



values

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HOMAGE TO THE GURU

All disciples and friends will join with us
this month in greeting Nararaja Guru on
his attaining the age of 72.

LONG LIVE GURUHOOD!



THE GURU

By SHRI AVADHOOT MAHENDRANATH

IN the darkness of life, a brilliant ray ;
The most precious thing in the world today ;
Above ambition and struggle for fame ;
Aloof from the world of its form and name :
Beyond the hunger of want and desire,
The Guru sits calm by his sacred fire.

Disciples at the teacher's feet did learn,
Until they all were gurus in their turn ;
From gurus of a past beyond all time,
There came the Truth in one unbroken line ;
So gurus that have been, but now are gone,
Have known the Science of God and passed it on.

The Guru sits, yet sees with half-closed eyes,
The world which men think real, is only lies :
The life which mortals meet with joy and zest,
The Guru sees as but a bitter jest,
Where everything important is a joke
And freedom but a different kind of yoke.

Reformers dream their dreams, so very nice,
To turn the world into a paradise :
The Guru knows that though the world is old,
Man has no power to recast or remould ;
And though long centuries do pass away,
Men never learn and dream new dreams today.

For all the hopes and plans of mighty men,
And every word which drips from active pen,
And every effort of the human race,
To make this sordid world a better place ;
The Guru knows that Truth you cannot drape,
For he has learned the only real escape.

He knows the mass will never give him ear,
Prefer their life, its hazards and its fear,
To dream that sometime they will have the price,
To turn their world into a paradise ;
The Guru sees the world of name and form,
A sorry mess in which men are reborn.

He does not seek to wander far and wide
Or ever crave for someone by his side ;
For he who knows the Absolute, the One,
Knows there is little more which need be done,
But use some particle of time each day
To guide a Soul and help it on its way.

In the confusion of the world today,
So many Souls have lost the proper way ;
Delusion, perverted to defiance,
Of the Way of God, the Perfect Science :
The Guru knows, from God we cannot stay
And someday we must throw the world away.

The way of men, the Guru must deride,
To help each Soul to throw the world aside.
Be thou the beaten one or be the rod ;
Either you want the world or you want God !
The Guru's word, more truer than an oath,
Says mankind cannot ever have them both.

GURUKULA NEWS

NATARAJA GURU underwent an operation for cataract at the Medical College Hospital, Calicut at the end of January.

We shall all miss Swami Mangalananda who attained samadhi on Jan. 25th. His end was sudden. He was one of the three disciples (the others being John Spiers and Nityachaitanya Yati) who were, in succession, appointed successors to Nataraja Guru. One of the finest orators in Malayalam, he was known throughout Kerala and wherever there were groups of speakers of that language, in the major cities of India and overseas in Malaya, Singapore, and Ceylon. He was lecturing to the very last. All will miss his cheerful presence and his able exposition of the teaching of Narayana Guru.

After completing their survey of the site for the Brahma-vidya Mandiram at Varkala, and after brief visits to the chief Gurukula centres, Dr Marc Gevaert, Walter de Buck, Jan Britszaert, and Freddy van der Borght, left India this month for their return journey by car to Belgium, via Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Turkey etc. They will be back again, possibly by the end of this year.

VERSES ON THE GURU *

(Guruvashtakam)

By SANKARACHARYA

“What we have to say is what Sankara said”—

NARAYANA GURU

In these famous verses, India's most famous Guru, Sankara who also came from the same region of South India as Narayana Guru, and whose time is placed about the eighth century, covers the range of relativistic values or virtues, discarding them all in favour of the supreme Value itself, with Guru-affiliation as its expression.

1. sariram surupam sada rogamuktam
yasascharu chitram dhanam merutulyam ;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghripadme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

Fair-bodied and ills-free, with Everest-high riches
and fame that is great and marvellous—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

2. kalatram dhanam putrapautradisarve
griham bandhavah sarvametaddhi jatam ;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghripadme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

With wife, wealth and progeny, grandchildren also,
with kinsmen, relations and home-pleasures too—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

* translation by the Editor. These verses appeared in one of the issues of VALUES many years ago.

3. shadangadi vedo mukhe sastravidya
kavitvadi gadyam supadyam karoti ;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghri padme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

Wise in Veda's six branches, repeating its learning,
composing in prose and in poetry too—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

4. videseshu manyah svadesesbu dhanyah
sadacharavritteshu matto na chanyah ;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghri padme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

Though famous abroad and locally gifted,
on meritous deeds ever intent theret—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

5. ksamamandale bhupabhupalavrindaih
sadasevitam yasya padaravindam ;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghri padme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

If even at last among all the earth's rulers,
your kingship should be the most honoured too—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

6. yasasched gatam diksu danapratapat
jagadvastu sarve kare yatprasadat ;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghri padme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

World-famous in name due to great benefactions,
yet lost to the Grace-source from whence they accrue—
If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

7. na bhoge na yoge na va vajimedhe
na kantasukhe naiva vitteshu chittam;
manaschenna lagnam guroranghripadme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

With mind not in pleasure, nor even in yoga,
and scornful of merit through sacrifice too—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

8. aranye na va svasya gehe na karye
na dehe mano vartate me tvanardhye;
manashenna lagnam guroranghripadme
tata kim tata kim tata kim tata kim.

Though to home or to jungle my mind be indifferent,
to action objective or in purity too—

If mind be not fixed at the feet of the Guru,
what good, what good, what good will it do ?

9. gurorashtakam yah patetpunyadehi
yatirbhupatirbramachari cha gehi;
labedvachchhitarthe padam brahmasamjnam
guroruktavakyे mano yasya lagnam.

Whether king or recluse, whether single or married,
he is blessed whose mind on the highest is bent.

To the Absolute known shall attain he whose mind
on the heard word of Guru is ever intent.

[END]

OUR NEW COVER DESIGN

THE cover on VALUES this month is by the famous Belgian artist Walter de Buck. It conveys at once the idea of wisdom attained by contemplation and the suggested figure of the Guru. It has sculptural depth because the artist himself is a modern sculptor. The figure can be either Eastern or Western, a Pythagorean or a Yogi of India. The slight accent on India is there in the animal skin on which he sits, showing its prehistoric origins. The lettering below of VALUES was done by Jan Brittsaert, noted modern architect. The work was done during their brief visit to VALUES' office at Kaggalipura.

DIONYSUS

By FRED HAAS

THE god Dionysus, in all his wisdom, has given to mankind two ways for realising his godhead. One is the way of the Bacchanal and the other is the way of the Divine Mysteries. O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy and absolute wonder! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become!!

