



values

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unitively, impartially and globally in the interests
of the general good.

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EDITORIAL:

CULT-FREE AND COOL

ONE of the policies in **VALUES** is to avoid making Narayana Guru or Nataraja Guru into cult figures. Adoration for the Guru is there and emphasized on birthday occasions. Cults arise through exaggerations of loyalty within the tendency which is at the root of caste. I therefore try to avoid the exhibitions of devotion and literary swoonings which I see happening to Gurus in many Indian publications. These are all deplorable and alien to the nature of Guruhood.

For those who are not brought up within the very demonstrative religious climate of India, such personalized emotional exhibitions, far from attracting the non-Indian, have the effect of repulsion and make him say to himself, "There's another cult."

Not only this, they come dangerously near to the position of the Christians who claim Jesus to be the one and only.

My position in **VALUES** is that all Gurus—the Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, Pythagoras, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Jnanesvar, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi, as well as Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru—are all worthy of reverential devotion because they all stood for Self-enlightenment. The glory of one becomes the glory of the whole and vice versa.

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The image of contemplative man has a thousand faces, speaks a thousand languages, has as many temperaments, each valid, but without rivalry. All merge into a Wonder, and when one sees that Wonder before one in the living Guru it may be natural to forget the ancient lineage and to think by clock time that it is there for the first time. But one learns to see that the Absolute plays its grand music through many instruments. And not only the human. It speaks through all the great living wonders of the universe as you can gather from the tenth chapter of the Gita.

In Guruhood there is no favouritism of Motherland or caste. Brahma-vidya has no special Vedas or Bible. Likewise loyalty to the Guru is loyalty to the universal, to the spirit of the numinous throughout the world.

As a modern World Guru Narayana Guru remained always what the modern generation understands as cool. He kept his ecstasy for its proper place, in his poetic verses on the Absolute. There you will find the authentic sentiments which transcend all religion. As far as possible, therefore, my aim in VALUES is to keep to this attitude, as befitting the sublimity of the subject and its Guru exponents.

[END]

GURUKULA NEWS

NATARAJA GURU has been making several visits to Ezhumalai, in the Cannanore District of Kerala, where forty acres so far have been acquired, and where Sannyasini Ramarani, (formerly Romarin Grazebrook) has built a little cottage.

Nitya has had a busy programme. On April 23 at Nandini in Madhya Pradesh, he laid the foundation stone of a Brahma-vidya Mandiram, the site donated by Mr Kunhambu. He lectured there and also at the nearby Bhilai Steel Works Township. On April 29 he addressed a group at Bhopal. Back at New Delhi, he conducted a Seminar on Psychic and Spiritual Research on May 13 and 14. He left for South India later in the month and paid visits to Varkala, Engandiyur (both Gurukula centres) and other places in Kerala, and then spent a few days with the Guru at Ferohill before leaving on June 7 for Madras and Delhi.

Nitya has been invited to preside at the Narayana Guru Birthday celebrations at Singapore and flies to Singapore on July 19. He will be away for two months.

Swami Fred Haas left for a tour of Kerala on May 19, and is still there, promoting VALUES. We take this opportunity of thanking all who have given the magazine support.

Architecture, Square or Organic?

By WALTER DE BUCK

[The following notes and reflections on architecture will be read with deep interest, as a necessary introduction to Walter De Buck's latest project, the designing of a Brahma-vidya-Mandiram (Institute for the Science of the Absolute), for which purpose he and his associate Jan Bruijsaert were in India few months ago. Thirty-three year old Walter De Buck is a famous sculptor of Ghent, Belgium, married, with three children. His father was a well-known artist, and Walter grew up in the atmosphere of Flemish art, against a background and tradition of tremendous craftsmanship. The world knows the great names of Van Eyck, Rembrandt, Breughel, Rubens, Jordaens, Vermeer, De Hoogh and dozens of others. Their priceless works are the glory of the world's art galleries. In all the cities of Belgium and Holland, the Town Halls, Cathedrals and even lesser buildings, reflect the originality and wonderful work of Flemish-Dutch artists and craftsmen. This is the tradition inherited by Walter De Buck. The originality continues and now seeks new forms. It is for ever an innovation. Both the newspapers and official sources in Belgium have shown a deep interest in these new ideas.]

SQUARE churches, square parks, square houses and factories, straight lines, right angles, flat surfaces—
so here we are!

in the midst of an accumulation of practical solutions
and comfortable spaces that have been designed and built
for us—
a square world for man to live in.

And yet,
man is spiritually poorer and lonelier than ever,
as if he belonged to another world,
a world that would have grown
as if he were unequal to such moments
of technique and rational thinking.

Not that these things are without value,
but do we not extend the straight lines too far?

Do we really believe that a world reduced to functional squares
is a full world?

that the practical, straight-lined solution
meets human needs and aspirations?

Has man not forgotten himself,
his own organic nature,
and his spiritual aspirations that made him raise stones—
the pyramids of Egypt, Stonehenge...?

Must our houses have nothing more
than a practical function?
should they not in some way be temples?

What would man's home look like
if he shared with sea-shells the ability to shape it organically ?
Would it be square or spherical ?
Nor would that be the end of it ;
Nature's shape-giving knows no frontiers, no limitations,
no styles, nor doctrinal laws ;
her norms are of another dimension.
Life energy and necessity bring about her functional shapes.

Should not human dwellings also rather be
a result of life itself,
something like a shell around human personality in all its
aspects !

And the town. Should a town not get its shape
from a certain way of living in a community ?

Are not all but some of our architects not too much like
servants of a Puritan pragmatism,
and very much like the priests of a barren doctrine—
functionalism ?

Sky-scrapers are built on a large scale,
immensely practical, but stereotyped and monotonous shapes.
Man has lost contact with his own achievements,
And it is as if a link were missing, somewhere.

Just as music from the human voice
is more intimately linked to man
than music produced from an instrument,
that which is hand-made is closer to man
than the products of a mechanized system.

At the beginning of this century
the craftsman was driven away by mechanization.
His crafts must be restored and revalued.

Dismissed as superfluous by the functionalists,
the sculptor has been working in his studio for more than half
a century
building a new language of shapes,
adapting new materials from modern techniques.

It has become clear today that his place is still vacant...

The ornament as an emotional, communicative and human symbol

must be restored to its place in architecture
where it belongs—an element as necessary
as the stability of the construction itself.

But it is not an easy task

to integrate the creative in the modern world;

there is an abyss between the lonely seeker and general necessity,
between the possibilities of an individual and those of our time
in which pressure on the individual grows stronger every day.

Only group work offers a solution

whereby the pressure is counteracted by being spread evenly,
and by bringing about a favourable atmosphere
where we can create and build ...

Small groups guided by one principle :

faith in human values :

teams of new temple-builders.

