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VALUES

PRICE : Rs. 0.50
VOL. XII No. 4
January 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, Asst. Editor: Fred Haas
Printed by T. R. Chetty, at Sri K. P. P. Press, Old Poor
House Road, Bangalore-1, India.

Y E A R L Y R A T E S

India: Rs. 6/- ; three years : Rs. 15/- ; 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

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BANGALORE: Kaggalipura, Bangalore South.

New Year Message

From NATARAJA GURU

ON entering into 1967 we are glad to bring the good news of the completion of our *magnum opus*, an event which we have been looking forward to for the past few years. To direct disciples, followers or admirers of Narayana Guru, whether in India or elsewhere this book of over one thousand pages is meant to take the place of a statement containing not merely the main religious or even philosophical teachings or doctrines of the Guru, but to present a complete and fully integrated Science of the Absolute acceptable to any strict thinker wholeheartedly interested in the subject, whatever his other affiliations of time or clime might be.

This claim is justified by the fact that the work is based on the *Darshana-Mala* (Garland of Visions of the Absolute) which Narayana Guru composed in simple Sanskrit. In its perfect symmetry of construction, beauty and power, the *Darshana-Mala* consists of ten chapters of ten verses, covering in order five ontological disciplines called Cosmogony (*adhyaropa*), Methodology (*apavada*), Phenomenology (*asatya*), Negativity (*maya*) and Normalization (*bhana*), and five teleological topics called Instrumentalism (*karma*), Reason (*jnana*), Devotion (*bhakti*), Contemplation (*tyoga*), and Absorption (*nirvana*). Each chapter represents a self-consistent possible and valid philosophical view, while all taken together constitute the core of the present work. It is an attempt to present the time-honoured *advaita* philosophy revised

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and restated in a more communicable and formal way. Both formalism and structuralism, together with a common epistemology, methodology and axiology give to the work a unified and scientific status, putting physics and metaphysics on one and the same footing for the first time.

The *Sarvadarshana Sangraha* of Madhavacharya and other works of a similar kind more vaguely attributed to Sankaracharya, represent the same integration attempted by thinkers in India within historic times. Such ancient works as Aristotle's *Organon* and Bacon's *Novum Organum*, together with more modern attempts at interdisciplinary integration of all sciences represent the same urge and aspiration on the part of mankind to arrive at that complete vision of Truth which alone can make man free.

The *Advaita Vedanta* of India which is also called *Brahmavidya* or the Science of the Absolute, and based on the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahmasutras*, when rid of its often cryptic, logistic, highly figurative or esoteric *lingua mystica*, and revised and restated in a more strictly conceived formal and structural language of modern mathematics would itself result in affording a basis for the integrating of all possible branches of knowledge into one whole.

When so revised and restated, the *Advaita* could claim to be treated on a par with a modern Unified Science which would emerge into being irrespective of East or West, and with a universally public, valid and fully scientific status of its own. It would thus help to banish that uncertainty and verbosity which have made some thinkers in recent years mistrust metaphysical speculation altogether as mere "nonsense".

A Science of sciences would thus come into view representing the Fact of all facts, the Light of all lights, and the Truth of all truths. Such a Science of the Absolute would enhance the dignity of thinking man, heightening his value as a member of the human race, distinguished by his natural gift of Reason. Even one free and wise man could be an exemplar who could inspire hope and confidence for the peace and happiness of mankind. Such a new Science of the Absolute could thus be expected to satisfy both a physicist like Einstein and a philosopher like Bergson at one and the same time.

Such are some of the features of the present work which is now completed and intended for dedicated disciples of the Guru and for earnest seekers of wisdom the world over. Such is the nature of the glad tidings with which this New Year greeting goes to all who love humanity, dear to us all who belong to One Kind, One Religion and One God representing the Absolute of all Values.

{ END }

ADVAITA DIPIKAM

THE LAMP OF NON-DUALITY

By NARAYANA GURU

(These nineteen verses were composed in Malayalam about seventy years ago. The translation is by Nataraja Guru.)

1

A thousand names and a thousand intelligibles
Comprise between them a thousand interest-items.
The world as such is real enough when not inquired into.
It is true only until one wakes from the dream. When awake
he is all there is.

2

The visible here has no truth in it. Viewed without the seer
One sees it as non-other. The universe makes thus
A mirage-like flow of consciousness. What stands as effect
Without its cause is non-other. What makes the wave is but
water alone.

3

From cloth to thread and to cotton, and then
To complex prime particles thus traced back,
All, like a (mirage) river in desert sands,
Is seen to spring from consciousness. The ultimate limit is
consciousness alone.

4

To a fully functioning will there is no universe
Nor even its seed of nescience.
Where a lit lamp is there, no darkness is near.
When the flame abandons the wick, the light goes out, and lo,
darkness comes.

5

Research reveals no world out there; nescience alone remains,
Presenting itself as the world to a non-truth-seeking mind.
It is the ghost that the light puts out,
For darkness to a coward is like a ghost.

6

As alternately coming to know as being and non-being,
What is stated to be real or unreal are mere presentiments
Whose nature is primordial nescience. On inquiry both
are naught.
The snake is not in a piece of rope; but the rope alone exist s.

7

One existence alone remains above all else, ever asserting again its own being.

All else passes and is unreal.

The (earthenware) forms of clay are not real;

What remains real is the clay itself.

8

Even at the time of ignorance we are not without awareness
Of existence-subsistence-value (*sat-chit-ananda*) looming in consciousness

In the form of an imagined snake out there with its real basis in the rope.

What stands *there* as the seen has the said (three factors) *here* again in verity for its reference.

9

Even when wisdom prevails and has effaced the whole world as meaningless,

It can still persist as given to the senses.

Even when a man has recovered from his wrong orientation

For some time thereafter he will continue to see the (wrong) directions as before.

10

The world is not in reality there. Everything looms as before
Even when all is cancelled-out by wisdom.

Even after one fully knows without doubt that the mirage has no water

It continues to exert its presence as before.

11

For a wise man the world is existence, and subsistence as the form of happiness.

Untruth is not a source of joy. To an ignorant man this is not clear.

For one who can see, happiness is a sun that is real.

But for one who cannot see, even the midday sun is a dark and empty thing.

12

There is one seed alone which manifests as many.

Herein there is no possibility of any specific ambiguity at all.

If a man, ignorant of the nature of rope should take a snake,

Would it then become a different reality from the rope?

13

On dividing one by one each part, and when all is separated,
Lo ! what a wonder, the world disappears !
In the same way, if one inquires further into these separate
parts,
One finds that one's own proper consciousness alone
comprises all.

14

The thread (as the cause) disappears into the cloth, likewise
does water into foam.
Thus, alas, by nescience all is lost.
So when all things are gone into their many effects,
Pure consciousness alone remains as the object of understanding.

15

Happiness exists ; it looms in consciousness ; it is one alone.
On treating oneself disjunct from it, nothing can exist or loom
at all.
The water of the mirage and the blue of the sky become unreal
And a blossom in the sky and the sky of a mirage gain ultimate
meaning again.

16

The Self has no egoism. Like a yogi through *maya's* semblance
In sport, it is here engaged in many ways.
Established in yoga and fully immobile,
Bearing many hypostatic forms, in creative joy the yogi remains.

17

It is only the immature seeker of Self-knowledge
Who takes the converse position against the man who doubts,
And not the one who has attained a stable understanding
The snake presentiment as being snake or rope is a confused
question, fully settled when the rope is seen.

18

Penetrating ever forward through each presented object,
Mental activity removes at every step the veil of nescience.
Even the knowledge resulting thereafter, like the eye which
follows
The lead of light, cannot see itself.

19

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.