Before the uncouth Aecheans and cruel Dorians¹ invaded ancient Greece, the Pelasgian people² adored Pan the all-pervading god of Mountains and Woods, Silenus his Satyr-son, Demeter the gentle goddess of the sweet and fruitful Earth, and Rhea the wise and pure Mother whose divine Mysteries were so powerful that she even told them to immortal Dionysus. The Pelasgians lived and re-lived their gods in song and dance, fertility rite and adoration of the phallus. O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy and absolute wonder! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become!!

Dionysus exists in many names and forms throughout the world. From eternity he continually makes his godhead manifest, sometimes in new and startling ways. He flowed through the Pelasgians long before his name was heard. He made his godhead manifest to them before the coming of the cunning and cruel Aryan hordes. In old Thebes³ one felt the Bacchic mood, and the people of Crete⁴ sang and danced Dionysian airs. The Cretans also knew the Indus Valley where this great god, according to some, came from in a new yet ever old form.⁵ O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy

1. The Dorians and Aecheans were the Aryan invaders of ancient Greece. Their ways and religious outlook are strikingly similar to the Aryan hordes who overran the peaceful Indus Valley culture of India.
2. The oldest known inhabitants of Greece. Mountain dwellers mostly, they are the original inhabitants of the country known as the *autochthonous* people of Greece.
3. According to Herodotus in *The Histories* (V. 58), it was the Phoenicians who came with Cadmus and introduced the art of writing as well as the religion of Dionysus into the Mediterranean world. Cadmus was also a Phoenician and is supposed to have been the founder of the city of Thebes.
4. Crete, where the magnificent Minoan culture existed as early as 5,000 B. C. had a religion similar in many ways to the Siva religion of India.
5. While Dionysus came from the East with the Phoenicians, the Pelasgians and Cretans had their own Nature religion and Dionysus was easy to accept because their religion was essentially a horned-god, ecstatic one. There is no doubt that Dionysus and Siva stand for the same spiritual values. The Dionysian Mysteries and the Saivite Tantra cult are similar. Both religions allow the devotee to become united with the god. To become "possessed" is the most essential feature of both religions.

and absolute wonder ! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become !!

O listen to the Bacchic Drum !

O roar with the mighty Bull !!

O dancer wild, Bacchus become !

O drink his godhead full !

Watch the god-full Maenads ⁶ dance with Dionysus. Listen how the lovely Bacchae move in the wild mountains :

"They are a sight to marvel at for modesty and comeiness—women old and young, and girls still unmarried. First they let down their hair over their shoulders; those whose fawnskins come loose, from their fastenings tie them up; and they girdle the dappled fur with snakes who lick their cheeks. And some have in their arms a young gazelle, or wild wolf-cub, and give them their own white milk — those who have infants at home recently born, so that their breasts are full, and they wreath their heads with garlands of ivy and oak and flowering bryony.

"And one of them took her Bacchic wand and struck it on the rock; and from the rock there gushed a spring of limpid water; another struck her wand down into the earth, and there the god made a fountain of wine spring up; and anyone who wants milk only has to scratch the earth with the tip of her fingers, and there is the white stream flowing for her to drink; and from the ivy-bound bacchic wand a sweet ooze of honey drips."

O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy and absolute wonder! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become !

See them all at the Bacchanal: rich and poor, young and old, all flushed with the god of joy. All free to adore and become full of the god. "Dionysus will not have his worship made a matter of nice calculation." ⁷ O see them wildly dance with the god flowing through them like clear cool wine! O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy and absolute wonder ! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become !

Sing, sing, sing the Dionysian song ! Dance, dance, dance to the thunder of the Drum !

O hear the drums ! Watch the band of Maenads fling back their heads in rapturous song, possessed by the frenzied Bull ! O see the god-drunken, thyrsus-swinging band of chaste voluptuaries, possessed and wild with the bull-horned god wearing the wreath of writhing snakes ! O mad lovers of Bacchic frenzy and

6. Female devotees possessed of the god.

7. From *The Bacchae* of Euripides. This description is told by a herdsman to the Dionysus-hating King Pentheus, ruler of Thebes. In the end the king is destroyed by the Bacchae and the town of Thebes suffers ruin. See Euripides, *The Bacchae and other plays*, translated by Philip Vellacott. (Penguin, 1954), p. 203, slightly revised.

8. p. 188, *Ibid.*

divine Mystery ! O sing, sing, sing the Dionysian sir ! O shout and sing ! O sing and shout in frenzied joy and absolute wonder ! O dance, dance, dance to the Magic of the Bacchic Bull ! O Dionysians, become the Bacchic Bull ! O become the Bacchic Bull !!

Sing to the beat of the thunderous Drum,
Sing for joy,
O sing for joy.
O sing, sing, sing, mighty Bacchus become !

O lovers of the Bacchanal, play not the arrogant god-denying role of Zeus-bound Pentheus. Be not Apollo's hound grovelling before Olympic law inspired not by Dionysus. Be not a godless slave of life-hating Jehovah. Bacchus, Bacchus, Bacchus, greater than them all, destroy them with your dance of life. O great giver of the Bacchic airs, strike down all enemies of the Bacchanal ! Dance on their heads. Drive mad all who deny your power and majestic presence. Drive them mad ! O great god of sweet-wild Mystery, dance the Bacchanal ! O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy and absolute wonder ! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become !!

O come Dionysus
With dance e'er unspent.
O come like a Bull or a
Hundred-headed Serpent !
Come like a Lion
Snorting warm-red flame.
O great Dionysus
We dance to your name !

O great Presence grant us all your full cup of sweet rapture ! O great Creator of the Bacchic way, O great Sustainer of the sublime and secret Mysteries, O great Destroyer of Zeus-bound mortals, O great Dancer deliver mankind from god-hating cities like your twin Siva did in the East !⁹ O loving god of the roaring Bull and all-wise Serpent, do your dance and fill us with your absolutist Presence ! O sing and dance to Dionysus, all-powerful god of frenzied joy and absolute wonder !! O become Dionysus, Dionysus become !!

The wise man knows the Mysteries gods ordain
And sanctifying life is without pain.
He steeps his soul in sacred dance release
By ritual pure has joy in mountain peace.
Observing mystic rites in Bacchic mood,
Created by Rhea, Mother of all Good,
He crowns his head with ivy, and possessed
With shaking wand is Dionysus-blessed.

[END]

9. Siva is sometimes referred to in Tamil as *tripurantaka*, "the destroyer of the three cities."

WHAT EUROPE MEANS TO ME (6)

By JOHN SPIERS

IF you have followed my line of thought so far, it should be clear that to be fair, you should not look at modern Europe and pass a hasty verdict on her spirituality as judged by the evidence of her affluent, mechanized, money-grubbing commercial frontage, her conventional church-going, her escapism into art and her trivial servility to television and so on.