[END]

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BOOK REVIEW: BASIC BUDDHISM

GEORGE GRIMM in his book *The Doctrine of the Buddha, the Religion of Reason and Meditation*,* bases his thesis on the fact that if one wants to understand the essence of Buddhism one must go back to the original teachings of the Buddha. The author is not just another paid-scholar, but was a practising Buddhist, who, in 1921 founded the "Altebuddhistische Gemeinde" (The Old Buddhist Community) at Utting in West Germany.

The beauty of this book is that it is written by a Buddhist as an enlightening guide for the sincere follower of Buddhism. It is not an easy book and I recommend it only to those who are vitally interested in Buddhism. This is most definitely not a book for dilettante orientalists. Too many books on Buddhism are cheapened because the only aim is reaching a mass audience. This is not true of *The Doctrine of the Buddha*. As the author points out, the Buddha never wanted to convert millions to a social religion, but his aim was always to help free men from suffering and ignorance. This is not just the opinion of George Grimm, but as he shows again and again, it is the Buddha's own position found in the *Sutras*.

The author divides his work into four chapters. Each chapter deals with one of the four Noble Truths. The reader is slowly led, step by step along the path of the four Noble Truths, ending with the absolute happiness, joy or peace of Nirvana. This is good and sensible. Many quotations are given from the early Buddhist *Sutras* and the *Milindapanha* (The Questions of King Milinda). The author never strays from the basic teachings by introducing some questionable teaching of his own. He remains true to the Buddha while restating the Middle Way for modern man who lives in anything but a spiritual climate.

It is unquestionable that the Buddha stood for individual liberation and when his teaching is correctly applied one arrives at this. George Grimm, with meticulous care shows us how this can be accomplished. Slowly and correctly he arranges the teachings from the *Sutra* so as to give them an intelligent sequence and unity. In less able hands this would not have been possible.

The real importance of this book is not just its scholarship, which is precise and in my opinion rarely if ever misses the mark, but the fact that Buddhism is presented as a living spiritual way of life. A distinction is made between the academic and systematic "philosophies" of the West and a real philosophy or wisdom-science like Buddhism. As I said, this book is not an easy one, but its importance lies in the fact that it is an excellent guide for anyone wanting to know and realize the Buddha's teaching. In my opinion *The Doctrine of the Buddha* is one of the best works on basic Buddhism, and it is always to the best we should go.

FRED HAAS

* Translated from the German by Bhikkhu Silacara; publishers: Akademie-Verlag GmbH, Berlin W. 8, Mohrenstrasse 39, West Germany; 1958, 413 pp. price DM 20.

The Autobiography of an Absolutist

11. In Good Old England Again

By NATARAJA GURU

WE were heading towards famous London town from Dover, taking heed of all turns and signs of winding roads which seemed all to lead to the same Rome whichever road one took. Past lawns and fields "up the river and over the lea" Celine drove fast till we actually reached the limits of London itself.

We had the problem of finding the right road to take in order to reach the suburb of Pinner, Middlesex, and Celine seemed a bit confused as she retraced her way more than once near Kings Cross about the time when all Londoners were up and eating their bacon and eggs breakfasts, the smell of which seemed unmistakably present in the morning air of Tuesday, 7th September 1965.

Celine consulted her big map of London and seemed to be making up her mind more than once. At last the route to Pinner was found, and the rest of the task was easier because inferential logic was all that was involved in following signboards and finding numbers leading to 32 Cecil Park where Lucie, one of the Gevaert sisters lived in a typical villa. She was married to a Hungarian biologist Mr Bossanyi.

After a late lunch, I slept almost till supper time in the warm room overlooking the backyard garden. After talking to visitors till late at night, the next morning I took the Tube railway, changing at Baker Street and found myself tugging my luggage up the steps to the platform at Kings Cross. A well-built elderly gentleman readily gave a helping hand and put my baggage near the booking office, and I entrained at 7.30 a. m. travelling via Leeds where I had to change into a diesel coach for Harrowgate.

A Modern Yorkshire Farm: I arrived about noon and my old friend Christopher Leslie with his children was awaiting me on the platform, looking sharp to recognize me because of my rich grey beard and Indian flowing gown in which he had not seen me before.

With the girls and Chris we drove through undulating countryside typical of Yorkshire in an autumnal air that felt not too good and rather humid for September.

Thornton Grove at Bishop Thornton, a few miles from Harrowgate, was a well ordered English style homestead tending rather towards opulence rather than being a mere farmhouse. A farm on very modernized and mechanized lines was being run by Christopher, and after I had settled down and had the first

night's rest with supper and television showing the latest in the Kashmir war, then fully raging in India, I was shown round the latest improvements in the farm which included a tower for storing grain, automatically worked by power. The two or three hundred Jersey cows in perfect condition were also milked electrically and the latest methods employed in USA were also found in the English countryside, and now so different from what Washington Irving, the New England author once described with such quaint picturesqueness.

Modernization, however, had economic disadvantages that always follow on its heels, such as excessive taxes and social security payments that often made farming an impossibly top-heavy business and anything but a sinecure. Chris was wistfully mentioning both these aspects as he took me to a harvesting tractor and handed me fresh unhusked wheat grains from the field, which I tasted.

The rose garden and big lawn with tall trees bordering it, made of Thornton Grove a typical country dwelling place of old Yorkshire. The frequent evening drives in his luxury car further convinced me of the quiet dignity and select beauty of the countryside. Hills alternated with forested areas and green lawns or farm lands with cosy-looking homesteads evenly distributed without too much small clutterings of villages, comparing favourably with the south of France and Italy except for the famous contagious mists and bad spells of weather of this island fortress.

It could be *good* when it is good and *very bad* otherwise. A secret Gaussian curve seemed to regulate the possibility or preferability of good weather in England. It had the fickleness of the woman known to Shakespeare himself. Italian skies perhaps had more homely ways.

I Develop Eye Trouble and Lumbago: The after-dinner comforts of the drawing room where I perhaps enjoyed the warmth of the red electric fire too long, as also some vertebra strained by carrying my own luggage in railway stations, together with the questionable weather of England of early September, gave me lumbago pains. My cataract, which was more developed in my right eye than in the left, had still several months to mature. My Indian robes were not so well suited as woollens for the weather and climatic conditions of England. My daily morning hot baths added to the trouble in spite of fully wood-panelled rooms with central heating and wall-to-wall carpets on the floors of Thornton Grove.

I consulted a lady ophthalmic specialist of repute, to whom Christopher took me. A pinhole disc was fitted to one of the eyes, which cut off extra sidelights that kept the iris contracted also. I could still read and write letters. The lumbago was evident to others only when I made vain attempts in my efforts to sit or get up from seats. It was only when a trained chiro-

practor in Ghent later told me that lumbago was due to certain pent-up liquids of the vertical column which oozed out through some sort of opening, that I began to understand better the nature of the trouble.

