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SYMBOL OF A CIVILIZATION
SUBRAMANIAM, SON OF SIVA — See page 263

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of the general good.*

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EDITORIAL : An Absolutist Civilization

UNESCO's Constitution loftily proclaims : " Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." This echoes the 2500 years old opening verse of the Buddha's *Dhammapada* which affirms : "All that we are is the result of what we have thought." The *Bhagavad Gita* (xvii, 31) goes further when it says our thought is determined by our values, and that our faith determines what we are. Jesus meant the same thing when he said (*Matthew* vi, 21): " Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

All these statements have relevance to Nataraja Guru's definition of civilization as " a state of mind " in this month's *Causerie* (on page 263). This has particular importance to the immediate world situation where President Eisenhower in his Chicago speech on July 27, succeeded, not so much in frightening Khrushchev, as in frightening mankind with his boast that the USA was " the strongest military power on earth," able to strike with " unimaginable destructive power " within minutes from "airfields around the world." Is this civilization? God help us !

Two Utopian Extremes : In terms of psycho-physical dialectics, there are two kinds of civilization, an outward and an inward, which roughly correspond to Jung's extravert and introvert. In the jargon of the Beats it is "square " and "hip". We have many other pairs like this, such as active and inactive, positive and negative, and all have reference to the values men pursue. We are here dealing only with the relativistic side. We shall come to the absolutist approach later.

When completely immersed in the illusions of wants or economics, we have masculine, dominant civilizations (what the philosophers of India would call *vikshepa* in essence, or the Chinese would call *yang*). The counterpart of these are the feminine, recessive, submissive, inert, easy-going civilizations (*avriti* in India, *yin* in China).

Broadly speaking, this is what is meant by the division of East and West, the one dynamic, the other sluggish. These generalizations are more or less true at the relativistic or horizontal level. Further, since these two forms of society are also describable as *rajasic* meaning passionately wilful, and *tamasic* meaning slothfully obscure, there is, at the same level, an attempt to modify or change both to a still relativistic state or condition called pure or *sattvic*. American and Indian Utopias would be the termini of such an attempt. It is here that many intelligent minds get caught.

In the one case we achieve the Swedish or Communist paradise ; in the other case we have the various types of Buddhist or Christian monastic communities. Each, no doubt, has its temperamental appeal, but these extremes are bound to fail ultimately, because they are lopsided. When the Self of man with its totality of values is divided into an inner and an outer, with preferences one way or the other, and emphases stressed this way and that, rather than by having an all-round equitable acceptance, some sort of discontent or suffering must prevail, either within or without. Man will suffer from value-starvation, and being conditioned, he won't know why.

Who Is Civilized ? We are at a point in human history where the great question for all is : " Where do we go from here ? "

From the account of what is happening in Sweden (see page 261) we have already sufficient evidence of the futility and failure of the affluent civilization which pins its faith and interests in external values. Despite this warning, the *rajasic* or extraverted temperaments (bound to be the first to come on top) who dominate the modern world, as businessmen or politicians, are determined to impose their type of civilization on the hitherto neglected regions of the world, which they naturally label as "undeveloped" or "backward."

Even the Congo, latest to hit the headlines, is going to be committed to the Western " way of life " through economic deals either with USA or Russia, or both- (Strictly speaking, in this context—as we know in India—it hardly matters whether the hydro-electric dam is built by one or other of these similarly extraverted States. *The dam has no ideology. It merely reflects a state of mind, common to that extent, to Washington and Moscow.*.)

The current Western delusion is that the only two " ways of life " or " states of mind " or civilizations are those of USA and Russia. Eisenhower in that same Chicago speech, says the world has only these two to choose from. We remember Khrushchev saying much the same thing when addressing the Indian Parliament recently. On that basis the ways of life, the states of mind, and the civilizations as represented by simple people like Eskimos, Red Indians, African Negroes, Todas, Nagas, Papuans and dozens of others, do not mean a thing. It is time such notions were corrected.

In India itself Nehru recently spoke sharply to the people of Assam, asking them to behave " like civilized people." Vice-President Radhakrishnan in a sermon down south wanted his college listeners to be " ladies and gentlemen " ! What do

they mean ? They don't say. They like Kalidasa, but it is Kalidasa and Asoka, not to mention Mahatma Gandhi and Bhawe, behaving properly, even if not dressed properly !

Leaving the Camera Behind : The Indian state of mind must baffle description by the dynamic-oriented writer, because in our analysis, it belongs to the introverted, *tamas*-inclined, negative-turned temperament. Cameras, tape-recorders, scientific research and even religious or artistic documentation just won't register this mind, any more than trying to photograph a ghost in a dark room. The disciplines of the extravert won't do at all. The nearest they can do is to take Aldous Huxley's advice in his essay *Heaven and Hell*, and under the influence of hashish, mescaline or marijuana, hope for a glimpse of " the antipodes of the mind ", of *their* minds. In any case, the camera must be left behind.

Exclusive of Indian cities with their Western values where the sounds of hammered metal-ware are now replaced by the hum of the machine-shop, and homes now patterned on imitations of Mosc-York, the majority of Indians live in a village-civilization coeval with the lost cities of the Indus Valley of 4000 years ago. This Stone-age civilization is content with the basic crude things of life, with huge heaps of rice and boxes of real gold, the good earth, acres of it, a house of mud and stone, a few reed mats and brass or earthenware pots. Its real life is lived under a forest banyan tree, where all is numinous and holy, an intimacy with gods and yogis, with samnyasins and Gurus and those who recite the perennial and unending legends, evoking the time-lost past.

At the same time, there is an "art" which, when it once gets going, overwhelms the stranger with its proliferations of imagery and symbol. The pre-Aryan Mohenjo-daro soapstone seals are a case in point. Mrs. Gertrude Emerson Sen, for instance, writes : " The Hoysala artists of Mysore covered their temples with minute lace-like carvings, as intricate and delicate as the work of a sandalwood carver or a goldsmith. Narrow bands, borders and friezes, one above another, decorated the entire outside of the high plinths. Someone has taken the trouble to count the number of elephants in the lowest frieze of the twelfth-century Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid. There are more than two thousand of them ! " (*The Pageant of India's History*. p. 230).

Ellora and Ajanta are well known. It is all symbol, taking the senses back to an inner civilization. Except in astrology there are no general records of time, and even there it is "Cyclic". The Westerner, tourist or scientist (and even those in sympathy with Indian religion have the systematic

approach) when faced with the Indian symbols, loses his bearings in a confused limbo. Classical and religious songs have all the same mood, mentally antipodean, infused with adoration and aspiration and drawing the senses inwards.

With all its outward drawbacks, its physical inertia, its irresponsible attitudes to keeping appointments, as judged by Western standards of efficiency, with all its muddle, its half-efforts to be exact and modern, it may seem strange that such a civilization of the mind, so negative, should be favourable to the flowering of real wisdom, and particularly of that kind which the world today actually, desperately needs.

“Take no thought of the morrow” and “Consider the lilies of the field” are wisdom precepts quite opposed to five-year plans and economic deals, though quite conducive as a discipline for the contemplative vision of life which was the aim of the wise man who uttered them. Nowhere in the world, and least of all in the security-haunted modern civilized world which, like a bad conscience, still preserves them, have these Christian sayings been followed—and long before Jesus spoke the words—except in India. Jainas, Buddhists, samnyasins, all hold these as a central core of their daily life,

Moving Into a New Dimension : The above necessarily gives an extreme picture of the two polarized states of mind, or civilization, the progressive and the recessive, of outer and inner values, in order that we may be able to bring into focus the balance and unity needed by both.

