armies and bombs, and it is a fact that half the revenue of every country today is for "defence" as it is called. The contemplative doesn't want to defend himself against anything but ignorance and the general stupidity of human beings. He considers most of the activity indulged in by modern governments (their propaganda, their passport systems, their prestige flag-waving, their nationalisms) as based on anti-human ideologies and dogmas.

The flight of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual-temporal head of Tibet, to India, is therefore a warning signal to all contemplatives, to all *sannyasins* (renouncers), *sadhus* (spiritual seekers), *bhikkus* (Buddhist mendicants), *munis* (those of silent ways), *parivrajakas* (world wanderers in the spiritual search), and all

the others in India and elsewhere called under various names, who follow the ancient hallowed path of the man or woman who seeks wisdom first. It is a warning to be awake to the dangers of the present situation, and to be vigilant not so much for their own personal security, as for the preservation of that long-recognized principle of the freedom of the individual to seek the Absolute under various spiritual ideals without interference by society.

The spiritual loyalty of millions of Buddhists throughout Asia has been abused by the Chinese government's exploitation of the revered personalities known as the Dalai and Panchen Lamas. They have been feted and petted. Now they are supposed to be rivals, which is incredible. It is at least a consolation that hereafter no Buddhist will be easily hoodwinked by pretended sympathy from politicians.

It is not only the hundreds of millions of Buddhists who are deeply shocked by recent events in Tibet. The living contemplative spirit of non-Buddhists in India is also shocked. The ochre or yellow robe is known throughout India as the symbol of an ideal which the entire literature and culture of India praises as superior to any worldly leadership, as greater than that of kings and certainly more than that of presidents, ministers and politicians. It is far more than just the tradition that Nehru mentioned the other day in New Delhi. While the politician stands for social affairs, for five year plans and gathering and spending of money, for taxes and armies, the man in the yellow robe stands for spiritual or wisdom values in life, for philosophic values which not only give solace to humanity beyond the ice-cream and automobile world of factories and brilliant cities, but which offers the best guidance for the happiness of mankind in general. Instead of the man of action dictating to the man of contemplative ways what he must *do*, the man of contemplation should be approached by non-contemplatives for *advice* as to what is the best course under the varying situations of life which cover far more than mere economics.

No sound philosophy has ever emerged from a materially prosperous, super-satiated society. All that comes out is a state of boredom of the mind, for man needs far more than just bread—or cakes. The abolition of poverty—a simple matter surely, not requiring elaborate ideologies to support it—may be urgent, but equally urgent is the abolition of selfishness and ignorance in the mind of man. The contemplative aims at this latter ideal. It is therefore in the highest interests of governments not to exploit the contemplative, but to protect him. At the same time contemplatives themselves must stand together somehow to affirm their role as the complement in human life of the role of men of action. That is the significance of the Tibetan affair.

[END]

VALUES—THE WORLD'S MAGAZINE
FOR CONTEMPLATIVES

Existence

by NATARAJA GURU

THIS is the first of three contributions dealing with the notion of the Absolute under the categories of Existence, Subsistence and Value. The philosophy of Existentialism is one of the most "popular" in post-war Europe, centred round the French novelist-dramatist, Jean-Paul Sartre, concerning whom a thumb-nail profile is given on page 237 of this issue. Nataraja Guru provides a happy blend of ancient and modern thought bridging the gap between Indian and European spirituality and philosophy.

EXISTENCE, Subsistence and Value mark three graded levels in the vertical axis of the frame of reference that we have developed stage by stage in the pages of VALUES. They are both subjective and objective categories of consciousness understood in the unitive absolutist manner to which we have adhered in our discussions.

The mind of man is so constituted that it can enter into relation with something second to itself only under these three categories of which the most primary and fundamental is that of existence.

Truth, belief, fact, reality and faith all refer to the factor of existence which is itself a generalized abstraction. When we think of a particular object in the practical context of everyday usage, the relation has nothing to do with the philosophical notion of existence in a purely idealistic sense. Pure existence has its place in a vertical axis, while the practical reality of a thing when referred to as existing is the product of a horizontal movement in consciousness. The vague generic content of "this" in a sentence such as "This is a pot" underlies the more specific content of the word "pot." The movement from the generic to the specific takes place within the world of virtuality-actuality.

A still deeper experience of existence as referring to purer factors in consciousness is possible as when we think of the synthetic-analytic movement in thought implied in a sentence such as "This is knowledge."

To distinguish these two movements in consciousness is a very important matter in the methodology and epistemology of all scientific philosophizing. The mixing up in the

mind of the pure or vertical aspect of existence with its own horizontal aspect, is the fecund cause of the "metaphysical puzzlement or perplexity" facing even logical positivists at the present day. According to Morton White, Wittgenstein, the last of the so-called analysts, carried the cure for this "puzzlement."

Degrees of abstraction are possible and qualitative abstractions have to be kept apart from quantitative ones if our logic in philosophy is not to lose its way. Epistemological monism, realism and idealism, when they deal with Essence or Existence, have hitherto erred in this respect.

The Vedantic term for existence is *sat*. This refers to the ontological aspect of the Absolute which has much in common with existence as understood by modern existentialists. *Sat* or existence in this sense should be understood as placed at the base of the vertical axis. It represents the calm, pure or eternal content of absolute consciousness both within as without, transcendent as immanent, in a context of wisdom which is both psychological and cosmological at once.

Existence and Essence : Is the idea of existence to be given priority over the notion of essence? This has been an epistemological problem disturbing the favourite dreams of philosophers throughout the history of thought. However carefully one might read the literature of philosophers who might be classed as epistemological realists, idealists or monists, there seems something elusive as between these two abstract notions.

The idea of essence, as related to the Latin term *esse*, has been much in favour with theologians of the so-called Dark Ages before the triumph of reason or science. God represented this principle of essence while creation itself with its material actuality was existence as God's creation.

The modern existentialists reverse the position between essence and existence, and give primacy to the notion of existence as against essence. Among existentialists themselves there are the believers and disbelievers in God. The believers who began to reverse the primacy of essence in God did not know that God would be dispensed with totally by their own argument by later existentialists such as Sartre. How the changeover from godly Existentialism to godless Existentialism took place can be gleaned from the following extracts from the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre who, according to editor Morton White "like Bergson has achieved popular fame that far exceeds anything possible for an English-speaking philosopher today ... He may be criticized but he cannot be ignored." (p. 116 *Age of Analysis*, Mentor, New York 1955). In Sartre's own words:

What then, is this that we call Existentialism? ... indeed the word is now so loosely applied to so many things that it no longer means anything at all ... All the same it can easily be defined.

The question is only complicated because there are two kinds

of existentialists. There are on the one hand the Christians among whom I shall name Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both professed Catholics; and on the other the existential atheists among whom we must place Heidegger as well as the French existentialists and myself. What they have in common is simply the fact that they believe that *existence* comes before *essence* — or, if you will, that we must begin from the subjective. What exactly do we mean by that? (quoted from Sartre's *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 122, *ibid.*)

Our interest here is to see in this new philosophy so popular at present in post-war Europe, the tendency to a new form of idealism and subjectivism in which the pendulum seems to swing away from Platonic ideas towards the ontological or real of the here-and-now world of values. What is taken away from the idea of God is given by another hand to the freedom of Man here, raising thus his dignity in the vertical scale of values.

Existentialism : That Existentialism stresses personal subjective values with a dynamism that may be said to move in the vertical rather than in a horizontal axis of relationships will be amply evident to anyone who by this time has acquired the mental habit of referring all factors correctly to our frame of reference which alone can save philosophers even of the most advanced type from that kind of "puzzlement" to which we have already alluded. Sartre himself explains the nature of the subjectivism questioned in the previous quotation, and as implied in existentialist philosophy, as follows:

Man simply is ... Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of Existentialism. And this is what people call its "subjectivity" using the word as a reproach against us. But what do we mean to say by this, but that man is of a greater dignity than a stone or a table? For we mean to say that man primarily exists — that *man is before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so*. Man is indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss or a fungus or a cauliflower. Before that projection of the self nothing exists; not even in the heaven of intelligence. Man will only attain existence when he is what he proposes to be. (p. 124, *ibid.*)

Man can thus wish to be like the essence implied in God after his own existence has been first postulated without God. Such is the position of the Sartre school of modern existentialists.

