



values

VOL. XII NO. 7

APRIL 1967

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

Published monthly for the Gurukula Publishing House.
Kaggalipura P. O., Bangalore South, India.
Edited by John Spiers, sst; Editor: Fred Haas
Printed by T.R. Chetty, at Sri K. P. P. Press, Old Poor
House Road, Bangalore-I, India.

Y E A R L Y R A T E S

India: Rs. 10/-; three years: Rs. 25/-; Life Subscrip-
tion: Rs. 100/- Rest of Asia: 10sh; America: \$ 4
Europe and elsewhere: 18 Sh. Sterling or its equivalent

A D V E R T I S E M E N T R A T E S

Full Page	Single Insertion	Yearly 12 Issues
COVER (Outside Back)	Rs. 250/-	Rs. 2,500/-
COVER (Inside Back)	Rs. 150/-	Rs. 1,200/-
BODY (Inner Pages)	Rs. 100/-	Rs. 1000/-

V A L U E S A D V E R T I S E M E N T O F F I C E S

MADRAS: Gina, Chromepet, Phone: 89253

BANGALORE: Kaggalipura, Bangalore South.

THE ABSOLUTIST WAY

READERS (and visitors) often ask me about the absolutist way of life. Codes for social behaviour have first to be distinguished from the disciplined way of a person seeking self-knowledge. Then it is taken for granted that there is wisdom, and that there are those who are wise and who can teach others, that is, the Gurus.

No better guide to such an absolutist way can be found than in the *Bhagavad Gita* (xvi. 1-3), where the distinguishing qualities of such a seeker are listed, as follows :

"Fearlessness, transparency to truth, proper affiliation to unitive wisdom, attitude of generous sharing, self-restraint and sacrifice, private perusal of wisdom texts, discipline and rectitude, non-hurting, truthfulness, non-anger, relinquishment, calmness, self-integrity, compassion to beings, non-interest in sense-values, gentleness, modesty, non-fickleness, alertness, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, absence of malice, absence of excessive respectability—these make up the divine values of anyone born for them."

A whole volume could be written about this long list. Take the very first, "fearlessness." Where the social man bends before the cheapest politician, the absolutist dares to hold on to the truth. Or take "proper affiliation to unitive wisdom." This means following wholeheartedly the way of the Absolute or best of all, the advice of a wise man. In the *Gita* these words are the voice of the Guru Krishna the absolutist.

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And then there is "private perusal of wisdom texts" Many would-be seekers expect others to do their research and study for them. This is like a student getting others to do his homework. Allied to this is regular discipline. All this encourages many of the other qualities listed such as "calmness" and "kindness," "gentleness" and "modesty" about one's learning and so forth.

The non-social character of this way of life is marked by the phrase "*na atimaanitaa*" or "absence of excessive respectability." One can be excessive on the side of good, being too good or goody-goody, which leads to a very common sort of pious behaviour which tinges of a kind of holy hypocrisy. One can be good without allowing oneself to be cheated and exploited. Truth must come before the conventions.

The Great Way of the perennial philosophy exists, stated in many ways in the *Gita* and other works. Those who seek it must go wholeheartedly into the subject with the "fortitude" and "alertness" mentioned in this list. This is the Way whose end is supreme enlightenment, freedom and happiness.

[END]

GURUKULA NEWS

AFTER the birthday celebrations held on Feb. 19 at the Somanhalli Retreat 20 miles south of Bangalore Nataraja Guru and party went to Erode where another celebration took place. At the end of February the Guru returned to Fernhill. In mid-March he went to Ezhumalai, to see about construction work on the recently purchased land on this island north of Cannanore. After visits to the Gurukula at Cheruvatur, and a lecture engagement at Calicut, the Guru went on to the Wynaad, where he spoke at the Subramania Temple on the Guru Narayana Giri above Woodbriar Estate, at the annual festival on March 26. From there he again visited Erode.

Nityachaitanya Yati has been back at Delhi since early February, and is preparing for the All-India Seminar on Psychic and Spiritual Research to be held in May.

Dr Marc Gevaert, with Messrs Walter de Buck, Jan Bruitsaert, and Freddie van der Borcht, are now back in Belgium after their overland car trip to India.

THE ETRUSCAN WORLD

By D. H. LAWRENCE

In his autobiography this month, (see page 205) Nataraja Guru makes a passing reference to the Etruscans. Here the greatest intuitionist poet-essayist of the century with his usual vigour describes this pre-Roman people who were hylozoic; for them everything was alive, with a religion which was very close to the Shiva faith of India.—*Editor.*

THE ETRUSCANS, as everyone knows, were the people who occupied the middle of Italy in early Roman days, and whom the Romans, in their usual neighbourly fashion, wiped out entirely in order to make room for Rome with a very big R. They couldn't have wiped them all out, there were too many of them. But They did wipe out the Etruscan existence as a nation and a people. However, this seems to be the inevitable result of expansion with a big E, which is the sole *raison d'être* of people like the Romans.

Myself, the first time I consciously saw Etruscan things, in the museum at Perugia, I was instinctively attracted to them. And it seems to be that way. Either there there is instant sympathy, or instant contempt and indifference. Most people despise everything B. C. that isn't Greek, for the good reason that it ought to be Greek if it isn't. So Etruscan things are put down as a feeble Graeco-Roman imitation. And a great scientific historian like Mommsen hardly allows that the Etruscans existed at all. Their existence was anti-pathetic to him. The Prussian in him was enthralled by the Prussian in the all-conquering Romans. So being a great scientific historian, he almost denies the very existence of the Etruscan people. He didn't like the idea of them. That was enough for a great scientific historian.

Besides, the Etruscans were vicious. We know it, because their enemies and exterminators said so. Just as we knew the unspeakable depths of *our* enemies in the last war. Who isn't vicious to his enemy?

However, those pure, clean-living, sweet-souled Romans, who smashed nation after nation and crushed the free soul in people after people, and were ruled by Messalina and Heliogabalus and such-like snowdrops, they said the Etruscans were vicious. So *basta! Quand le maitre parle, tout le monde se tait.* The only vicious people on the face of the earth presumably. You

and I, dear reader, we are two unsullied snowflakes, aren't we? We have every right to judge.

Myself, however, if the Etruscans were vicious, I'm glad they were. To the Puritan all things are impure, as somebody says. And those naughty neighbours of the Romans at least escaped being Puritans.

* * *

Lingam and Yoni: B., who has just come back from India, is so surprised to see the phallic stones by the doors of many tombs. Why, it's like the Shivalingam at Benares! It's exactly like the lingam stones in the Shiva caves and the Shiva temples!

And that is another curious thing. One can live one's life, and read all the books about India or Etruria, and never read a single word about the thing that impresses one in the very first five minutes, in Benares or in an Etruscan necropolis; that is, the phallic symbol. Here it is, in stone, unmistakable, and everywhere, around these tombs. Here it is, big and little, standing by the doors, or inserted, quite small, into the rock: the phallic stone! Perhaps some tumuli had a great phallic column on the summit, some perhaps by the door. There are still small phallic stones, only seven or eight inches long, inserted in the rock outside the doors: they always seem to have been outside. And these small lingams look as if they were part of the rock. But no, B. lifts one out. It is cut, and is fitted into a socket previously cemented in. B. puts the phallic stone back into its socket, where it was placed, probably five or six hundred years before Christ was born.

The big phallic stones that, it is said, probably stood on top of the tumuli, are sometimes carved very beautifully, sometimes with inscriptions.

By the doorway of some tombs there is a carved stone house, or a stone imitation chest with sloping lids like the two sides of the roof of an oblong house. The guide-boy mutters that every woman's tomb had one of these stone houses or chests over it—over the doorway, he says—and every man's tomb had one of the phallic stones, or lingams. But since the great tombs were family tombs, perhaps they had both.