[END]

WISDOM QUATRAINS

By AVADHOOT MAHENDRANATH

(These are from the author's book, reviewed on page 120)

WHAT man loves most he must in time, become ;
Stone if he loves stone ; fire if he loves fire,
Or if his love is for the Absolute,
He must, in time, attain his heart's desire.

Confusion is the path through endless books ;
Pretended learning, ignorance will hide :
The wise men throw away their books and take
Upanishads and Gita as their guide.

Resort to some excluded spot, apart ;
Have no possessions which you do not need :
From lust and anger you must cleanse the mind ;
From egoism, power and pride be freed.

GURUKULA NEWS

THE annual Convention of the Narayana Gurukula was held during the last week of December, 1966. On Jan. 1st, Nataraja Guru gave the message which will be found at the beginning of this issue.

With the exception of John Spiers who was indisposed, most of the immediate disciples and followers of the Guru in India were present. Sannyasini Ramarani (formerly Romarin Grazebrook) was initiated as a disciple by Swami Mangalananda.

Marc Gevaert, the Head of the Gurukula in Belgium, along with Walter de Buck the famous sculptor, Jan Brutsaert and Freddy Van der Borgh were also present. They had motored from Belgium, but due to extraordinary formalities they were forced to leave their car in Pakistan and so they came by air from Delhi. Jan is an architect and is assisting Walter with the design of a Brahmagvidya Mandiram (Institute for a Science of the Absolute) at Varkala. They will be visiting the Gurukula site at Erode (Madras State) and the new world centre at Ezhumalai Island (Cannanore District, Kerala State) in connection with buildings at both these places. Details about the Brahmagvidya Mandiram at Varkala will be given in VALUES in due course.

Nataraja Guru's programme is not finalized, but he expects to be in Trivandrum this month to have an operation for cataract. He will most probably be present at the Somanhalli Retreat (18 miles from Bangalore) during the celebration of his 72nd Birthday Anniversary, on Feb. 19.

Fred Haas and Nityachaitanya Yati were on tour of Kerala and other places during the first half of January. Fred will be back at Bangalore by Jan. 20 and Nitya at Delhi on Jan. 25.

7. European Contacts Old and New

By NATARAJA GURU

THE first night I spent at the Gevaert family table seemed to set the model unconsciously for many more similar nights in which I renewed old contacts and made new ones. After a few nights spent at Paul's house, helping his wife Nicole to keep Allan and his baby sister from getting into constant mischief, I was taken by Dr. Vercruysse to his quiet riverside home near the middle of Ghent.

The children's playroom and kitchenette on the top floor was to be all for myself. I spread out my belongings and settled down with my typewriter and papers around me while each night old acquaintances were renewed and new ones were made.

My interest was wholly in furthering my research in every possible direction for clarifying further my work on the Science of the Absolute. All my friends co-operated with me day after day as I explained each evening the new ideas that developed with me. Soon there was a regular group coming to listen to my talks. A Brussels group, led by Me. Vishnevsky, Count d'Arschot and his disciple Noel all came and sat around listening to me.

My early sleeping habits brought from India were rudely broken into. To compensate for this I slept long hours after breakfast so as not to feel dazed at the meetings later on. As I looked through the window of my bedroom I could see one of the canals linking the river Lys. I could also see the tall poplars and singing birds. There was also a boat tied up by some cruising holiday makers down the river where one could also see modern apartment skyscrapers of the latest match box style.

On Sunday the Gurukula party was fairly well represented at the country house and farm of Walter de Buck which is about 20 kilometers from Ghent. Walter is a sculptor and has already been to India where he spent some time in the Fernhill and Kaggalipura Gurukulas. He is now trying to build up a new home in rural surroundings. He belongs to a Flemish family and married an unsophisticated girl who does not care about the French refinements imported into Belgium, but prefers to remain a simple and honest Fleming. As the saying goes a Flemish woman is equal to a man in her ability to manage all normal affairs of life. Balzac went further and said she is the equal of two Frenchmen. Paula looked after her two children with little

complaint even when absent-minded Walter was absorbed in his own world of art causing him to forget about providing for the family table. In this he had a touch of the beatnik-artist, but the negative features of beatnikism get sublimated to a higher level. He was developing into a most popular type of artist-absolutist and had a group of disciples round him.

We were to have a Sunday picnic at his farm near the lowlands of the Dutch border. We found ourselves eating a grand lunch consisting of macaroni and cheese followed by large summer strawberries and cream. We lay lazily on the lawns under the tall fir-trees and could hear the cuckoo so often associated with the cuckoo clock in almost every rustic house in Europe. Both clock and bird succeed in epitomizing the spirit of late spring or summer producing the same echo in the lazy contemplative listener lying on the grass under the trees. Poets and poetasters have often sung the glory of this silly sounding bird whose more respectable counterpart is the *koel* of India. The *koel's* long drawn out notes have inspired Indian poets and mystics. Kalidasa's play *Sakuntala* praises the *koel*. The content of this mystical feeling is perhaps milder and more diffuse compared with the strong response produced by the European cuckoo bursting the human heart at the beginning of summer. The bird and the song are both interchangeable terms, as also the seasons that correspond to the cuckoo or the *koel*, irrespective of time or clime. No wonder therefore that the bird has often been compared to an internal spirit side by side with its feathered fellow creature of almost equal representation, the skylark. I remember how the sound of the cuckoo made a deeper impression on me this time. The bird was more than a bird.

After a day spent in leisurely laziness where Dr. Vercruyse also mixed with the more disreputable hobos, forgetting his professional status in the city, we returned to town just before night-fall. There was another dinner served by Walter in which jugs of *sambhar* and *rasam* were made, with *chapatties*. We all sat on the ground eating with our fingers and finished off the pile of *chapatties* like primitive cave men. Refinement was ruled out and everyone entered into a gourmandising unity of spirit through gluttony. Nobody seemed shocked.

Sunday Gatherings and the Last Talk with Father Gevaert : Sunday lunch gatherings were a feature which had become a habit carried over from my previous visit to Latem St. Martin when the Gurukula was located in a cottage of its own in a quiet riverside location. In principle that Gurukula was supposed to have been absorbed by the new house which Marc Gevaert, the eldest of the disciples, was moving into after his marriage to Martine Christophe, now better known as the mother of that rare character Natasha already mentioned.

Somehow married life and the open ways of the Gurukula did not seem to go together, in spite of the open-mindedness

(Continued on page 123)

WHAT EUROPE MEANS TO ME (5)

By JOHN SPIERS

IF the European is to be delivered from his present condition of distrust of all values, he must realize his own spiritual roots. My task now is to show where these roots are. It is not a matter of reviving what really has never died, but of revaluation of his own psychic and spiritual heritage.

What should be first recognized is that Europe has two main Pagan spiritual centres. One belongs to the Mediterranean or Middle Sea region, with Greece as its centre; the other to the European mainland, the Middle Land, with its centre in Germany.

The spiritual and philosophical importance of the Greek and Roman legacy is familiar enough, but the other which includes the Teutonic, Scandinavian, Slavonic and Celtic, has been much neglected. When you consider the matter, it would be strange if this greater portion of European people had no religious, spiritual and philosophical values of their own, and had to look outside and borrow everything spiritual from Greeks, Phoenicians, Cretans, Romans, Egyptians and others living in the region of the Middle Sea!

The Latin-Teutonic Complex: Conquerors always carry their gods with them. Caesar's armies brought the gods of Rome even as far as my home in Perthshire in Scotland. When it came to power, the Church continued the principle. The priest spoke in Latin and discouraged the native languages. This latinization can be compared with the parallel of the brahmin in India using hieratic Sanskrit for his own caste ends. One language was favoured at the expense of the other. Language being a direct product of the psyche, containing *meaning* which is part of the nature of the Absolute, it is among the most precious things, and to tamper with language is to tamper with the soul. All propagandists know this. The replacement of native tongues means the withering of old soul and its wisdom which language bears. This is what happened in Europe. The Romans, followed by the Church, ousted the native tongues in favour of Latin, and succeeded in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, but not in the other parts of Europe. The Teutonic regions remained largely unaffected.