From this school for our purposes it is important to note two things, one of which is that Existentialism has a contempt for things understood as simple utilities. The stone, the table, the cauliflower do not touch the subjective dynamism of the existentialist. Though in favour of an ontology as against any religious teleology, the dynamism implied can be clearly seen to move in a vertical axis of pure values. In the words we have italicized above, "man is before all else, something which propels itself

towards a future and is aware that it is doing so", the subjective personal dynamism, not unlike that of Bergson, is clearly evident.

Existentialism asserts the dignity of man and his high destiny although it does so avoiding Platonic, Christian or even Cartesian terminology. The existence here resembles rather that of Aristotle who conceived it as something at the basis of matter and form. Existence as opposed to essence and as consisting of essences subjected to accidents are further clarifications of the notion of existence as defined in *Runes Dictionary of Philosophy* (p. 102).

We shall not be far wrong when we try to clear the puzzlement as between these terms when we say that existence in philosophy strictly refers to a horizontal factor and that essence is strictly a vertical one. In Sartre we have a notion of existence to be understood in verticalized yet negative terms. According to the stricter epistemological frame of reference we have tried to develop, we could sum up Sartrean Existentialism by saying that it is an attempt to rob godly essence by conferring it on free man here and now. Briefly, it refers to a vertical but negative value.

Static and Dynamic Existence : Modern philosophy tends to stress dynamic existence as against merely intellectual fixed concepts of existence. Bergson is well known as the philosopher of flux, change or becoming. What he says in the following paragraph will help to show how great a family resemblance there is between Bergson's notion of existence and that of Jean-Paul Sartre :

Human intelligence as we represent it, is not at all what Plato taught in the allegory of the cave. Its function is not to look at passing shadows nor yet to turn itself round and contemplate the glaring sun. It has something else to do. Harnessed like yoked oxen to a heavy task, we feel the play of our muscles and joints, the weight of the plow and the resistance of the soil. To act and to know that we are acting, to come into touch with reality and even to live it but only in the measure in which it concerns the work that is being accomplished and the furrow that is being plowed, such is the function of human intelligence. Yet a beneficent fluid bathes us, whence we draw the very force to labour and to live. From this ocean of life in which we are immersed, we are continually drawing something, and we feel that our being, or at least the intellect that guides it, has been formed therein by a kind of local concentration. Philosophy can only be an effort to dissolve again into the Whole. Intelligence ... consists in an interchange of impressions, which correcting and adding to each other, will end by expanding the humanity in us and making us even transcend it. (from *Creative Evolution* pp. 74-75 *ibid.*)

Bergson's objection to Plato's view arises from the fact that Platonism lives in a world raised above everyday living necessities, in the world of
(Continued on page 248)

Nataraja Guru in Belgium

THE pictures on these pages were taken on the departure from India of Nataraja Guru who has gone to Belgium at the invitation of Mr. Edgar Gevaert and his son Dr. Marc Gevaert (who was recently in India), with the object of exploring the possibilities of establishing a wisdom centre or the nucleus of a wisdom university.

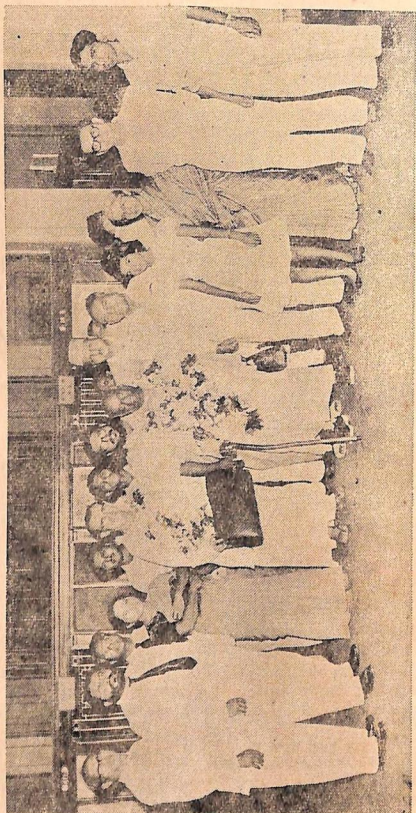
Although he left at very short notice, due to an unexpectedly sudden berth being available, there were spontaneous receptions at various places, including Bangalore, Madras and Bombay. Before sailing on the 25th March, the Guru managed to give half a dozen discourses in Bombay. There was a noticeable interest in the audiences on hearing his revaluation of Indian spirituality.

With much insight, it was his revered teacher, Narayana Guru who shortly before he passed into final peace, himself advised and paid for Nataraja Guru's first visit overseas in 1927. Nataraja Guru spent five years in Europe on that occasion, mainly in Switzerland and France, with visits to Italy and other countries. It was during this time that he took out his Doctorate of Letters at the Paris Sorbonne, his thesis being "The Personal Factor in the Educational Process."

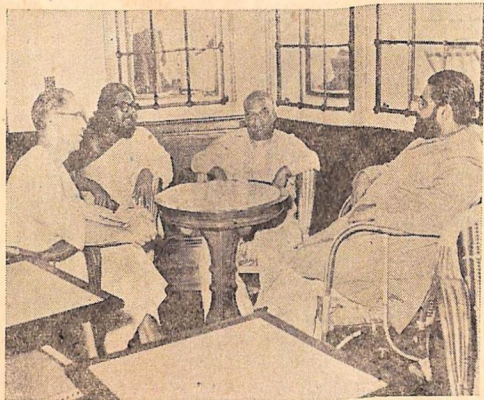
On his return to India in 1933 he spent much time in building up the Narayana Gurukula movement which he had started a decade earlier. After the war, in 1947, he was ready for a further visit to Europe and also America. This time his passage was the gift of the widow of the famous Malayalam poet-disciple of Narayana Guru, Kumaran Asan. It was on this visit that he strengthened the contacts made at that earlier time, and wrote *The Word of the Guru* (now unfortunately out of print). He also found two great personalities who became his disciples, Mr. Harry S. Jakobsen, (who became head of the Gurukula in New Jersey, U.S.A.) and Mr. Garry Davis, known everywhere for his bold active advocacy of World

Correspondence for Nataraja Guru

Correspondence for Nataraja Guru marked "To be Forwarded", may be sent care of JOHN SPIERS, Kaggalipura P. O., Bangalore District (South).



Reception party at Victoria Railway Station, Bombay. L. to R.: Dr. Nath, Mr. B. N. Nair, Mr. T. M. Madhavan, Mrs. Nair, Mr. O. K. Madhavan, Mr. John Spiers, Mr. E. Damodaran, Yati Nitya Chaitanya, Nataraja Guru, Mr. Harikishendas Aggrawal, Mr. N. Karuven, Miss Kannan, Mrs. Kannan, Mr. Kannan, Mr. Kumaran.



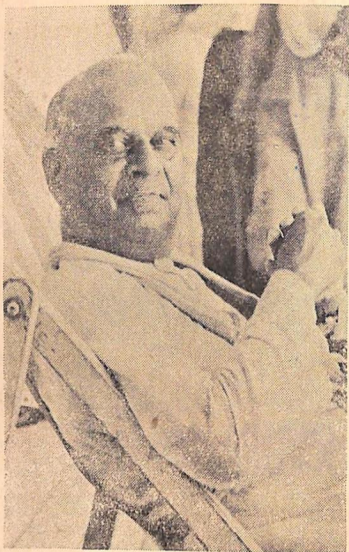
In the Lounge of S. S. Strathaird: L. to R.: John Spiers, Yati Nitya Chaitanya, Nataraja Guru, Mr. B. N. Nair.