The stone house, as the boy calls it, suggests the Noah's Ark without the boat part: the Noah's Ark box we had as children, full of animals. And that is what it is, the Ark, the *arx*, the womb. The womb of all the world, that brought forth all the creatures. The womb, the *arx*, where life retreats in the last refuge. The womb, the ark of the covenant, in which lies the mystery of eternal life, the manna and the mysteries. There it is, standing displayed outside the doorway of Etruscan tombs at Cerveteri.

And perhaps in the insistence on these two symbols, in the Etruscan world, we can see the reason for the utter destruction and annihilation of the Etruscan consciousness. The new world wanted to rid itself of these fatal, dominant symbols of the old world, the old physical world. The Etruscan consciousness was rooted quite blithely in these symbols, the phallus and the arx. So the whole consciousness, the whole Etruscan pulse and rhythm, must be wiped out.

Now we see again, under the blue heavens where the larks are singing in the hot April sky, why the Romans called the Etruscans vicious. Even in their palmy days the Romans were not exactly saints. But they thought they ought to be. They hated the phallus and the arx, because they wanted empire and dominion and, above all, riches: social gain. You cannot dance gaily to the double flute and at the same time conquer nations or rake in large sums of money. *Delendo est Cartago*. To the greedy man, everybody that is in the way of his greed is vice incarnate.

Vitelleschi Museum: In Tarquinia (Corneto). Across the space from the cafe is the Palazzo Vitelleschi, a charming building now a national museum.—so the marble slab says.

The museum is exceedingly interesting and delightful to anyone who is even a bit aware of the Etruscans.

It is useless to look in Etruscan things for 'uplift.' If you want uplift, go to the Greek and the Gothic. If you want mass, go to the Roman. But if you love the odd spontaneous forms that are never to be standardized, go to the Etruscans. In the fascinating little Palazzo Vitelleschi one could spend many an hour, but for the fact that the very fullness of museums makes one rush through them.

There is a haunting quality in the Etruscan representations. These leopards with their long tongues hanging out: those flowing hippocampi; those cringing spotted deer, struck in flank and neck; they get into the imagination, and will not go out. And we see the wavy edge of the sea, the dolphins curving over, the diver going down clean, the little man climbing up the rock after him so eagerly. Then the men with beards who recline on the banqueting chairs: how they hold up the mysterious egg! And the women with the conical head-dress, how strangely they lean forward, with caresses we no longer know! The naked slaves joyfully stoop to the wine-jars. Their nakedness is its own clothing, more easy than drapery. The curves of their limbs show pure pleasure that goes deeper still in the limbs of the dancers, in the big, long hands thrown out and dancing to the very ends of the fingers, a dance that surges from within, like a current in the sea. It is as if the current of some strong different life swept through them, different from our shallow current today: as if they drew their vitality from different depths that we are denied.

Yet in a few centuries they lost their vitality. The Romans took the life out of them. It seems as if the power of resistance to life, self-assertion and overbearing, such as the Romans knew : a power which must needs be moral, or carry morality with it, as a cloak for its inner ugliness : would always succeed in destroying the natural flowering of life. And yet there still are a few wild flowers and creatures.

The Living Cosmos : The natural flowering of life ! It is not so easy for human beings as it sounds. Behind all the Etruscan liveliness was a religion of life, which the chief men were seriously responsible for. Behind all the dancing was a vision, and even a science of life, a conception of the universe and man's place in the universe which made men live to the depth of their capacity.

To the Etruscan all was alive ; the whole universe lived : and the business of man was himself to live amid it all. He had to draw life into himself, out of the wandering huge vitalities of the world. The cosmos was alive, like a vast creature. The whole thing breathed and stirred. Evaporation went up like breath from the nostrils of a whale, steaming up. The sky received it in its blue bosom, breathed it in and pondered on it and transmuted it, before breathing it out again. Inside the earth were fires like the heat in the hot red liver of a beast. Out of the fissures of the earth came breaths of other breathing, vapours direct from the living physical underearth, exhalations carrying inspiration. The whole thing was alive, and had a great soul, or *anima* : and in spite of one great soul, there were myriad roving lesser souls : every man, every creature and tree and lake and mountain and stream, was animate, had its own peculiar consciousness. And has it today.

The cosmos was one, and its *anima* was one ; but it was made up of creatures. And the greatest creature was earth, with its soul of inner fire. The sun was only a reflection, or off-throw, or brilliant handful, of the great inner fire. But in juxtaposition to earth lay the sea, the waters that moved and pondered and held a deep soul of their own. Earth and waters lay side by side, together, and utterly different.

So it was. The universe, which was a single aliveness with a single soul, instantly changed, the moment you thought of it, and became a dual creature with two souls, fiery and watery, for ever mingling and rushing apart, and held by the great aliveness of the universe in an ultimate equilibrium. But they rushed together and they rushed apart, and immediately they became myriad : volcanoes and seas, then streams and mountains, trees, creatures, men. And everything was dual, or contained its own duality, for ever mingling and rushing apart.

[END]

SPIRITUAL TYPES

By FRED HAAS

JUST as in psychology there are personality types, so, too, in spirituality. If only one fixed type of personality or spirituality is accepted then all other types are left out.

In the final chapter of Narayana Guru's *Darsana Mala* (A Garland of Visions), called *Nirvana Darsana* (Vision of Nirvana), there are various types of humans who seek liberation. It is interesting to note that the Guru does not give a precise definition to nirvana. Instead he says in the opening verse that it is basically of two kinds:

Nirvana is of two kinds :

What is pure and what is impure.

What is without incipient memory factors (*vasanas*), that is the pure ;

Likewise, what is qualified by incipient memory factors, is the impure.¹

In the Guru's own *didhiti* or gloss² he gives many synonymous terms for nirvana. They are *nirvritti* (escape), *nirvraiti* (release or absence of functioning), *nivritti* (withdrawal), *parama-gati* (ultimate goal), *paramapadam* (ultimate state), *moksha* (liberation), *kaivalyam* (aloneness), *mukti* (liberation), *amritam* (immortality), *apavargam* (salvation), *nishsreya* (ultimate state), *sreya* (spiritual progress), *santi* (peace), *brahmabhuyam* (attaining the Absolute), *brahmatvam* (absoluteness), *brahmasayujyam* (union with the Absolute), *brahmanirvana* (absorption in the Absolute), and *paripurnat* (perfection). Narayana Guru also says that *jivanmukti* (release while yet alive) also refers to the state of nirvana.

Without giving nirvana any specific definition, the Guru has made it the central unifying or linking element of all spiritual seekers. Nirvana is usually associated with Buddhism, yet Sankara has written verses on nirvana (*Nirvanashadakam*), and the *Bhagavad Gita* (VI. 15) also refers to it. *Kaivalya* or spiritual aloneness which is associated with Patanjali Yoga is also used by Narayana Guru as a synonymous term.

In the second verse the Guru says the pure (*suddham*) is of two kinds which are pure and extra-pure. And the impure (*asuddham*) is also two kinds which are pure-impure and impure-impure. In the *didhiti* to this verse we read, "Pure nirvana

1 translated from the Sanskrit by Nataraja Guru.

2 translated from the Malayalam by Nataraja Guru.

belongs to liberated men while still alive, and impure nirvana belongs to those who desire liberation." The reason for this distinction the Guru says is because of the superiority and inferiority of liberated men in life (*jīvanmuktas*). Each type of spiritual seeker is given a corresponding type of nirvana according to what he thinks is necessary for liberation and happiness. Since nirvana is a state of consciousness there will be different types of people wishing to experience it, and what they experience and value must be graded.