In about equal proportion, just as there are so many Western-minded types of Indians, so there are Eastern-minded types in Europe and America. The former are imitators with plenty of models supplied by visits to America, by affiliation to visiting Westerners, or via mass media such as the cinema. And of course in India they are educated in their thousands, by Western standards. In New York recently, Mr. Lumumba was reported as being “extremely articulate.” And why not? Ought he to have been dressed in beads, rolled his eyes and said “Him Belgians velly bad mans. You good mans ask him no stay”?

People in the West with Eastern states of mind, are today more frequent, (or more articulate!). It's not so much that they become afflicted with a yen for Hinduism or take to Theosophy, with Buddhas in their parlours like Dr. Barbara Moore, the 50-years old British hiker who is also a vegetarian. No, quite apart from those who *know* they are Asian-orientated, there are many thousands in whom the symptoms of revolt against Western civilization point to an Eastern state of mind.

(Continued on page 283)

Another Report from Satiated Sweden

BY KATHLEEN NOTT

In our June Editorial we referred to Peter Wyden's article, "Sweden: Paradise with Problems" in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Among other things this report dealt with "welfare state criminality" the "young robbers" who shuffle through the streets in jeans and leather jackets, gaping and searching for adventure and like Americans, parents wonder why they turn to robbery "when their parents can afford to gratify their wants better than ever before." And other questions unsolved are why Sweden has the world's high st consumption of hard liquor, why a country without slums, the most American in Europe, but one quarter co-operativised, has the highest suicide rate barring West Berlin. Prime Minister Erlander said there was a need to find something to interest them. This is a background to author Kathleen Nott's notes from her forthcoming book, "A Clean Well-Lighted Place." Here is a picture of civilization somehow gone wrong.

SWEDEN is the most comfortable country in Europe—and the least cosy. Certainly Monday's wash is no longer hanging round and the furniture has been polished—but you may get the feeling that it is always Tuesday afternoon. The temptation to put one's feet on the table, if not to break up the home, may be almost irresistible.

Many foreigners, ignorant more often than not of their own national rates, are tendentiously cnrious about the high incidence in Sweden of suicide, mental illness, drunkenness, promiscuity and other forms of what we call maladjustment. They might remember that all leisure-travel is liable to be a form of romanticism. One is always, half-consciously, seeking the old, the broken and the dirty; and how old ruins have to be before they are beautiful is a difficult question.

Beautiful but Dumb: In Sweden there are no contemporary ruins, and no squalor—and so we simply do not remember that the country has "had" poverty, and been cured, at least for the present. It is as if we compared poverty with being crossed in love—it is healthier to forget.

But many visitors feel a sense of flatness and I am not sure that this comes solely from disappointed *schadenfreude* [pleasure at other people's troubles]. The country seems beautiful but dumb: everything is of the highest quality and workmanship, including nature, which has a tendency towards simple functional lines. Nature itself looks modern. Pine trees after all are only growing telegraph poles; and the constant slight birch, the latest survival beyond the Arctic Circle, always looks as if newly and amateurly painted.

A Simmering Violence : This is only a metaphorical way of describing the homogeneity of Sweden....For all the slick and highly polished comfort of modern life, the opposition of light and dark has a real significance for Swedes. On the first gleam of spring, smart, elderly ladies with the smartest hats and handbags squat among students on the steps of the Dramaten Theatre to *kisa på solen* (roughly, "to moon in the sun"). It is a national predisposition, but you feel that nature-worship is also tacitly the official faith, and that Midsummer Day, which united Cross and Maypole, is now the wedding anniversary of Church and State.

Sometimes you could think that Sweden is like a mind in a state of analytical disturbance. Her social organizations have a compulsive urge towards sweetness and light which compensates for the awareness of gloom and complexes. There is a simmering violence which often boils up and spills over into Monday's headlines (*Father in Tegner-Gaten Blows Up Family With Dynamite.*)

Sometimes it takes a form which looks like organized eccentricity and hence like significant social comment. In a respectable restaurant in Stockholm the guests were quietly dining when a man, his wife, and teenage son came in, all drunk. They thought the service was slow (it almost certainly was) and began hammering on the tables and flinging the crockery at the waiters, who retaliated. All the guests joined in, taking sides. Police arrived in time for mopping-up-operations and later commented, like sociological connoisseurs: "This is undoubtedly the biggest battle which has ever taken place in a Stockholm restaurant." —"FROM THE OBSERVER," LONDON".

GURUKULA NEWS

Nataraja Guru remains at the Gurukula, Fernhill, Nilgiris, as readers will know from the Gauseries.

European Guests : Dr. Paul Gevaert has been here, at the Gurukulas at Fernhill and Kaggalipura, and has also been on a tour of South India. He will be visiting Singapore next month. He is the son of Mr. Edgar Gevaert whose biography appears on page 269.

We have also had Mr. Walter de Buck, also from Ghent, an artist-sculptor on a study tour of India. He hopes to found a new Gurukula when he returns to Europe.

Singapore : On August 7, the foundation stone of the new building of the South-East Asia Gurukula Centre was laid by Swami Renganananda. From Sept. 4 to 6 there will be big celebrations on the occasion of the 105th Birth Anniversary of Narayana Guru,

Narayana Guru Birthday : This will be celebrated at all Gurukula Centres during the period September—October 1960. Detailed programmes for each occasion will be intimated from particular Centres.

Causerie - 10

The Journal and Reflections of an Absolutist

BY NATARAJA GURU

That even an absolutist has to meet the compulsions of necessity is the opening theme of the author, leading on to a discussion of the two main types of civilization, where the mind turns towards the quantitative values represented in material achievements, or towards the qualitative "empire of the spirit".

IT is easy to call oneself an absolutist and sit irresponsibly sky-gazing or philosophizing. Poetic moods exalt the spirit, but there is another side to the picture which might be forgotten when one reads the reflections of an absolutist. One has only to speak for five minutes with the wife of a great artist or a philosopher to find that every Socrates has his counterpart in a Xantippe.

They will all tell you that the husband is a great man, but to live with him in the workaday sense has its trials and problems which are no less real than art or philosophy. One has to make two ends meet. Bills pile up on the table. Taxes have to be paid in time as also debtors and lawyers, besides the milkman and the baker. Social obligations, intruders and pretenders, with crying children, poor relations, or pets that mess up the house have all to be dealt with.

The artist lives above the clouds of necessity, and his indifference irritates his partner in life, in many a subtle way. Some of them even go under, overpowered by the weight of necessity, and protect themselves by going really mad, or pretending to be so for the rest of their lifetime, to escape falling into the *kriti-maha-dadhi* (the great ocean of necessary activity). Few hold their heads above the drowning level.

Trials of the Rainy Season on the Hills : In previous causeries I have let myself go on the poetic way perhaps too freely. As the wet days began, the tray of morning coffee that came to my room began to be delayed by several minutes. Wet firewood would not burn as brightly as dry. Cold dishes are not enjoyable.



A recent photo of Nataraja Guru

A moist bed and wet feet with mud on them, with cows to graze in rain and wind, add to the picture of the Kuchela-Krishna fellowship in the typical Gurukula sufferings. One has to be a *Gurukula-klisha* as the *Kadambari* of Bana puts it, to qualify for Gurukula life.