Germany was the impossible land for both Roman and Christian Establishments. From the time of Julius Caesar an emotional or psychic cloud has hung over the name Germany because the Germans refused to be latinized. Caesar's armies

had to retreat from the Rhine and his soldiers were scared with the terrors of the impenetrable Hercynian Forest of those days. Thus the Germans were regarded as unrefined barbarians and thoroughly feared.

In the fifth century the Germans—known as Visigoths, Ostro-Goths and Vandals—took over Christian Rome and established themselves in places as distant as Spain and Sicily. The Church rallied its forces, formed its armies of Knights, and returned to power. Determined that such an invasion would not be repeated, the Church remained militant and encircled the unruly, recalcitrant area. It was, however, again in Germany, one thousand years later, that the internal Protestant revolt against Rome occurred, in the sixteenth century. The Roman Church never recovered from this blow. You must note also that this revolt spread chiefly through the non-latinized or semi-latinized countries. It is true that the French Revolution of 1789 was politically important, but, despite allegiance to "the goddess Reason", it had practically no effect on the Church, which is almost as strong in France as ever it was.

In all its spheres of influence and in the latinized countries, the Church encouraged a hatred of Germany, easily intensified in the present century after two German-centred wars. Nobody approves of Hitler's genocidal attack on the Jews. But hatred of the Jews is a part of Church doctrine, a fact which it is psychologically interesting to note is always conveniently forgotten. It was this doctrine which made the Ghettos. It was this doctrine which drove the parents of the philosopher Spinoza to flight from Spain and seek asylum in Protestant Amsterdam three hundred years ago. Even in distant India the Jews of Cochin have told me harrowing tales of how they were driven there from their thousand-year-old settlement in nearby Cranganore which from the times of the ancient Greeks, had been the chief port of Malabar, by the Portuguese Christians.

The Heart of Europe: What is called the coarseness of the Germans, applied by extension also to the Irish, Scots, Slavs, Scandinavians, Dutch and Flemish, with other derogatory terms such as heavy, slow, dull, rough, wild, shiftless, crude, and so forth, is really a homely peasant dislike of polished refined manners and pretensions. There is nothing superficial about the Germans and these allied peoples. Their nature is warm and earthy. It is closer to the forests and hills than to the cities. The earthly spirit, a rock-bottom sincerity, is rightly feared by all closed groups, by all pretenders masked by bourgeois culture.

Is it not paradoxically odd that these terrible northern barbarians should be foremost, not only in skilled craftsmanship and invention, but also in speculative philosophy? Mysticism which burst through creed and dogma, began in Europe with John the Scot and later through the group known as the Rhineland Mystics. Without the German contribution from Kant to

Wittgenstein, what philosophy would be left in modern times? Do we not see here the Pagan European inquiring spirit? Surely too, it is this same spirit which inspired the Germans to do so much in bringing Indian philosophy to the Western world. As A. L. Basham writes: "Probably the greatest achievement of Indological scholarship in 19th century Europe was the enormous Sanskrit-German Dictionary generally known as the St Petersburg Lexicon, produced by the German scholars Otto Bochtlingk and Rudolph Roth."

This is what I call great bridge-building. A. W. von Schlegel was appointed to the first chair for Sanskrit philology at Bonn in 1815 and a few years later he published the *Bhagavad Gita*. Today there are departments for Indian studies at the universities of Hamburg, Bonn, Munich, Marburg, Tuebingen and Goettingen, and chairs at eight other universities. There are great names like Bopp, Max Mueller and Paul Deussen. This immense interest stems from a mutual Pagan sympathy. Philosophic interests and plain earthiness nearly always go together. The Germans were late to become civilized and modern. The Slavs came still later. My own impression is that the Russians, when they have exhausted the limits of the doctrine of Marxism—and it is by no means so rigid as it used to be—will bring out their pre-Christian, "Viking"-originated philosophy in a purer form. Fixed ideologies, like fixed religions, ultimately wither away. But spiritual roots belonging to the Great Unconditioned remain and reappear in revalued forms to meet the needs of the soul in the ever-flowing pattern of time.

Thus the charge of being only half-civilized is in fact something of a compliment. It means being a freedom-loving half-Pagan. And this the German peoples (in my extended sense of "German" or "Teutonic") still are. They are not conditioned or tamed. That is one reason why they are feared. That is also why I see this great body of Europeans with the actual Germans as the heart of Europe. Of course it is "dangerous" when a phenomenally crazed absolutist like Hitler uses this pagan potential for ego-maniacal ends. But surely it is infinitely superior in value to the trashy boredom of the mechanized welfare state which has no values whatsoever, either positive or negative, and which at the same time confronts its adherent slaves with the utter zero of the Atom Bomb and the ash-grey snow fall-out of death.

Sources and Symbols: When a religion and philosophy go underground, one way by which they survive is through folklore and customs. Folklore is a harmless-sounding euphemism used only in Europe to describe the mythology, beliefs and legends of a people. Europeans have no hesitation in calling the same stores of beliefs of the ancient Greeks, Polynesians.

1. P. 6, *The Wonder That Was India* (Grove Press, New York, 1954).

Peruvians or Japanese as religion, but when it is their own beliefs and legends, their own Pagan religious literature, their own storehouse of symbols and rituals, the Christian centuries of fear and shame make them give it this quaint, mild, inoffensive, weak label. But it is far from being weak. Indeed by the law of reaction, the more the suppression, the greater the explosion and vitality of the suppressed material in the depths of the psyche. To use the terminology of Jung, whose labours almost alone in this field are inestimable, the European is afraid to look at the contents of his Collective Unconscious. His mind, moulded by the threats, dogmas and conditionings of Church, science and the state, which is the *Collective Conscious*, assures him that this material is all innocuous, all harmless, and he is lulled into accepting this facile conclusion.

In the Orient, where Paganism lives freely in the open, symbols and idols are visible everywhere. You have only to see the temples of South India covered with symbolic sculptures. Or visit the Haw Par (Tiger Balm) gardens in Singapore and see what a richness Mahayana Buddhism can produce! Just to call it mythology is not to lessen its power or the solace and richness it gives to the soul. Human beings cannot do without myth. If one myth is driven out another takes its place. They are not single-meaning abstract Words like art, science, France, India. Myth and its component symbols constitute the only language through which the Absolute, the Unconditioned or the Unconscious, communicates with the personal ego. The words for the named Absolute, such as God, the Great Designer, the One, Nature, Spirit, Matter are mythological terms which have many meanings. It is through myth that the complexity of the many has value.

The religious or intuitional part of our nature is far more powerful, and brings us closer to the self than the small section dealt with by the pedestrian scientist with his models of a physical universe. The lotus as *Nelumbium speciosum* is a single determined object. But the sacred lotus as a symbol of the Atman or Self has infinite meanings; indeed it is in its unknown (to the conscious mind) possibilities of meaning that the symbol is what it is. If everything about it was known it would cease to be a symbol and would descend to the level of conscious physical things. What we call its mystery is what makes it a symbol, because reality itself carries mystery. Mystery cannot be fitted into single meaningness. But mystery and plenitude of meaning can and do come together in the great symbols which the Absolute has thrown out in the psyche of humans everywhere.

Now it would be incredible if all the people of the world except the European had a rich store of myths which they could call their own. And if we know where to look, we shall find the myth-world and symbols of the European as fantastically crowded with imagery and legend and story as anything out of Asia. And remember, what I am referring to is neither Chris-

tian, Greek nor Roman. The sources are in alchemy, in fairy and witch stories, in the treasures of symbology and ritual found in the Hermetic, Rosicrucian and Freemasonic brotherhoods, in the traditions of witchcraft and the surviving Pagan festivals found throughout continental Europe, and last but not least in the sacred legendary literature of the Celtic, Scandinavian and Germanic lands.