Citizenship. John Spiers, whose link with Nataraja Guru began in 1936, had also joined as a disciple in 1946. Thus the movement of the wisdom of Narayana Guru spread slowly but steadily beyond the confines of India and the West Coast.

On Nataraja Guru's return to India in 1950 he was publicly recognized as a Guru and spiritual successor to Narayana Guru at Varkala in Travancore, Kerala, the centre where Narayana Guru had spent so much of his time.

It will be seen that Nataraja Guru has not received a penny for his travels from any of the big organizations such as the Narayana Dharma Sangh (a body of sannyasins) or the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalayana Yogam (more commonly abbreviated as the S.N.D.P.Y.). This has been perhaps for the best. It is mentioned here not by way of reproach, but to avoid the confusion that exists also between the functions of such bodies, in the minds of many thousands of loyal followers of Narayana Guru. Unlike these two organizations, the Narayana Gurukula is based on the principle of *Guru-sishya parampara* (spiritual teacher-disciple succession). The Gurukula movement is neither religious nor social in its primary character. It is a body of absolute seekers of wisdom who are affiliated to a wise man or Guru without social or religious commitments. The Narayana Gurukula is mainly concerned with the living exposition of that rare wisdom teaching which is handed down from Guru to disciple.

Once more, and this time entirely at his own expense, the Guru has



FAREWELL TO INDIA

left on a third visit to other lands. Although he has just passed his sixty-fourth birthday, he is still vigorous and we may expect him to have many more years of active teaching before him. The world is growing more unified and humanity everywhere is the same in the light of wisdom, so it is only fair that seekers in other lands should get the chance to listen to the voice of a truly wise man. This time he has a welcome and a hospitality assured him in many places, and will be properly honoured wherever he goes. The duration of his wandering pilgrimage will depend largely upon the touch of the Absolute which always follows the ways of a representative of that wisdom. There is every chance of mighty development and through VALUES too the wisdom itself has at last a medium for its global integration.

We are sure that all who love wisdom, all who are loyal to Narayana Guru and to his grand successor Nataraja Guru will join with us in the good wishes that accompany our beloved Guru of the modern age in his dedicated wanderings, carrying with him the precious flame of unitive understanding.

[END]

Phenomenology and Existentialism

By IRIS MURDOCH

The relation of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus to philosophy is clearly different from that of their literary predecessors ; and this is not simply because they are in fact doing philosophy as well as writing novels. These writers would claim that they are philosophers in the main tradition of European philosophy — and that their use of literary means is symptomatic of the turn that philosophy as a whole is now taking.

SINCE Hegel, (author of *The Phenomenology of Mind*) phenomenology has been the main stream of philosophical thought on the Continent. But though it is strictly Hegel's child, it received an injection in extreme infancy from Hegel's enemy, Kierkegaard ; it never recovered from this, and it developed in consequence what its parent would probably regard as curious deformities. The great names in phenomenology after Hegel are Husserl, Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre. There is another line of descent from *The Phenomenology of Mind* via Marx' *Capital*, the work which stood Hegel's book on its head. So that the Existentialists and the Marxists are really philosophical cousins.

What is phenomenology? If one wanted a bold formula one might say that it was an *a priori* theory of meaning with a psychological flavour and a highly developed descriptive technique. In England the study of meaning has become the province chiefly of linguistic philosophers or of semantics merchants. Meaning is explained in terms of the positions of words in the language and their relation to that more or less conventional framework of behaviour which ekes out the language. The phenomenologist does not regard meaning only as a function of our language ; nor does he, on the other hand, take it, with the Aristotelians, to be somehow inherent in things themselves, nor with the Platonists, as residing in a transcendent intelligible world. He regards it as dependent upon the activity of the subject.

The Hegelian Subject Self: "Meaning is conferred by the subject." This is said, but who is the subject? Is this a sort of metaphysical subject which is identical in all of us? A frame which imposes *a priori* conditions of objectivity? Or is the subject which confers meaning the empirical psycholo-

gical subject, you and me in short? Or is it something between the two? The crucial step towards the phenomenological viewpoint is made when we leave Kant and turn to Hegel. Kantian subjects are beings each endowed with the same faculty of reason, and whose rational wills are thought of as harmonising in a Kingdom of Ends. But in the Hegelian world reason has a history, that is the subject has a history, and is in a state of war with his environment and with other subjects. With Hegel the real subject enters philosophy. It is true that Hegel holds that "all is ultimately reconciled in the Absolute." But what interests Hegel, at any rate in the *Phenomenology*, is not the goal but the way — and on the way, at any time before the end of history, there are contradictions that remain unresolved.

In this perilous Hegelian universe, full of substance and colour and dialectical change, the modern phenomenologist first begins to feel at home. Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a remarkable book. It can be taken as a world history of ideas, as a world history of societies, as a possible history of an individual consciousness, or as a metaphysic. How exactly one is to understand this work does not now concern me, fortunately. The aspect of it which is relevant here is this: it describes various general modes in which the subject grasps, sees or understands his world. Hegel presents us with a series of portraits of a self which is at various stages of self-alienation and self-knowledge. At first it is pictured as merely divided against itself, then it is seen at war with other selves, mastering them or being mastered; later on it advances to realise an ethical and then a religious meaning in the world about it. Now this is in many ways the same self whose adventures we meet with again in Sartre's book *L'Être et le Néant* — but with important differences.

The Predicament of the Free-Self: Behind the story of the Hegelian self lies the dialectic, the self-development of reason, or, if not that, then the intelligible onward march of history, as the Marxists would say. The Hegelian self, for all its historical and psychological colour, has no fundamental structure, and no fundamental predicament, for it is not ultimately an independent irreducible entity at all. In the end there will have been nothing but the different phases of the Absolute — and these phases are not phases of anything independent of the phase. The self whose structure Sartre describes in *L'Être et le Néant*, and whose adventures he relates in that book and in his novels, is however an independent entity, and it has, like the self of Kierkegaard one fundamental predicament. Sartre's novels and plays have a strictly didactic purpose. They are intended to make us conscious of this predicament, so that we may pursue sincerely and with open eyes our human *metier* of understanding our world and conferring meaning upon it.

What is this predicament? The outlines of it, as pictured by Sartre, are perhaps by now familiar. We all readily seek out pictures whereby to understand ourselves. This can be a dangerous game, but it is certainly a natural one, and the picture offered by Sartre does have an immediate appeal to many people. The nature of consciousness, he says, must be understood by contrast with the nature of things. The thing is in-itself, *en-soi*; the consciousness is for-itself, *pour-soi*. That is, it is nothing; it is not a substance and it has no meaning, although it is the source of all

Jean-Paul Sartre

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE is 54. He was educated in Paris. For a while he was a teacher at the Lycee du Havre. From 1929 to 1934 he travelled in Egypt, Greece and Italy. He had another spell of teaching at the Institute Francais in Berlin. From 1935 to 1942 he taught philosophy at the Lycee Condorcet. For over a year in 1940-41 he was a prisoner-of-war. Afterwards he resigned his teaching appointment and took an active part in the resistance movement.

Since 1936 he has been writing novels, plays and expositions of his philosophy of Existentialism. He takes an active part in journalism and politics and lives in Paris. His most important work is *L'Être et le Neant* (translated as *Being and Nothingness*) which was published in 1943. Other writings include *L'Imaginaire*, *La Nausee*, *L'Age de Raison*, *Le Sursis*, and plays such as *Les Mouches*, *Huis Clos* and *Crime Passionnel*.



meaning. Its fundamental character is its nothingness, that is, its freedom ; its fundamental predicament is the realization of its freedom : *Angst*, *angoisse*, dread. It is, however, also conscious that it has to contend, not only with the world of things, but with other selves who are only too ready to make it an object in their universe and to give it their alien significance.