As for my eye trouble, I found that the more reputed the specialist the busier he is likely to be and the summary disposal of cases thus becomes normal. The development of visual aids before operation has been badly attended to so far in spite of striking advances, like grafting of other people's lenses with or without contact lenses. Over-specialization often overlooks common sense remedies. This time in Harrowgate it was a lady specialist who was a theosophist whom I had the good luck to consult. As a woman she had a more personal approach than men specialists and the pinhole device helped me much where other specialists could suggest nothing.

A Talk to the Harrowgate Theosophists: Lumbago made me stay longer in bed for a few days and, in spite of bad eyesight I contrived to read and follow up lines of modern research helpful for a unified science of the Absolute which I was interested in formulating in one or two years.

This time it was a picture-book for children called *The Universe in Forty Jumps* by Kees Boeke (Faber and Faber, London, 1927) that opened up for me a new scientific perspective for the physical world. The forty jumps were represented by views either through the telescope or microscope which portrayed the universe in graded scenes where sub-atomic or supra-stellar worlds were alternately described and pictured. Observable space thus fell in graded order along a vectorial, tensorial and scalar space structure with a positive or negative parameter relating the biggest and the smallest in the universe. Structuralism thus became observationally justified.

While profiting thus by my stay indoors, I had a speaking engagement to fulfil on 15th September evening, sponsored by the Harrowgate Lodge of the Theosophical Society. Mrs Sheppard presided and an elite gathering including many eminent doctors and members of other professions were present as I spoke on "A Common Frame of Reference for Physics and Metaphysics."

It was an unusual subject and most of what I said went over the heads of the listeners, although it seemed to hold the interest of the audience unmistakably. Christopher Leslie himself was fully pleased as he said when we drove home to Thornton Grove after a pleasant *conversations* that followed the meeting, over strong cups of coffee. A lady doctor of medicine even thought that what I said about the *Principia Mathematica* of Russell and Whitehead was not wholly fair as Russell was a great man. Others referred to eminent Indians who had previously addressed the gathering. My concern was merely not to disappoint my host Christopher who, being a staunch lover of Indians and a

theosophist of long standing, would have, as my personal sponsor, felt somewhat let down if my speech had been a flop.

As it happened, however, I went to bed at 11 p. m., putting myself on the back as it were, remembering those numerous days in my life in which good public speaking had failed me. The best speaker is only occasionally so. There seems to be the same lurking Gaussian principle of probability or possibility involved here as in phenomenal nature outside. The ups and downs of chance elements of life-value import are what Indian philosophy refers to as being rocked in the sea of samsara.

On Foods and Thieves: Holidaying in Yorkshire came to a close for me by the morning of the 17th September. I stayed at my friend's house sometimes as a member of the family, visited other relations, cooked Indian curries for him many times. These reminded him of his days in India, but the nurse of the children and the cook suspected much the spicy nature to let the children take them freely. English food excels in being plain or bland, but spicy Indian curries are known to be too exotic and easily upset the balance of the European stomach, more used to cheese eggs, butter, etc. and pampered, if at all, only by the more dangerous poisoning due to alcohol. One could hardly choose between the possibility of stomach ulcers either way. Food to one could easily poison another. It is best to strike a middle way.

The remaining few evenings before the 17th, when I left, I was treated to an Indian dinner at a Pakistani restaurant in Harrowgate, cinephotographed and tape-recorded, gadgets for both possibilities being present more usually than ever before in the West.

One evening, visiting one of Christopher's brothers, Charles, for tea, there was an orchard stealing reported in the back garden. A ruddy youth was readily caught by Leslie's alertness and let off. Shakespeare himself is said to have committed this form of crime so natural to youth, so that it could be thought that this failing has a place in human nature when the full-blooded urges of vitality have not yet been canalized or controlled. There could be a superman touch even in the criminal, but most of them are just mean pilferers or poachers.

Some birds, beasts or reptiles are nobler than others. A tragic touch might mark out a true hero, though the converse is not necessarily true.

Leslie tried to put me in touch with mathematicians and engineers from Leeds and Oxford universities. Except one engineer friend I had met before, I could not actually contact any. My stay in Yorkshire thus terminated by being driven to York Junction instead of Harrowgate, to save me having to change trains at Leeds which would have been a problem with my lumbago pains still present.

(Continued on page 288)

THE TAO TEH KHING

Treatise on the Absolute and Its Nature

By LAO Tzu

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

XLIII

The most yielding of all things overcomes the hardest.

The formless penetrates what has no crevice.

Thus I know the value of actionless action.

Few attain to teaching without words

And few understand the value of the doing of doing nothing.

COMMENTARY: To those who have not read similar statements about the *via negativa* or the *Nirvitti Marga* or the *Neti, neti!* in the works of the world's mystics, the ideas expressed here will be very obscure.

The Upanishads in many places tell us that Ultimate Reality goes beyond speech and mind, where they "do not enter in" and that it cannot be taught with words but is to be made one's own by restraining all words and all the senses by discipline and yoga. Sankara in his Dakshinamurti verses has given us that wonderful picture of the young Guru who is sitting beneath the ancient banyan tree and whose pupils are the old men (symbolically representing the *Vedas* perhaps), who get enlightenment by his silence. The Buddha too, according to Zen records, gave his highest teaching when he smiled and held up a flower, a teaching, we are told, that only Kasyapa understood.

Peace comes when there is no shouting for peace, let alone the contradiction of fighting for peace. It is like the soft yielding formless water which wears away the hardest rock (as the first line of this cryptic chapter implies). Similarly the steady silence of the Absolute or Tao comes flooding in, washing away every concept, every word, every bit of knowledge, when there is no knowledge of anything else. The restless mind has no "crevice" but steady habitual quietude without any intentional, or purposeful, interfering activity invites the Tao—in fact it is the operation of the Tao.

Chuang Tzu, the great exponent of Lao Tzu's teachings, devotes a whole book (XII) full of metaphors and parables illustrating what is summed-up in this brief chapter. I cannot do better than to quote from him. *

First there is the answer to the man, who, like so many people, think that the Tao is like other subjects. He asked how he could "get the Tao and hold it as mine." The reply was:

* slightly adapted from *The Texts of Taoism, II. The Writings of Chuang Tzu*, translated by James Legge, pp. 62-66. *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XL (Oxford Univ. Press, 1891).

"Your body is not your own to hold—so how can you get and hold the Tao?"

"Then who holds it?"

"It is the bodily form entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth (i.e. by Nature). Life is not yours to hold. It is the blended harmony of the quiescent and active principles (the Yin and Yang). Your nature is not yours to hold. It is entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth to act in accordance with its specific constitution (*svadharma*). Your grandsons and sons are not yours to hold. They are the cast-off skins of a snake entrusted to you by Heaven and Earth. Therefore, when we walk, we should not know where we are going; when we eat, we should not know what to occupy ourselves with; when we eat, we should not know the taste of our food—all is done by the strong Yang (positive) influence of Heaven and Earth. How then, can you get the Tao and hold it as your own?"