This would be as foolish as to judge Indian spirituality on the evidence of her debased city populations of Bombay and Calcutta and other huge slummy conglomerations, or on the shameless corruption of her politicians and the ruthlessness of her businessmen, or on her charlatan "swamis" and "yogis" who exploit spirituality and misrepresent her wisdom both at home and abroad. The spirituality of both India and Europe still draws its vitality from the prehistoric past, in India openly because India is still Pagan, in Europe secretly because of massive opposition by a militant Church and anti-spiritual science.

At the highest sources—in the pure teaching of Jesus which many Indians who read the *New Testament* naively think is the basic teaching in the Churches!—in the Pythagorean, the neo-Platonic, the Druidic, and in the teaching of the *Gita*, the *Upanishads*, the *Kural*, in Buddhism, particularly in what is called the Mahayana, in the highest Jaina and other sources, —in all these sources, East or West, the common factor is not a doctrine. It is the principle of emancipation, of liberation, of freedom. This also means freedom from doctrines. What often seems like a doctrine is invariably the thorn used to extract another thorn. Those who know this doctrineless teaching, the "teaching" which is "no teaching," are the true Gurus of humanity.

There is an all-too-crude view which is also all-too-common. This says that the dharma is for the East to give the West her spirituality and the West to give the East her science. The presumption is that the East has no science and the West has no spirituality. But India certainly has her science and Europe does have her spirituality, in both cases hidden. So in both cases these will have to be brought out into the open, and both openly acknowledged.

The Case of Romain Rolland: Romain Rolland had a glimpse of this situation. This great man of letters, although born in France and writing in French, had a full sympathy with the best in the whole of Europe, and with Germany in particular.

He never succumbed to the hatred of Germans like others in France and elsewhere. During the first World War he retired to Switzerland so that he could be above these political emotions and prejudices. He died in 1944. His sympathies were not limited to Europe. He was deeply interested in the wisdom of India. This can be seen in his beautiful stylized biographies of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, a typical Guru-Sishya pair.

It was in his biography of Vivekananda that he boldly stated that Indians did not have a monopoly of spirituality. For this he was reprimanded by the Indian publisher-editor who inserted disapproving footnotes in the English edition of his book. But Rolland, with his knowledge of wisdom texts in Greek and Latin as well as other languages, was too great a scholar to be affected by such bad manners, so that the patriotism (against which Rolland protested all his life) which was so glaring in all this pettiness and nationalistic zeal, was only underlined. Here are two of the passages from his work which I consider to be fully justified and which upset the Hindu patriotic zealots:

"The essential part of their (i. e. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda) experience and mystic conception, as well as the metaphysical construction of which these are at the same time the foundation and the keystone, far from being peculiar to India as she tends to believe, are held by her in common with the two great religious metaphysical system of the west, the Hellenic and the Christian... the great paths of reunion with the Infinite Force, in particular that the total Negation—the "deification" of the enlightened soul, after its identification with Unity—these are all explained by Plotinus of Alexandria and by the early masters of Christian Mysticism with an ordered power and beauty, which need fear no comparison with the monumental structure of India. On the other hand, Indian mystics would do well to study it."

And again:

"Our Asiatic friends, who judge Europe by our bankrupts—our politicians, our traders, our narrow-minded officials, our ravening wolves whose gospel is their maw, the whole of our colonial personnel (both the men and their ideas)—have good reason to doubt our spirituality. Nevertheless it is deep and real, and has never ceased to water the subsoil and roots of our great Western nations. The oak of Europe would long ago have been hurled to the ground by the tempests that have ranged round it, if it had not been for the mighty spiritual sap rising ceaselessly from its silent reservoir. They accord us a genius for action. But the unflagging feverishness of this age-long action would be impossible without inner fires—not the

1. *The Life of Vivekananda* p. 174 (Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta)

lamp of the Vestal Virgins, but a Cyclopean crater where the igneous substance is tirelessly amassed and fed. The writer of this work has denounced and disavowed the 'Market Place' of Europe, the smoke and cinders of the volcano, with sufficient severity to be able to vindicate the burning sources of our inexhaustible spirituality. He has never ceased to recall their existence and the persistence of 'better Europe', both to outsiders, who misunderstood her, and to herself, as she sits wrapped in silence. '*Silens sed loquitur!*' (She is silent but she speaks!) But her silence speaks more loudly than the babel of charlatans. Beneath the frenzy of enjoyment and power consuming themselves in surface eddies of a day or an hour, there is a persistent and immovable treasure made up of abnegation, sacrifice, and faith in the Spirit.'''

To this apology Rolland added a very important footnote: "Europe," he wrote, "has not been solely made up of Christianized Greco-Roman culture. This is a pretension of the Mediterranean school, which we do not admit. The groundwork of the autochthonous (native to the soil) races of the West has been ignored, as well as the tides of the Great Invasions that covered France and *Mittel Europa* with their fertile alluvium. The *Hochgefühl* (feeling for the sublime) of Meister Eckhart and the great Gothics has been allowed to fall into oblivion."

India Not all Vedic: The correspondence with India is also here. To echo Rolland, I can say that India is far from being entirely Vedic and that this is a pretension of the brahmins which I certainly do not share. For there are the Buddhists, the Jainas, the Tantrics, the Siddhas, the Saivites and dozens of other types of emancipators and wisdom teachers, all completely free from the *Vedas*. Nothing could be more autochthonous than the wisdom-teachings of the *Tiru-kural* of the Dravidian weaver Tiruvalluvar which even Christian missionaries have acknowledged to be the "bible" of over forty million Tamils in South India. This is not to say that in their final consummation all these heterodoxies did not reach the same conclusions as the reevaluators of Vedism who authored the *Upanishads* and produced its metaphysics in the *Vedanta*. And in our own century we have seen the full flowering of this total Indian wisdom free from all background factors, both Vedic and non-Vedic, orthodox or heterodox, expressed by the genius of a true universalist, the Guru Narayana. In his cosmic framework, both insight and outlook, there is an equal place for all wisdom doctrines, from any part of the globe, wherever men have sought freedom and enlightenment. He went ahead beyond *Vedanta* (at least as a doctrine) into the free spiritual science called *Brahmavidya*, the wisdom science of the Absolute, into which all regional philosophies and their disciplines and doctrines are finally correctly absorbed.

It is Guruhood, the position of the teacher of emancipation and wisdom, which is respected in all worthwhile philosophy. This has been recognized everywhere and this abolishes all possible religious or doctrinal rivalries. When I say "everywhere" I also mean in Europe in its Pagan days. For evidence of this I would instance two apparently incompatibles, doctrinally speaking, if we should take the views of the writers of histories of philosophy who stress the differences of doctrines between one philosopher and another. The two "opposites" I have in mind are a Pagan Plotinus and a Christian Father of the Church. I refer here to Plotinus (205-270 A.D.) and Origen (185-254 A.D.).