In verse three the extra-pure (*atisuddham*) is divided into three kinds: the elect, the more elect and the most elect. This means that people who have attained liberation while still alive can be classified under four types. In the *didhiti* to this verse we read the following interesting description of the four types: "The pure abides in the knower of the Absolute; the positively pure abides in the elect; the comparatively pure abides in the more elect; and the superlatively pure abides in the most elect." Here we have four different grades of nirvana beginning with the pure and ending with the superlatively pure. As the Guru later on points out it is the most elect grade that is the highest type of purity and the most difficult to attain.

In the fourth verse the Guru says the pure-impure is without passion (*rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*), while the impure-impure has these nature modalities. He goes on to say that the pure-impure is the one who desires liberation (*mumukshau*) and the impure-impure is the one who desires psychic powers (*siddhis*). Regarding the pure-impure type, we read the following.

"By the term *mumukshau* as stated above, one has to think of a type of person whose passionate and inert tendencies have been abolished and what remains is the bright and intelligent tendency (i. e., *sattva-guna*) which alone is characterized by the desire for liberation. Although such a person is still under the sway of some sort of desire, however pure, and because his attainment is not yet fully perfect, it is not wrong to class it under pure-impure nirvana."

The Guru explains this by saying that the impurity comes from desire and the purity from the goal or value which is liberation. As for the impure-impure type, the Guru refers to Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras* (III. 36) where *siddhis* are dismissed very briefly:

"These (psychic attainments) are obstacles to *samādhi*. Psychic attainments (cause) excitement."

The *Yoga Vasishtha* is also referred to and the Guru points out that many other texts have also discountenanced *siddhis*. Since they are impure and the person wanting them has the modalities of *rajas* and *tamas* predominating, which are also impure, the classification must be impure-impure.

(Continued on page 220)

BRUNO

By **JOHN SPIERS**

GIORDANO BRUNO was an absolute philosopher standing far and away beyond Christianity. Even when they burned him at the stake in Rome on the 17th February 1600, Bruno defeated the Roman Catholic Church. It was a fiery victory for this indomitable man. For he never surrendered, never compromised, never recanted, as so many of the Mystics, philosophers and scientists like Galileo did.

A moment before the faggots were set ablaze, when a priest of the Inquisition held up a cross before the victim, Bruno turned aside with disgust.

He was too clever at exposing the Church Establishment. And not only the Roman Church, but the others, the Lutherans and Calvinists as well. If he had been an artist he would have been like Daumier, Goya, Hogarth or Rowlandson. At the same time he must have had enormous charm for he was readily admitted into the powerful, rich, intellectual circles of his time. This was quite apart from being one of the greatest scholars and writers of Europe, and besides all that, he was also, as is evident from his works, a deep contemplative of pre-Socratic insight.

He is claimed by the historians of modern empirical science as their forerunner. This is absurd. It is true he was a scientist, but hardly of their sort! Never do they quote anything he wrote or said, even although Bruno's many works are there. It is, significant in its own way, that his works have never been published except in bits and pieces, in any other language than Latin, Italian and German. For this essay I have had to draw upon the meagre fragments available in the histories of philosophy which provide but brief accounts. But enough is there for my purposes.

Bruno was born at Nola near Naples in 1548; born into a dangerous, perilous world, for one so sharp and bright.

Wanderer in a Hostile Europe: When he was fifteen he was placed in a Dominican college in Naples. Here his troubles began. For this order's founder had created the Inquisition, and Bruno had the audacity to criticize the dogmas of Transubstantiation (that the bread and wine of the Mass became the actual

body and blood of Christ) and the Immaculate Conception (that Christ was born without physical intercourse).

Bruno was thrown out as an impious heretic. From that time on he was a homeless wanderer from city to city and land to land, in a thoroughly hostile Europe, with cold and hot wars of religion or politics or both going on internally and on many frontiers. It was an age of absolute monarchs, of two inquisitions, one Catholic, centred in Rome, the other Protestant, centred in Geneva.

In this stormy sixteenth century, about one million people, entire persecuted populations, were on the move, looking for refuge from these tyrannies and holy wars. Five hundred thousand Moors and Jews were exiled from Spain alone. The Huguenots in Paris were slaughtered by order of Henry III, on St. Bartholomew's Night on August 24, 1572. Philip II of Spain, whose territory included the Netherlands, in connivance with the Pope, (Saint I) Pius V, ordered the death of the whole three million Protestant population of Hollanders by a decree under the Inquisition, dated February 15, 1568 and carried out by the Duke of Alba with an army of ten thousand!

Of course this was the last straw, and while thousands were being slaughtered in the name of gentle Jesus, the Dutch revolted and set up a Republic.

To appreciate the courage of Bruno, this background data is necessary. The Catholic Church was making its last stand as a world power, trying to crush revolts on all fronts. What a time for an outspoken truth-lover and critic of all dogmas! Where could he go with safety?

He bounced from one hotbed of fanaticism to another, never at ease. First he got out of Italy and went to Geneva in 1579, but here the horrible doctrines of John Calvin (1509-1564) who was born there, had taken root and flourished. It was just another terror for body and soul. Who in his right mind could tolerate Calvin's merciless dogma of original sin and predestination? Everybody was a born sinner, hell was everlasting for all except the Calvinist elect, the pure lily-white believers. Man was likened to a filthy spider held by the hand of God over the flames!

So Geneva was no place for this searcher for truth, this scholar with his deep knowledge of the Greek philosophers, who preferred Pythagoras and Parmenides and Zeno to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and who had suffered enough from the categories, the classifications, the logic-chopping, the syllogisms, the catechisms and dogmas and the whole scholastic schooling of the Catholic educational system.

1 This is no romancing or exaggeration. Details are given on pp. 422-423 of Vol XIII of *The Historian's History of the World*, (The Encyclopedia Britannica Co., New York).

On to Paris and London : Once again, then, Bruno was on the roads, to Lyons, Toulouse and Montpellier, and finally reaching Paris in 1581, when he was thirty-three. Here he was offered a chair of philosophy, provided he would receive the Mass. The old story. He refused to conform. He was permitted, however, to lecture, basing his talks on the philosophy of Raimon Lull.

This Spanish philosopher had invented the *Ars Magna*, "The Great Art" and a mechanical device by which all concepts were graded on concentric rings, each properly related to the others and which could be shifted about, solving problems in a unified way. It was claimed that Archimedes had also invented a similar instrument of thought, a *memoria technica*. This visible mechanism giving evidence of unity, being easy to understand, was according to Lull and his spokesman, Bruno, the answer to the anti-metaphysical wranglings of the Aristotelian rhetoricians and grammarians such as the currently popular Pierre de la Ramee.

At Paris, Bruno had been admitted into the free atmosphere of the aristocratic circles, where alone in this dreadful age, it was possible to speak openly without fear of reprisals, among those who were too influential to be touched by the Inquisition. In this group, acquainted with the discoveries of the Polish astronomer Copernicus (1473-1543), and of the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan and others, (which destroyed geocentric and anthropocentric Christian beliefs), and therefore having a broad view of life, acquainted also with the thoughts of the Dutch scholar Erasmus (1467-1536), Bruno found a milieu wherein he had some respite from his homelessness.

For a while at least, he could study and write without fear of the Inquisition hammering on his door. It was under the protection of his friend, the French ambassador, Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de Mauvassiere, that he passed over to England in 1583. He was now thirty-five years of age.

Bruno remained in England for over two years, still in the retinue of members of high society. He made the friendship of the young Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), a typical poet-soldier representative of the Elizabethan age. He was considered the model of the chivalrous courtier, noted for his qualities of nobility and generosity. Fulke Greville (1554-1628) was another highly placed poet and friend to Bruno. Their madrigal-style poetry is in most anthologies.