Confucius asked Lao Tzu: "Having some leisure today, may I venture to ask you about the Perfect Tao?"

Lao Tzu replied: "You must first, as if by fasting and vigil, purge your mind, wash your spirit white as snow, and sternly restrain your knowledge. The subject of the Tao is profound and difficult to talk about—I shall give you an outline of its simplest characteristics.

"The Luminous was produced from the Obscure; the Multi-form from the Unembodied; the Spiritual from the Tao and the bodily from the seminal essence. After this, all things produced one another from their bodily organizations...but their coming leaves no trace, and their going no monument; they enter by no door; they dwell in no apartment—they are in a vast arena reaching in all directions.

"Those who seek and find the Tao in all this are strong in their limbs, sincere and far-reaching in their thinking, acute in their hearing, and clear in their seeing. They use their minds without being exhausted; they respond correctly to everything without regard to place or circumstance.

"Without this heaven would not be high, nor earth broad; the sun and moon would not move, and nothing would flourish—such is the operation of the Tao.

"Moreover, the most extensive knowledge does not necessarily know it; reasoning will not make man wise in it—the sages have decided against both these methods. However you try to add to it, it admits of no increase; however you try to take from it, it admits of no diminution—this is what the sages maintain about it. . . .

"Those whose knowledge is complete do not discuss it—such discussion shows that their knowledge is not complete. Even the most clear-sighted do not meet with the Tao—it is better to be silent than to reason about it. The Tao cannot be heard with the ears—it is better to shut the ears than to try and hear it. This is what is called the Great Attainment."

(To be Continued)

I. THE WORLD OF HINDU IDOLS

By FRED HAAS

To Him the Divine in the fire

To Him in the water.

To Him having entered all beings in the universe.

To Him in plants.

To Him in trees.

Adoration! Adoration!

—SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD (II.17)

IT was D. H. Lawrence who said that one will either wholeheartedly take to the Etruscan religion and way of life or else completely dismiss it. The same is true with Hindu idolatry. Either one enters sympathetically and intuitively into the strange and wonderful world of Hindu idols, or else one dismisses it all as baseless, superstitious, unscientific and heathen.

In India idolatry still exists in a living religion and philosophy drawing its strength and vitality from a spirituality that is over 5,000 years old. Hinduism is not a curious something-from-the-past religion, nor is it a commodious philosophy to be cheaply exported abroad. On the contrary, it is a living and dynamic spiritual expression of a deeply religious people no matter what outer appearances seem to be. Hinduism in the fullest and most open sense includes Mahayana Buddhism and Jainism, and all are idolatrous and are able to accommodate a non-social, though not anti-social, philosophy and way of life based on spiritual attainment.

Idols are symbols coming from the unconscious of man and made conscious through image and idea. An idol is not just a piece of stone or wood, but a symbolic representation of some spiritual value having great inner meaning. Mythology, whose real meaning and essence are lost to moderns, gives meaning to idolatry and itself serves as a spring-board for absolutist philosophy. Philosophy is not mythology or idolatry, but both are used for its own purpose which is wisdom attainment and spiritual freedom. The *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* accept the great idol-symbols of Hinduism and revalue them. The process of revaluation has always been the secret of the sage. It is found in all Pagan religion and philosophy. Even Socrates, who is usually wrongly labelled a rationalist, used to recite this *Invocation to Pan*, found at the end of Plato's *Phaedrus*:

“ Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul ; and may the outward and

inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as a temperate man and he only can bear and carry."

The wise man always understands the symbols he is using.

Language and Meaning: The most important thing about Indian spirituality is that philosophy and religion join hands in one common pursuit and goal. There has never been a split between the two. Philosophy in India is the same as what Pythagoras outlined as the true spiritual path for the contemplative to follow. It is both a wisdom-science and a wisdom-attainment which includes religion. Pythagoras, and many other Greek gurus accepted the Pagan religions of Greece, Egypt and elsewhere as the natural springboard for absolutist philosophy. In India the same is true with Hinduism.

Now if idolatry is accepted by sages, the meaning given to idols is philosophical. The language becomes a philosophical language; a language suited to mystical contemplative wisdom, as in the case with the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upanishads* and in more recent times Narayana Guru. The idol, as image and idea, has many meanings which burst forth in many ways. Symbol language is used by the philosopher as a device for pointing first of all to an important value and then finally to the ultimate Reality which is beyond all name and form. The multiple meanings attached to an idol-symbol, and the new meanings that are liable to come up at any moment, are like the rays of light from the Sun. The great Light, which is the Sun itself, is the Symbol of all symbols,—the pure Absolute beyond the pair known as *raguna brahman* (the Absolute with qualities) and *nirguna brahman* (the counterpart Absolute without qualities but still qualified as a counterpart). The *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, which is a magnificent symbolist philosophical treatise uses many great symbols from Hinduism. Savitri, the vivifying Sun, is boldly used as a pointer to the great Light. Savitri is also a Guru figure, who, by special grace brings forth the great Light. We read the following in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* (II.3) :

"Joining the mind with the Divine, when thought about, that brightness is the luminous. Savitri, willing to show that great Light brings it forth to them."

Another great symbol is *Isa*, usually translated as Lord or God. The word means, "owning, possessing, sharing; one who is complete master of anything; to dispose of, be valid or powerful."¹ *Isa* as a divine image of the Absolute is the Powerful Overlord. Once again the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* (III.7) gives us a most beautiful description of this great absolutist idol-symbol :

¹ p. 282, *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 1, Jowett trans., (Random House, New York, 1961)

² See under *is*, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by Monier Williams (Oxford, 1873).

"Then, just as the Absolute beyond (the relative) and the Great beyond (the lesser) are hidden, hunched together in all beings, (so) the all-embracing Powerful Overlord Knowing Him one becomes immortal."

No Meaning for Moderns: Such intuitive insights found in the *Svetasvatara Upanishads* and elsewhere are possible because of the use of symbol as a backdrop for expressing great philosophical truths. The authors of the *Upanishads* were never deceived by idol-symbols as the language they used and the meaning they gave to them amply proves. If idol-symbol language is taken away from philosophy there is no longer any pure philosophy but merely epistemology and logic, which are very much subservient. In fact in a pure philosophy that uses idol-symbols, epistemology and logic are not needed. Epistemology only deals critically with the question of "how" we know, but ignores the more important questions of "why" we know and "what" we know. Logic as applied in the formal sense only means investigating the structure of propositions and considering their logical form by the method of deductive reasoning. Hegel was correct when he said that logic belongs to rhetoric and not philosophy. Western philosophy from the time of Descartes has degenerated to such a sad state that the word no longer means what it meant to the Greeks and others,—"love of wisdom." Also terms such as "philosophy of science" and "philosophy of mathematics" are utterly misleading and incorrect because what is meant is not philosophy but epistemology. Pure philosophy can never dispense with idol-symbols because its whole frame of reference is centered around them. A wise man in order to communicate his wisdom must use some kind of spiritual background for developing his subject.