Poverty, chastity and obedience are vows known even in Christian monasteries, in spite of the wine-drinking and meat-eating the inmates may be permitted. *Uparati* and *titiksha* are two qualities laid down for any absolutist who wishes to lead a Gurukula life. *Uparati* means that one has to be free from hankerings, and *titiksha* refers to a hardy attitude which is willing to put up with difficulties. The scout and the soldier cultivate this virtue, and to that extent they are also absolutists. Early rising, cold water bathing and non-gourmandizing are corollaries to this attitude. If with these, a novice to the Gurukula could learn to hold his tongue and learn to listen and not be too eager to teach, we would have a perfect model of a *brahmachari* (one who walks in the way of the Absolute). *Guurkula-vasa* (long life in the family of the Guru) *Guru-bhakti* (establishing strict bipolar relations with the teacher) and *brahmacharya*, not interpreted merely in the context of sex continence, but in the larger context of walking in the way of the wisdom of the Absolute, are some of the matters taken for granted and treated as normal in a Gurukula.

Being the head of one that I dared to found myself at a time when the whole spirit of such an educational atmosphere has given place to one that lacks all reverence, I have many a problem of which I have omitted to speak in my causeries. The reader must supply them from his own imagination. The Guru Narayana himself had warned me in advance, when I was thinking of starting a Gurukula in the hills, saying that the times had changed and there was less respect for any kind of spiritual authority in modern times. The golden days of obedience of a spiritual master have, alas, passed, it would seem forever.

In spite of the picture of having to plough a lonely furrow, my faith in the dream of the Gurukula still consoles me in my personal life of dedication as an absolutist. However great a philosopher might be, the exacting toll of "Necessity" with a capital letter, has to be paid in one form or another. Worries ranging from a mother's death to the lack of a pin when you are in a hurry to post a letter, constantly encroach into the peace of man.

The love of "Peace" also with a capital letter, is its only remedy. This is how the absolutist can win, in and through necessities, rather than by trying to by-pass them. That will

Never work, but Necessity with redoubled force will return to hit one's head if the suspended ball is wilfully pushed away from its natural equilibrium at the same level as the head.

June and July with their wet, cold, muddy and windy days brought me face to face with Necessities big and small. I try to keep smiling as many others must be doing, like me !

Black and White Sides of Absolutism: The twin paths of light and darkness find reference in Vedantic books such as *The Bhagavad Gita* (VIII.26) as the *sukla-krishna-gati* (white-black-ways). Contemplative India has retained to the present day the shadow aspects implied here.

Between its North and South, India still presents this polarized picture. In explaining the different aspects and complexions of Indian culture, art and spirituality to two newcomers from Europe who have been sharing the necessary aspects of life in the Gurukula with me in recent months, I have had some difficulty in explaining the subtle dialectics of black and white elements that mixed into the dull grey of the veritable spiritual complexion of contemplative India.

Tragic and comic elements blend into this state of mind so imperceptibly, that it is no more possible to separate the patches: both and nothing seems to true. The tinge of regret that persisted in the South was absorbed into a higher expression of unitive contemplative expression in a dialectically revalued form in the writings of Kalidasa and others who represented the golden period of Samskritist civilization.

At the epoch of the *Bhagavad Gita* there was a dialectical revaluation of wisdom values. The forest of Dandakaranya that Rama and Sita entered on their vow of *vanavasa* (forest dwelling), was the counterpart of what Ayodhya, the semi-Aryanized city of the North represented. The religion of Indra and Varuna with its fire ritual of the *agnihotra* in which the North was merged, separated it by a subtle dialectical distinction from the *pitriyana* (the way of the ancestors). This latter struck a deeper note of contemplative agony as represented by Arjuna's attitude in the beginning of the *Gita*.

South India, especially Tamil India, had also its golden periods of revaluation which have to be many thousands of years prior to the more recent revaluations of the *Gita* or of the time of Kalidasa. We have to think in terms of thousands of years rather than in centuries. What is usually referred to as Greater India refers to that unit of civilization that had its epicentre, as it were, more towards the South than the North.

The Kalingas and the powerful ruling dynasties of the South made their contributions to this earlier civilization.

The post-Gupta period in Indian history presents to scholars many problems and enigmas into the intricacies of which one cannot enter here. This should not, however, deter us from arriving at broad generalizations about the reality of a civilization which was Saivite and South Indian in its origin, and which radiated its influence far and wide across the islands and oceans, especially of South-East Asia.

The Samskritist golden period has to be placed in the larger and more ancient context of the golden period of Greater Indian Civilization. The ancient Dravidian languages represent the living remnants of the more comprehensive state of mind which belongs to older India and the Greater India. The Golden Age of Kalidasa and that of Tiruvalluvar are being commemorated in India, strangely at the very time these thoughts come to the present writer, without any premeditation about them. The conformation of the absolutist way comes from such simple coincidences, sometimes called luck, chance, or providence. Probability and possibility are more modern terms for the same. The tide in the affairs of men that Shakespeare speaks about refers to the same common thread of continuity that gathers chaotic aspects of life into a cosmic string of pearls made up of a series of realities or worlds of value.

The Ocean of Humanity in the Scattered Landstrips of S.E. Asia : If India is a state of mind designated by the name *Jambu-Dvīpa* (the Island of Wild Berries) which we tried to visualize in an earlier causerie, the Greater India that we have referred to, is a vast spiritual empire spreading over many islands and peninsulas floating like pearls in the warm latitudes where the Pacific and Indian Oceans meet.

Instead of the ideological insulation of Peninsular India, the ocean breezes waft the subtle influence that persists in pockets like Java and Siam, over the widely-scattered fragments of *terra firma* where humans cluster together, seeking cultural as well as physical nourishment, without which man may be said to starve. The keenness of the hunger for both nonrishments are the same.

The stories of the Ramayana are acted to this day by the people of Bali and Java, the same as they did centuries ago, when the adventurers from the mother country were actually there. Although the Mohammedan religion has mostly displaced the Hindu ways superficially, the sub-stratum of the way of life

that may be said to belong to Indian civilization, with its milder and gentler attitudes, is still retained.

Crude *asuric* or demoniacal tendencies however, have overcovered by their wild growth, much of the ancient love of kindness and fellow feeling. Open, as the people were, to outside influences from almost every point of the compass, the word foreigner could not have much significance here. Humanity flourishes here like the luxuriant vegetation around it, more like a weed, as De Quincey wrote, rather than as a garden plant.

The pearl-like islands set in the bright warm ocean, are overcovered with luxuriant vegetation. Instead of the monsoon or periodic rain conditions of the mother country, we have here alternating rains and sun all through the year. Incubator conditions favour the proliferation of humanity. The open parts attract the trader from all parts of the world. The Chinese and the Malay with soldiers and mariners from almost every part of the wide world jostle and rub shoulders in the market places and the nightly haunts. From terrorists to adventurers, fortune-hunters and descendants of head-hunting tribes, all find opportunities in this ocean of humanity that is South-East Asia.

Below the surface levels of such a life of motion and mixing of value-elements, there is still to be discovered, by the keen eye of the student of civilizations, a stratum hardly visible except as outcrops here and there, where a deep human note still persists.

It is to this stratum that the memories of ancient India have attached themselves. Chinese Buddhism itself may be said to belong to this deep memory of ancient India, and the interior parts of the islands and peninsulas of South East Asia are dotted with *viharas* of the Buddhists of the Mahayana branch. The seated figure of the Buddha in meditation is an ancient Indian ideogram. In rock and pillar this ancient ideogram has been repeated so profusely that the visitor to Annam, Siam or Cambodia, not to speak of Borneo, Java, Indonesia, or even the little island of Penang off the Western coast of Malaya, is often surprised and overpowered by the persistent breath of a past whose atmosphere is present, forcibly and strikingly intruding itself. Its subtle influence cannot altogether be missed even by the most casual onlooker or tourist.