But as for London and the English masses! London was probably the filthiest city in Europe. No wonder not so long after, it got first the Great Plague and then the cleansing Great Fire! The Nolan (as Bruno described himself) narrates humorously in his book *La Cena delle Ceneri* (Ash Wednesday Supper-talk) how he and two companions set out one evening to Fulke

Greville's house, where Bruno was to deliver a lecture on the Copernican theory. He got sunk, he says "in the ooze so deep that he could not pull out his legs." So how the three "pushed on through a sea of slime", with people jeering at them, "for England," he writes, "can boast of a lower populace which in disrespect, incivility, coarseness, boorishness and sheer savagery of nature yields to none in the world."

On the other hand, he had the very highest praise for Queen Elizabeth. But this was dangerous for Elizabeth had been damned by Pope Pius V, who, in a Bull had called upon France and Spain to remove her. Of course we know the result of this was the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the downfall of Spain, and the beginning of the British Empire.

The Productive Period: In this same work, Bruno was indiscreet enough to satirize very thinly, the Pope and all his minions, and this was neither forgotten nor forgiven by the Church when they finally got him.

Bruno found Oxford no better than Geneva and Paris. It was full of left-over scholastic fudge and pedantry. There was a statute in force that "Masters and Bachelors who did not follow Aristotle faithfully were liable to a fine of five shillings for every point of divergence, and for every fault committed against the logic of the Organon."

But under Elizabeth there was at least tolerance for heterodox views; since she was herself a mighty scholar, very broad-minded and knew many languages. And so, in spite of these fantastic hangover provisions, the cobwebs of the Middle Ages, Bruno managed to give several lectures at Oxford, as well as participate in debates, at which he reported having an easy, victory.

This period was the start of Bruno's literary production. Books were becoming popular and editions of ten thousand being printed in every city in Europe. Besides the work quoted above, which was mainly an exposition of the Copernican universe, Bruno published two works, *Of Cause, Origin and One* and *Of the Infinity of the Universe and of the Worlds*. In 1585 he had printed *Heroic Exaltations* and *The Hidden Science of Pegasus the Winged Horse*, and the dialogue *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*².

This last work was a direct attack on all forms of anthropomorphic religion. The Establishment got it hard and strong from Bruno. He wrote that men are to be judged by their deeds

2 quoted in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*

3 We give the English titles. The original titles are either in Latin or Italian.

(Continued on page 214)

9. SUMMER DREAMS IN ITALY

By NATARAJA GURU

I HAD known Italy before and had lived near Venice and in Rome and enjoyed the beauty of the Bay of Naples. I had several times travelled the length of the leg-shaped peninsula and spent several months too, in Syracuse in Sicily.

Italians loved their country in a way slightly different from what the French or the English temperament permitted. One thought naturally in terms of poetry and lisped words inspired by the Muses more naturally here.

The prospect of passing through Florence interested me much while I waited in the public garden of Nice, as Jean Convent and Herman van Hecke were buying ripe peaches for our lunch. It took one full day for the grand Italian consulate officials to get the consul to sign a visa to cross the French-Italian frontier.

At last we picked up the passport after queuing for it. I even suspected that the officials enjoyed the suspense and subtle cruelty involved in obstructing simple movements on God's good earth.

Just at the time we were passing Nice the papers had headlines about what they called "the menace of nudists." But we were soon driving fast again through the French and Italian rivieras with the summer craze for beach life lingering on still with its unabated fever. We passed through many interesting Italian towns and stopped at midday for a wayside river bath which was a joy in the summer heat. The train to Rome passed near the river on whose sand banks we sat picnicking soon after, and I remembered how I had passed by that same train about thirty-five years ago.

At dusk we found a place to sleep high up, commanding a view of the Gulf of Genoa and in the early morning we continued and soon entered the Florentine country. We stopped for a very short period of sightseeing in Florence itself in the early afternoon. The size of the monuments and buildings impressed me again and made me think of a culture that imposed such an influence on European civilization shaping its art, politics and religion.

Half-Pagan Umbria: We passed through the regions of Umbria and, expert driver as he is, Jean could not avoid a small accident at the market place of Perugia. This was a dream

city built on a spacious hilltop with the expanse of the clear green lake Trasimeno nearby, with well-fed cattle grazing on the slopes where the undulating land was covered with fruit-laden orchards and olive groves.

No wonder St. Augustine spoke of a City of God and the Greeks of an Acropolis. The Bible has its idiom of a house built on a rock—all of which seem natural in this Umbrian countryside.

Dante was associated with this area in his day and the monasteries of St. Francis of Assisi found in the abundance of the place a natural self-sufficiency, especially for the numerous communities of nuns who must have lived happily judging by the numerous remains of convents and cloisters even today.

No wonder this land was the cradle for romanized Christianity. Its abundance favoured that Paganism on which what were called the Christian ways had to be constantly enforced, and even now one can hardly say whether the forces of Paganism or true Christianity gained supremacy in this land of good food and wine in plenty. At least I had the impression that the nuns that I saw here and there even now looked very normal and happy and the priests also tended to be on the side of the well-fed specimens. It showed how Paganism can still subtly defeat the demands of true Christianity.

On the Road to Rome: All roads lead to Rome—which was not built in a day. Rome still has the Appian Way and the road on which I was moving at the moment was a highway traversing the Etruscan countryside. The Papacy and Roman Christianity were products of the way of life and thought of these ancient people of the city of the dead about which I knew only vaguely, although I visited tombs three or four decades ago.¹ My education about them was still largely incomplete, and I wish to make amends for it one day. My interest was in the actual beauty of the countryside which presented itself stage by stage as we drove away from the lakeside into regions where St. Francis lived with his nun disciples drawn from the cream of the aristocratic life of that region of whom St. Clara was the head. St. Francis' own religion resembled that of the Aryans in its love of the Sun, so dear to Julian the "Apostate".²

The dividing line between Paganism and Christianity was very thin with St. Francis, but the Pope of his days evidently saw no objection to that particular form of Pantheism that St. Francis represented. This must have been because, as I have

1. For an account of the Etruscans, see "Etruscans and Dolphins" in *VALUES* for Jan. 1966.
2. The life and writings of the Emperor Julian, Europe's last Pagan ruler, at least as far as the Mediterranean is concerned, were covered in two articles, "Julian the Royal Pagan" and "Oration to King Helios" in *VALUES* for Nov. and Dec. 1965.

just said, the Papacy itself was a product and not the source of the thought that Umbria represented in its long history.³

My later talks with the Curate of Labro have confirmed the truth of this statement, because the history of Count Vitelleschi and the attitude of the Labro priest sufficiently evidenced superiority over the authority and the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

Even the modern mind has not missed appreciating the beauty of the city of Perugia, where an international university supported by American funds brings students, both men and women, from far corners of the world. No better location for such an international centre could be thought of anywhere else in Europe.

Arcadian Plenty: By now we had travelled far enough towards Rome and needed to look out for signboards where the roads bifurcated to Piediluc from Terni. The winding roads now went through valleys and hillsides and we could not mistake the beautiful lakeside city of Piediluco which Madame Octavia Vercruysse had already described as within easy view of her own hilltop ancestral castle of the Vitelleschi which dominated the village of Labro clinging on its slopes.

The rays of the setting sun lit up the whole castle-topped hill as we were trying to locate our destination for the day so as to end the long journey. After a few more unexpected turns we were right within the grounds of Labro and on the winding road to be so near to the castle as possible, parking the car on the pebbled roadside. We had then to walk several yards through antique roads with narrow alleys and arches or steps to come soon to the pebbled courtyard of the castle. Vineyards surrounded the courtyard below the eaves over which the castle battlements rose high, and from where a panoramic view was presented of the whole countryside about thirty miles distant all round. The towers were built with crude stones picked locally and, although crumbling here and there, were considered quite safe.