Origen has been called "the principal founder of Christian theology, who tried to enrich the ecclesiastical thought of his day by reconciling it with the treasures of Greek philosophy."³ Plotinus is well known for his wonderful *Enneads*.⁴ As we know from Porphyry, Plotinus' disciple and biographer, Origen and Plotinus were both pupils of the same Guru, the mysterious Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria.⁵ Plotinus and Origen remained close friends. After all, they were co-disciples. And one day, as Porphyry reports: "Origen came into the conference room; Plotinus blushed deeply and was on the point of bringing his lecture to an end; when Origen begged him to continue, he said: The zest dies down when the speaker feels that his hearers have nothing to learn from him."⁶

Narayana Guru and Jung: That there is a science of the Absolute (*Brahmavidya*) or a science of the Self (*Atmavidya*) whose discoveries can be reached by a prepared mind East or West, can be demonstrated by two pairs of quotations from the writings of two people of widely different origins and backgrounds. Here is Narayana Guru (1854-1928):

"The gross, the subtle, the rational and the intuitive, four such are the divisions of the content of consciousness, which same names apply to consciousness as well."⁷

And here is Prof. C. G. Jung (1875-1964):

"There are four aspects of psychological orientation.....we must have a function which ascertains that something is there (sensation); a second function which establishes what it is (thinking); a third function which states whether it suits us or not (feeling); and a fourth function which indicates where it

3 Ralph B. Winn in Runes' *Dictionary of Philosophy*, (Jaico, Bombay, 1957)

4 Translation by Stephen Mackenna (Pantheon, New York)

5 *Ibid.* pp. 2-3

6. *ibid* p.10.

7. *Darshana Mala*, v. 2,

came from and where it is going (intuition). When this has been done, there is nothing more to say...The ideal completeness is the circle or sphere, but its natural minimal division is a quaternity." 8

Once more, here is the Indian philosopher-scientist :

" What is conscious is conditioned; the unconditioned does not become conscious. What is conditioned is unreal and what is unconditioned, That is indeed THAT (Reality)." 9

And again, the Swiss psychologist :

" The self is not only the centre but also the whole circumference which embraces both consciousness and unconsciousness ; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of the conscious mind." 10

The concordance here is surely striking. Here it is not a doctrine, but a statement of discoveries and facts. These facts were derived from an inside-outside, all round examination of the subject, the nature of the Real or the Self. The Guru and Jung were true psychologists and ontologists (i. e., dealing with the science of being, or consciousness-unconsciousness, conditioned or unconditioned). Beliefs do not come into the picture at all, and yet you can say that this examination touches the very core of spirituality, for if the heart of the matter is known, which means the nature of the Self or Absolute, then all else is known. All else follows from this basic principle of the Self and therefore all goodness and value are known, and so right or proper behaviour will also be known. This gives the material for a universal ethic, and this clearly is the basis of what is understood as religion.

Absoluteness : Absoluteness has always been present in humanity East and West. It is absoluteness which makes the hero, the saint, the genius, the supreme artist, the grand lover, the all-time leader in every field of human activity and thought. In the remainder of this essay I shall give examples of absolutist types belonging to Europe, some perhaps not so well-known. There is a mistaken belief that Spiritual Absolutists are found only in the fields of religion and philosophy. That is not so.

People must earn the title properly. A so-called absolute monarch who forgets his kingship with all the responsibilities which should accompany kingship, such as a firm dedication to the welfare of all alike, universally, brings the notion of absoluteness into disgrace. Among the Roman emperors there were

8. *Psychology and Religion : West and East*; Coll. Works, Vol. II, p. 167,

9. *Darshana Mala* v. 10

10. *Psychology and Alchemy*, Coll. Works, Vol. 12, p. 41

only two who fully justified their royal position—Marcus Aurelius (121-180) and Julian (331-363). Marcus Aurelius is well known for his attempt to live the life of a citizen of the world. He was a real philosopher-king or Raja-riishi. In his book known as the *Meditations* you feel the breath of the universal, for example: "My city and country as far as I am Antoninus, is Rome, but so far as I am a man, it is the world." (v. 44) "Constantly regard the universe as one living being, having one substance and one soul; and observe how all things have reference to one perception, the perception of this one living being; and how all things act with one movement; and how all things are the co-operating causes of all things which exist; observe too the continuous spinning of the thread and the contexture of the web." (iv. 40)"

Such thoughts of the spinning of the web were to be taken up by Goethe and introduced into his *Faust* over 1600 years later. Even Voltaire, anti-monarchist as he was, had to admit that if a monarch there must be, he should be like Marcus Aurelius.

Julian the supposed "Apostate" from the Church was another all-out personality about whom and his tragic failure to restore the ancient Paganism I have written about elsewhere."¹¹

Greek mythology and religion is packed with absolutism, the element which gives perennial grandeur to Greek dramatic tragedy. Heroes and gods meet and draw out the subtle absolutism which is hidden behind the flux of relativistic action. Dionysos, the god of absolutism, (about whom Fred Haas has written in the present issue), who crushes the relativistic world of King Pentheus in an orgy of wild frenzy, must have been understood vividly by the crowds of pilgrims who saw Euripides' play *The Bacchae*, and it is interesting to note that the part of the mother of Pentheus was played by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great."¹²

Then there is Prometheus, one of the immortal Titans, or gods of the elements, his name signifying "forethought", who opposed the autocratic Jehovah-like Zeus, in favour of helping humanity. Because he stole fire from heaven and gave it to mankind, and also taught them all the useful arts, the relativistic god Zeus revenged himself by the Pandora Box gift giving humanity all the horrid diseases, and also punished Prometheus

11. See pp. 133, 106, *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius* translated by G. Long, (Cassell, London, 1907)

12. See *Julian the Royal Pagan* (VALUES, Nov. 1965) and *Oration to King Helios* (VALUES, Dec. 1965)

13. Source Plutarch, noted by J. W. Donaldson, in his *Theatre of the Greeks*, p. 171 (Bell, London, 1875)

by having him chained to a rock on Mount Caucasus, where in the daytime an eagle consumed his liver which was restored on each succeeding night, a perpetual torture. But the hero Herakles, who was Zeus' own son also opposed Zeus and killed the eagle.

For another example of a mythological absolutist there is Medea, perhaps best described as a beautiful witch, who was skilled in magic. She fell in love with Jason, and assisted him in procuring the Golden Fleece. Then, when Jason deserted her for the youthful daughter of King Creon of Corinth, she took fearful vengeance upon her faithless spouse by murdering the two children she had by him and by destroying his young wife with a poisoned garment. She then fled to Athens in a chariot drawn by winged dragons. This is also the theme of one of Euripides' tragedies. In Media the absolutist Kali principle prevails.