Islam itself, which in other parts of the world has some touch of the harsher outer aspects of the absolutist attitude implicit in it, tends in these parts to be subdued into mellowed mildness. Such is the spell of ancient India that still influences subtly the thought and pattern of behaviour of the millions of men and women of South-East Asia.

Many Islands in One Greater Indian Humanity: Insular India and the India of the Indian Archipelago are dialectical counter-parts of the same absolute human value implicit in a civilization with common bipolar epicentres or origins. One of these poles is to be situated by us in or around Ujjain, the Alaka of the Samskritic Golden Age. The other is more difficult to locate but must be situated in the Tamil *Nad* (country).

The rocks of Trichnopoly with rivers that water the extensive paddy fields round about Sri Rangam are said to be geologically and archaeologically the oldest landmarks in India. The people of this area, especially the common people, know no harsh word in their tongue. A Tamil orator, even to this day, avoids all harsh interjections. "Kill", "hit", sudden danger signals, cries of help or of anger are scarcely used by the Tamil speaker. Murder and crime might be there potentially, the same as in every civilization but the outer linguistic expression is what we are referring to at present.

In railway compartments in North India one witnesses frequent fights or angry words, which are practically unknown in the ancient Tamil *Nad*. The Tamils are peace-loving people in whom harshness has given place to gentler ways. The depth of the civilization to which these people are affiliated has to be measured in three or four or even more thousands of years, and reaches back to the Mohenjo-daro and Harappa period, at which time we could well imagine an extensive area from the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris, having common links with that of the Indus, the Brahma-putra, the Ganges and the Cauvery.

Tamil is the oldest of the Dravidian proto or pre-Aryan languages, and linguists who have traced the origins of the Kanarese and the Telugu languages have related it to the Babylonian and Akkadian civilizations. Whatever the actual number of years, one thing is certain, that instead of counting in centuries, we are here concerned with millenia.

Reaching beyond the Vedas and the farthest recesses of Old Testament antiquity, a deep and profound note of culture is implied, tacitly and nobly in the soil of this part of India which it is important to recognize for the future of the unity and solidarity of India and the wider world which looks to it for spiritual leadership. We have here the seeds of a spiritual empire not based on territorialism but on a fully wise attitude more consistent with human dignity.

What Is the Measure of a Civilized People? Some people are proud of their skyscrapers, their biggest tunnels or bridges that they have able to build. Dams worth millions of units

(*Continued on page 280*)

EDGAR GEVAERT

Artist, Writer and World Citizen

MR. EDGAR GEVAERT has been introduced to the readers of *VALUES* (*Causerie* : Sept. 1959) already as a painter and a well-known figure of Laethem-St. Martin near the city of Ghent in Belgium. As one of the important sponsors of the World Citizenship movement started by Garry Davis and one of his earliest and constant supporters, Edgar Gevaert is known to some of us.

He is the author of many books of distinct literary value, both in the Flemish and French languages. One of his works had the recognition of the Belgian Academy which offered him a prize. As a painter too he has attained distinction and has been able to strike out a new line in that art. His large canvases cover the walls of the lounges, vestibules and rooms in his ample family houses where, with ten children, only four of the youngest^t being sons, he lives his own sequestered life, somewhat like a patriarch of biblical times, in the wooded area of the well known village of Laethem-St. Martin, ten kilometres from Ghent. Even a reputed school of painting known as the Laethem School, once flourished here.



"Unforgettable Character" : His own domain consists of about forty acres of land planted with conifers and fruit trees of more than fifty varieties. With cows, goats, donkeys and poultry, he is not only a self-made but a self-sufficient man, whose domestic economy is more of the type called abundancist rather than what could be called opulent.

He is also a musical composer and a connoisseur of the best wines of which his cellar abounds in variety and richness. Hunting and fishing have been his hobbies from his youth, though by intention he is strongly against killing of any kind.

Self-made, self-willed, original, self sufficient, generous, while being at peace with himself, and wilfully attached to unitive and universal ideas, Mr. Gevaert may be said to be one of those characters who figure sometimes in magazines as "the most unforgettable." In fact he was going to be sensationally featured as such from which misfortune he was saved by his own open objection to such easy glory.

Our own excuse now in writing about him here comes from the fact that he has sent us about 35 pages of typescript consisting of about ten short literary compositions based on his original and very strikingly presented thoughts on human solidarity and allied subjects. The biggest of them covers

seven pages in type and there are many extending over three pages. As these pieces contain matter of direct interest to readers of VALUES who are familiar with the unitive and universal attitude that VALUES has stood for throughout, and because of the bold originality of the writer which makes him enigmatic in many parts, especially as he relies largely on the aphoristic form abounding in rhetorical questions, we have taken here the liberty of a short character sketch without which the import of his writings might altogether be missed.

A Dream that Failed : In the month of January 1951 there was held in the international city of Geneva a very unique conference of the representatives of all the parliaments of the world, called the People's Constituent Assembly. The writer of the present sketch happened to be returning to India by way of Europe just at that time, and by a strange chance happened to be a casual onlooker on one of the most remarkable events in the history of the world.

Here in the Batiment Electoral (the building meant for the elections of the Swiss Federation), was assembled a body of about one thousand distinguished men and women from almost every part of the world. Negroes from Texas and and Japanese came thousands of miles by land and sea, to meet planters, industrial magnates, and day labourers from South Africa and Canada, not to mention the numerous men and women of the World Citizenship Movement from the various states of Europe. Prime Minister Nehru of India happened to be passing through Geneva on his way to England at that time, and he was interviewed at the Airport by the chosen representatives of the People's Constituent Assembly. He seems to have expressed himself in favour of such an Assembly and as being sympathetic towards its aims.

Many world-famous persons were at that time supporters of the general idea that the Assembly represented, and well-known personalities like Albert Einstein expressed themselves favourably disposed and lent their moral and other support to the cause. The proceedings were conducted in a dignified and worthy manner and for a time it looked that the time was ripe for humanity to take a definite step forward in the direction of giving to the world, one legalized personality. Lurking deep down below the surface, however, there seemed to be some non-spiritual factor which was spelling the failure of this splendid vision. Rival claimants for the glory of World Government cancelled each other out in the end, and all was as it was before the dream began.

It was nearly a decade after that I learnt that the moving spirit at the bottom of the whole endeavour was Edgar Gevaert with his ten children, all fired by the vision of a united world with one law for all mankind.

Tragedy of the War Refugees: Further acquaintance with the Gevaert family has revealed the deeper causes for this dream. It was not of the category of a fanciful day dreaming of this lonely man. It was the natural culmination of a father and ten children having to live a human life wandering for nearly half a dozen years, between the wars, first and second, facing the danger of death almost every moment and the worst conditions to which a displaced and dispossessed group of persons could ever be exposed.

Carrying the youngest ones on their shoulders for miles, seeking the night's shelter in a new place almost every week, exploited and exposed to other forms of ignominy too numerous to mention, to which lost people are always exposed, depending only on that faint touch of humanity in a fellow peasant or common woman to save them from lack of shelter and starvation for the hundredth time, the story of Gevaert and his companion in life Mrs. Gevaert, of wanderings in the South of France, in Wales and in different parts of northern Europe, is a heart-rending one.