Ambiguous Choice: To get the full flavour of this drama I think that the keyword is "ambiguity," a word which one associates particularly with Kierkegaard. The free and lonely self, whose situation Sartre pictures in these somewhat Kierkegaardian terms, discovers the world to be full of ambiguities. These have to be, and are resolved by action, are by that species of action which we call inaction. That is, we are condemned to choose ; we choose our religion or lack of it, our politics or lack of it, our friends or lack of them. Within the wide limits of our historical situation we choose one world or another one.

The existentialists have generalised and given a philosophical form to something which, piecemeal, most of us can recognise in the crises of our own lives, and which some novelists have already been at pains to display. If we want more scientific material to study we may turn to the case histories of the psychoanalyst. What is the analyst doing? Is he laying bare a pre-existing structure, or is he persuading the patient to give a fresh meaning to his past experience? The liberating and therapeutic character of analysis would seem to arise not simply from revelation and instruction on the part of the analyst, but from the creation by the patient of a new view of his personality and his own free assent to this view.

In *L'Être et le Neant* we find a chapter called "existentialist psychoanalysis." This is a procedure we all indulge in when we question ourselves — as we perhaps rarely do — concerning our *projets fondamentaux*. Are we accepting too readily the standards of our society or of our

church? Is our picture of the world distorted by an unwillingness to face unpleasant facts about ourselves? These questions are asked in the context of a fundamental loneliness of the individual, where there is no answer to the questioning except a decision, an affirmation of meaning the objectivity of which nothing certifies. We ask: Is what we value really valuable? We must answer — and yet this cannot be in terms of objective values, for there are none.

Transcendent Nature of Values: This begins to sound oddly familiar. It is interesting that by dissimilar paths the existentialists and the logical positivists have reached positions which are in some ways strikingly alike. Consider this: "There is nothing to be done about it, except look at the facts, look at them harder, look at more of them, and then come to a moral decision. Then asking whether the attitude that one has adopted is the right attitude comes down to asking whether one is prepared to stand by it. There can be no guarantee of its correctness, because nothing counts as a guarantee, but counting something as a guarantee is itself taking up a moral standpoint." This is not Sartre, but Prof. A. J. Ayer writing in *Horizon*. The fundamental moral predicament is the same for both of them. This viewpoint was strikingly expressed long ago in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. In it there is no value — and if it were it would be of no value. If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being-so. For all happening and being-so is accidental."

It was the negative aspect of this text that the linguistic philosophers first emphasized. Ethical propositions are not really propositions, so they must be a kind of exclamations, and so on. Later they cottoned on to its positive aspect, and changed over from being enlightened materialists who said that value was a fiction to being the defenders of the true concept of value. It is in emphasizing that real value is a function of a free act of valuing, not an objective quality of the world, that the existentialists come closest to this line of thought. Both sides have been charged with corrupting the youth. It is easy to see why.

When Meaning Vanishes: The next moves, though, are different. The linguistic moral philosopher (the positivist) is concerned only with analysing propositions about moral concepts and with showing, for instance, that such propositions are ultimately connected with our attitudes to life, and are not ordinary statements of fact. Sartre, who is a phenomenologist rather than a logician, and a moralist as well as a moral philosopher, wishes to go on and to display in detail the adventures of the beings who are in this situation of having no guarantee.

Sartre is profoundly serious about ethics, and his works have a piercing and illuminating character which, to my mind, contrasts favourably with the abstract nature of a careful book such as Charles Stevenson's *Ethics and Language*. Stevenson sets about describing attitudes at the level of conventional morality and without an adequate terminology. The conflicts which Sartre describes are the ones which go to the root. His terminology may offend because of its metaphysical implications. But even where it is unacceptable it is illuminating. And can we really describe (I would emphasize *describe*) what moral disagreements are like

without on the one hand making some concessions to the notion of a substantial self, and on the other using the real concepts which are causing the real trouble? Political concepts, for instance. We may or may not decide that it is the moral philosopher's task to conduct such a description. But rather than do it in Stevenson's terms I would prefer that we should assume that the matter ends with Professor Ayer's article in *Horizon*.

Sartre's novels, then, describe the drama of people who are reacting more or less consciously and in various modes to the predicament of their ethical loneliness and their state of war with other selves. And it is not only ethical loneliness that is described. *La Nausee*, which is certainly one of Sartre's most remarkable books, describes what one might call a sort of logical loneliness. Meaning is suddenly seen as withdrawn not from a world of objective values, but from physical objects themselves. This is a plunge into the absurd. If indeed we confer meaning, not only upon ethical and religious systems, but upon the physical world too, in that we see it as a correlative of our needs and intentions, then this meaning could in principle vanish, leaving us face to face with a brute and nameless nature.

Metaphysical Era : This is the predicament of Antoine Roquentin, the hero of *La Nausee*. And one might say, the purpose of the book is to reveal to us our real situation by contrast with one from which a familiar element has been removed. A similar device is used in the play "Huis-clos." We might compare Kant's use of the notion of intellectual intuition, or the contemporary philosopher's games with the queer logics of imagined languages. The same vanishing of meaning, only applied this time to social convention, is described in *L'Etranger* of Albert Camus. In Simone de Beauvoir's book *L'Invitée*, the drama concerns the meaning of action: what is the real meaning of my act, that which I see or that which others see? In Sartre's novel sequence, *Les Chemins de la Liberté*, there are many themes, but the chief one is political: is there a meaning in history, and what is the individual who cannot answer this question to do about it?

One may ask, *en fin de compte*, why all this fuss, all this talk about "meaning"? Is not this the sort of thing that novelists have always been doing, is this really a candidate for being a new kind of novel? I think it is, in the sense that the writer's attention is focused on this unusual point, this point at which our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions, loves and hates are seen to be discontinuous with the selves that may or may not go on affirming them. It is this focusing of the attention, the bringing to light of this aspect of our experience, that gives to the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Camus and Sartre, their disquieting character. It is for this that they are attacked as immoral. It is this that Maurice Merleau-Ponty celebrates when he says that with Miss de Beauvoir there ends the era of *la littérature morale*, and there begins the era of *la littérature métaphysique*.

[END]

Atmopadesha - Satakam

One Hundred Verses of Self - Instruction

By NARAYANA GURU

Translated from the original Malayalam
with a Commentary, by **Nataraja Guru.**

(Verses 1 to 4 appeared in previous issues of VALUES. Copies at cost plus postage are available for those who may want them. A reader has suggested having the original Malayalam, but on due consideration, since the majority of readers of VALUES have no knowledge of that language, no really useful purpose would be served thereby, but the original is available in Malayalam from the Manager, Sivagiri Mutt, Varkala, Kerala State, India.)

5

People here on earth, they sleep, wake and think
Various thoughts; watching over all of these with intent eye
There dawns a priceless light, which never shall dim again;
Led onward by this, one should forward wend.

6

One has to wake, then go to sleep, of food partake, or mate—
Thus do promptings dissipating keep coming round;
Whoever could there be, therefore, to wake
Unto that reality's one and changeless form?

7

To wake never more, sleepless ever to remain
As awareness—if such be now beyond your reach,
Then in the service of those silent ones who dwell ever
awake to AUM
Absolved from birth-rounds, thy spirit attune to stillness.

Concerning verses 5 to 8 : It is important to notice, as from verse 5, the general plan of these hundred verses. We know already that the Guru Narayana, being an avowed Advaita Vedantin who follows the steps of Sankara and revalues his position in his own way, has the basic doctrine of non-duality preserved intact in his writings. This can be gathered from a general examination of the other compositions of the Guru taken all together. The task of the student of the philosophy of the Guru will be facilitated if he can place his finger correctly and carefully on just those points where the Guru tries to restate the position of Sankara's Advaita. The later modifications given to the science of the Absolute (*brahmavidya*) as brought about in the writings of the two other important classical Gurus of South India, Ramanuja and Madhva, should also be kept in mind by the careful student.