Greek and Roman Absolutists: Among the ancient philosophers or Gurus whom I consider to be outstanding absolutists there is Pythagoras (c. 582-507 B. C.), who combined profound intellectuality with an equally profound religious life, completely dedicated to wisdom. His intuitional discoveries achieved by contemplation are being justified by many of the modern atomic physicists. For example the scientist-writer Stephen Toulmin says:

"...this Pythagorean belief that the distances of the planets from the centre of their orbits fit a simple, 'harmonious' mathematical law, was the life-long conviction of Kepler, 2000 years later, and inspired the whole course of his astronomical researches."¹⁴

I am bound to ask when Pythagoras is acknowledged to be so right in this field why is he disregarded and mocked at in the more important field of metaphysics? Without Pythagoras there would be no Plato although in the extant works Plato seems often reluctant to admit his debt to him.

Socrates (469-399 B. C.) of course was an absolutist, best disclosed on his refusing to escape after being condemned to drink the cup of poison. His absolutist argument was that to run away would be to injure the law, returning bad for bad, evil for evil, which is wrong in principle. That, he says, is the morality of the many, a relativistic attitude which he could not adopt.¹⁵

We hear much of stoicism or cynicism the "official" philosophy followed by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius whom we have already mentioned. To give two instances of the absolutism of the forerunners of this attitude, there is first Diogenes (412-323

14. p. 73, *The Fabric of the Heavens*, (Hutchinson, London, 1961)

15. see his arguments at the end of Plato's *Crito*.

B. C.). His absolutism comes out in the story of his meeting with Alexander the Great. "Now what can we do for you?" the young emperor and future world conqueror asked, patronizingly. "You can move aside," was Diogenes' answer, "you are hiding the sunlight." The other absolutist stoic is Epictetus (50-125 A. D.) who was a slave. His *Discourses* are among the finest of Europe's contributions to wisdom literature. His master was cruel and it is said that one day he took to twisting the slave's leg as a passing whim. "If you continue" said Epictetus, "you will break my leg." The master went on and did break the leg. "I told you" Epictetus said, "you would break my leg." These are examples of what I would call *negative absolutism*, but the absolutist approach, the courage and the unflinching attitude is there and that is what is important. No half and half measures. When the world is led by the half-hearted it is then that the need for the absolutist avatars is most clearly seen. It is at such times that poets like Wordsworth cry out:

"Milton! thou should 'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters."

And for "Milton" and "England" take any country of your choice, change the names and you will know what I mean!

Another absolutist, equal in my view to the inspired Pythagoras, and especially noted for his purity and dedication to wisdom, is Plotinus, a Greek-speaking Egyptian, but settled near Rome and adopting Pythagorean methods with Platonic teaching. I have mentioned earlier how modest he was and how he stood above doctrines (an attitude which is always a mark of the lover of absolutist truth). The teaching passed from him to his pupil Porphyry, from Porphyry to Iamblichus, and from him to his pupil Julian (already mentioned) and Hypatia.

Hypatia was the daughter of an Alexandrian mathematician, and was held to be the foremost philosopher in Alexandria. At that time, in the 5th century A.D., Christianity was gaining ground. A fanatical bishop, Cyril, could not tolerate the fame of this lovely but Pagan Saraswati. And so, in March of the year 415, under Cyril's instigation, a mob of monks led by one Peter the Reader, abducted Hypatia when she was returning from one of her lectures. They stirred up the Christian crowd who carried their victim to a church. There in a church, they stripped her, flayed her with oyster shells and burned her Poor body piecemeal! Such is the price for being faithful to absolutist philosophy!¹⁶

Christian Absolutists: And now for a "Christian" absolutist! Here when I mention his name, Pelasgius, some of my ancestral harp-strings faintly vibrate... Pelasgius (360-420) was

36. a brief account appeared in *VALUES* for Jan. 1956.

one of those exceedingly learned monks from Ireland (like Eriugena - John the Scot - some five centuries later whom I have already mentioned in section 2 of this essay). Pelasgius shook the foundations of the Church by opposing the contemporary Augustinian dogma of original sin. Pope Zosimus of Rome agreed with him, but Augustine and Jerome got the Church Council of Carthage to condemn him as an arch heretic, a heresiarch. And so the seeds of what was to be known as the Inquisition and also Calvinism were accepted as an essential part of the Christian Church dogma. Pelasgius' great argument was :

"There is, in fact, no such thing as original sin, sin being a thing of will and not of nature: for if it could be of nature our sin would be chargeable to God the Creator"

Sin of course, meant sex, and to Augustine and Jerome salvation consisted in being continent. Pelasgius was last heard of trekking east-wards from Jerusalem. He had done his best to liberalize and open out the Church.¹⁷

Pelasgius was at heart a Pagan who could not stomach the sex obsessed Augustine. He was taking also a view of Christianity which had the approval of scholarly Pagans such as the contemporary Roman Senator Quintus Aurelius Symmachus who, in a public controversy with another dogmatist, Ambrose, got no reply to his challenging remark that :

"There must be more than one line of approach to the heart of the great mystery of the universe." Toynbee, in quoting this, adds, "This challenge to the Judaic vein of exclusiveness and intolerance in the spirit of Christianity has remained unanswered down to this day."¹⁸

For another Christian absolutist I would point out the tragic figure of Pierre Abelard (1079-1142). Again it is sex which was the central pivot. The acknowledged leader of philosophic thought in Paris, young Pierre fell in love with Heloise, one of his many pupils. When the affair became known, Canon Fulbert, the uncle of the girl, got a band of ruffians to emasculate Abelard. He was hounded from one retreat to another, anathematized and called a heretic. Heloise went into a convent but their love went on and is one of the great romances of the world. Their remains lie together, in a corner of the famous cemetery of Pere Lachaise in Paris, united in death as they could not be in life. History justified their love despite all the tirades of narrow Church thought.

17. part of the controversy is given in *Documents of the Christian Church*, (Oxford 1943)

18. p. 229, *Hellenism*, by Arnold Toynbee (Oxford, 1959)

Joan of Are and Robin Hood: Joan of Arc (1412-1431) was another absolutist, and though adopted after by the Church she was really a Pagan. I have already told her story in my essay in **VALUES.**¹⁹ How a young girl showed how to defeat the entire court of Christendom by a simple adherence to truth is one of the marvels of absolutism.