Belgium itself, generally speaking, has been the battlefield where the wars and feuds, religious or political, have been fought out many a time in European history. The soul of the common man of this part of the war-worn world has so far mutely put up with the unjust sufferings inflicted on it for the benefit (or the contrary) of rival powers that the accident of geography had located in this part of Europe.

If the full implications of these circumstances, as applied to the Gevaert family, as to that of the country in which they were born, are kept in mind, the zeal of Edgar Gevaert for World Government could be seen as the natural conclusion.

How many displaced families are still suffering in the name of the mere idolatry of nationalism at the present day? How many men and women who have children are being denied honest livelihood in the name of this same bloodthirsty goddess? These are questions that stare us in the face in spite of the closed attitude of important politicians who pose as judges of human conduct and who might themselves have to be judged one day by some authority.

Justice cannot be dealt with relativistically or in piecemeal fashion. One dominant unitive and universal idea has to be accepted by all, like the fatherhood of God or the brotherhood of Man which are only the theological version of universal Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, not only as a motto of the French Revolution but as a slogan befitting the whole world.

The ten aphoristic literary compositions of Mr. Edgar Gevaert, though clothed in a style that is personal to the writer

and which relies much on rhetorical questions, still represent the agonies and heart-searchings of every honest man of our generation who is aware of what is going on around him.

We extract the following from them, to give the reader some sort of taste in regard to the nature of his latest writings :

[NOTE : The portions printed in italics are direct translations from the author's own words, while the remainder are summaries and comments.]

OF THE NATION

Mr. Gevaert begins by asking the question :

The research of truth, could it ever save humanity? Do we not call him the saviour who brings truth to humanity? But how could the truth save? Is not truth united with existence, and falsehood with non-existence? ...

We open here, as we believe, one of the most important problems when we state that the nation is a falsehood. It would follow that it does not exist.

Thus we see that the author poses the paradox of the very concept of nationhood by way of kicking off the ball, as it were, in the full style of a dialectician, to develop his themes which centre round the same kind of paradox.

The existence of nations is so evident to the common man that he pins his faith in it idolatrously as the real, while one has to see the matter from a different perspective altogether according to Edgar Gevaert. The perpetuation of nationhood could be undertaken in the manner of those who built the Pyramids of Egypt to preserve the mortal remains of great kings of the past, which have no reality at present. Those who conceived of the Sphinx, on the other hand, built on the indefinable spiritual reality of the idea which lives on, as the glory of the Unknown Soldier who also represents an invisible idea which humans love to glorify.

What do we find at the origin of nationhood?

Mr. Gevaert again goes on to ask. The nation, he replies, has undoubtedly its origin in the will of the individual who conceived it like a piece of art. It was meant to be an embryo of human society and not a static and closed unit called a nation.

OF COMMUNITIES

In this penetrating piece of subtle dialectics the author starts by his pointed question :

The community, as existence, is it thus forgotten?

He wishes, by this rhetorical and aphoristic question to make the distinction clear between the right notion of

a community and its own treatment as existing in the wrong or non-existent sense. What he has in mind becomes clear when he goes on to reply himself.

We cannot doubt the existence of the humankind which evidently does not exist by any collection of communities, for these latter cannot but eclipse its unity. ...

The human species is not divisible. Its existence cannot be destroyed by a division into communities.

A value, could it become superior by its imitation or by its reduction into fragments !

All existence flows from the never-ending source of life, while inexistence reaps its harvest of nothingness at the source of lies.

With a touch of mystic frenzy, he continues :

The Absolutist is happy in his quietude. He sees, contemplates, adores and creates where the reality of existence excludes all lies. Leave to him the truth with its proper imperfection which does not trouble him at all. Let us be polite, let us cultivate tact, let us make others happy, let us hurt none in intention, not anything, not ever. One imperfection in such a life will not give cause to unhappiness.

There is an aspect of imperfection that has inevitably to go with perfection, and this inasmuch as it is in keeping with the laws of life in nature, is not to be considered evil. The absolutist and dialectical approach is clearly evident here. "We know," he says earlier in the same piece "that the negative is present in accomplishment of the work of man."

[TO BE CONTINUED]

NARAYANA GURU PUBLICATIONS

WE get many inquiries for books on Narayana Guru. Nataraja Guru's big work **The Word of the Guru** is out of stock. There are still a few copies available of John Spiers' little booklet **A Warrior Rishi** (50 nP. post free). The Malayalam version **Vira Maharshi** (50 nP. post free) is also available. A Tamil version will be published soon by Mr. K. Dharmadas, Head of the S. E. Asia Gurukula, 16, Smith Road, Singapore-27. He is also publishing as a Birthday Souvenir, a collection of **Narayana Guru's Verses** in English translation (price will be about Rs. 2/-). Orders for all these may be placed with **VALUES**, Kaggalipura P.O., Bangalore District South.

BHAGAVAD GITA

Printing on Nataraja Guru's great commentary on **The Bhagavad Gita** goes on. We hope so announce publication date soon. Orders for this work (each copy about Rs. 30/- postage extra) may be sent to **VALUES** Office.

Atmopadesha-Satakam

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

BY NARAYANA GURU.

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

(Continued from last month)

Narayana Guru (1854-1928) was a Guru of humanity who revalued the spirituality of India. Here in one of his major works, his disciple reveals the depths of his teaching, bringing together the philosophies of Asia and Europe

35

Like the dawn all together of ten thousand
solar orbs

Wisdom's function comes : Such, verily
is that which

Tears asunder this wisdom-hiding, transient
Maya-darkness here,

And as the primal Sun prevails !

AFTER pointing out in the immediately preceding verses that reality and knowledge are not distinct, and that the content of half-a-second is sufficient to imply all the manifested universe, the Guru here makes a more finalized statement about the way in which wisdom comes to the aspirant for self-knowledge. Illumination as understood in the contemplative context is not one that takes place slowly and gradually as in the evolutionary picture or as with the growth of a plant. Within the relativistic context there might be accumulation of information about things or events which in time might mature to make the person concerned more and more worldly-wise ; but the wisdom that has to do with the Absolute asserts itself in quite another fashion. It is not a slow evolutionary process but an overwhelming event in one's life.

It is true that there are references elsewhere in wisdom writings to the long number of years of discipline in the form of meditation or study that should precede the attainment or the goal of education or spiritual discipline. The Gita refers

to the many births that should pass even for a wise man to attain to the Absolute, (VII, 19). In the context of education with a Guru in Ancient India, twelve years, or even multiples thereof, are said to be normal periods for finishing one's studies. Here it is not a question of the time required but of the qualitative content of the wisdom, when it comes, if at all.

Contemplative wisdom is different from ordinary accumulation of information about events, things, or matters. It is something wholesale of an all-or-nothing character. This difference is due to the global totality of the subject-matter of such wisdom which is no other than the Absolute. Wisdom that refers to the Absolute has to be itself of an absolute quality.

There is moreover to be noted the word *vrutti* (functioning) which qualifies the kind of wisdom which the Guru has in mind here. There is static wisdom as also dynamic wisdom. The latter is the resultant of the meeting of the positive and the negative aspects. When the positive and the negative aspects of wisdom meet, it is the central radiance of the neutrality that we refer to as wisdom. This subtle mechanism, as in the case of the electric arc lamp, where positive and negative electricity meet, to make the brilliant light, is referred to elsewhere in the writings of the Guru, more clearly. In his composition called *Advaita Dipika* (The Lamp of Non-Dual Wisdom) verse 4 translated, reads as follows :

In wisdom that is dynamic, there is no universe
Nor is there any seed thereof as nescience. When light
comes there is
No more darkness near it; but again as soon as the wick
Is left, the light goes out and darkness comes!