In point of method and theory of knowledge the Guru Narayana will be seen to depart slightly from all these Gurus, Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, and although the essential spirit of the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* will be seen to be maintained, and the finalized position of the *Brahma Sutras* generally supported, the Guru will be seen to conform closely to the requirements of a more strictly unitive or dialectical approach.

He is not content to be merely theological like Ramanuja, nor does he make of philosophy as perhaps with Sankara, sometimes, merely academic abstraction in which the living breezes of human values do not play. In these verses 5 to 7, it would be advantageous to note in advance that the method employed here approximates to that of Sankara, in the analysis of the states of consciousness in locating the substratum of the Absolute common to waking, dreaming and deep sleep. It is compatible with Sankara's definition of the Absolute as *avastha-traya-sakshin* (the neutral witness, as it were, of the three states, *jagrat* or waking, *svapna* or dreaming, and *sushupti*, sleeping.) This compares with the method of the *Mandukya Upanishad* which equates absolute consciousness with that of the "fourth" or *turiya* state which inclusively transcends all the other three.

Ramanuja's dynamism of existence follows the same dialectical lines but in terms of *being* and *becoming* rather than in terms of pure consciousness. Madhva stresses the aspect of a scale of values as between the Absolute and the Relative understood in the dialectical context. But here the Guru Narayana brings dialectics to bear on common human life.

These three verses, therefore, have to be read together so as to see that unitive fibre running through all three of them. The same thing is said from three dialectically different points of view. Using the terminology we have developed in the pages of *VALUES*, we can explain broadly that verse 5 tries to draw the distinction between the horizontal and the vertical attitude implied in contemplative life. The dynamism of the horizontal factors, as they regulate common human life, are outlined in verse 6, while the same is viewed from the vertical in verse 7.

The student must read all these verses in the light of one another before trying to extract any doctrine out of any one of them. Wherever the doctrine is vague, he must relay on other sections in the same work where a similar or allied problem has been treated; and he may even go beyond the limits of the present composition to others by the Guru.

It would not be wrong to fit the teaching here back upon the general teaching of the Advaita of Sankara and upon the greater background of Vedanta thought in general as implicit in the three "canonical" writings, namely, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*. Only then one would be but doing justice to the Guru Narayana who represents the Advaita tradition in a fully revalued and restated form. In this translation all we are trying to do is to find precise modern equivalents and illustrations for the ideas presented by the Guru (and his predecessors) and if possible, to continue the very trend of modern philosophical thought which itself is waiting, we believe, for a more unitive restatement in terms of a new world philosophy where the scientific spirit would not be lost, but would be preserved in an extended sense. Although we cannot promise to be exhaustive, we shall make an effort as far as possible to supply cross references.

Verse 5

AFTER preliminaries about the subject-matter and the general approach to it have been broadly indicated in the first four verses, the theme narrows down as it were to its proper contemplative limits, not as a cosmological or as a merely psychological abstraction, but in terms of a way of life or a bipolar relation from a more personal everyday point of view.

What was neutrally treated in the first verse as the "core" spreading its light homogeneously within as well as without the central Self (which is the subject-matter and the object-matter of the whole work), we saw that the Guru, for methodological requirements, alluded to it as a "supreme Sun" postulated as a second pole marking the goal of attainment for the contemplative. The inevitable duality thus introduced—somewhat akin to a pagan sun-god, though not strictly so when viewed more closely—was again to be reduced into terms of "non-difference" and strict "loneliness," in the next two verses.

Here in verse 5 we should not miss the change in the analogy. Instead of a sun in the void, there is an eye watching the actions and thoughts of man. In the *Isa Upanishad* (verse 16) there is the reference to the *purusha* or supreme Spirit "yonder" which is equated at the same time with the supreme *purusha* "within" the contemplative "here." The Person in the sun and the Person within are equated to constitute the central unitive Absolute without prejudices of the subjective, objective or the conceptual as explained in verse 4.

The eye above is watching the watcher from here below who is caught in everyday necessities of personal life, such as waking, sleeping, and thinking of various interests arising during the workaday life of the common man. Necessary aspects of life touching the common generality of mankind are not by-passed by the Guru but, more like a modern pragmatic philosopher, the contingent and the necessary aspects are brought together as if with equal importance, in the treatment of the highest contemplative text. There is no other-worldly escapism in such a way of treatment here. The Guru thus catches up with the requirements of modern thought as against the ivory tower isolation of the more ancient classical writers, whether of the Eastern or Western context.

"Think various Thoughts": Contemplation becomes strictly

established only when the multiplicity of interests which regulate human activities are absorbed and united into a single bundle of one master interest proper to the absolutist way. If we were to distinguish this master-tendency at the core of life as the *vertical*, then the plurality of interests that keep succeeding one another in our life ordinarily, clashing and displacing one another for occupation of the centre of the stream of consciousness might be called the *horizontal* factors. The well-founded intelligence or the properly cultivated wisdom in man always seeks the unitive value of the vertical. As the *Bhagavad Gita* states, even in its early chapter:

The well-cultivated intelligence is unitive, O Joy of the Kurus (Arjuna); many-branched and endless is the intelligence in uncultivated people.—II.41.

There is again the Upanishadic dictum which says:

He who sees (reality) as if pluralistically here

Wends from one death to another.—*Brihadaranyaka Up.* IV.iv.19

Plurality of interests and thoughts arising from desires or instinctive hungers that cannot be wholly satisfied is the enemy of the contemplative. This does not mean however, that to be a contemplative means killing out the legitimate joys of life. But in and through all interests, a master interest must always be preserved. All actions and thoughts motivating them must be gathered together into a master life-tendency, so verticalized as never to enter into conflict with the minor fissiparous dissipating interests of a life without such a dominating interest. What is here implied is a process of sublimating pluralistic interests to unitive interests.

“There dawns a priceless light...”: The mixed metaphor is deliberate. The eye of the previous line is treated as if it could equally be regarded as a light. The light is what helps the eye to see other objects. The organ of sight is dialectically equated to the light which is both an *end* and a *means* in the central awareness of reality which is the common result of the presence of all these three factors working in unison or operating in one vertical line. The idea is not unfamiliar to us in Plato's *Republic*, as well as in Plotinus (Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike.—*Enneads*, I. vi. 9)

“Which never shall dim again”: The idea suggested here is of an everlasting value in life. When we reach the end of the work, in verses 93 and 98 this dominant everlasting life-interest in the Selfhood of Man is reiterated, after the implications of such a claim have been properly covered in the body of the composition.

When we say “Man as *homo sapiens* is characterized by his wisdom” the verity of such an axiomatic statement without further proof is accepted. Wisdom's method admits of such *a priori* reasoning as normal. It is true there is a modern tendency in thought to speak in terms of probabilities rather than in absolute certitudes. This is the result of the *a posteriori* habit of mind brought into vogue by science. But when a unified science becomes an accomplished fact, as hoped for by some of the best minds of our day, the absolutist form of reasoning implied here will not be really objectionable. *A priori* inductions and *a posteriori* deductions will become equally valid in a unitive way of exact thinking which will bring the humanities and the sciences together as belonging to one single discipline.