Unfortunately there is no meaning in all this for moderns. They have lost this precious language and inspiration. Modern science will certainly never fully accept anything so pure and intuitive, and as for the Church, well, its position is quite clear: it confuses dogma and fixed belief with symbol and this is a tragic mistake. It is interesting to note that in Roget's *Thesaurus* the synonyms for idolatry are, "demonism, demonology, devil worship and fetishism". But Roget was only a conditioned lexicographer and hardly an authority on idolatry and symbolism. He associates idols with the Devil which is the official Church doctrine. Western man has been so deeply conditioned by the Church that he is terrified of the Horned God. The Church has cleverly devalued and debased idolatry which was central to European Paganism, and its meaning and value has been completely twisted about by ignorant theologians masquerading as philosophers and Church saints who were supposed to be contemplative mystics. Therefore the Christian Devil is the Pagan God and should be treated as such.³ This is

³ For a most illuminating study on the devaluation and outright distortion of the gods of Pagan Europe by Church Christianity see *The Devil Revalued* by John Spiers (VALUES, Nov. 1961).

easy for Hindus to understand because they experience missionary fanaticism and hatred against their own gods like Siva, Vishnu, Krishna, etc., who are called "devils." So it is wise to be a "Devil-worshipper" and unwise to pay tribute to the idol hating Jehovah of Church Christianity.

From Pantheism to the Great Light: To know and experience the world of Hindu idols is a tremendous awakening. To the uninitiated such a world is confusing and makes the mind dizzy. "How can they believe in so many gods?" is usually one of the first questions asked by a monotheistic conditioned non-Hindu. This is usually followed up with, "What is the reason for worshipping so many?" The reason for this pantheistic display of idol-symbols is because in Hinduism every worthwhile value in life and every life-expression have a corresponding deity or group of deities for representation. There is the most earthy and necessary item of life which is food as natural abundance and is associated with Lakshmi the goddess who bestows abundant wealth, and, also represented by Durga in the form of Annapurna or the Bestower of Food to whom Sankara composed twelve verses (*Annapurna stotram*). On the other hand the gentle and beautiful goddess Sarasvati represents the arts and higher learning. Ganapati or Ganesha, the elephant-headed god is a remover of obstacles (*Vignesvara*) and is also indirectly connected with the arts and higher learning because many authors before commencing writing a book or composition first of all invoke his grace by inserting at the beginning of the work some verses in his honour. Perhaps the most well known Hindu deity to Westerners is the great cosmic dancer, Siva-Natarajan, who represents ecstatic joy and absolute wonder. Manikka Vacahar in his *Tiruvasaham* has these wonderful lines singing high praises to the Cosmic Dancer :

I know myself no more; nor the recurrence of night
and day.

He who is beyond the reach of human thought and speech.
He has maddened me with madness mystic."

To continue with this great pantheon of Hindu idol-symbols there is Siva's son Subramanya who represents the absolutist *sannyasin* of pure ways. And then there is Krishna, also well known outside of India, who, as a cow-herd stands for joyful sport or *lila*, both individually and cosmically. And so many others there are!—Rama, the refined and highly gifted warrior figure, his wife Sita who possesses pure feminine wisdom, and Hanumao the well known monkey god who is associated with the Rama family of deities. There are also heroic women worshipped like Kannagi the heroine of the Tamil classic *Silappathikaram* (The Jewelled Anklet) who destroyed the city

4 p. 201, *Tiruvachakam, A Hindu Testament of Love* by Ratna Navaratna, (Bombay, 1964)

(Continued on page 284)

The Ominous and the Numinous

I. The Dialectics of Social Change

By JOHN SPIERS

THIS is an exploratory inquiry into the chances of getting free from the ominous symbolized by the Bomb, the mushroom-cloud. It involves the discovery of its counterpart, the numinous. The principle of Dialectics and of cyclic change applied to the present situation has also to be considered. More particularly, a short and long-range view must be taken of the world-wide revolt of the present generation, and of the unique features of this new type of revolt.

This group of the under-thirties has introduced a new element into the world, speeded-up by modern mass communication. Any kind of wisdom-communication must take account of this.

First we should understand that attempts to better a situation mechanically will not succeed. This is the error repeatedly made by the legally-minded who organize creeds, doctrines and ideologies. They believe that you have only to get certain laws passed, you have only to seize power and rule from the top, and somehow everybody is going to be wise, a world full, if not of sages, then at least of good people who will shed their hatred, renounce war, and be mild, kindly, and non-aggressive.

It is nonsense, but all legal reformers, from law-abiding parliamentarians to Communist revolutionaries firmly believe it.

Only the wise are free. From a study of such wise men it is clear that the one real freedom is Self-knowledge or enlightenment. All other "freedoms" are relative, and therefore carry with them the evil counterpart of subjection.

The real freedom-seeker in this sense rejects action. His rebellion arises out of absolute discontent with the whole world of received opinion, rejecting all its values.

Fatality of Action: The search for true freedom is also a search for new values. In its final sense it must lead to the Self and the Absolute. It is here that the numinous as the counterpart of the ominous, resides.

That all action of a positive kind is fatal, is illustrated by an anecdote about Narayana Guru, which has haunted me and impressed me, ever since I first read about it nearly thirty years ago in Nataraja Guru's little book *The Way of the Guru*. This was later incorporated into his larger book, *The Word of the Guru*.

It was over forty years ago, when the poet Tagore visited the ashram at Varkala in what was then Travancore. When Tagore met the Guru he congratulated him on the "great work" he was doing. With deep seriousness, Narayana Guru replied: "Neither in the past have we done anything, nor is it possible to do anything in the future. We are powerless and full of sadness."

It is bound to be so, when all doing is relative. Nothing works out as anticipated. Prohibition creates the two problems of illicit distilling and bootlegging on one side and mass unemployment on the other side. An injustice removed in one area leads to an unforeseen injustice in another sector. When women got emancipated, home-life was disrupted. The 1917 revolution in Russia intended to liberate the 200 millions of Russians placed a dictatorship elite in power for fifty years (so far). Freedom from imperialism has led to conflicts between strongly national new states and enslaved whole populations to international bankers and businessmen. Education intended to help people to think for themselves has been used to make everybody think along approved channels. Discoveries and inventions intended to make people happier have been diverted into the most menacing ends of war, threatening total devastation for everybody, and indeed the whole of life. The greatest relative good always seems to turn into the greatest relative evil.

The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley.