In verse 17 above of the same composition, the more complete psycho-physical picture with the role of the wick, as the basis of wisdom-functioning (or dynamism) has been once touched upon. The various references to the structure of the Self have to be put together by the intelligent student to yield a complete picture of the living Self as finally to be understood in the context of the wisdom of the Absolute.

Science and nescience are two aspects of the dynamism of wisdom ; one that may be considered positive in character and the other that is negative. Between these aspects there is an interaction that, when dynamic, tends to dispel the surrounding darkness, and when static, brings more darkness round it, resulting in the emergence of the phenomenal universe. The phenomenal universe belongs to the world of transcience, while the dynamic reveals the light of the Absolute which is eternal

and changeless. The technical name in Vedanta for this alternating process, in which the plus and minus sides alternate to make for a phenomenal world of doubtful status in reality, and which is filled with the plurality of multifarious entities, in ever changing flux of becoming, is *Maya*, and results from the dual aspects coming together without the fullest measure of dynamism. Degrees of doubt and error giving rise to relativistic phases of appearances result from the same *Maya* principle understood in this manner. *Maya* is the basis of all possible philosophical errors, whether physical or metaphysical. When the full dynamism of absolutist wisdom prevails the brilliance of the illumination suffices to efface all the relativistic vestiges in consciousness, leaving the pure consciousness to prevail over all appearances which are false. The vision of the Absolute is here compared to the primal Sun which for ever reigns dispelling the relativistic darkness.

36

The powers of wisdom are many ; all of them
under two divisions

The "*same*" and the "*other*" could conclusively
be brought ;

Merging into that form which makes
for "*other-sameness*"

To clarity of vision one should awake.

BEGINNING with this verse and ending with verse 42 (inclusive) we have a very valuable analysis of the structure of consciousness with two main axes of reference which are classified under the taxomic nomenclature of two symbolic expressions which are the words "*same*" and "*other*".

The clarification of the implication of these broad categories are given in the later verses of this section of seven verses. It is not easy to analyse the events in consciousness and refer them to their normative axes of reference. Such analysis is the result of extreme introspective research and the Guru has given us the result of his meditations here in a very precise and succinct manner which it would be wrong to try to elaborate in any way. All the clarification legitimately necessary is already given by him. If the reader does not still understand the full import of what he says with such crystal-clear precision, it must be because the philosophical problems that the subject-matter presuppose have not had a chance, so far, to arise and assert themselves in his own thinking. Dictionary meanings might be given, but the import might still remain elusive. The reader has been warned in the very first verse of the work that the subject-matter of the composition has to do with higher wisdom and not with everyday knowledge of practical utility.

The present commentator has developed in his writings a frame of reference consistently applicable to many branches of contemplative wisdom, theological, cosmological or psychological. The taxonomic categories of the "same" and the "other" refer to the vertical and the horizontal axes of the frame of reference that has been developed. Even in the Guru's writings this frame of reference is implied in more than one place. In his *Daiva-Dasakam* (ten verses devoted to the topic of God) we find that the Guru equates the depth aspect of the ocean with the Absolute, God or Reality. The surface aspect of the ocean in the fourth verse of that composition is meant to be analogous to the collective and overt aspect of the consciousness of humanity conceived as a unit, while the depth of the ocean is there compared to the Absolute or God. Translated, the verse reads :

Like the sea and the wave, the wind and the depth,
Let us within us see
Ourselves, Maya, Thy Power and Thee Thyself
respectively !

Here there is a tacit plan of reference in which the dimension called depth represents what is of value contemplatively. The individual selves in each member of humanity, thought of collectively, tends to be *quantitative*, and thus with the rival claims of each member, there is divergence instead of unity. Inwardly understood however, the same Self could be conceived unitively and contemplatively as participating *quantitatively* in the unity of the Absolute Self, which is that of God. This same way of analysing consciousness has been consistently kept up in all the writings of the Guru and constitutes his contribution to *advaitic* or non-dual thought, of no small importance. The importance of these aspects of the Absolute reality has been insisted on in the *Bhagavad Gita* which devotes the whole of its XIIIth chapter for the purpose, as significantly stated :

Know Me also as the Knower of the field in all fields,
O Bharata !
Knowledge in respect of the field and the Knower
of the field
According to Me, constitutes (veritable) wisdom
(itself). (v. 2).

The conflict implied between these two is a subtle one which has to be clarified in various contexts, as the problems present themselves. The intersection at right angles between these two aspects of the Self, understood in the absolutist context of total consciousness, will be justified, as and when occasions arise, in the rest of the work. Confirmation will be found in other works, not only of the Guru, but in wisdom literature generally for which the keen student of Self knowledge has to keep vigilant watch, before the whole living picture gets filled in with the clear content of a clarified vision.

In the present verse, after indicating the two categories of the movement or the functioning of higher reasoning or wisdom, the Guru indicates summarily that the goal of the contemplative is not to give primacy to the one or the other of these rival aspects, but to transcend them both through the neutral point of intersection of the two axes of reference, which he names as *anya-samya* (the other-sameness) aspect. By giving primacy to one limb or the other, whether in the vertical or the horizontal, negative or positive aspects of consciousness, one tends to lose clarity, however much the accentuation of one aspect of knowledge might be necessary or laudable in a particular instance. The normal and normative picture of the Self has first to be conceived in its neutrality and harmonious symmetry before other value accents could be added to the basic picture.

37

To subdue even somewhat the obduracy of
the "other"
Is hard indeed without wisdom's limitless
power ;
By such do gain mastery over it and unto
her who is wisdom
The anti-sensuous one. close access attain.

THE structure of consciousness and how it operates are dependent upon certain reciprocities, ambivalent polarities and peculiar modes which are important for the aspirant for spiritual Self-realization to understand fully. Independence and interdependence of tendencies, some of which compensate and some that come into conflict, some compromising the effect while others add up the cumulative effect according to inner laws of neurology or deeper psychology, have all to be taken into account before one could gain final Self-realization. Here the Guru is not concerned with all the details of neurological or psychological phenomena, but only with those basic ones which give us the key to the inner workings of the modes of gaining knowledge or wisdom.

The two aspects of wisdom-functioning known as the "same" and the "other" have between them a subtle organic relationship with a law of inverse proportion implicit between them. If the horizontal tendencies are accentuated the vertical ones suffer, and *vice versa*. Just as pruning one branch would stimulate the growth of another, and electricity and magnetism are interdependent, we have to gain, by intuitive imagination, an idea of the structure and working modes of the process of cultivating wisdom. The "same" which we have renamed here as the "vertical" is pure and unrelated to sense objects. The attractions and repulsions of things do not affect this series of tendencies. The class of tendencies which refer to the sensuous

side of life which we have tried to distinguish as the 'horizontal,' called the "other" in the text, tends to be strengthened at the expense of the former. Within the two categories of tendencies themselves there are polarities reflecting ambivalence so that a certain degree of relativity on the one side is countered by a corresponding degree of its opposite. The "same" or the vertical aspect has to gain an absolute status before it can prevail against the distracting forces of sense interests. Half-hearted efforts at affirming Self-realization can therefore only fail. The "other" itself tends to gain an absolute status with the help of the natural penchant existing in life ordinarily. These subtle mathematical laws hold good also in the domain of the science of the Absolute, to which Self-realization, as understood here, also pertains. Self-realization has to respect the innate methodology, epistemology and axiology of the science of the Absolute if it is to yield any degree of success at all.