This religious and spiritual material is often difficult to bring together, or to see as an integrated whole, but this does not make it any the less important. On the contrary, its effect has been and still is tremendous. The analogy of the iceberg applies here. An iceberg which rises to one hundred feet above the ocean will have eight times its visible volume hidden in the ocean and may be a thousand feet in depth. Similarly there is an oceanic quality in myth and symbol, because these manifestations are only visible indications of the Absolute which brought them forth.

The Strange World of Alchemy: This richness of symbols and dreamlike quality reveals itself in most extraordinary fashion in alchemy. Alchemy was fashionable in the late Middle Ages and indulged in by kings. The alchemist with his laboratory full of odd and magical furnishings was often a subject for artists. The extant literature on alchemy is immense. Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy* indexes over five hundred books, both ancient and modern.

Just to glance at the three hundred illustrations in this book is to enter into a world which fascinates because it is not only the world of my immediate ancestors, but because it is at once strange and familiar.

Here you will see snakes swallowing their tails, hermaphroditic figures half-king, half-queen, fabulous animals, gryphons, dragons, unicorns, cosmic man stretched across the heavens, with the symbols of the zodiac, figures with multiple heads, trees growing out of the male genitals, other trees which are born out of the flames, homunculi, peacocks emerging from retorts, eagles covered with eyes, feathered men and oak leaf men, the caduceus with intertwined snakes, figures which are half-human, half-serpents, *mandala* quaternions, pentagrams, interlaced triangles, god-faced suns and moons and planets, strange palaces reaching up to heaven. It is the world that we understand by the word magic. Although it evokes our wonder and puzzles us, you should remember that it was entirely meaningful to the people who employed this language of symbols, the picture language of proto-linguism. Right up to the end of the eighteenth century thousands of scholars and philosophers used this language.

Modern historians and physicists make it out to be an early form of chemistry. Although it was nothing of the kind, this is what those who understood this language properly hoped it

would be taken for and so deceive the authorities of the Church. The philosopher-chemists even encouraged the pretence that they were in search of the secret of making gold from base metals such as lead. To quote Jung here:

"Whereas in the Church the increasing differentiation of ritual and dogma alienated consciousness from its natural roots in the unconscious, alchemy and astrology were ceaselessly engaged in preserving the bridge to nature, i. e., to the unconscious psyche, from decay. Astrology led consciousness back again and again to the knowledge of Heimarmene, that is, the dependence of character and destiny on certain moments in time and alchemy afforded numerous 'hooks' for the projection of those archetypes which could not be fitted smoothly into the Christian process. It is true that alchemy always stood on the verge of heresy and that certain decrees leave no doubt as to the Church's attitude towards it, but on the other hand it was effectively protected by the obscurity of its symbolism, which could always be explained as harmless."³

The Typical Case of Freemasonry: If alchemy was a clever device for preserving the wisdom of pre-Christian Europe, other means came into existence when alchemy itself declined. Alchemy could not be reconciled philosophically with the empiricism of chemistry, so by the seventeenth century it faded out. A new device was called for, and this was found first in Hermeticism and in Rosicrucianism, and then finally in Freemasonry.

The old medieval guild systems offered a model. Skilled artisans protected their interests by forming secret associations. Freemasonry adopted this pattern and, as a further measure of safety, based its philosophy on the familiar biblical record (in *I Kings*, 6 and 7) of the building of the Temple of King Solomon. Thus the vulgar eye was avoided by its secrecy, while anything that leaked out regarding its symbolism could be, as in the case of alchemy, reconciled with a Christian allegory. But although the biblical story was there, it was far from the intention of spreading either Judaism or Christianity. Indeed, Freemasonry was under deep suspicion and even persecution by the Church.

Certainly the Church had reasons. Freemasonry is a typical product of Pagan Europe. Its symbolism and ritual can be equated with what existed in Druid times, and also with the witch tantra cults of Christianized Europe. Still further back it could be traced ritually to the Pagan Mysteries of the various religions, Apollonic, Dionysian, Cybellian, Orphic and particularly to the Mithraic. Freemasonry's affinity with the latter is clear from the study of the remains of Mithraic temples, as one may see from the descriptions and illustrations given by Franz Cumont.⁴ Both the Church and Freemasonry used the Mithraic

3. *ibid.*, p. 34.

4. See text and particularly the illustrations in *The Mysteries of Mithra*, Franz Cumont, translation by Thomas J. McCormack (Dover Publications, New York, 1956).

ritual, but whereas the Church made a hotch-potch of it, Freemasonry kept strictly to the open or faithful Pagan purpose of both ceremony and symbols.

This purpose, like that behind the symbolism of alchemy, was the preparation and guidance of the initiate for Self-illumination. This great aim may not be well known, any more than the superficial visitor, innocent of Europe's secret life of symbols, and who judges from outward appearances, can have any deep knowledge of the power of such organizations as Freemasonry in preserving the way or the Dharma which in Pagan religions is made a central feature. This involves a discipline with its "degrees" leading the neophyte from darkness to spiritual light. Freemasonry could hardly have spread round the world, with its membership drawn from all the great faiths, if it had been just an esoteric quasi-Christian or Judaic cult. Today its membership is around six millions.

A Glimpse into the World of Symbols: I am not a Freemason, but I do claim to have some understanding of the language of symbols. My own field of interest here is that most popular of all pre-Christian sciences, astrology, and when you know the symbology of one, you have a key to the reading of the symbol-languages of the others. Symbols tell me more than perhaps the main body of Freemasonry members know themselves. I would first ask them where they think their symbols originated. I would ask them to study symbolism itself which is only esoteric in the way that the Absolute, the Tao or the Unconditioned, or Nirvana is a Mystery only to be understood by direct experience and impossible to reduce to dictionary meaning. I would ask Freemasons also to investigate the unity of symbols in both Europe and Asia. How in every region, in every group of humans, with different backgrounds and histories, the same symbols emerge, is surely itself a proof of the sameness of the Absolute everywhere, with a power of projecting into the crystalline mind of the personality-dissolved enlightened seeker, the great truths in these symbolic forms. Such grand images, what Jung calls archetypes, have appeared in the innumerable varying consciousnesses of innumerable ego-bound personalities too, but in their dreams, as baffling and disturbing efforts of the Self to speak to the world-bound personality.

As I see it, then, the basis of Freemasonry is a view of man as the identical Temple which is the *same* as the Cosmos itself, which is the universal Model. The visible Cosmos with all its wonder and awesome beauty (so superbly described by Plotinus) is itself a symbol of the Absolute. The tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* says the same thing. In Freemasonry the seeker has to rebuild his Tabernacle. On one side there is his disciplined ascent through various degrees of initiation, grades on the way to perfection, which means the dropping-off of all forms of ego-consciousness, the renunciation of narrow closed ways in the interests of the Brotherhood of All. It is the Great Work,

the *Magnum Opus*, parallel of the *Opus Alchymicum* which Freemasonry took over.

In the building of this Temple which is the perfection of man, it is interesting to note that King Hiram of Tyre is asked by the Guru Solomon to prepare all the parts of the Temple, the wood and stone, in advance, so that when the construction actually is done there will be no sound of chipping or hammering. This is to indicate the contemplative character of the final process.

The coping-stone or keystone of the arch is another spiritual symbol. Because of its odd shape it is overlooked or rejected. But it is really the most central and important of all the stones of the Temple. It corresponds to the Philosopher's Stone, the *lapis philosophorum* of the alchemists, the stone which turns everything to pure gold. This pure gold is the supreme value which is the nature of the Self. It is the same as the crest-jewel of intuitive or *turiya* insight, the same as the intelligence-gem or *Chintamani* of Indian symbology, which fulfils all desires. It is there all the time, but unwanted. It is the value-stone of the human arch, neutral above all the contraries of the individual stones of the dualistic pillars, giving to each their value and always balancing all opposites. To know this man has to be naked of all his accumulated possessions, to regain the nature of the lost child, to be like some untutored primitive of pure nature who in sympathy or yoga has never lost identity with the whole.