"Led onward by this": The kindly light leading one on to salvation or to the goal of wisdom is sufficiently familiar in the context of Christian theology as not to need any explanation. In reality the idea dates back to times more ancient than Christianity, and general literature such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* has poetical imagery borrowed from Plato, such as the progress of the soul guided in its upward course to God by the help of celestial light. In the very first canto Dante refers to "the Planet that leads men straight on every road." In many other passages in the various cantos of this work of the Florentine Christian poet, the pagan image of the sun occurs, treated in the dialectical fashion of both the *Upanishads* and Plato's *Republic*, where the inner eye and the outer sun are equated into a central value. In Canto XIII of the *Divine Comedy* we have Virgil and Dante described as mounting the second terrace of the Purgatoria past the "circle of purification." They are in a region where the value called "generosity" is in front of them and "envy" its counterpart is behind them. They dare not linger in this region of dual values. The usual "virtuous citizens" were found to be denizens of this region. Their eye-lids are described as being stitched together, through which, on seeing the visitors, tears come in their agony. Virgil is depicted by Dante as remarking "If here we wait to ask of, I fear perchance that our choice may have too great delay." And gazing fixedly at the sun Virgil remarks, "O sweet light, in whose trust I enter in the new way, do then lead us as we would be led here within; thou givest warmth to thy world, then shineth upon it; if other reason urges not to the contrary thy beams must ever be our guide." (p. 271, Modern Library Edition, New York.)

Thus in the heart of Christianity we find this way of spiritual progress described in terms of Platonic dialectics. Vedantic literature in many places has the same comparison of light in relation to wisdom. In the literature of Advaita the two counterparts or terms of the equation are treated more unitively together. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva mark three grades of such a treatment, the last accepting a greater distinction between the counterparts.

In the history of Western philosophy the body-mind duality of Descartes, if viewed in the light of dialectical methodology, implicit as in Dante, need not really be considered so objectionable as some modern critics tend to think. Dialectical methodology requires at least some initial duality, even though it abolishes it later. The occasionalism intervening between the body-mind duality makes full amends for the initially supposed dualism and makes of it as respectable a theory as any other, conceived on the same dialectical lines. The dialectical method permits duality in order to efface it more completely afterwards.

Boethius (480-524 A.D.) who may be described as the first of the scholastic philosophers - or the last of the pagans - for he was the companion of all the medieval scholars, recognizes in God not the Father but the "foreknowing Spectator of all events" (*Encyc. Brit.*) The idea of a guiding star or light or supreme intelligence is only a corollary of our search for wisdom.

When light and darkness are properly understood as simple analogies, the strangeness of this language will be seen to be merely attributive to the limitations of common language. By trying to escape from the exigencies

of language we are only likely to enter into more subtle dualities as implied in the most recent of philosophies called Existentialism which is based on the rejection of the notion of "essence" as known to classical philosophers, and substituting in its place the notion of "existence" as primary. The analogy of light is perhaps the most permissive, since light has a unitive status of its own, independent of darkness which is not a rival entity in its own right, but merely a negation of the real item called light.

This analogy which the Guru employs elsewhere (as in his *Advaita Dipika*, "The Light of Non-Dual Wisdom") treats the counterparts with masterly dialectical insight. With a slight stretch of methodological insight or intuition, darkness can easily be imagined as being capable of becoming positive again, by a process of "negation" of itself. Poetic expressions like "dark-splendid" as also the description of the light of infernal fires in the opening lines of Milton's *Paradise Lost* reveal the subtle principle of double negation as known in general literature. The essence of tragedy itself is based on the principle of double negation. When light triumphantly leads us onward, the tail end of the same light gets absorbed or doubly negated. Such are some of the more delicate implications of dialectics which we must bear in mind here.

Verse 6

THE biological cycle of necessary activities considered neither physiologically nor psychologically but from a commonsense standpoint are referred to in Verse 6. These follow one another as dictated by the vital urges within man. One satisfaction of instinctive desire follows another in a certain order of circulation. Waking and sleeping alternate diurnally, attended with secondary needs or appetites of hunger or sex common to human beings generally.

Instead of referring to these aspects of necessary life as belonging to sin, concupiscence or desire as in the stricter theologies of codified religions, the Guru here reviews them more simply as necessary factors in common human life, but all the same suggests that, if one set of necessary cycles of activity prevails in anyone, it would be impossible for him to get interested in the other unitive interest which is beyond mere necessity in the everyday sense, but belongs to an order wherein lasting values prevail.

The object here is to bring together into proper relief the two sets of interests or value-worlds to which any man normally can relate himself. Without self-instruction, as contained in this composition, man will tend naturally to attach importance to the series of necessary activities at the expense of the higher contingent interest which can everlastingly include all the others and lift the personality to a higher level of life altogether.

The rhetorical question at the end of the verse strikes a note of despair on the part of the Guru. The natural penchant of the human mind to find satisfaction in the horizontal world of values has to be overcome with the help of some positive effort which as it were, must do violence to itself. Here comes the need for disciplining the mind to overcome its conditionings, for lifting it away from its merely instinctive moorings, and for setting it drifting on its course to higher and higher levels of interest until full dignity is established in selfhood. That very

few persons seek the positive orientation of the spirit implied in the ascent here is referred to with a similar note of despair in the *Bhagavad Gita* :

Out of a thousand humans, one, maybe, strives to attain the desirable ; out of such strivers, even when they do so, one maybe can understand Me in the light of (correct) principles.—VII.3.

“Thus do promptings dissipating...” : The expression in the original is *vikalpa* which has its antonym in *sankalpa*. These refer to two sets of activities, the former connoting evil and the latter good. The mind is the meeting-point of both these types of activities as defined by Sankara in the *Vivekachudamani* (167 to 183 and verse 174 particularly) and by Vidyaranya in *Panchadasi* and in the *Vedanta-Sara* (66) of Sadamanda. Opposite tendencies like good and evil promptings originate in the common locus of the mind. Sankara places in the mind the factors conducive to bondage as well as of emancipation. Of the two sets of promptings originating in the mind *sankalpa* will thus refer to vertical tendencies and *vikalpa* to horizontal ones which refer to lower values in life. The vicious circle of horizontal values keep recurring and repeating, while vertical tendencies lead to wisdom and freedom.

“To wake unto that reality’s one and changeless form” : The reference here must be to the Absolute conceived as the master interest in life. Horizontal relativist interests are pluralistic. They contain rival or conflicting items as against the series of vertical unitive interests implied in the contemplative view of life. The latter can range from the basic necessities of life such as food to the satisfaction of the highest of cravings such as the love of freedom. The Absolute need not necessarily be conceived as a thing. It can be merely a dimension such as depth, or a direction such as the superior attitudes that the mind is capable of having when thinking creatively of the Absolute. The one-one relation as between the Absolute and the Self is implied here.

The word “changeless” employed here draws attention to the *nitya-anitya viveka* (the discrimination between lasting and transient values) which, according to texts such as the *Vivekachudamani* of Sankara (verse 19) is the preliminary qualification required before one enters contemplative life. The changeless reality can only be the Absolute, as will become clear later on when the nature of the Self stands revealed in greater relief in these verses. The Eternal, the Everlasting, Omnipresent and Omniscient are attributes belonging to the Absolute, whether theologically conceived as a deity or as a purely abstract notion by one capable of such philosophic thought.

Word Notes : “Wake to, etc.” The suggestion here is that the Self when in the grip of the fully sleeping state or the opposite condition of full wakefulness is engrossed in actual or virtual activities or interests of a very positive kind. Intermediate to the extremes of sleeping and waking there is a purer middle state of consciousness which is referred to more directly in verse 7. This word “wake” is meant in advance to pave the way to this middle state. When bipolarity is established correctly between the Self and the non-Self as counterparts, the resulting state of consciousness has the Eternal as its content. In other words there is entry into the neutrality of the Absolute when the relation as between subject and object is established in a vertical sense.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Non - Existing Existence

STARDUST asked Nonentity: "Master, do you exist or do you not exist?" Getting no answer to his question he looked steadfastly to the appearance of the other, which was that of a deep void. All day long he looked to it but could see nothing; he listened for it, but could hear nothing; he clutched at it but got hold of nothing. Stardust then said: "Perfect! Who can attain to this? I can conceive the notion of existence and non-existence, but not that of non-existing non-existence and still there be a non-existing existence. How is it possible to reach to this?"