The remainder of what is implied in this verse has to be understood by imaginative intuition and not by any metalinguistic analysis. The Guru himself elaborates and defines to the extent that such is possible or necessary in such a matter as this which touches the core of consciousness itself, which eludes by its subtlety all analysis. It has to reveal its truth rather than be described in analytical terms. [TO BE CONTINUED]

NARAYANA GURU AND THE GURUKULA

SEPTEMBER 5 is the Birthday Anniversary of Narayana Guru (1854—1928), the teacher of Nataraja Guru. We do not want to make a cult around this great spiritual genius, but, as Plotinus, the 3rd Century European Guru said about the Festival in honour of the Guru Founder Plato (5th Century B. C.), its only excuse is for a reaffirmation of the TEACHING. It is this teaching which marks the greatness of the man, which adds lustre to his memory, and neither pictures, nor personality worship. We should not ask "Where was he born ? Who were his parents ?" but " What were his ideas ? What did he teach ? "

It is with this spirit in mind that the Narayana Gurukula exists. Wisdom needs the living transmission. Wisdom properly is not like other forms of teaching which can be learnt from textbooks. It requires the fully dedicated absolutist disciple who represents in and through his personality at all levels of values, and through all kinds of experienced occasions, the principles of Guru Wisdom.

It was with such an aim that Nataraja Guru founded with the blessing of Narayana Guru the Narayana Gurukula in 1924. This is the highest type of service to the Guru—an institution dedicated to one and the same Wisdom. The various Gurukulas and centres now established across the world, in USA, in Europe, in India and Singapore, no matter how humble and simple they may be, will thrive to the extent that Wisdom has first place and other things come afterwards.

of money are pointed out proudly as the signs of progressor the triumphs of science or civilization. Crime or cleanliness are criteria for others. The amount of soap used by a nation, when measured, is to some an indication of how civilized it is.

• It is true that these are indicators, but they refer only to skin-deep factors of human life. Like polished shoes or well-dressed hair, they count in a world where outer factors gain primacy oven the inner. Inside factors of civilization may still be a fen of stagnant waters. Standards of human dignity might have touched there its lowest water-mark. The big front that is a mere facade might hide much dirt and shame behind it. Glitter, paint and streamlined polish make for false paradises worse than slums. Killing, sex promiscuity and crime thrive freely in many a so-called civilized city at present.

The question can well be asked now : What is real civilization? The favourable expectation of life or the control of populations are false planks on which some take their stand to answer the straight question. One meets frequently a civilized man in the West who suddenly puts you questions like Is the milk in Indian villages pasteurized? Is their diet balanced with vitamins? Do they have green vegetables with chlorophyl? These questions are expected to have the effect of making the hearer ashamed of his lack of civilization and bend down in moral defeat.

In their self-complacency the questioners often forget that a series of similar questions could be put against what passes for civilization in the West. Most of the questioners speak from hearsay in such matters without knowing what pasteurization is meant for, that certain chlorophyl-producing vegetables like spinach recommended by some doctors, contain poisons too, besides vitamins. The average expectation of life may not be an advantage where means of livelihood in scarce. Longevity without zest in life could be a form of punishment. People can suffer from being too emaciated as also from obesity. All is not so simple as eugenics might put it. The remedy in the long run might be worse than the disease. Civilization has to be measured in terms of what makes a human being have true human dignity. The present measuring-rod of progress or civilization has to be changed.

Killing for Eating Not Worthy of Man : Fellow-feeling and kindness are the correct measures of human dignity. A woman can be beautiful and might resemble a goddess in her demeanour if her beauty and reputation were genuine. If

a woman were to carry a dead animal or a bird in her hand which she was flaying or preparing for food, there could be a drop in our estimation of her beauty, which depends on human dignity.

Chinese people are very civilized by outer standards but to the mind of an Indian, when he finds they eat all sorts of animals, a change necessarily takes place in his attitude. A pig eater is disgusting to a true Mohammedan and a cow-eater to a Hindu. These might be due to long conditionings; the disgust is not perhaps a rational one. Notwithstanding, it is a fact, whatever the reasons, whether just or unjust.

It is true that in warm latitudes it is easier to be a vegetarian than, for example in the case of the Eskimos who are bound to live in snowbound regions. Non-killing is a principle that one can accept and apply in practice to the extent that it is practicable. The urge to refrain from killing for the pleasure of the palate is what counts, to give dignity to humans.

If a man adheres to the vow of non-killing, in spite of difficulties to that extent his dignity may be said to be enhanced in proportion. Like sinning under and without temptation, the virtue involved becomes intensified to the credit of the man who adopts right principles of life.

Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism are the three great religions which have emphasized the non-killing commandment. Christianity and Judaism too have this among their principle commandments. The masses observe this rule in the breach at present, but the principle itself does not suffer degradation because of this. By past conditioning the Siva worshippers are those who will not kill for food. The Tamils of Jaffna in Ceylon and of South India have represented this Saiva attitude for centuries in their collective behaviour patterns. The dialectically revalued Subramanya, who was once worshipped with animal sacrifices, is no longer adored with any bloodthirsty ritualism. To be a Saivite in its best sense is to abstain from animal food. This is the standard desideratum for measuring the civilization of a people as understood in India and especially in South India. From this region the vast spiritual empire of Subramanya and Siva are to this day committed to this principle of non-killing.

India and Greater India as States of Mind: A civilization is a state of mind. It is independent of geographical actualities, but is like a cloud of opinion hanging over the actual earth, constantly exercising an invisible influence on successive generations of a people united spiritually.

If we put a circle or an ellipse with the two epicentres of civilization which we have located, the one near Ujjain in the North and the other near about Sri Rangam in the South of India, and again put a similar circle around the Indian Archipelago with Singapore as its base, so as to include the greater part of South India, Burma and Ceylon included, we have roughly two regions that we could distinguish as the India and the Greater India respectively of the golden periods of the Sanskrit and the Tamil civilizations.

Separated in time and distance, these two mental states still affect vast masses of humanity subconsciously though not consciously. One has a deeper and perhaps achromatic colour, while the other is full of the joy of life, both of the rainbow hues and the lighter greys. Between them we have the whole range of human values comprized which, when properly understood again as belonging to the Absolute, which is the highest of human values, would serve as a basis for a fresh start in human civilization in which humanity could unite, bound by one common bond of solidarity.

South-East Asia cannot be orthodox by insulation, and India can never become characterless or diffuse by winds that waft from every side, to dislodge its ancient heritage of wisdom. This does not mean that other civilizations are not significant. When the vague implications of the state of mind that we have tried to point out with reference to the hoary past of these two expressions of the civilized mind, and when the values that have persisted through long lapse of time are again made effective in regulating human behaviour, civilization understood in terms of one humanity might get a chance to emerge. The Near, the Middle and the Far East must step in to add their deeper note to what might be called the United Civilization for the One World of Tomorrow. The contribution of ancient Tamil thought has to be understood in the same context as that of Samskrit, and both allowed to counterbalance the values that have been thrown up in what is called the modern Western civilization. All notes and shades of colour have to blend to give the Absolute value that is dear to Humanity as a whole.

[END]

[TO BE CONTINUED]

IS YOUR LIFE WITHOUT VALUES ?