Somehow they always do. Where schemes are concerned, man is apparently no better than the little field mouse whose nest Burns turned over with his plough.

The Secret of the Philosophers: Great labour-saving devices from the spinning-jenny to the latest automation and computers, have led to the evil of mass unemployment. When that was corrected by shorter hours of work, higher wages, and welfare, the problem of leisure appeared. Instead of spending their free-time in self-improvement, the bored millions turned to bingo and car-stealing for kicks. Crime became an exciting pastime. Universal literacy and television were hailed as instruments of enlightenment, and what a farce and a disaster this has turned out to be, with every single man, woman and child perpetually exposed to persuasive high-pressure salesmanship, of everything from soaps and cars to political policies, by dazzling T-V personalities. Up to the present there has been no effort made to protect people from this universal brain-washing. Few (except the new generation) have the will to resist, and to live with the minimal exposure to television, radio and the newspapers.

At the time, the dropping of the atom bombs and the murder of 200,000 innocent civilians in Japan may have seemed an easy way to end the war. It was not realized that this ominous invention would give the name the Age of Anxiety to the mid-twentieth century.

What does all this imply? Surely it proves that all action is double-sided, and that every good is balanced by its equivalent evil, and vice versa. From this knowledge the ancient Greek Gurus introduced what they called Dialectics, and what the Indians called yoga—the resolving into unitive apprehension by the mind of all counterparts or “pairs of opposites.” Not only

good and evil, but all, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, submission and revolt. The thesaurus contains thousands of them. The secret is that they all belong together and that it is tragic not to see them together. The counterpart is not always easy to see. Skill in this is Yoga—"Yoga is skill applied to action" as the *Gita* (II. 50) defines it, a revaluation of Patanjali. This solves the puzzle of what Plato meant when he called Dialectics "the coping stone of wisdom" (*Republic*, VIII. 535) and Plotinus "the precious part of philosophy" because it distinguishes 'What is lasting from what is not' (*Enneads* I.3), which is word for word (*nitya:anonya*) what Sankara in India gives (*Vivekachudamani*, 19) as the first qualification for a wisdom-seeker.

Anyone who has this secret of philosophy fully known, moves with the utmost caution in life, and especially so if it is a matter of introducing any new element into what is given by nature, into society. It is the knowledge that whatever is done will in the course of time be undone. White into black into white. Such is the nature of things.

Change Cannot be Stopped: Transformations in nature such as the shifts in the seasons, alterations in river courses, the silting up or wearing away of coasts, as a rule go on slowly, and thus life in its myriad forms makes adjustments smoothly. Children laugh at the story of King Canute ordering the tide to go back, but even great scientists are King Canutes when they transform overnight what in the course of nature might take a million years to accomplish—the ruthless clearing of forests, using up fuel resources, oil, coal, natural gases etc., the widespread use of chemical fertilisers, the wholesale poisoning of life with deadly sprays, the creation of dustbowls and deserts. Books such as *Man the Desert-Maker* by Caldwell and *Silent Spring* by Carson, give the facts of this foolish sordid story which must be familiar to many readers.

The conceit of man is his refusal to admit change. The builders of modern civilization imagine it will not perish like ancient Egypt's or Babylon's. But change is inexorable. There is no reason to believe it will last. Flux and decay will have their way, even with the "everlasting" institutions, the democracies, the communisms, the monarchies, the parliaments, the Pentagon, the Kremlin, the ICI, Shells and Essos, Coca-Colas, the big bankers, the UNO, the Vatican, all the Churches and all the other religions, the temples, mosques,—they cannot last any more than did the old empires with all their proud cities and ways of life—now archaeological ruins.

A Yogi does not need, therefore, to study a history book to lay down the general principle of change or even to give indications of the future of some of the changes coming soon. He can also feel the suffering at all levels of this inevitable time-process. He is in a real sense helpless in all efforts made to transform

what is relative into what it cannot be-steadfast and unchanging, since such a perfection belongs only to what is absolute.

And yet that is what almost everyone is trying to do—looking for lasting values in things which by their nature, are of only temporary character.

We have therefore the paradox that, while most people have never heard of the Absolute, and that even the few who have heard of it are inclined to doubt its existence, at the same time they are hopeful that the relative values they pursue will turn out to be absolute.

The Counterpart of the Ominous: I think it will be admitted, all the same, even by the most cocksure of relativistic seekers of the earthly paradise, that as long as thermonuclear weapons exist, their ominous threat upsets and counteracts completely their hopes for the welfare of people. There are many ominous things in the world, madness, disease, torture, crime, famines and earthquakes and war, but the Bomb tops the lot. It is the ultimate.

What is its proper counterpart dialectically? Since it is the greatest evil, the most ominous, the answer that comes up is that the numinous, the greatest good, must be its inevitable relation.

If we seek to find the numinous, where will it be? Again it must be opposite to where the Bomb is located. The Bomb is at the energy core of matter; the numinous, therefore will be located at the core of life where there is nothing material or sensuous, beyond mind and consciousness which deal with things or objects, matter fine or gross. We reach therefore pure spirit but of course words have been degraded and spirit is only a pointer-term. We reach the pure Self, which is neither personality, mind, soul, none of that consciousness which is found in the waking or dreaming, nor in its absence in dreamless sleep. This Self is the absolutely numinous, charged with wonder, mystery and fountain of Value. Also, since the opposite of what is the most violent form of all activity must be beyond all taint of action of any kind, this numinous Self must be absolutely unchanging.

We cannot be completely unbodied, non-materially affected, brooding as the Self is over body and mind. We can know, however, what belongs to the flux, and which, having appeared at birth out of the flux will in time return to the flux. Even the wise man has a body and therefore some degree of a driving compulsion to act in the field of sheer necessity. The difference between the man who knows and other men is that with his dialectical insight (Yoga) he can restrain the urge to a greater or lesser degree, and let it drain away in as harmless a manner as may be possible. Here great skill is needed, between acting and not acting, the problem of *wu-wei* of Chinese philosophy, of *karma-nkarma* of Indian thought.

Of one thing, however, we may be sure. To give a prior place to action is just not possible. That is why Narayana Guru told Tagore he had never done anything nor would he do anything (on purpose). He refused to be caught in mental or sensuous drives. He remained a neutral observer, or spectator of what was going on and, though ever favouring the good, at the same time refused to be trapped in the relative process (called *samsara*). At the same time he was capable of expressing a natural human sympathy and sorrow at being unable to pit himself against the fatality of the relative world of flux and transformation. For those who might listen he played the part of a Guru, teaching them in various ways the lesson of Dialectics and how to seek out and hold on to the Value which is Absolute.

Rolling Cylinders: The Guru's sadness has been felt by many philosophers. The Buddha started off his teaching with an analysis of suffering. As far back as the sixth century B. C. it was expressed by Pythagoras in his *Golden Verses* (These were published in this magazine in December 1960 and a brief life of Pythagoras in the issue of January 1961). Pythagoras said:

Though the good is near, they neither see nor hear it.