Then there is the black and white chequer-board pattern of the floor of the Lodge. This is the world of the physicist, of time and space measurement. It is the relativistic base on which the warp and woof of the universe is constructed. But high above is the All-seeing Eye, never closed and therefore divine, for the gods never blink. In India, Siva's Queen is known as Min-akshi or "Fish-Eyed" who reigns in Madurai, ancient city of the Tamils. This is also the *jnana-chakshus*, the wisdom-eye of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is beyond waking and sleeping.

I have taken the example of Freemasonry without touching on its ritual which gives dramatic actuality to the symbols, and chosen Freemasonry rather than alchemy to indicate a fragment of the spiritual riches which Europe hides away; because to deal with alchemy would require more space than I have at my disposal.

The Devil as the Siva of Europe: A devout worshipper of the Indian Siva cannot be expected to look with cold scientific eyes at his God. He is a worshipper and not a mythologist or anthropologist. In the same way the average European who has been brought up within the Christian fold (whether he accepts it or not in later years is of no consequence) cannot be expected to be quite rational when the subject is the Devil. Just as Siva belongs to the Unconditioned Self of the Indian,

so does the Devil as an autochthonous deity forcibly painted evil by the Church, belong to the same Unconditioned Self of the European.

When a Siva *bhakta* enters a Siva temple he surrenders himself to a special numinous mood. In such an exalted state there is no use trying to reason with him, because he is beyond the limitations of the world of causal relationships. But a European can look rationally at the religious situation. He will see merely a stone lingam or a stone bull and a man lying on the ground prone before the image. Again, the European can look without any inner disturbance at the three-faced, horned, nude Siva yogi depicted on the seals of old Mohenjodaro.

If, however, I were to point out that this same Siva, under a new form, born afresh from the same matrix of the Unconditioned Absolute is really that ancient God of Europe, now called the Devil, and that this Devil, horns and all, had been his God for at least 17,000 years, and if I were to produce all the proofs of what I say from ancient sources, starting from the frescoes on the walls of prehistoric caves in France and Spain, at les Trios Freres or Altamira, or in the stone yogi-sculptures of the Germans and Celts in pre-Christian or Druidic times, and, further, if I were to remind him that in the religions of the Mediterranean world there was Dionysos with horns and the great symbol of fertility, the lingam or phallus, and Pan the Universal God of Nature (Pan in Greek means "everywhere") and that after Christianity the same horned, contemplative ecstatic God was regarded quite naturally as the arch-enemy of the moralizing jealous Jehovah of the Church, and was therefore considered as Pagan and evil, but who as the Devil was a God whose power was never subdued or lost, a God who still lived in the oceanic depths of his psyche, if, as I say, I were to show the European all this, and he could face the situation without a shudder, and see its value, he would be at once released from most of his inner conflicts. I say this because the great need of the European is for a religion which agrees with his own regional conditions.

This ancient God of the Siva type of religion, is what best fits the character of the European. Called the Devil, this Cernunnos the Horned One as the Romans called him, the great Lord of Druids and forest yogis, the God of the ancestors who you will remember, I mentioned had "spoken" to me, is the Lord of life and procreation. He insists on the virtue of sex, saying that sex is sin, something Jesus never said but which was propagated by Paul the pervert who is the real author of the Church and not Jesus.

When sex is given its divine place and dealt with without the sense of guilt, as it is for instance in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, it takes its proper place without all the distortions and the pruderies and fears or, worse still, the promiscuities and exaggerations which we see everywhere in civilized society

today. Sex needs its rightful place in human life, that is all. A religion which denies sex cannot be good for the happiness or betterment of man.

On the other hand, if there is a religion, with a "Devil" God who stands for such a joyous worship, and if this "Devil" is accepted face to face, the shudder would change to ecstasy and the European would once again draw spiritual vitality from his own numinous roots which are deep in the global soil which knows neither east nor west, although the trees and the flowerings above the soil may be varied. The European who achieves this has a measure of values which is what he most needs. He needs this old or revalued type of religion to enable him to have communion with the Absolute, with wonder. Taking over or borrowing from other religions won't work, because they are not really his own, but he can share his experience with them, only he has to have his own experience first. Instead of frittering away his life with useless things which solve no real problems, things like politics, science and even art, the European would have a new enthusiasm of the spirit. This type of religion, of his own, would link him up with the Siva religion of the East, a religion which all Europeans who have been bold enough to examine sympathetically find that it agrees with their nature. To state it axiomatically, Siva is the "Devil" of the East, just as the "Devil" is the Siva of the West.

This religion of Cernunnos, Siva, Dionysos, Pan, so easily recognizable because it glorifies sex and dismisses society and cities and is natural, is the oldest religion of mankind. It takes man back to the primordial world of Nature, the world of hylozoism, of the animals, of everything that is alive, of mountain and stream, forest stars and flowers and winds and clouds. If man is to be happy, in Europe or anywhere, it is into this world of Nature that he must fit, and not into the world of silly mechanics of bricks and banks, barracks and jails and factories and churches, and all these mean and mediocre things which give him absolutely nothing for his psychic hunger.

Man belongs to Nature, not as a conqueror but as an integral part to be harmonized with her in every respect. What is natural can only be good, whatever the priest with their distorted minds may say. What is needed here is not the priest who stands between man and God, but a Guru to lead the way to final yogic realization. The Guru is merely a guide, a *psychopompos* as the Greeks called the leader of the soul.

Who Were the Witches? This European Siva or Devil religion was once the universal faith of the entire confederation of peoples and tribes comprising the German, Scandinavian, Slavonic and Celtic regions. It was held together by the Arch-Druid, the Forest Guru, the word Druid meaning a Man of Wisdom.

This religion had its own stores of learning, an unsurpassed intimacy with Nature, knowledge of the ways and even language

of animals and birds, of weather secrets, of astrology, of medicine and of the magical potencies of sound. This nature-based faith had its temples in the caverns which are now the crypts of Christian Churches and Cathedrals, its ashrams in the forest for men and its colleges for men and its colleges for women on certain secluded islands, such as that of Sena at the mouth of the river Loire. A high place was given to women, with the worship of the Great Mother (counterpart of Siva).

Disciples gathered regularly round the horned Guru figure. Such gatherings, later to be called covens, persisted throughout the Christian period, even during the times of the Inquisition and the ferocious witch-hunt. For these men and women followers of the Old faith were known as witches, and the fact that, like Joan of Arc, they never disavowed their faith is sufficient evidence of their sincerity. Horror stories about their sacrificing babies or virgins can be dismissed and have no more basis in fact than similar stories about Napoleon or the Germans. It is the same with stories of the Black Mass. The faithful had no need to imitate anything Christian even backwards! When the Church missionaries first went to Tibet they were shocked to find the Tibetan Buddhist ritual in the *gompas* or lamaseries to be almost the same as that of the Church.