It needn't be—six rupees will bring Values to you
every month for one year

(by M.O. to Kaggalipura P.O., Bangalore South)

At lower levels we find this revolt expressed in irrational delinquency, from drunken youngsters stealing cars without reason, to wealthy women stealing nylons from big stores. It is boredom, life made too easy, life without interest. At upper levels we have the existentialist philosophers, such as Sartre with his "nausea" which he feels outside as well as in him; or Beat poets such as Ginsberg whose poem *Howl* means the same. All express an agony of mind and spiritual misery, angered and unrelieved by any values they can find in the well-furnished but cultural desert of Europe and America. Even sex, they say, has lost its kick. We can well believe it, from a cursory reading of their books, philosophical or fictional.

At the horizontal or relativistic level where East and West states of mind show such a cleavage there can be no solution to this problem of civilization. Prof. Tillich recently wrote about the need for a new dimension in religion, but actually a new dimension *all round* is needed. This can only be an absolutist dimension. It must be sought everywhere, and it must be moved into by both these states of mind, from both extremes of relativistic civilization.

We must rise above both these states of *rajas* and *tamas* and the civilizations they represent, the dynamic ones and the static ones. And this too, no matter how pure or *sattvic* they might become. The *sattvic* escape is still at the level of the old dimensions and will ultimately fail. The artificial paradises resultant from the Ike-Khrush-Nehru-Lumumba pattern of democratic-communist-welfare-affluent-techno-efficient state is, as we see from Sweden and the increasing "delinquency" everywhere, of no avail to the anguished human who will ultimately smash its plate-glass picture windows and shiny cars, because he is spiritually or inwardly bored with its lop-sided values. Equally, the negative - inert - self-surrendering - dulled - non-responsive-fast-and-austerity-all-is-sinful - ostrichlike-living-in-the-past-ancestralist - recessive pattern is also an escapism which is not going to satisfy the whole mind, since humans need to attend also to normal physical values. No matter how harsh or crude, how refined or soft any such solutions may be, they are at the level of the old dimensions of thought. We must move away from both these relativistic solutions in a new direction or dimension.

The Absolutist Take-Off: Dragged between the negative-based ancestral inertial forces alternately shrinking or expanding into the closed self-sealed nationalist or tribal compartments and the other, the expansionist compulsions and vulgarities of the brassy advertisement civilization with its standard patterns

of life encroaching octopus-like with a thousand arms everywhere, branding all alike, irrespective of old frontiers or tribal enclaves, with Protean change of company name but with the self-same brand product inside, where is the take-off to a new dimension to be found ?

The answer must take us back to the mind itself, the seat of civilizations. We must see its nature, its faith, its values in terms of the whole or absolutist man.

The Swedes are not delinquents. They are merely unhappy people. The Sartrean or Buddhistic unpleasantness of life can be shut off with drugs, drink or self-enclosure. That is what has happened. For thousands of years introverted Indians have revelled in the mind's antipodean values wholly beyond all but a few Western minds such as the mystics and the poets. The whole history of post-Hegelian philosophy, culminating in the logical positivists, dialectical materialists and empiricists has stopped at its analytical terminus. The present phase of philosophy in Europe is the exploration of a world of existential values outside any intellectual system. It is symptomatic that Kierkegaard wrote a long "Unscientific Postscript." People are not expected to "understand" modern art, no more than anybody can "understand" Indian art. *Being* a god in *bhakti* is something other than just worshipping an image. Beingness is the basis of existentialism.

Man must know himself again. It is here that the old way of turning round the valuating eye of the mind needs to be known as a spiritual-psychological discipline. This is not done as an escape from life, but in order to establish proper relations with the illusive character of the world of absolute outer values as well as to have similar proper relations with the absolute inner values. Although we all normally look outwards (and hence regard people with insight as freaks), there is this way of turning inwards, known as *nivriti marga*.

Sense-openings outgoing did the Self-existent make
So that one sees the outward and not the inner Self ;
But, seeking immortality, some wise man turned
his gaze

With sense-averted eyes, and inwards saw the Self.

So the *Katha Upanishad* (iv. 1). This is the initial discipline regarded as an essential by wise men everywhere — as an absolutist take-off.

Splendour and Glory : However, this is only a means to an end. In India it is all too often made an end in itself. Even Jesus spent only forty days in solitude in the wilderness. The *nivritti marga* is, after all, a *marga*, a way, or method, to discover the non-sensual source of all values, the criterion of

all values, in the Self itself. A *marga* is but a road, and not a terminus. In a composition of 156 verses called *Determination of One's Own Self (Svatmanirupanam)* Sankara says : " For unripe seekers bound to relativism the notion that the world is unreal holds good ; but for bright persons the entire world is the Absolute." (verses 81-82). The world is then seen without preconceived conditioned notions, in its own glory, and the absolutist revaluator can then agree with Traherne, for whom, in his *Centuries of Meditation* :

All appeared new and strange at first, inexpressibly rare and delightful and beautiful...I was entertained by the works of God in their splendour and glory ; I saw all in the peace of Eden...The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped nor ever was sown...The dust and stones of streets were as precious as gold ..And young men were glittering and sparkling angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty.

Extraverted civilization sees only tons of wheat to utilize for sale and profits. Introverted civilization also sees only food. Only the absolutist can see the eternal, the immortal, the glory of the Absolute, and in that way mud to him is as precious as gold. William Blake could "see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower," and it is the same great English seer who, without knowing the *Katha Upanishad* also declared : " If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite, For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' chinks of his cavern."

Instead of escaping by blocking the doors of perception at one end or the other, the Absolutist allows a reciprocal free breeze to blow right through either way. The knot of the heart is broken. The doors are broken. Our whole strange mind needs a great cleansing. Everything must be opened, the conditionings of ages discarded for the rebirth of man as absolutist and the manifestation of an absolutist civilization where *all* values will live.

Only therefore, when Western extraverted man (and his counter-parts everywhere) acknowledge the ocean of values behind the minds' closed doors, behind the material world of values ; and the Eastern introverted man in his turn, (and his mystical, poetical, existentialist counterparts in the rest of the world) recognize the values outside their closed doors in the changing world of nature which is really the cosmic form of the Absolute ; and only when both extremes recognise the common Source of both sets of values in the Self of man, shall we have the real meeting of East and West, and that type of civilization, or that state of mind which is worthy of being called final or absolutist.

To emphasize only one end of the full human spectrum of values is sure to bring about unhappy states of mind and distorted civilizations.

Although fundamentally the absolutist has personally no need for any of these worlds of civilization, he can certainly say which values are best or happiness-productive for a given situation. Today we have a world situation and therefore require a world solution. The absolutist too need not be such a *rara avis* in a more balanced or unitive human civilization. At the moment the absolutist is misunderstood in both Western and Eastern civilizations, and even India itself never was able to do him full justice. The course of history would have been perhaps far different if the Absolutists in India had ever been given a chance. But negative societies give opportunities for the rule of a few priests and dictators, while wise men are abandoned and neglected.

Is there better hope today? Surely the intelligence that can send rockets to the moon is capable of understanding simpler human needs? Surely it is possible to solve the mental problem posed by UNESCO. Some of us can at least ask these questions, and inquire whether or not humanity can raise a civilization in which all values would have their fulfilment. [END]

TO VALUES' READERS

Values represents communications; and these were greatly disturbed last month, due to the general postal workers' strike in India. In consequence we need whatever assistance is possible from all our supporters. We have intimated the amounts due from subscribers, and again here kindly request them to remit their subscriptions.

It would also be of help to our aims for all who support *Values*, to promote reader interest by showing our magazine to friends or by requesting us to send specimen copies, which we shall willingly do, free of cost.

Our thanks to one and all who have sustained us during the last five years.

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