Few are those who know release from evils.

Such is the fate that blinds the understanding of mortals;
And like cylinders they roll now here, now there, enduring
woes without end.

Cylinders! How apt a description for our geometrized world of egg-crate graph-like skyscrapers, knife-straight roads, conic-section airports, angular dwellings—any modern city gives a free lesson in simple geometry.

And the bumping of the cylinders, crashing into each other—another spectacle, given various names—the rat-race, the scramble for office, jostling for position, clash of interests, confrontation. People like puppies or kittens, irresistibly charged with restlessness. Bouncing, leaping lambs, but not innocent. Sheep. The leaders of the sheeplike scrimmage are also sheep. They roll by cylindrical jet plane from one conference table to another, victims of autohypnosis, fame-inflated by non-stop publicity in every mass medium, pursued by a chorus of flatterers hopeful for tomorrow's doubtful favours.

Are all these cylinders destined to roll over the edge into the flaming heart of the thermonuclear crater?

Action cannot be stopped. Electrons and galaxies dance in their orbits. Our minds also pulsate, and sleep follows waking. But we are more than mind and this diurnal consciousness. We can recognize this double sided process and do our best to earth this dangerous high voltage at all levels, both within and without. This requires well-directed, steadily-maintained contemplation. We can focus our attention on the numinous rather

than on the ominous, and give primary place to the non-phenomenal Self in spite of all the wild clamour of the senses. We need not be cylinder people. To do this is hard. Fortunately there are teachers like Pythagoras and the Buddha. It is like seeking the source of a river; one must go against the stream.

It means turning away from everything that the cylinder people follow—their nationalisms and tribalistic behaviour, their closed-in socialized religion, their academic leaders, their scientists and advertisers, their educationists and philosophers. It means breaking the great taboo which all of these opinion-makers have imposed on the numinous. What they have outlawed by taboo, what they most despise must contain something of the solution. Pagan or Oriental religion, the "primitives" and the under-developed peoples and countries, must contain somewhere the answer. We have only to apply the principle of Dialectics to find the solution.

A Note for Moderns about Gurus: Here I want to assure my readers of the modern generation that a few old codgers like myself have had their suffering, gone through their agonies and illness, and taken a cure. But that has not been easy.

I have been fortunate or graced as the saying goes, by having, from my earliest days, a critical faculty which has saved me from being too much misled by my schoolteachers and by the conditions of a near-slum environment. Even when I have been engaged in many activities one part of me has always played the part of a detached spectator. Without this inborn gift I would never have come to real philosophy at all, nor would I have come to India when I was just emerging from the teenage class. Without this detachment, as I know now by hindsight, I would, in all probability be like most of my elderly contemporaries, just another geometrical piece fitted into the square world, and perhaps sitting dazed, hypnotized and receptive before a television screen.

But things have been otherwise. Such understanding as I have, I owe to the Gurus of humanity, Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, Persian, and to those true Christians called the Mystics. I include too, the Druids and alchemists and the brave witches who stood for that free spirit, that great horned God of freedom called the Devil by the black-robed priests of the black Church. And there have been dozens of poets, artists and thinkers who have all made total sacrifice to the numinous Absolute and opposed outright the entire values of the cylinder world. To them all I am grateful beyond words.

These have been my teachers and they brought me to recognize my own Guru Natarajan even before others acclaimed him as such, even before he took on the Guru role. To him I owe my final development and through him my understanding of his Guru Narayana.

Not one of them had anything but contempt for the shoddy values of society or civilization. And when I have ventured into social activity, and usually burned my fingers, and watched later the undoing of any "good" I had erroneously tried to do by corrupt "social reformers", it is to these contemplatives and their wisdom that I have returned and strengthened my affiliation to what they represented—the numinous.

Except perhaps for some literary training and verbiage, I owe nothing to the so-called authorities, secular and spiritual, of my younger days. To present-day scientists and what are called philosophers I owe hardly anything other than headaches. Their pretentious writings, innate contradictions, lack of properly stated aims, and their involved expositions, all guesswork, but each needing sets of vocabularies which need to be mugged-up, exhaust my patience.

On the other hand, when I have returned to the writings of the Gurus of the world, I have always found they were able to say in plain, terse but intuitive phrases what became crystal clear to my understanding. But listening to the respected intelligentsia of today has been like listening to the gabble of fishwives. You get weary hearing the grating noise of crashing cylinders.

Gurus as Rebels and Critics: Even many Indians seem to have lost the clue to the character of the Guru. Much of this is due to a century or more of Christian missionary conditioning. The stuff I scan in most of the Indian religious, spiritual or philosophical magazines and books at the present time, all too often reflects Christian idiom and a fear of Western criticism.

They equate the Guru with the Christian saint, the sannyasin to the Christian monk. These are false comparisons. The Mid-Victorian morality of missionaries teaching that sex is sin and idolatry of the devil, instead of being answered with a resounding "Nothing of the sort", brings out feeble defences and apologists. What Indians as pagans should say is that sex, far from being a sin, is a glorious manifestation of the Absolute. They should tell the missionaries that idols are just as great as bibles and speak often a nobler symbolic language than beliefs and creeds which have addled the life of millions in the West. They should affirm that a Self-realized free man has no conventional morality since he is an exile from the moral fashions of all societies, free of its demands and its relative codes and ethics, its prejudices and conditionings. But in India as elsewhere there are thousands of pious people who would be scandalized by his free ways if they met a really free wise man. Invariably of course they don't. They meet merely religious lecturers who play up to their wrong notions of what a Guru actually is. They want holy figures and entertainment, and the demand is supplied. But the absolutist Guru does not fit into

this conventional holy frame. He is in line with the teaching of the *Gita* (V.18) where it says the Yogi treats holy Brahmin and the dirty unholly pariah who eats dog-meat as equals. Instead we have all this fussing about sattvik food and specializing in the sacredness of holy cows. With the Guru all life is holy (or unholly). These fantastic images of the Guru which prevail in modern India need strong correction. Gurus do not stand for caste and specialization in any form.

People are scared of freedom, afraid to leave their prisons. In his textbook for seekers, *The Supreme Path or Necklace of precious Gems*, (XVI 9) Gampopa the twelfth century Guru and disciple of the famous Milarepa of Tibet, wrote: "To differ from the multitude in every thought and action is the sign of a superior man."

Not only did these sages live often contrary to the ways of society; they were its outright critics. Take two instances. The Pharisees, the most arthodox sect of the Jews were shocked when the disciples of Jesus (a Palestinian Guru) were discovered plucking wheat and eating it on the sacred Sabbath day. "It is not allowed," they told him. Jesus replied in the memorable words, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (*Mark*, II, 27) Narayana Guru and his teacher-companion Chattambi Swami broke the caste restrictions of Brahmins, Nairs and Ezhavas by mixing freely with all, eating with all and sundry and ignoring all the social taboos. Narayana Guru declared: "Man belongs to one God (or numinous reality), to one religion (or sacred fold), and to one caste (the human species)" (*Jati Mimamsa*, verse 2).