A milder name for the believers, particularly in Ireland and France was the name the Fairy Folk, the Good people, or the Tuatha de Danann. They were both liked and feared, because of their unusual powers, and they were remarkable for their ability to disappear out of sight, long experience having taught them how to hide on moorland and mountain. Partly because it was the colour of nature, and partly because of the camouflage, the "fairies" wore green clothes. The fairies or witches were human after all, but so much in accord with nature that they got the reputation of being magical immortals. The notion that fairies were diminutive etherial beings and not human arose partly because of Shakespeare's treatment in his *Midsummer Nights Dream*. As Dr Murray wittily says: "The traditional costume of the fairy godmother is precisely similar to that of the witch, both women carry sticks—a wand or a crutch—with which they perform magic, both can turn human beings into animals, both can appear or disappear at will. In short, the real difference is that one is a dainty old lady and the other is a dirty old woman."⁵

Folk-Tales and Fairy Stories: It is only recently that the fairy story or folk tale has been studied as a source of traditional popular mythology rich in religious symbol, and belonging to pre-Christian times. Enormous masses of material have accumulated in all the countries of Europe. The richest sources, naturally, are in those countries which became civilized last—parts of Ire-

5. p.40, *The God of the Witches* (Anchor, Doubleday, New York, 1960)

land, the Highlands of Scotland, certain regions of Wales, Scandinavia, Germany and Russia and the Balkans.

Over one hundred years ago the Brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm were the first to make a serious collection of what in India would be known as *Puranas*. These were all stories handed down, and not rewritten or newly made-up. The difference is very marked from that, say, of the Danish Andersen's Fairy Tales, which always conclude with a moral. They are very thin bourgeois soup compared with the rich vital fare of the German Grimm collection. I got both, as a child, and remember preferring the Grimm collection, instinctively, I suppose.

When these stories are regarded, not as being for children, but as preserving the mythological wisdom of the Old Religion, they become at once the equal of the mythological literature of any of the ancient Pagan countries, as significant, let us say, as the myths of the Greek world. They are full of nature imagery, of shape-changing, of transformation from ugliness to beauty, of the triumph of the poor and unfortunate, of boons, the pursuit of proper values and the magic power of the mantra word. They are well stocked with wise old men and women who help the hero or heroine with advice. There are giants and dwarfs who again can be equated with spiritual values. The setting is often the forest which is the region of mystery and the Unconditioned. But every story can be interpreted symbolically with reference to the search for certainty and value. Jung's *Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales*⁶ is helpful here.

Even under regimes which actively oppose religion, the fairy tale is approved. This is very remarkable. The Communist States in fact, have published some of the most beautiful books of fairy tales, including all the ingredients, witches and dragons and humans in animal form (theriomorphism) and all the other symbolic figures of this form of literature. The ideological contradiction of this with official Marxism can be accounted for only by the fact that the numinous or wonderful, the urge behind religion, which is of the Absolute Self, when driven out from one side, returns with greater and more subtle force from another acceptable side. One door closes on the Absolute, but simultaneously another door quietly opens.

The world of these Russian fairy-tale books is rural, even medieval and the very opposite of the world of skyscrapers, factories, hydroelectric dams, scientific studies and mechanization. I see this as one more example of the Janus-like split character of the European soul. Technologically hard-boiled on the surface, this does not represent the whole truth. Behind the working world of Marxian ideology and five year plans, the Russian yearns for simplicity for nature and the intuitional values which thrive on symbol and the ancient ways. It is a longing which has not been

6. p.61 ff. *Psyche and Symbol* (Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, 1958

suppressed even after fifty years of materialistic or atheistic indoctrination! Marxism here is just a temporary mask worn for political ephemeral ends which will one day be discarded when its values have been exhausted. It cannot compete with the eternal verities.

The Sacred Books of the West: How many Europeans who consider themselves well-informed know about their own sacred literature? They will be knowledgeable about the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Dhammapada*, the sermons of Zen Abbots of China, and they will know the Greek and Roman writers from Plato to Cicero, from Homer to Virgil; but if they were asked about the Scandinavian *Eddas*, of the *Mabinogion* of Wales, of the *Nibelungenlied* of Germany, of the *Tain Bo Chuailgne* of Ireland, how many could give an answer?

Even the writers, with few exceptions, who present this literature, become apologetic, lacking sympathy with the Pagan spirit of the works, and so approach this essentially sacred literature with a cold attitude, or even err on the other side by being poetic affected, treating the material aesthetically.

As we might expect, many writers and translators have a strong Christian prejudice. When they meet with Pagan virtues which are as good as anything Christian, they say the Pagans borrowed it. A typical example is found in an official Norwegian publication which has just come to my hand. The author in his Foreword writes: "Thus, some scholars believe that Balder the Good, who, innocent and pure, suffers death but comes back after the destruction of the world, is a heathen Christ-figure. Another trend, which is no doubt due to the influence of Christianity, is that the Almighty who rules over everything shall come from above, after Ragnarok (the Twilight of the Gods), and pronounce judgment."

Similar absurd claims have been made about Buddhism and about Christian borrowings in the Tamil *Tirukkural*, so it is hardly a surprise to find Christians adopting the same Procrustian device in the religion of their own Pagan past.

Almost as ridiculous is the suggestion that the Gods of Northern Europe were lifted from the Olympians of ancient Greece. As Charles Squire has put it: "Divinities should, surely, seem the inevitable outgrowth of the land they move in! How strange Apollo would appear, naked among icebergs, or fur-clad Thor striding under groves of palms!"

7. p.5, *Of Gods and Giants, Norse Mythology*, by Harald Hveberg, translated by Pat Shaw Iversen, prepared in cooperation with the Office of Cultural Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Tanum Forlag, Oslo, 1962).

8. p.4, *Celtic Myth and Legend, Poetry and Romance* (Gresham, London)

There is no country in Europe without its authentic body of sacred traditions, in one or more of the various kinds of sources that I have mentioned. Even although much has been tampered with by priests or monks, or given a coating of Christian paint (such as in the case of the Arthurian and Grail legends⁹), it is usually not difficult to separate the original from the spurious emendations. The great *Eddas* which are prime sources, and the heroic epics of Ireland, Wales and Germany, can be fitted together to make one whole, as legend parallels legend, with the names of the heroes varying from one land to another. The epics of Cuchulain or Siegfried are as worthy of study as the *Odyssey* or the *Ramayana* but are far less known.

In Druid times, it was the function of the poet-prophets to preserve the wisdom for the people in popular form. They were variously called *skald* in Norway, *Faith* in Ireland, *Bard* in Wales and *Vate* by the Romans. In my own time the tradition was still living in the Scottish Highlands, where the story-teller poet would hold the company of peasants in some humble cottage, entranced with the ancient tales of Gods and heroes and the Fairy Peolpe.¹⁰ This method of oral transmission, outside the written word, is common throughout the world. Chanted repetition, day after day, of the versed material, can give incredible results in memorization. In India there are thousands of Indians who can repeat the whole of the seven hundred verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* and a few who can repeat the entire *Rig Veda* of ten volumes of verses.

It is not my purpose here to summarize, let alone give quotations from this vast literature of Pagan Europe. It seems to me the first step needed is to do justice to it by bringing it all out into the open correctly without the meddling condescension of anthropologists, folklorists and the interference of antagonistic Christian interpreters. It should be recognized as essential reading and study for all who claim to know what Europe means, far more important than Shakespeare, Goethe or Dante or other great names in familiar secular literature. This is above all *sacred* literature and if Max Mueller could bring out his grand series called *The Sacred Books of the East*, a similar qualified person is needed to edit with a body of scholar experts what could justifiably be called *The Sacred Books of the West*.

Quite seriously I submit that if the European is to save his soul he must return to his own Gods, to his own Siva type of

9. see my essay *Arthur, the Green Knight and the Grail Fraud* in *VALUES*, May 1965.

10. for a good description of such a *celidh* as it is called in Gaelic, see the introduction to *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, by W. Y. Evans-Wenz (Oxford, 1911)

religion. Prejudices must be exposed. He must rid himself of his horror of idols, realize the slander which has made the Guru-God into what the Church calls the Devil, and the faithful to be called witches.

What is to be done with Christianity? First to realize the distinction between the pure teachings of Jesus as a Guru and the closed travesty of that teaching with a closed Church. The Christian religion can find its place if, and only if, it becomes like the great Hindu faiths, tolerant and kindly disposed towards all religions. If Christians persist in being superior and in fighting other faiths, then their religion must wither away. There cannot be any doubt about this. The example of the Christian Mystics can be held up as showing the correct attitude.