Lay Nobility and Paper Authority: The history of the castle Vitelleschi, to which I was invited by Madame Octavia Vercruysse, one of the direct descendants of the line of nobles of the days of the earliest popes, is an interesting one. The big Encyclopedia

3. The Church was very uneasy over the teaching of Francis. While Francis was in the East, being well received by Moslems, Cardinal Ugoline (the future Pope Gregory IX) reorganized Francis' Order, the Grey Friars, permitting them, against the wishes of Francis, to hold property. Francis thereupon resigned his headship of the Order. After Francis' death (1226) those who preached his pure doctrine of Christian poverty and forbearance were persecuted and imprisoned as heretics. Brother Bernard, his first disciple, was hunted like a wild animal in the forests of Italy. And in 1318, by decree of Pope John XXII, four Franciscans were burnt alive at Marseilles, as incorrigible heretics.—EDITOR.

Larousse mentions this name and indicates how one of the Vitelleschis was a rival of a Pope in ecclesiastical authority though remaining a lay nobleman still. Knight errantry and the spreading of the gospel must have gone together in those days in the ways hardly imaginable now. Thus it was that a Vitelleschi ancestor was confined and fatally poisoned by order of a Pope. But the next Pope seems to have tried to make amends for this crime by granting the family a hereditary pension, which accumulated fortune, as the story was told me, remains unclaimed to the present day.

Octavia's father, the last of the nobles of that line, has his fortunes in far off Brazil, and cares for his family castle only by way of remembering his blue blood. The royal apartments of the castle are still kept intact, with gilded furniture, coats of arms and other accoutrements reminiscent of days when knight errantry and spiritual lordship vied with one another in the Italian countryside.

The courtyard with its chequered summer shadows of evening enclosed in tender green vine creepers with towers above them, was filled with a group of children playing hide and seek, and among them I could not mistake little Natasha who had also been invited by Amie and Octavia to spend their holidays there with their own and other children who were to come in a few days. Natasha was no other than Marc Gevaert's eldest daughter who had come in advance of him with her mother Martine. Two helpers in the household, Bianca and Dina carried typical pitchers on their heads, full of clear water from a spring on the slopes of a hill, and water was also available within the courtyard itself in picturesque fountains fitted under arches.

The Past Invades the Present : The whole place seemed an antique painting come to life, and I myself as a bearded Oriental swami from India and part of the scene, found it at first, difficult to fit in with the holiday spirit that prevailed. But Octavia, who had always shown special consideration for me, from the time of my earlier visit to Ghent four or five years before, soon put me at my ease by conducting me to an apartment distinguished with antique gilded furniture and paintings, fit even for Louis XIV himself.

Original old master paintings in full size hung from almost every available wall-space both in this royal bedroom and the adjoining reception hall which was filled with coats of arms, helmets and armour, preserved as in a museum, but arranged in a liveable way. I spread my papers and books in this hall, which had just that long table and chairs for all the knights under the chief who must have very many nightly bouts and carousings within it, with a smattering of beautiful ladies I am sure, who must have added to the complexity of the situation.

I could take my early morning cold baths in a modernized bathroom which Octavia had taken care to install under an adjoining vault, and thus soon I felt quite happily settled down for the next two weeks.

For writing, my thoughts were fixed on my still vain attempts and agonies at getting started on my *magnum opus*, the pangs of whose birth had by now lasted several months, nay, even years. I was still reading rare books from which to glean support for schematism or structuralism, and just then I was reading of the pre-Socratic hylozoist philosophers.

The castle window opened out below the battlements and towers into the cool autumnal air that was beginning to be evident already in late summer and, as I thrust my head through the high-placed window to take a bird's-eye view of the panoramic vista of Umbria spread before me soon after sunrise or before sunset, I could not but help being drunk with the thought that breezes from both the seas, the Tyrrhenian on the west and the Adriatic on the east, which bounded Italy, whispered to me their messages alternately as they met the sunlight.

All these factors soon put me in a sufficiently poetic mood as a result of which I composed a sonnet combining Petrarchan and Shakespearean models without Miltonian continuity. This has already appeared in *VALUES* (Sept. 1965) but is here reproduced :

To Labro

Labro, simplest village of mid-Italia

Clinging close to castle-dominated hill, where

Sunbeams and breezes meet daily from sea to sea,

Under the blue skies of mystic Umbria.

Speak to a pilgrim from afar, whose nostalgia

Rivals only his passion for one humanity !

Whisper again of Pythagoras and of Assisi

And of that author too of *La Divina Commedia*.

Thus in consoling reveries lost in promenade

Or seated still in view of Terminalo's peak

Let him with you breathe near lake, spring or cascade

That fresh air of freedom that all equally seek.

May God the noble Vitelleschis bless

Humble Dina and Bianca no less.

Project for a Centre of World Understanding: Octavia had suggested already in 1960 that the castle of Labro could

be used as a centre for World Understanding under the Gurukula, and thought that her father could be persuaded to help in such a bold scheme. My own appreciation of this part of old Italy with its beauty spots like Perugia where an international university already existed in working form not far from the lakeside town of Piediluco within view of the Labro Castle, made me think that God had destined that such a centre should come into being. In all matters I have always put the forebodings or admonitions or even mere intimations of the will of God or the Tao, or Allah on the side, and tried to follow, however vaguely, its leading strings from my own personal side which was always kept free from personal preferences or prejudices. My mind worked with possibilities and probabilities which were always given full freedom of interplay.

Muhammed on one side and the mountain on the other had to decide between them as to which of them moved to the other, while I kept looking on at my own doings as a mere impartial witness, with no definite say in any matter. Luck or providence had to be given its own free chance so that it could come to you in any one of the 365 days of the year in which it might choose to favour you. All was in the lap of God.

With such a resigned attitude I said to myself that it was both probable and possible that a veritable centre of World Understanding could come into being in this beautiful place thus offered to me, though only by the daughter, whose influence with her father was not yet, as far as I could understand, a negligible factor.

Such mathematical calculations are sure to appear foolish to more matter-of-fact people, but it is the weak trait in my character which I openly avow for what it is worth, without apology. It is God that carries man like a reed-pipe through which this music is to be played whether on hill or dale as Tagore would put it. With this attitude I wished to save humanity at that moment, an over-optimistic and confirmed dreamer as I have always been; and, as Milton says in his famous sonnet on his blindness, that "They also serve who only stand and wait," as much equally as those who are active, nothing would be lost by always trying to do something noble and great.

As luck would have it, the Mayor of Labro who was a personal friend of Octavia in her girlhood days was enthusiastic about starting some cultural centre in this beautiful historical remnant which, he otherwise feared, would be condemned by civic authorities and abolished for ever.

The Curate of Labro, to whom I spoke over wine cups also seconded enthusiastically the plans being hatched by the Mayor. Just at that time one of the four important ministers of Rome visited this very castle with all the men and women authorized

to effect whatever changes they liked in different parts of Italy. I was asked to present a full case for what I called "A Centre of World Understanding" before this influential group. This I did by explaining first and handing them later a typewritten prospectus explaining the project at a tea-party at which all were seated at the long royal table with its high-backed gilded chairs.

The minister promised to supply the finances necessary and Aime Vercruysse was appointed as a correspondent for further negotiations. All seemed in order. And when nothing is against a thing to happen, it was perfectly just to think that it would take shape. Such is the argument by possibilities which is as valid as that by mere probabilities, which is of a lower earthy order. I was guided by both these factors without pinning my faith merely on probabilities as a mere man of modern physics would have done. By giving importance to both it was that I could claim to be a man of an absolutist way of life.