That a robber can represent still another aspect of the absolutist way is seen in the half-legendary, half-actual case of Robin Hood and his Merry Men (14th Century). To steal from the rich and to rob the luxurious monasteries and abbeys and give to the poor is a kind of poetic, romantic justice which holds the approving attention of all young people (and many of their elders) to this day, although the conventional upholders of the law like the present sheriff of Nottingham, Percy Holland, thinks it appalling. Robin Hood was anti-social or anti-relativist, like most of the absolutists of India. He was a king of nature, living in the forest, dressed in the nature colour green like the "fairy people." He was an outlaw, as all absolutists are at heart outside man-made laws, but holding to the grand *dharma* of Nature.²⁰

Explorers and Missionaries: A very special kind of absolutism belongs to the explorer. It is something akin to the absolutism of the all-out gambler (given absolutist status in the *Gita* X. 36), but of a higher or more skilful order. There is the touch of the absolutist in all the great explorers of history, and Europe has had her full share of them. Absolutism can be applied to the outer as well as the inner world. The gamble, the adventure, the risk, the mysterious unknown or chance are all factors which contribute to the make-up of the absolutist explorer. Fearlessness, courage and heroic leadership mark the type. I can only list the greatest. First there is Herodotus who combined the spirit of inquiry with an amazingly accurate descriptive genius which is only in the present century being fully verified. His explorations date back to the fifth century B. C. In the following centuries we have evidence (such as the *Periplus Erythraea*) of Greek sailors trading with colonies as far away as Malaya. One and a half millenia later Vikings such as Eric the Red and Leif Ericson reached Greenland and the mainland of North America. In the 13th century the Venetian Marco Polo made that extraordinary overland journey to China. The next several centuries were the great age of exploration of Columbus, Cabot, Vasco da Gama, Balboa, Magellan, Cartier, Drake, Hudson, Van Diemen, Cook, and many others, right up to the end of the 18th century. These men were all driven by

19. see *Joan the Absolutist Maid*, **VALUES**, April 1965.

20. see my essay *The Secret of Robin Hood*, **VALUES**, April 1965.

an absolutist wilfulness which in many cases was only dimly understood by the crews whose sense of adventure was usually much less than the total dedication demanded of the leader.

Missionaries and Women: in the 19th century a revolt against the dullness of European social life was often the real cause of so much so-called Christian missions like that of Livingstone, just as journalism was only an excuse for the explorations of Stanley in search of Livingstone for a scoop. Only the same type of absolutist revolt can account for the amazing journeys of missionary women like Mildred Cable and Francesca French into the unknown wastes of the Gobi Desert.²¹ Or like Lady Hester Stanhope, the niece and secretary of William Pitt; she bolted from prim Victorian England to become a tribal queen in the Lebanon. The attraction of Madame Blavatsky (1831-1891) was her absolutist revolt from a dull marriage, her breaking of conventions, and finally her adoption of anti-Christian esoteric orientalism. She was in her way a literary genius, swore when the mood needed it, smoked and thumbed her nose at Christianity and started the theosophical movement whose solemn and absurd developments would hardly have pleased her sense of the ridiculous. And just as Lady Hester led the way for other women explorers or archeologists who were all absolutists in their fashion, such as Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark, so too, the lure of the Orient and esoteric mystery begun by the adventurous Russian sparked off many other women to follow suit, from the Irish Annie Besant to clutches of diverse types thereafter nesting in California. Who cares what they believed? It hardly matters; they broke out of the stuffiness of Victorian life and each in their own way became absolutists.

Before leaving the explorers I ought to mention Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890) who peered at and recorded the seamy side, meaning the sex life and perversions as they are called, of the Islamic countries, and who was a master of many languages, a discoverer of the source of the Nile, who penetrated to Mecca, and who gave Europe its first full blooded translation of the *Arabian Nights*. His writings shocked his Christian Catholic wife Lady Isobel so much that she had all his unpublished works destroyed at his death. Burton would have enjoyed the literary climate of Europe in the present sexy 60's when the taste is for prolific usage of four letter words and for erotica in its fifty-seven varieties, and no doubt he would have found some way of shocking the unshockable.

Among explorers who revealed their absolutist mettle, I must add Robert Falcon Scott (1868-1912) and Laurence Oates (1888-

21. see *The Gobi Desert* Cable and French (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1942)

1912). Oates was lamed by frostbite and walked out to his death in a snowstorm to relieve Scott and his fellow explorers on their return journey from the South Pole. Scott and his companions perished in any case; but his diary with its last tragic words which I have seen in the British Museum, reveals him as a heroic absolutist to the last.

Absolutist Heroes: And now I set the pointer of the time-machine of history back to the 16th century and present Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) who is more often mentioned as a martyr to science than to philosophy, because of his support of the ideas of Copernicus. The importance of Bruno was in his absolute opposition to the Church. Both Spinoza and Leibniz drew on Bruno for their inspiration. In spite of Bruno's importance, it is almost impossible to find to date any translation in English of his works. It was Bruno who postulated the idea of *natura naturans* (Nature naturing or creating) and *natura naturata* (Nature natured or created) as two aspects of the Absolute or God. Spinoza took these over and made them the basis of his philosophy. It was also Bruno who postulated the ideas of the Monad of Monads which was taken up as a central feature of the philosophy of Leibniz.

Bruno was born in a village near Naples. At fifteen he entered the Dominican Order of the Church but was soon cast out for opposing the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. As he matured, he became more and more vigorously critical, and had to live a life of continuous exile from city to city and country to country. No place was safe for him. If it was not the Catholics in Paris it was the Protestants in Geneva and Oxford who harried him. In Paris he lectured and was offered a professorship if he would attend the mass. He refused. He was trapped into visiting Venice. There the Inquisition caught him, took him to Rome, and imprisoned him for years. They tried in vain to get him to recant, but he resolutely refused, and was burned at the stake in Rome on the 17th February, 1600.

True to Themselves: You must notice that in all these instances of absolutists, their special philosophic views, while important in themselves, are hardly the common element which constitutes their absolutism. Behind their social *daeshans*, there is an impelling, relentless devotion to what they felt to be right. Not one—king or slave, explorer or scholar, robber or philosopher—ever compromised with what they believed to be true. They faced mockery, privation, the law and death with a fearlessness and even carelessness which raises them to the high pitch that we distinguish as absoluteness. And I think this is really what is important. It is not even a question of what they did, but of what they represented, what they were by nature. These men or women were all true to their own nature or *svadharma*.