There should be a return to Guruhood. That is the secret. It is through Guruhood that all faiths become tolerable each to the other. Guruhood supplies the values in life because it is a recognition of the Absolute Self which is the measure of all values, the highest being the Guru who has reached the position of being a spokesman for the Absolute unconditioned at all levels.

The two great focal centres of European religion and philosophy, the Celtic-Germanic and the Mediterranean can share their wisdom which in any case is the same at the Guru-philosophic level.

A few Europeans can come to India and achieve the freedom and happiness of the Pagan way of life and find Guruhood and walk the absolutist path. But the great majority of Europeans cannot do this. Nor can the Gods of India be transported to the temperate and cold soil of Europe. Nor need this be necessary, since the European has his own Paganism and his own veritable Gods who are the counterpart of the deities of India. It is for the European to seek them out and be paganized not from without but from within. Every region has its own numinous background. This is not a patriotic statement. A Guru has no special land but only human beings who each have their own conditioning, their backgrounds of climate and geography and history, interior as well as external. The Guru has to use many idioms. He brings the same absolutist water to the oak and the palm. Both are precious. No seeker can be disadopted and all are precious.

My aim in writing this essay is largely educative for my readers both in the East and in the West, in the hope that these two sections of humanity can reach understanding in the light of a science of the Absolute.

[BND]

AN ABSOLUTIST SONG

A MOST precious volume of Hindu *bhakti* verses has come into my possession recently called *Sanatana Dharma Gita* (Song of the Eternal Wisdom)* by Shri Avadhoot Mahendranath. The author, an Englishman by chance-birth, is a Hindu *bhakta* by choice, with his own guru who initiated him into the *avadhoot* tradition.

The most wonderful thing about this short work of 147 verses, is how faithful the author is to the genuine absolutist *bhakti* tradition of India. The term *bhakti* is most difficult to translate into English. This is because the religious outlook of the Hindu is so different from the ordinary western Church Christian. A completely open and dynamic form of absolutist mysticism is perhaps the best translation that can be given to the term. Shri Avadhoot Mahendranath completely allies himself with this ancient and noble spiritual tradition.

Sanatana Dharma, which is usually associated with exclusive caste Vedism, has been revalued by the author to mean "eternal wisdom." He tells us that the path of *bhakti* and the *avadhoot* way is open to all. One must become spiritually naked and pure, or as the Taoists say, one must become "like an uncarved block." Indians are a deeply religious people, and when the religious mood expressed is of such a high absolutist quality, like here in the *Sanatana Dharma Gita*, it is a joy to behold and worthy of the highest praise.

The author is also to be congratulated on being able to express the essence of Hindu *bhakti* in the difficult language of English. This is not always easy to do. His style is simple and direct, and he convincingly speaks from his heart. The reader is not compelled to do anything. The Avadhoot does not seek converts and he has no special doctrine to expound. As a singer of the Absolute he is beyond all special doctrines and creeds.

I highly recommend this book to all lovers of absolutist Hindu *bhakti*. It is good to read a book of *bhakti* verses that can so easily stand alongside the verses of other great names in the *bhakti* tradition like Tukuram, Tirujnanasambandar, Chokamela, Sundaramurthy, Jnaneswara, Mirabai, and others.

[END]

* Published by Ishvarlal S. Thakore, 171 Ghashiramni Pole, Sarangpur, Ahmedabad, Gujarat State. Copies can be secured from the publisher for Re. 1 each.

BLACK FOREST TREES

By D. H. LAWRENCE

IT is the edge of the Black Forest—sometimes the Rhine far off, on its Rhine plain, like a bit of magnesium ribbon. But not today. Today only trees, and leaves, and vegetable presences. Huge, straight fir-trees, and big beech-trees sending rivers of roots into the ground. And cuckoos, like noise falling in drops off the leaves. And me, a fool, sitting on a grassy wood-road with pencil and a book...

Never mind, I listen again for noises, and I smell the damp moss. The looming trees, so straight. And I listen for their silence—big, tall-bodied trees, with a certain magnificent cruelty about them—or barbarity—I don't know why I should say cruelty. Their magnificent, strong, round bodies! It almost seems I can hear the slow, powerful sap drumming in their trunks. Great full-blooded trees, with a strange tree-blood in them, soundlessly drumming.

Trees that have no hands and faces, no eyes; yet the powerful sap-scented blood roaring up the great columns. A vast individual life and an overshadowing will—the will of a tree; something that frightens you.

Suppose you want to look a tree in the face? You can't. It hasn't got a face. You look at the strong body of a trunk; you look above you into the matted body-hair of twigs and boughs; you see the soft green tips. But there are no eyes to look into, you can't meet its gaze. You keep on looking at it in part and parcel.

It's no good looking at a tree to know it. The only thing is to sit among the roots and nestle against its strong trunk, and not bother.

I come so well to understand tree-worship. All the old Aryans worshipped the tree. My ancestors. The tree of life. The tree of knowledge. Well, one is bound to sprout out some time or other, chip of the old Aryan block. I can so well understand tree-worship, and fear the deepest motive.

Naturally. This marvellous vast individual without a face, without lips or eyes or heart. This towering creature that never had a face. Here am I between his toes like a pea-bug, and him noiselessly over-reaching me, and I feel his great blood-jet surging. And he has no eyes. But he turns two ways; he thrusts himself tremendously down to the middle earth, where dead men sink in darkness, in the damp dense undersoil; and he turns himself about in high air; whereas we have eyes on one side of our head only, and only grow upwards.

Plunging himself down into the black humus, with a root's gushing zest, where we can only rot dead; and his tips in high air, where we can only look up to. So vast and powerful and exultant in his two directions. And all the time he has no face,

no thought; only a huge, savage, thoughtless soul. Where does he even keep his soul?—where does anybody?

A huge plunging, tremendous soul. I would like to be a tree for a while. The great lust of roots. Root-lust. And no mind at all. He towers, and I sit and feel safe. I like to feel him towering around me. I used to be afraid. I used to fear their lust, their rushing black lust. But now I like it. I worship it. I always felt them huge primeval enemies, but now they are my only shelter and strength. I lose myself among the trees. I am so glad to be with them in their silent, intent passion, and their great lust. They feed my soul. But I can understand that Jesus was crucified on a tree.

And I can so well understand the Romans, their terror of the bristling Hercynian wood. Yet when you look from a height down upon the rolling of the forest—this Black Forest—it is as suave as a rolling, oily sea. Inside only, it bristles horrific. And it terrified the Romans.

The Romans! They too seem very near. Nearer than Hindenburg or Foch or even Napoleon. When I look across the Rhine plain, it is Rome and the legionaries of the Rhine that my soul notices. It must have been wonderful to come from South Italy to the shores of this sea-like forest, with its enormously powerful intensity of tree-life. Now I know, coming myself from rock-dry Sicily, open to the day.

The Romans and the Greeks found everything human. Everything had a face, and a human voice. Men spoke, and their fountain piped an answer.

But when the Legions crossed the Rhine they found a vast impenetrable life which had no voice. They met the faceless silence of the Black Forest. This huge, huge wood did not answer when they called. Its silence was too crude and massive. And the soldiers shrank; shrank before the trees that had no faces, and no answer. A vast array of non-human life, darkly self-sufficient, and bristling with indomitable energy. The Hercynian Wood, not to be fathomed. The enormous power of these collective trees, stronger in their sombre life even than Rome.