With Priest and Bishop: The visitors during this period included also the Archbishop of Rieti, with his velvet cap, purple tunic and full robes, leaving his retinue of brass-band players and school children, who gave him an ovation as he came to inspect the administration of the church of Labro village, and thus play the role of the Good Shepherd as bishops have always done. As he came into the courtyard I felt like a fly in the ointment in such a situation fully Catholic Christian. Already I had the experience of entering into an argument with a Christian young man who seemed to be rubbed the wrong way when I said that I was a vegetarian while Jesus himself loved to eat fish and loaves. The Catholic world has its own value-references of profanity or sacredness and as an Oriental and Hindu swami I knew I had to be careful not to create any nuisable situations. But the Archbishop himself extended his hand to me with a gracious smile on his features which had a summer glow at the end of the festive events of the day.

Three priests also visited me specially to discuss my theology and philosophy one evening. Two of them were brought to meet me by the official priest of Labro who was a professor of philosophy. I remember sitting with them for long hours at night, and whenever the two visiting priests raised any objections to my views I found that the Labro curate took my side, cutting short their arguments again and again by his "momentino" voice, so as to put in his own explanations always justifying my viewpoint. Thus the curate and the priests, not to speak of the archbishop and the minister of state turned favourable one by one, and even Dina and Bianca reported

that the first suspicion of the village women and children about a black non-Christian man staying at the castle as the best friend of the Contessa, eating plenty of macaroni and spaghetti with olives and figs at the sumptuous table each day, had been fully banished, and all began to appreciate the sonnet which was being handed round in translation, which last gesture seemed to make my conquest of the heart of Labro full and complete.

Other Ambitions and Fortunes at Labro: Garry Davis, foremost advocate of World Government, had chosen another part of Europe for his summer holidays with his wife and children. I got his letter saying so as my visit to Labro was fast drawing to a close. Dr. Joseph Vercruysse's sister was married to a doctor and joined the group of families already holidaying at the castle. The rest of my days here consisted of small outings round the countryside including a visit to a waterfall several hundreds of feet high of the river that fed the lake of Piediluco, where there was always a throng of summer bathers even at dusk, when the sun had warmed the waters. Ice-cream eaters sat round tables under trees and as with the rest of Europe, people went gay and compensated for bleak winter months in a way unknown in warmer climes.

The Terminalia peak, the highest point of the hills surrounding the valley, watched the waterfall and the lake as a witness from above, corresponding to the conscience of each of the holiday-makers. The outer scene has to be compensated by the inner state of mind in order to represent the felicity resulting from both, which is often in the best cases a constant that knows no change. Thus it is that little pleasures can attain to a Felicity that each one of us, if we know how to discover it within ourselves, can be possessed of free from the vicissitudes of time or place.

In and through such exalted states of mind, I had my own weaknesses and ambitions which prompted me to look at neglected houses "going for a song" as it were, in the neighbourhood of the castle, where I could start a small Gurukula centre. I inspected one or two such houses during my various evening outings, but good luck would not favour my fixing on any of them. It had to tally with its own counterpart of ambitions in order to come true. When they do tally the event is like that of the chosen man of God as against a mere John the Baptist who could be greater than the former. The Gita also states this principle when it says that much learning could be of no avail in spirituality except when one is chosen by the Absolute Principle on high.

Thus it is that ambitions and good fortunes constantly play hide and seek and elude each other eternally in our various life

experiences in referring to values big or small. Life is a wild goose chase or a wanderlust or a sowing of wild oats most of the time. Probabilities and possibilities cross each other, only sometimes resulting in good luck.

It is in this sense that I must relate how tempted I was at this particular period of my life when I was driven to a domain of several hundred acres planted with different conifers and other foliage trees just overlooking the beautiful lake and in full view of the peak and the valley golden at dusk.

Letting-go of a Dream: It was a long drive that took us to the front of the villa with forty-five commodious high apartments with doors and windows of very generous proportions as also staircases and corridors, built in plain modern style. It was reported that the owners who were American millionaires, were killed in a car accident soon after they built the place, and not being claimed by anyone, it was being cared for and repaired little by little at a time at a cost that the local municipality of Piediluco could afford. It was too grand a place for any project that Piediluco could think of, and if Garry Davis could have claimed it at that time it would have been possible to use this as a centre for World Understanding for Integrated Science and Philosophy, or even World Government.

These ambitions were not quite compatible with my own love of simple ways, but just as a cat may look at a queen, my imagination was for a time fired, even like glory of the sunset seen outside. That dream has now lost its fervour for me. I have learned the lesson that ambitions and fortunes can come true only when they tally with the will of the Tao.

After one day more spent in the paradise of a heavy-laden orchard of ripe fruit belonging to the Curate of Labro, where I was by his special invitation to all the party, on the 21st August Jean Convent was preparing to leave Labro, intending to drive all day, heading towards the French frontier beyond Turin.

It was after breakfast that all, young and old, turned out to the roadside and then ran back to the towers of the castle to watch from there our waving hands as our well-conditioned car appeared and disappeared among the trees on the road on the opposite side of the valley. It was a genuine, touching and spontaneous send-off. It is a pity that I cannot remember all the names of the young ones whose affections I had gained as I have always done throughout my life. The elders were also evidently impressed by my words as a philosopher always enjoying a good tête-a-tête on philosophical themes which have always been my consolation wherever I went.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

and not by their beliefs. Monks are stigmatized as pendants who would destroy the joy of life on earth, who are avaricious, dissolute, and the breeders of eternal dissensions and squabbles. He boldly puts the Jewish records (the Bible) on a level with the Greek myths. Miracles, he says, are just magical tricks.

He had just eight years more of freedom before him. In 1585 he returned to Paris with Castelnau. His views were now widely known and more firmly held than ever. He was deeply religious and studious, but had no good word to say for the Christian faith as he knew it. He was expelled from the university of Cambrai.

Caught at Last by the Inquisition: From France he went to Germany, and we hear of him at Marburg and Wittenberg—the place made famous by Luther who nailed his 95 theses against Rome on the doors of the Church. Here he seems to have spent his time quietly, producing more books: *On the Light Given by Lull* and *The Logical Pursuit of Progressive Illumination*. These were published in 1587.

During the following year, when he was forty years old, Bruno went to Prague and then to Helmstadt. Three years later he went to Frankfurt, where he published works *On the Three Smallest and Measurable*; *Of the Monad, Number and Form*, and *On the Boundless and Innumerable*.

Bruno the Nolan had now been wandering for twenty years, a homeless weary exile, and, we must suppose, often longing for the sunshine of southern Italy. In 1593 he was in Zurich and it was here that the spies of the Church began to set the trap into which he fell. They got a traitor friend, a young patrician, Giovanni Macenigo, probably under threats and pressures, to invite Bruno, telling him it was perfectly safe to come to Venice. Bruno went there; was taken by the agents of the Inquisition, brought to Rome and thrown into the prison of the Castel Sant' Angelo.

He was now forty-four. For eight years he battled for his life and it took all the resources of the Inquisition to pin him down. Bruno appealed to the Pope, but Clement VIII had no clemency and did not even bother to read Bruno's appeal.

Although he knew the consequences, Bruno refused to submit. Others under similar circumstances have given in, compromising, while keeping their real thoughts to themselves. Bruno was not of that kind. He was adamant to the last, and faithful to the truth that he knew. His tremendous courage never faltered. When he finally heard, on February 10th, 1600,

that he was sentenced to death as a confirmed heretic, he told his captors, "You are more afraid of this than I am."