— *Writings of Chuang Tzu.*

THE GREAT SWORD-SMITH

HERE now is a great founder, casting his metal. If the metal were to leap up in the pot and say "I must be made into a sword like the Mo-yeh (name of a famous sword made for Ho-lu the king of Wu), the great founder would be sure to regard it as uncanny. So again when a form is being fashioned in the mould of the womb, if it were to say, "I must become a man! I must become a man!" the Creator would be sure to regard it as uncanny. When we once understand that heaven and earth are a great melting-pot, and the Creator a great founder, where can we have to go that shall not be right for us? We are born as from a quiet sleep, and we die to a calm awaking.

— *Writings of Chuang Tzu.*

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Existence (Continued from page 230)

intelligible essences, like the attributes of a hypostatic entity such as a deity. When, however, Bergson himself refers to an entity called the "Whole" with a capital letter, and refers in the last part of the above quotation to expanding the humanity within us even so as to transcend it, the dynamism that is in his mind is unmistakable.

In the earlier reference to the fluid that bathes us belonging to the "ocean of life", the negative ontological idealism, not unlike that of the existentialist is discernible to any but the most superficial philosopher. Being and becoming as applied to something existent which philosophers postulate, are really complementary notions in the context of the Whole which Whole itself can be nothing but the Absolute.

Platonic and Aristotelian realities are poles of an axis where dynamic consciousness can move. Consciousness can be viewed also as a kind of "local concentration" as Bergson puts it in the above quotation. We could call such a static view of existence a cross section of the whole, where being and becoming, existence and essence come to a sort of equilibrium, cancelling each other out into a neutral personal state.

Such a hierarchy of states of existence was known to scholastic theologians, but other imaginative or poetic representations of the dynamism of progress in consciousness, in keeping with evolution, have largely displaced this notion. Reincarnation persisting in India contains essentially the same idea of stages of stable existence among beings of different grades. Prof. A. N. Whitehead has underlined for us the primacy given to "becoming" rather than to "static being" in the following unmistakable words:

It is nonsense to conceive of nature as a static fact, even for an instant devoid of duration. There is no nature apart from transition, and there is no transition apart from temporal duration. This is the reason why the notion of an instant of time, conceived as a primary simple fact, is nonsense. (quoted from *Modes of Thought*, p. 88, *ibid.*)

Momentary and Eternal Existence: Being or static existence is generally spoken of as opposed to non-being or the void. Being and becoming are also sometimes referred to as counterparts in the dialectics of the Greek Eleatic school. The Eleatics gave being an absolute status. Plato tended to give primacy to ideological existence while his disciple and complementary philosopher Aristotle, while giving to the notion of being an eternal status, admitted "ideas" and "forms" as inseparable concomitants of essential being. Thus throughout the history of thought something elusive has persisted round this question of being and becoming, or between being and non-being. If we were asked to mediate, the position that we should take would be that of the dialecticians. In the *Bhagavad Gita* we have the famous verse which reads:

Becoming cannot apply to the non-existing and non-becoming cannot be predicated of something that exists. The conclu-

sive position with regard to both these together has been seen by the philosophers. (*Gita*, 11.16)

The statement here bears a family resemblance to the position as stated by Parmenides who put the same problem in the following dialectical form as mentioned by W. S. Weedon in his article on being in *Runes Dict. of Philosophy* :

According to Parmenides and his disciples of the Eleatic school, everything real belongs to the category of Being, as the only possible object of thought. Essentially the same reasoning applies to material reality in which there is nothing but Being, one and continuous, all inclusive and eternal. Consequently, he concluded, the coming into being and passing away, constituting change, are illusory, for that which is not cannot be and that which is cannot cease to be.

The last sentence in the above quotation is a distinct echo of the thought in the *Gita* that we have just cited. A careful scrutiny of the rival theories on the subject will reveal the superiority of the dialectical approach whether in the East or in the West. This approach has a methodology of its own which is different from the merely logical or rational. When this distinction is made clear, the "puzzlement" here must vanish.

Even when dialectics is applied to the problem of existence, it is possible to have two answers equally valid, one by which we have the notion of the *Dialectical Moment* and the other which may be called the *Eternal Present*. The *Dialectical Moment* is Being understood as the Void, and the *Eternal Present* has a conceptual content which can only be the notion of the Absolute as the meeting point of contradictions.

According to Indian Vedanta texts we know the Absolute as Being referred to as *sad-asad* (existing-nonexisting) which should not be understood as a contradiction but is a unitive intuitive contemplative vision with a sufficient reason unto itself. Contradiction here is reabsorbed into the supreme unity of the Absolute which stands for all existence. The *sunya-vadins* and the *kshanika-vijnana-vadins* of the later Buddhistic context, confronted this very problem and solved it in their own ways by treating *sunya* (void) and *vijnana* (practical wisdom) as Absolute Norms, equally valid.

Metaphysical Bewilderment and Overlapping Definitions : Anyone who has tried to follow carefully modern trends in philosophical thought will recognize that from the day Positivism was formulated by Auguste Comte there has been a persistent tendency to discredit all forms of abstract reasoning as baseless, non-factual or sentimental. Darwin's theory of evolution became a natural starting point for a new variety of practical and realistic philosophizing. Factual metaphysics as opposed to abstract doctrines became preferable. Kant, Descartes, Spinoza, leaving aside classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, were boldly criticized and decried as living in their own ivory-tower

The true representatives of the *Age of Analysis*, as writers like Morton White called them, include such names as Peirce, Whitehead, James, Dewey, Russell, Croce, Bergson, Sartre, Santayana and Wittgenstein. A practical common-sense view of the universe, as conducive to "progress" (whatever that meant exactly to these writers as each followed the footsteps of science), stressing clarity of a certain kind, represents something of the characteristics of the philosophy in common to these moderns. The notion of the Absolute gave place to the admissibility of pluralistic belief. With the advent of the "Logical Positivists" the limits of analytical philosophy seemed somewhat extended so as to admit within its scope logic, mathematics and linguistic studies for distinguishing what they called "meaningful" from absurd assertions.

When one has reviewed all these philosophers, one notes that the latest of them, Wittgenstein, not only relied on logical syntax and semiotics, but began to question the very possibility of definitions. He is said to have been the most modern and the most puzzling of all analytical philosophers. We shall quote a paragraph from his *Philosophical Investigations* (section 77) to show the nature of the puzzle to which Wittgenstein directs his attention. Taking the case of two pictures, one sharply defined and a blurred one corresponding to it, he says:

And if we carry this comparison still further it is clear that the degree to which the sharp picture *can* resemble the blurred one depends on the latter's degree of vagueness. For imagine having to sketch a sharply defined picture "corresponding" to a blurred one. In the latter there is a blurred red rectangle: for it you put down a sharply defined one. Of course—several such sharply defined rectangles can be drawn to correspond to the indefinite one—but if the colours in the original merge without a hint of any outline won't it become a hopeless task to draw a sharp picture corresponding to the blurred one? Won't you then have to say: "Here I might just as well draw a circle or heart as a rectangle, for all the colours merge. Anything—and nothing—is right."—And this is the position you are in if you look for definitions corresponding to our concepts in aesthetics or ethics. (p. 235, *ibid.*)

The impossibility of clear definitions when we follow the way of *looking* rather than *thinking*—i.e. when we conform to an objective discipline in philosophy, is what Wittgenstein labours to make clear. Morton White, the editor of the book, himself estimates Wittgenstein's contribution to modern philosophy in the following words:

Wittgenstein's passionate interest in describing the use of language without metaphysical presuppositions is reminiscent of Husserl. His interest in describing the role, job and function of words is like the pragmatists'. His hostility to cartesian dualism and his preoccupation with shared, social linguistic activity sound

more like John Dewey than Dewey or Wittgenstein would have dreamed. The notion that each word is embedded in a large linguistic context that swells into a "form of life" is *certainly not utterly removed from idealism* . . . "the meaning is the use" was Wittgenstein's most famous slogan and it applies ten-fold to his own words. To understand him one must read him and see the use of it. (p. 228, *ibid.*)

A philosopher who insists on seeing the use of words that cannot be defined clearly and depends on what he calls "family resemblances" recognized by each person between instances of a concept such as "game" or "patch of colour" or even those notions such as "good" etc. implying value, is in short a follower of Wittgensteinism as the latest expression of an idealistic positivism. The vaguer the definition is taken to be the better the chances for the "family resemblance" to operate in a useful or progressively scientific way. Such is the position which takes us far beyond the strict limits of empiricism which a Carnap or a Russell would set for modern philosophy. We have every reason to believe in this tendency a sly return to a new form of idealism, as Morton White hints at in the sentence we have italicized in the above quotation.