Such a true-to himself person was Spinoza (1632-1677), so gentle, and yet so firm that like some Indian *tapasvin*, he seemed to take austerity and poverty naturally. He was of Jewish stock from Spain (Espinoza), but his views made the orthodox Jews in Holland excommunicate him with dire Jehovahian curses. With the intellectuals of Europe, with the King of France himself offering him a pension, he refused it all, barely earning his livelihood as a lens-grinder. He felt content with the least amount of wealth and possessions and felt it wiser to keep his independence and not compromise with the world in the least. By all accounts he was loved by all who knew him, and was famed for his serenity and happy disposition. Even those who dislike him (e. g. Bertrand Russell) admire his sweet character. But that character and the views were one and the same! Although non-affiliated to any religion, Spinoza represents the pure 28-carat religious temperament. After Pythagoras and Plotinus, and Mystics like Eckhart, the absolutist religious type in Europe is most clearly represented by Spinoza.

Socrates once said that he was driven by his *daimon*, a personified spiritual drive. All forms of absolutism agree on this kind of possession. Such spiritually obsessed people seem to the outsider to be mad, untamed and wild. Such people stand apart from society in a lesser or greater extent, from jobs, from conventions. They outrage the conventions, they are abnormal, misfits, throwing away good positions, respectability, status, opportunities for careers. In India they might be sannyasins, but in the world of civilization, although there is a place for the monk and the nun there is no place for the spiritual beatnik.

I think this is one of the real distinctions between the relativistic revolt and the absolutist. You can see the distinction in Voltaire (1694-1778) and Rousseau (1712-1778). People think the difference is one of doctrines, but that is only superficial. The real distinction is that Voltaire fitted himself into society even when he was writing satirically about it: whereas Rousseau even when he was talking to those middle class ladies and the minor or major aristocrats, was always an outsider. Voltaire was in orbit but Rousseau was an unpredictable comet. Any intellectual can follow Voltaire, but to appreciate Rousseau you need intuition and insight into his understanding of the dialectics of freedom and social bondage. Voltaire was a social critic, whereas Rousseau was standing for a completely new kind of life for mankind.

Poetry-the real stuff-is always close to the spiritual or psychic reality of humanity. Blake (1757-1827), Burns (1759-96), Whitman (1819-1891), and D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) were all wild poetic absolutist mystics possessed with universalist vision, with whom conventional respectable people couldn't live and only praised when they were safely dead. And one could say the same of the great painters of the last hundred years. These poets threw

away the social masks they were supposed to wear ; they turned down flatly all the offers of social advantage and the good jobs, and so because they refused to accept the careers, refused to compromise, and chose to live at the bottom of the social structure, they were all a reproach, they became pariahs and outcasts. Their dionysian possessed nature however has in consequence a message which is still valid as long as this rotten social fabric persists. They *lived* as absolutists, each in his own fashion.

This living is important. Tolstoi's (1828-1910) greatest moment was at the end of his life, and it illuminated and eternized his whole corpus of writing. It was when he just walked out of his home forever, away from all the incessant squabbles of his huge family (who, after his wife's whining account of her life with him and her attempts to make him into a tame bourgeois husband gets as you might expect, all the world's sympathy !) And in spite of all the cheap ballyhoo, the Duke of Windsor (now forgiven in his old age) did show a lightning flash of absolutism when he threw away the crown of Britain for the sake of his beloved.

Freud (1856-1940) was an absolutist when he insisted on giving a place to sex and blew up the skirts and opened the bedroom doors of the Victorians. Jung (1875-1964) was an absolutist when at the end of his life he declared he had more faith in the ancient Chinese and Indian Gurus than in the academic pundits whose disciplines and conventions he had hitherto respected.

Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895) were absolutists, not for their economics and the obsolete stuff of *Das Kapital*, but for their exposure of the relativists or the bourgeoisie and their ethics based on dollars and profits so eloquently and fierily presented in their joint *Communist Manifesto* which is as valid criticism even for modern Russia as for the same civilised world today. Lenin was a relativistic compromiser who threw out Trotsky. He was not capable of seeing this side, the philosophical side, of Marx and Engels, and the subsequent rulers of Russia equally have all been relativists and therefore although using the names of Marx and Engels, have never understood this side of Communism. They are all smug socialites, the enemies of any kind of frenzy.

The importance of Nietzsche (1844-1900) as an absolutist is that he was conscious of the need for an absolutist dionysian spiritual revolution, and invoked the horned God of the pagan past. In India absolutists can still call upon the support of the ancient Gurus of the *Upanishads* or the *Gita*, on Yajnavalkya and Vyasa or Sankara. But in Europe these true spokesmen of the Absolute had to stand alone. They had to face slander, exile and death, imprisonment and the asylum.

The Absolutist Eye: Recently the tridents (*trisuls*) of Siva have been shaken at the relativistic centre of New Delhi. The cause was incidental, but it was an effort to restore the true values of Indian spiritual life. But Europe also has its trident in Poseidon, and the yogic wand of Dionysos. The dull, boring, artificial life of Europe cries out for dionysian destruction. These pretentious professors with their absurd theses, these scientists all servile to the war machine, these artists getting further and further away from nature, these monstrous cities and roads swallowing up all the forests, the fields, and the flowers, you may be sure it will not last for it has become intolerable for the young. The bearded beatnik is a symptom of the anti-body which this monstrous world generates and it only needs the guidance of a Guru avatar for the whole European, indeed the whole Western world to break like a bubble.

Europe has never completely lost its spiritual side. When the awful fever has run its course there will be a return to a sound Pagan health. Of that I am sure. Why am I so sure? Because of the cyclic law of *yin-yang*, of challenge and response.

All absolutists develop or attain a special organ—not physical, but psychic, an organ of the soul, and in India called the Wisdom Eye (*jnana-hakshush*), or the third eye of Siva. This sees through the pretences, it shrivels up the false values. It saves its possessor from being trapped by the enemies of wisdom—by all the Establishments—such as the Academie Francaise, that body of zombies who have pickled the living word of the French language in the name of literature; the Burns Societies who spend more in one day's junketing than the peasant poet had in his whole lifetime; the millionaire collectors of the paintings of artists from Breughel to Gauguin who, if these same artists could be resuscitated, wouldn't even shake hands with them; yes, the absolutist eye sees through all the world of phoney values and absolutely refuses to compromise.

To conclude, let me say, that the harsh climate, the oppressions and the historical cruelties and injustices which the people of Europe have suffered, has resulted (by a dialectical law of compensation) in qualities of spiritual endurance and capacities of austerity surpassed by none. Once aware of absolutist truth the European will never surrender, never give in. And that is Europe and the European as I see them. And therein is the great hope for the future.

[END]

SORRY, AND ALL THAT

SORRY that we have had to push the annual subscription of **VALUES** up to ten rupees. Ten rupees in India today is just pin money, and we know you will all help us in defying the prevailing anti-economy.