He would neither repent nor recant. And so he was burned for being a non-conforming philosopher, as a man who believed more in the ancient Pagan teachers than in the corrupt Popes and priests of Christianity. From the beginning of their power, when they closed the Gurukulas of the Platonic and other Pagan teachers in the year 529, the Church had always opposed philosophers as a dangerous breed. True, they had Thomas Aquinas whom they called a philosopher, but Thomas on inspection is really a tricky theologian using Aristotelian logic to defend the tenets of the faith, including a defence of killing heretics like Bruno! We know quite well from his own words that Bruno stood for the philosophic life. The Church was bound to make no distinction between its creed and theology and universal philosophic truth. But Bruno clearly made the distinction between belief and truth, between religion and philosophy proper. For Bruno religion had its function, which was social. Philosophy too, he held, also had its function, namely for the individual seeker, the genuine learned contemplative. He set it down as follows:

"True propositions are never offered by us to the vulgar, but only to the wise, who can reach an understanding of our point of view. This is why truly religious and learned theologians have never challenged the freedom of philosophers; while the true, civilized and well-organized philosophers have always favoured religions. Both sides are aware that religion is needed for restraining rude populations, which have to be ruled, whereas rational demonstration is for such, of a contemplative nature, as know how to rule themselves and others."

Philosophy of the Living Cosmos: In giving the following summary of Bruno's teaching, which invoked the hatred of all the powers and creeds of Christendom, it should be remembered that he was neither an Aristotelian nor even a Platonist. He was what is known as a hylozoist (Greek "hyle", matter and "zoo", life). For Bruno as for those who came before Socrates and Plato, the whole universe was alive in whole and in all its parts. There was no division between dead and living matter. Star and atom were all alive. He adopted Copernican theories because these gave infinity to nature as a true image of the Infinite Absolute. Not only were there worlds beyond worlds, all dancing and pulsating with life, but there were also worlds within worlds. Narayana Guru (1854-1928) said the same thing in his *Atmapadesha Satakam*, v. 74.

Bruno stated his cosmology when he replied to the charges of the Inquisition :

"I hold the universe to be infinite, as being the effect of infinite divine power and goodness, of which any finite world would have been unworthy. Hence I have declared infinite worlds to exist beside this our Earth; I hold with Pythagoras that the Earth is a star like all the others which are infinite, and that all these numberless worlds are a whole in infinite space, which is the true universe. Thus there is a double sort of infinity, in size of the universe and in number of worlds; this it is which has been understood to disagree indirectly with the truth according to faith. However, I place in this universe a universal providence whereby each thing grows and moves according to its nature; and I understand it two ways, one the way in which the the soul is present in the body, all in all and in each part, and this I call nature, and shadow and vestige of the Deity; the other way is the ineffable one in which God is present in all, not as a soul, but in a way which cannot be explained."*

But of course the Church could never agree to this idea of innumerable worlds. Her theologians believed in the importance of a single world which Christ had come to save, as a once-and-for-all unique divine event.

It will be seen that such views also alienate Bruno from the position taken by the modern empirical scientist. But there is yet another point of divergence. This is Bruno's wholehearted regard for the wisdom of the ancients.

"Another stump of the past, you say? A stump, if you wish, but destined to bloom with vigour; antique things, perhaps, too, but to come back; truth, long forgotten, but now recovered."*

The Thinking Monad: Further insight into Bruno's vision is given by Robert Adamson and John Malcolm Mitchell, the joint authors of the article on Bruno in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* :

"To Bruno... philosophy is the search for unity. Amid all the varying and contradictory phenomena of the universe, there is something which gives coherence and intelligibility to them. Nor can this unity be something apart from the things; it must contain in itself the universe, which develops from it; it must be at once all and one. This unity is God, the universal substance—the one and only principle, or *causa immanens*—that

* *ibid.* pp. 249-250.

* *ibid.* p. 21.

which is in things and yet is distinct from the particular. He is the efficient and final cause of all, the beginning, middle and end, eternal and infinite. By his action the world is produced, and his action is the law of his nature. His necessity is true freedom. He is the living, active intelligence, the principle of motion and creation, realizing himself in the infinitely various forms of activity that constitute individual things. To the infinitely actual there is necessarily the possible; that which determines involves somewhat in which its determinations can have existence. This other of God, which is in truth one with him, is matter. The universe, then, is a living cosmos, an infinitely animated system, whose end is the perfect realization of the variously graduated forms. The unity which sunders itself into the multiplicity of things may be called the *monas monadum*, each thing, *monas* or self-existent living being, a universe in itself. Of the monads the number is infinite. The soul of man is a thinking monad, and stands midway between the divine intelligence and the world of external things. As a portion of the divine life, the soul is immortal. Its highest function is the contemplation of the divine unity, discoverable under the manifold of objects."

Bruno held to the cyclic theory, that the innumerable worlds rise up, manifest, and then fall and disappear, in a constant continuous pulse-beat of the one divine All-life. He also looked upon the universe as a painting done by an artist,⁷ an image also used by Narayana Guru.

Self-knowledge, the Aim of True Science: Another of the doctrines of Bruno was the distinction between the originator or knower of the field of manifestation, and the field itself, between *natura naturata* (nature naturing) and *natura naturans* (nature natured). These terms were taken up by Spinoza and elaborated half a century later, and Bruno's theory of monads was also used and attributed to Leibniz, who was of the same period as Spinoza. Leibniz' work on Monadology is well known.

Bruno's whole attitude to science was centred in Self-knowledge, Self-understanding; its end was the disciplined attainment of identity with divinity, the very same as that of Indian Yoga. A quotation from Windelbund makes this clear.

"Man knows the all in so far as he is the all. This was a pervading principle of Eckhart's mysticism. But this idealism (with Bruno) now took on a definite form. As a body, man

7 mentioned by Wilhelm Windelbund, p. 368, Vol. II, *A History of Philosophy* (Harper, New York, 1958).

belongs to the material world; indeed, he unites within himself, as Paracelsus, and following him Weigal and Boehme teach, the essence of all material things in finest and most compact form. Just on this account he is competent to understand the corporeal world. As intellectual being, however, he is of 'sidereal' (i. e. starry or heavenly) origin, and is therefore able to know the intellectual world in all its forms. Finally, as a divine 'spark', as *spiculum vitae* (living particle), as a partial manifestation of the highest principle of life, he is also able to become conscious of the divine nature whose image he is."⁸

"To become conscious of the divine nature." This is the science which Bruno—and Paracelsus, Weigal, Boehme, Nicolas of Cusa and Eckhart—understood, and this is precisely what Europe still lacks, and why Bruno and these teachers are so important. Europe still lacks this wisdom science because she is still limited by the lingering theology of the Bible, the Churches and their bastard son, the empirical scientific religious surrogate.

It is typical of the temper of our age that Windelbund (still valid although he wrote half a century ago) dismisses all this side of Bruno and the Mystics as "theosophical," "fantastical" and "magical." And people today kow-tow to this same fake science which will have nothing to do with the Self of man, treating it as a mere superstructure on dead matter. But Bruno refuses to be a mechanist; he always gives primacy to life, intelligence and divine value.

Bruno called himself Philotheus, "Lover of God." "Truth," he wrote, "is in the sensible object as in a mirror; in the reason through inference and discussion; in the intellect through premise or conclusion; in the mind in absolute living form."⁹

He bridged the gap between Pythagoras and the Mystics of Europe. Eckhart wrote of the Divine Ground, Paracelsus of the Archeus, Boehme of the Primus, and Bruno the Monad of monads. He endorsed Paracelsus system of sympathetic "signatures" in minerals, plants and animals (including the human), which was employed practically for the curing of diseases, and which had long been incorporated as part of the science of astrology.

Bruno soared beyond the gross, ugly human world of his age, and in his own poem which we give below describes his own flight to the divine. We may be sure too, that he reached his Goal.