CORRECTION

On page 113, nine lines from the foot of the page, the following should be inserted after "He insists on the virtue of sex":
"which may be the chief reason why he was so much hated by the Church, which has plagued Europe with a sense of guilt about sex,"

The Autobiography of an Absolutist

(Continued from page 104)

of Martine. Spiritual patterns of behaviour nonetheless have a way of repeating themselves atavistically. There is a subtler wilfulness that develops in that direction once a habit has been formed. Although I was not keen on repeating the classes held on Sundays during my last visit, a repetition of a similar gathering took place almost automatically as it were by common consent. I was still the guest of Dr. Vercruysse, a name which was associated with deep rooted Paganism which flourished in Ghent full blast before the coming of Christianity. It was at his home that many contacts with books and personalities were cultivated. I even met two professors of physics.

The next Sunday gathering took place on July 3rd. We counted about 55 people. The Gurukula *homam* (fire sacrifice) was again repeated by the common request in the Gevaert family house. Celine and Mother Gevaert co-operated with the preparation of the sumptuous Indian dinner. Father Gevaert had been convalescing from some kind of nervous breakdown after some days of anxiety which he had given to his family over his dubious health. He complained of pains and long sleepless nights. He was composed enough however to talk of his own death now and again. I told him of the analogy in the *Upanishads* of the king having to get up from his seat before the ministers could depart with him even if they wanted to stay. The king represents the *mukhyaprana* or chief vital air and the other tender groups that were at the base of vitality were such that even one's afflictions could not bring about a general exodus, however intensely the preparations for partial departure might be felt by the person concerned. Going from one life to the next has also been compared in the *Upanishads* to the flight of a swarm of bees from their hive going to a new hive with the queen bee in the lead. Another Upanishadic analogy is that of a caterpillar reaching the tip of another blade of grass from the blade of grass it is on. It does this by stretching out and only letting go when it has a hold on the new tip. The snake shedding his skin on a discarded anthill while it gets a more shining one in the more essential body it is supposed to enter psychophysically is another example from the *Upanishads*. The departure of the *pranas* has been compared also with a horse shaking off its loose hair, which represent the items of good and bad merit which go to one's friends and enemies. Life cannot depart without having a method in its supposed madness.

Father Gevaert's talk revealed to me the imminence of this event I could clearly anticipate. His zest for life and strong convictions were not however weakened in any way. His perverse absolutism, implying an unconventional attitude to life by which he refused to be a mere "yes man" in society, still made him one of the most interesting people I have ever met. He

insisted on saying that the father's-in-law of his own dear sons had stolen their affections from him. One of his elder daughters, Celine, was his secretary and chief support. She was almost like his shadow throughout his last days. They were as inseparable as Oedipus and Antigone. The father turned for the approval of his favourite daughter even in some of his idiosyncrasies which he readily received from his quiet and docile fair maiden daughter. He was an ideal family father and an absolutist. Even his perversity was an ornament. His unique kind of absolutism only heightened his character by a sort of double negation. He could easily be as much a Pagan as an Old Testament patriarchal head of a family. Many of his paintings revealed his exuberant love of life with a touch of Old Testament suffering belonging to Lot or Job. True Christianity often reveals this paradox and proves that the sacred and the profane can complement each other without entering into any conflict.

Father Gevaert had just published the first volume of his *La Nation*. The second volume he was just finishing with his final remarks. The first volume when it came to my hands referred to the Garden of Eden and man's first disobedience through the poisonous guile of the serpent. After the class was over, the conversation I had with Father Gevaert, which was the last meeting on earth for us, turned on the theme of Christianity as opposed to Paganism. When I said that even stone and mud have their own value in the total axiological situation in life, he seemed to be rubbed the wrong way. He protested saying, "What is the good of a broken chair for example? An object has to be beautiful before it can be good. Mud and stone are not dignified enough to be fitted into a proper Christian world of values where high heavenly values alone count. Even the Golden Calf is too Pagan to belong to such a world. Flowers and fruits are beautiful, but not the worship of the Golden Calf".

Father Gevaert's art revealed a strange mixture of the pure and the Pagan, and he had not yet made up his mind about the value represented by the Golden Calf. He tried to combine a worship of Bacchus with Jehovah. I was for a minute taken aback by his question about a broken chair and its uselessness and lack of value. Still I was resourceful enough to be able to evade the situation by saying that if a Queen had to cross over a puddle of mud a broken chair could always be used instead of a courtier's velvet cloak as with Sir Walter Raleigh.

Although the Golden Calf could have its Pagan value when put in its proper place, my answer seemed to silence the old gentleman who went home and seems to have added a post-script to his unpublished second volume in which pure Christian values were capable of being replaced by earthy ones however humble when time and circumstance enhanced their vital value to life.

(To be Continued)

THE TAO TEH KHING

Treatise on the Absolute and Its Nature

By LAO TZU

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

XXXVIII

1. THE perfect absolutist does not make a show of his absolutist nature : and so he possesses it in the highest degree.

The imperfect absolutist, being conscious of an absolutist nature is afraid of losing it, and so does not possess it.

2. The perfect absolutist is not action-motivated.

The imperfect absolutist always acts with an ulterior motive.

3. The kindly man acts without a motive.

The righteous do-gooders all want to show off.

4. When the man with the highest legal rectitude and morality acts and gets no response, he rolls up his sleeves and uses force to get his way.

5. And so,

When Tao (the Absolute) is lost, its natural characteristics appear :

And when natural characteristics are lost, kindness appears ;

And when kindness is lost, righteous doing good appears ;

And when righteousness is lost, duty and moral codes appear.

6. Now legal ritual and morality are the mere husk of loyalty and trust, and also indicate the beginning of disorder. Prophecy is only a flower of the Absolute and is the beginning of folly.

7. Thus it is that the perfect absolutist bases himself on the solid and not the flimsy ; on the fruit and not the flower. And so he rejects the one and chooses the other.

COMMENTARY : The first ten lines here have no verbs. This is possible in the Chinese language which is very largely protolinguistic. But it makes it hard on translators. Even Waley notices this. The perfection of the Absolutist being outside of events, and all its attributes being self-given or Nature-given, there is nothing of succession, evolution or progress about it. To indicate this, the verbs are omitted. In the purest sense the Tao or Absolute is not, according to Lao Tzu, something later to be acquired or added on. The Absolute *is* our true nature. As Rousseau and Socrates declared, it is nearest to us the

more we discard all the trammels of society. The simpler we become, the closer we are to our God or Absolute-given nature. Jesus asked his disciples to imitate the flowers of the field. But the problem is that in its most perfect state we are unaware of possession of the Absolute. And when that nature is lost through the wrong education and conditionings of our parents, teachers and society, it cannot be found by imitation. Nature cannot be forced or taken by storm. Kindliness is natural and so to be consciously kind is not pure kindliness. Chuang Tzu tells one of his stories about a beauty queen of his day. This beauty would sit for hours with her face in her hands frowning. But she was still beautiful. An ugly woman who wanted to be beautiful and admired began to copy the behaviour of the beauty and so she too sat with her face cupped in her hands and frowned. Chuan Tzu concludes: "When the rich people of the village saw her, they closed their doors and would not go out; when the poor people saw her, they took their wives and children and ran away from her. The woman knew how to admire the frowning beauty, but she did not know how she, though frowning, was beautiful." (*Writings*, Book xiv, 4). The decay of the Absolute in human society is described in this chapter in graded succession—imitation of virtue, active doing of "good," making people good by force (by laws and moral codes). The final end, far from being a civilized Utopia as the prophets of progress hope, through five year plans and welfare states and so forth, is total social disorder. It is just a blossom of the mind and not a nourishing fruit. What a lesson for our times!

(*To be Continued*)

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The jungle hills and the mountains,
The river streams and the fountains,
Are all manifestations of one supreme,
Omnipresent, all-pervading in every being.

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non-dual contemplation



These phenomenal aspects five such as the sky
Which as emergent from outside here seem to be,
By contemplation one should bring to non-
difference,
As the sea is to the waves that rise in rows
above.

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