After stating that "games" form a family based on certain connecting fibres, as it were, of "family resemblances" which elude precise definition, Wittgenstein concludes :

... if someone wished to say ; "There is something common to all these constructions — namely the disjunction of all their common properties" — I should reply : now you are only playing with words. One might as well say : "Something runs through the whole thread — namely, the continuous overlapping of those fibres." (p. 231, *ibid.*)

The principle of "continuity" referred to here as opposed to the principle of "disjunction" referred to above, correspond to the vertical and horizontal aspects of existence as we have tried to distinguish them.

The Notion of Non-Dual Existence : Philosophy as understood in our day tends to be based on common-sense utility. Pure rationalism and idealism, which were considered the true domain of philosophy in the era of Descartes, Spinoza and Kant, have suffered a rude displacement in favour of something that "works," or is "provable" or demonstrable as in a laboratory experiment.

This tendency has been pushed to its furthestmost limits and the diehards of the empirico-utilitarian school are still maintaining the ground they invaded with the triumph of science in whose wake they followed till now. But unfortunately for them, science itself is now turning speculatively philosophical. The material basis of matter is gone. A mathematical god is being visualized by disciplined scientists who lapse alternately into the language of mysticism or mathematics.

It looks as if the battle will be lost in favour of a new idealism. Such a prospect would be both good and bad. If all normative thinking should be lost, solipsism and sentimentalism would engender a crop of pseudo-scientific superstitions with dangerous consequences to civilization. The opposite danger is equally serious whereby in the name of scientific validity we might stand to lose our bearings in the world of worthwhile human values.

When the rigid experimental foundations of thought are failing on one side, and scientific thinking is invading the domains of pure thought on the other side, looking for new norms and meanings, it would be normal for those who take neither the side of empiricism nor that of mere rationalism, to discover a way to open up the blind alleys leading from opposite directions, by a revised and unitive methodology and epistemology. In this matter the Vedanta of India undoubtedly has some suggestive lines of thought to offer to the modern West.

The Existent in Sankara's Philosophy: Vedanta philosophy generally and Sankara's system in particular is built round the primary notion of *sat* or existence. The given, ontological real of here-and-now, although conceived as a unique abstraction along the lines of the "prime matter" of Aristotle rather than as a hypostatized entity as with Plato, is the basic starting point of all Vedanta philosophizing. Prof. Lacombe of Paris in a whole work devoted to the notion of the Absolute according to the Vedanta, starts his chapter on Sankara's notion of *sat* with the following bold generalization:

Vedanta is a philosophy of being - *sat*. It is in this, that taken as a whole, its most central point of insertion in the tradition of the Upanishads resides. (trans. from p.3, *L'Absolu selon le Vedanta*, Paris, 1937).

In the *Bhagavad Gita* we find that this idea of *sat* as the basis of the existent in the strictly ontological sense is extended into notions of value and good or right action:

In the sense of existence as well as in the sense of the good (the expression) *sat* is used. Likewise when speaking of worthy actions too this same term *sat* is pertinent, O Partha. (*Gita*, XVII. 26)

In the next and last chapter, the same vertical series of ontological levels from the most basic or generic to the most specific, expressing itself through possible activities in life, is again referred to as follows:

The base, the actor, the instruments of action and activities of diverse kinds with God as the fifth here. (*ibid*, XVIII. 14)

A vertical series of ontological factors attaining to supreme specificity in God through intermediate stages in which activity is implied gives us a living picture of the human personality or spirit much after the manner of the moderns such as Bergson, whose words quoted above bear a family resemblance to the ontological approach implied in Vedanta.

The inversion of the Vedanta approach *vis-a-vis* the traditional occidental approach to the problem of reality is further clearly explained by Lacombe in the following passage from his book :

The metaphysical problem *par excellence* for occidental philosophy is to conquer the two paradoxes in passing from things finite and relative to the being infinite and absolute.

Daughters of Plato, the one as well as the other, but all the same turning their backs to one another, two great doctrines separate from each other here ; Aristotelian Greek and Medieval of being and of the pure act ; Cartesianism with all it was followed by, which will soon be a philosophy of action. (p.35)

After devoting some additional paragraphs in which the course of Western philosophy is carefully traced from Descartes through Spinoza and Leibnitz to Kant, Prof. Lacombe goes on to sum up the position of Sankara in respect of his existent reality of *sat* which participates to some extent in the notion of *substance* as known to the West. He then says :

Thus while all our (Western) philosophy is constructed upon the primacy of Ideas or of " formal causality " the philosophy of Sankara sets the pace deliberately for what we should call fundamental causality or substantial causality. It is not that it is unaware of the fecundity of being nor would it underestimate such, if one would well understand its generosity. But if it is true of other metaphysics than his, and not Indian alone, that the movement of return from the finite to the infinite is more profound, charged with greater sense — even to the extent of setting on one side its saving orientation — than the movement of departure, involution more authentic than evolution, this seems particularly true of the Vedanta of Sankara, because for him the term of all evolution definitely coincides with its source : the final cause as well as the formal cause re-absorb themselves in the substance, and by way of consequence, the efficient cause also. (pp. 37-38, *ibid.*)

We can now clearly distinguish two distinct trends in philosophy. To use Prof. Lacombe's expression, they are turning their backs on each other. Plato's ascending dialectics led him into the thin air of the world of the intelligibles, while Aristotle by an opposite tendency or trend in the progress of philosophic thought, went beyond matter and prior to it into another world of unique existential factors basic to matter and form.

The notion of substance was meant as an intermediate link between these two poles to which thought was drawn. Modern analytic or pragmatic philosophers who tended to discredit the idealism of Plato, did so because Plato's concept of Ideas, though sound from the point of view of abstract philosophy, could not lend itself as the foundation of a scientific or progressive civilization which believes in action rather than in calm contemplation.

However, with the admission of logic, mathematics and semantics into philosophy in recent times, a new phase in philosophic thought is being ushered in. This has at present the added support of a philosophy of science which itself is becoming more and more non-materialist. We have seen how Russell has long been convinced of the limits of empiricism and its inadequacy for philosophy in all its aspects. Carnap's position brings him to the verge of seeking worthwhile meanings in propositions which have to be demonstrable and useful. As we have just seen, Wittgenstein goes further into the mystery of meanings even of words such as "game" or "yellow" and says that no distinct notions can be formed by the mind about these in pragmatic ontological terms when we "look" and do not "think." To him meaning has also to be useful. It is clear that an ontological concept of existence is being formulated afresh in modern philosophy. In such a task human values should not be shut out. The primacy of man's existence has to be conceded. A fresh normative notion for philosophy seems almost ready for birth. In this the notion of *sat* or existence as known to Vedanta will have at least a certain "family resemblance" in the Wittgensteinian sense. Further aspects of this question will be examined when we take up "subsistence" for consideration.

[END]

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