⁸ *ibid.* p 370

⁹ p 261, *The Age of Adventure* (Mentor, New York, 1964)

Who gives me wings and who removes my fears
Of death and fortune? Who inflames my heart?
Who breaks the chains and makes the portals start?
Whence but a rare one, freed at last, appears?

Time's Children and his weapons, ages, years,
Months, days, and hours, all that host whose art
Makes even adamant and iron part
Have now secured me from his fury's spears.

Wherefore I spread my wings upon the air
No crystal spheres I find nor other bar
But flying to the immense I cleave the skies
And while from my small globe I speed elsewhere
And through the etherial ranges further rise
I leave behind what there is seen from far.

[END]

THE STERN SCIENTIST

BUT the exactitude with which the scientist works is obtained by narrowing the field of the inquiry. He makes use of very limited concepts and the results which he obtains are therefore of an equally limited nature. The scientist may be likened to a man who travels along a well marked road, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, and without raising his eyes from the ground. All travellers by this road have been warned to listen only to the voice of the intellect, to pay no heed to the promptings of the emotions, and to avoid as much as possible the use of concepts of a psychological nature. In this way, and in this way only, does he believe that it is possible for a man to reach truth. A note of austerity can usually be detected in his voice when he describes to a layman what is called 'the scientific method', and at such times his face is likely to assume a stern expression, such as one imagines that the face of a desert father must often have worn when admonishing his disciples to guard against the wiles of the devil. 'Believe nothing that you cannot prove,' he seems to say, 'accept nothing that you cannot measure and, above all, turn a deaf ear to the specious words of the heart.'

KENNETH WALKER, *Meaning and Purpose*

WARNING

I AM instructed to warn all friends and the public in general against one Sukumaran, a recent inmate of the Narayana Gurukula at Fernhill, Nilgiris, aged about thirty, tall, with long prominent nose, who has been forging Nataraja Guru's name on cheques procured by false pretences.—

JOHN SPIERS.

SPIRITUAL TYPES (Continued from page 200)

In verse five the Guru explains the knower of the Absolute or *brahmavid*. The verse speaks for itself:

Established in the Absolute, a knower of the Absolute,
By the fire of wisdom having burnt everything up,
Aiming at the good of the world,
Performs action according to what is considered right.

Narayana Guru goes on to comment that what he means by a knower of the Absolute is what is described in various chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita* (e.g., II. 55-72, IV. 19-20, 37). The description here, confirmed by the *Gita*, is one of the wise man who is a *tyagi* or relinquiser.

In the next verse the Guru describes the *sannyasi* or the man of renounced ways:

He, renouncing all action,
Always established in the Absolute,
Continues the course of bodily life, wandering
In the world, (he) is the elect knower of the Absolute.

The Guru says in his *didhiti* that, "This type of knower of the Absolute has only that degree of responsibility about the body he possesses because of past actions, and only till the moment such actions have been expended, causing the body to drop off of itself." Once again the *Gita* is referred to for confirmation. In Chapter XII which is entitled *Bhakti Yoga* (Unitive Contemplative Devotion) verses 13-19 are quoted. The elect knower of the Absolute is considered to be a *bhakta* by Narayana Guru, because he is "free from action, public-mindedness, etc. without even the least touch of urgency to action and attachment to public life, and because he is always in the enjoyment of the bliss of nirvana..."

In the seventh verse the more elect knower of the Absolute is described:

He who, being informed by another is able to know,
But by himself does not know;
He is the more elect, who always
Enjoys absorption in the Absolute.

The more elect is a person who has transcended the three *gunas* or nature modalities and as the Guru points out "attains to outward consciousness only when prompted by somebody else..." When this type of person is left alone he again returns to his natural state of silence. The Guru again refers to the *Gita* (XIV. 22-26) and says this type of person known as a *jivanmukta* is described in these *Gita* verses. Since the state of silence is natural to this type, the wise *muni* or silent recluse is what is meant here.

In verse eight the most elect knower of the Absolute is described:

He, by himself does not know anything
And even when made to know, (knows) not;
He is the most elect, always void of activity,
(Himself) being the Absolute alone.

The most elect knower of the Absolute is like the Taoist *ershi* or sage of Lao Tzu found in chapter XX of the *Tao Teh Khing*:

Indeed I seem to have the mind of a fool, a booby,
chaotic, muddled.

Ordinary men are so confident and brilliant, while I alone
am benighted and dull.

They are all cocksure, they have the knowhow to get around
while I am silly and confused.

I seem to be all at sea, adrift, unsettled and useless.

The people of the world are all purposefully active,
and I alone incapable and raw like some uncouth
barbarian.

So I am different from other men—

Because, oh, I value no sustenance that comes not from
the Mother's breast.³

The Mother is the Absolute. Narayana Guru has also written about the Mother as the Absolute in his nine verse composition *Janani-Nava-Ratna-Manjari*⁴. A person who apparently knows nothing and even when made to know still knows nothing is considered by ordinary people to be silly, useless and a fool or booby. (In passing, I would like to add, that even some of Narayana Guru's own disciples were somewhat ashamed of him because he knew very little English and did not take any deep interest in modern science, psychology, etc. This shows how people prefer what is clever and bright to what is steady, simple and of lasting value.) The Guru in this verse once again refers to the wise *muni* who in terms of absolutism is one step higher than the more elect knower of the Absolute, because even when someone tries to make him know something he will not know. The Guru in his *didhiti* also equates the most elect with the *kaivalya* or spiritual aloneness of Patanjali. Finally, Narayana Guru, in no uncertain terms considers the most elect to be the highest spiritual type. He says: "There is no living man of nirvana who is more elect than the most elect knower of the Absolute. Such a state is a very rare one to attain."

3 *Tao Teh Khing* (A rendition with commentary on the translations by James Legge, Lin Yutang, Arthur Waley and others by John Spiers, (VALUES, May 1965)

4 see VALUES, March 1964.

Verses nine and ten give instruction on what philosophical attitude should be adopted. Verse nine reads as follows :

Of this (world) there is nothing to be rejected nor accepted;
As for the Self, it is self-luminous.
Having understood, withdrawing (from all activity),
Thereafter activity does not repeat itself.

The world which is not absolutely real need not be accepted nor rejected by the man of spirituality. What is to be accepted and meditated upon is the Self, since this alone is real. By calling the Self self-luminous, the Guru has given it a value and content. The luminosity of the Self is on final analysis the Self itself, and its splendour is so great that the relative darkness-light pair are absorbed into it. In the 14th verse of the *Atmopadesha Satakam* (100 Verses of Self-Instruction) the Guru further explains the character of the luminous Self :

That light, rid of threefold view, that ever bright burns
Upsurging and brimful beyond the bounds of the triple
worlds

Remember, that it will never come within the reach
Of a hermit untrue, as Upanishadic secret lore declares.*

In the final verse the Guru gives his *siddhanta* or final conclusion :

Then the one Absolute is without a second ;

Nothing else there is, no doubt.

(Having understood thus), the well-instructed one

From duality withdrawing, does not return again.

This *siddhanta* is also the secret lore of the Upanishads. Such a conclusion is reached when knowing and experience are one, and the certainty attained has absolutely no duality in it. This is not only the final *siddhanta* of Narayana Guru, but also of Advaita Vedanta, Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism and western philosophers like Pythagoras, Plotinus and Meister Eckhart.

[END]

5 translated from the Malayalam by Nataraja Guru.

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the wisdom-eye



Lo! the eye now sees when opened.
When closed, the blind man alone remains within,
As awareness has not yet come.
Knowledge cannot come out by itself:
It needs its eye in order to be accomplished,
Just as the eye needs light.

NARAYANA GURU, Advaita Dipaka, verse 19.