THE TAO TEH KHING

Treatise on the Absolute and Its Nature

By LAO TZU

(Based on various translations, with comment by the Editor)

XXXIX

As for the things which from of old have got the Whole (the Absolute), these are :

Heaven which by it is bright and pure ;
Earthy rendered thereby firm and sure ;
Spirits with powers by it supplied ;
Valleys kept full throughout their void ;
The myriad beings which through it do live ;
Princes and kings who from it get
The model which to all they give.
— Because of the Absolute they became so.

Without transparency, heaven would shake ;
Without stability, the earth would quake ;
Without powers, the gods would quickly fail ;
If not so filled, dread drought would parch each vale ;
Without vitality, all beings would fade away ;
Without uprightness, monarchs would all decay.

Truly, " the humble is the stem upon which the mighty grows ;
the low is the foundation upon which the high is laid."

Hence princes and kings call themselves "orphans," "the unworthy," and as "carriages without a nave." Thus they acknowledge that their might and dignity depends upon their humility, upon being rooted in the common man.

True indeed are the sayings : " Enumerate the parts of a carriage, and you still have not explained what a carriage is," and "they (the sages) did not want to jingle like the jade-bells but rather to rumble like the rocks."

COMMENTARY : The author here is pointing out the unitive factor common to everything in nature, the heavenly, the divine, the earthy and the human. When each unit holds on to its own nature, all is well ; but if any does not keep to this appointed course there is disruption and ultimately disappearance.

Lao Tzu refers to sayings belonging to a wisdom older than his own, as if he was just a transmitter-interpreter. At the end, he indicates the preference of the wise for the plain and even coarse, rather than the artistic or refined, the simple rather than the complicated. Again he says in effect, with the instance of the parts of a carriage, that the Absolute is a totality, a whole, to be known as a whole and never by description of parts, a hint to the modern fact-finding empirical scientists. In short, Lao Tzu points to the mysterious Whole, the Great Carriage which is the Universe, bearing along the myriad beings, men and gods, all dependent on a subtle trust in the Tao or Absolute, to be perhaps personified as the Charioteer. The idea is similar to that of Narayana Guru's Great Captain of the mighty Ship of Being, in his *Daiva Dasakam*.

(To be Continued)

BOOK REVIEW

THREE LECTURES ON INDIAN CULTURE

A. L. BASHAM'S latest book *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture** comprise three lectures given at the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture in Bombay. This is a difficult book to justly review because of the author's earlier masterpiece *The Wonder That Was India*. Professor Basham has a wealth of knowledge about India and a genuine love for her various religious and philosophical expressions. Keeping all this in mind his latest work can perhaps be read as a kind of outline before going into his famous *Wonder* book.

There is one thing that could have been included in this work. Instead of trying to compare Hinduism with the Christian West, the author would have done a great service if he compared the pre-Christian West with India. If he did this he could have started the construction of an East-West cultural bridge, because Pagan Europe and India have so much in common that they can be treated almost as brothers.

The three lectures are titled Social Life, Political Life and Religious Life. Taken by themselves they do not offer anything new or original to the reader who is familiar with Basham and India religion and philosophy. *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture* can best serve as a kind of introduction to Basham's great documentation, *The Wonder That Was India*. FH

* Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966, 46 pp., Rs. 5/-

THE YOUNG NARAYANA GURU

By NATARAJA GURU

AS the villagers' curiosity became greater, they soon discovered that there were people in the neighbourhood who brought milk and fruits for the strange man, which they left beside him; but the birds and the squirrels were seen more often to partake of them than the man himself. A single banana and some clear water formed his sustenance from day to day, as he spent his time in introspective absorption.

His ways frightened some and served to keep them aloof. Others approached nearer and made bold to break the silence and tried to induce him to take more food. There was one elderly dame whose maternal instincts prompted her almost to compel him to take more food by putting rice into his mouth. To a vast majority of people who had not come near him, he remained merely an abnormal man. Some thought him an imposter trying to play on the religious sentiments of the credulous. Others thought him one whose virtue was only a cloak to hide laziness or even vice. Some of them blamed him openly even though the young seeker had asked no favour of them whatever and was totally unrelated to them in any way. They blamed him and hated him and without apparent cause gave vent to their aversion in strong language. Indifferent alike to praise and blame, the young man sat neither loving less nor hating more, but imploring God in the most supplicant terms to save him from his inner misery and lift him beyond blame. Some strange cosmic emotion was heaving within him and he was in the pangs of the birth of an inner life to which the life dictated by the senses was becoming more and more repulsive.

This state of self-absorption increased soon after. Human company of any sort became unbearable to him. When a curious passer-by stood and watched him as he would a curious animal in the zoo (so he himself described it), he would sometimes spring to his feet in resentment and walk off to the neighbouring hill-top on the summit of which, on a pile of stones for a seat, he would sit crossed-legged, erect and silent, gazing at the vast panorama of hills that was visible from that point of vantage. He sank deeper and deeper into oblivion of the affairs of the world. The mind seemed to feed on itself and reach a strange happiness.

[END]

COMPASSION

To them who have compassion in their hearts, there is no entry into the world of darkness and suffering.

—Tiru-Kural

THE DEPARTURE OF SOCRATES

We will do our best, said Crito : And in what way shall we bury you ?

In any way you like ; but you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not run away from you. Then he turned to us and added with a smile :—I cannot make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who has been talking and conducting the argument ; he fancies that I am the other Socrates whom he will soon see a dead body—and he asks, How shall he bury me ? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavour to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed,—these words of mine, with which I was comforting you and myself, have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me to him now, as at the trial he was surety to the judges for me : but let the promise be of another sort ; for he was surety for me to the judges that I would remain, and you must be my surety to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart ; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned or buried. I would not have him sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the burial, Thus we lay out Socrates, or, Thus we follow him to the grave or bury him ; for false words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil. Be of good cheer then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that whatever is usual, and what you think best.

—PHAEDO

THE PASSING OF PLOTINUS

OF Plotinus' last moments Eustochius has given me an account.

He himself was staying at Puteoli and was late in arriving : when he at last came, Plotinus said : 'I have been a long time waiting for you ; I am striving to give back the Divine in myself to the Divine in the All.' As he spoke a snake crept under the bed on which he lay and slipped away into a hole in the wall : at the same moment Plotinus died.

—*On the Life Of Plotinus*, by Porphyry

THE WAY OF THE WISE

Follow wisdom and ever be happy, the Truth in its fulness to know.

—*Jataka Tales*

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Guru has a deeper sense to convey,
Guru gives knowledge that you can't repay;
Points at your own knowledge,
Like the mirror in front and says "here
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In that exalted region where neither tongue nor taste have place is where your glory abides. Who is there to know your greatness, O Mother ? Words are weak, even for praising you, alas.

NARAYANA GURU (last lines of Nine Stanzas to the Absolute as the Mother).