Rebels and critics. Yet the taboos remain. Many Brahmins visit our ashram here and refuse to drink or eat with transparently lame excuses that they either have just had something or that they are fasting, or that they don't eat this or that. I wonder why they come. Maybe a white sannyasin arouses their curiosity, like a white elephant in the zoo. Anyway, if any of them read this, they will know I have not been fooled. Take two Christian countries, South Africa and the Southern United States and think of freely mixing in these places. And that bit about the sacred Sabbath, Just try to get a bite to eat on a Sunday morning in any town in Scotland. The most recent guide-book prints a warning about this to the innocent traveller. Such is the madness of mankind.

The Dionysians: The free or liberated man as a numinous symbol had been expressed all over the world. The recall back to Mother Nature appears in the figure of Dionysius, laughing, dancing, drinking, convention-smashing, with his magic wand and ecstasy of drum turning docile sheep into courageous lions. There is his counterpart in India, of two varieties. One is the esthetic Krishna, sporting with the village girls, stealing their clothes when they are bathing, full of amorous adventures which

defy social convention. The other is the mighty Siva as King of Dancers, Nataraj, in the form of a wild hunter, as untamed as the forest animals, making frenzied rhythms with his drum, with his matted hair streaming out, dancing, dancing, on all the trashy social taboos and ominous evils, represented by a hideous dwarf on whom he is trampling.

Grand images, all showing the victory of the numinous; all proving dramatically the truth of the Chinese proverb that one good picture is worth a thousand words.

What is deliverance from evil? Surely it must be relief from the burden of submission to necessity and from hardened fixed social conventions; deliverance from caste, from class, from tribalisms, from nationalisms, from fixed creeds, from dismal oppressive and life negating religions, from mad theorists, doctrinaires, ideologists, from the concrete geometrical life of cities, from the horrors of militarism and all its works, the slavery of conscription, the barrack square, the secret chemical-war laboratories, from the whole war-preparation establishment with their fearful armoury of destructive weapons, from the whole thermo-nuclear terror of the atom Bombs, from all the restrictions on movement symbolized by the passport, from all the tyranny of armies of officials whose sole purpose is harassment of plain human rights and commonsense, and above all, freedom from ignorance, freedom from the ingrained fear of all these negative and stupid things. The ominous always says no thou shalt not, it is prohibited, verboten. The numinous laughs and says yes! why not! Real true gods laugh, like Dionysius, Krishna and Siva Nataraj. All sad gods are on the side of the ominous—the prayers, the vigils, the confessions, the humbling of the individual, the terrors of hell, the threats of woe, the bleeding hearts and sorrows of crucifixion, the austerities and hurtlings of the body, the fasts and flagellations, the world of enclosures and coffins. From all these things the shining numinous is there to deliver man and make him free by the power of Truth.

Such is my reading of the eternal countering of darkness by light. It is here that the dialectics of black and white comes in.

Negation can be negated. This is the teaching by example of all who have stood for the numinous. I can think of hundreds, and can name a few—Blake, Burns, Bruno, Diogenes, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Hypatia, Joan of Arc, Kropotkin, D. H. Lawrence, Orwell, Henry Miller, Nietzsche, Rabelais, Rolland, Rimbaud, Robin Hood, Rousseau, Socrates, Thoreau, Tolstoi, Villon, Voltaire, Wagner, Whitman ..

They were all on the side of the numinous, and therefore on the side of the true gods, even though hardly one of them could

be called religious in any conventional sense. They stood for freedom, often to the point of martyrdom or madness. They all dared to negate the negation around them.

This illustrious list could be extended enormously, not only by adding hundreds of names from Europe, but from every other part of the world. I call them the Dionysians. And to this list I must add one living contemporary, Garry Davis, whose widely publicized refusal to acknowledge the passport world during the last twenty years has made him a legendary terror for all who uphold that solemn nonsense of political frontiers, where you have men in national uniforms with rubber stamps examining travel documents, creating entirely artificial differences between one man and another, denying the truth that men are the same everywhere. Garry Davis has exposed this man-made evil by a disinterested refusal to identify himself with any of the nation states, and has insisted that his country is the world, and that in matters of citizenship he is a citizen of the world. Passport officials are haunted by the roguish smiling figure of this Dionysius of the frontiers.

Sex Made Cheap and Commercial: The taboo on sex has been almost violently destroyed. You can now discuss openly all the formerly banned subjects such as homosexuality, incest, ritual murders, works such as the Kama Sutras and those of the Marquis de Sade without the slightest fear of being abnormal or obscene. There is no slur on having posters for birth control, or even for women in high office in India opening factories for the manufacture of loops and condoms. Far from being a disgrace and destroying a reputation, it is a coveted honour to become a beauty queen or a movie star. To display their sexual attractions on posters, far from being condemned, is applauded in these sexy sixties. An Aphrodite of the streets, Christine Keeler, is a famous heroine. To be inhibited on sex is really to be dated.

With what result? Sex is now stale. Instead of being the most numinous of all human values it has become vulgarized and commercial. There is now neither gentleness, compassion nor wonder, all of which were there in the old Pagan world. If former generations dishonoured sex by making it a Christian sin even to mention it, the present civilized generation have further dishonoured sex by making it cheap and merely biological. This is the result of interference by silly scientists, unscrupulous businessmen and politicians. Sex emancipation is good; but the evil today is that rulers exploit this new freedom so that their complacent subjects can revel at the bestial level like great herds of pigs.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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VISAKHAPATNAM.

Symbol and Myth (*Continued from page 272*)

of Madura because the king executed her innocent husband, and there is the goddess Kanyaka Paramesvari who represents a virtuous and noble woman who committed *sati* (voluntary cremation by a wife while yet alive along with her dead husband).

Hinduism also recognizes pure nature worship of the Nagas or snake-kings, as well as adoration of planets, stars, the sun and moon, sacred trees, animals, rivers and mountains, and last but not least the land itself as Punya Bhumi or the Sacred Earth. There are also great Guru figures like the Nalwar and Alwar mystics of the Tamilnad, the Buddha, and the Jain spiritual figure Gomatesvara, who, at Sravanabelagola in Mysore State is represented in an over fifty foot stone statue, and where recently over 175,000 pilgrims assembled on a single day to pay special homage to this great figure from the past. There is even Kapila, who over 2,000 years ago founded the Samkhya philosophy, so important to Hindu spirituality in general. In the months of January and February of each year thousands of pilgrims visit the island of Sagara on the mouth of the Ganges about eighty miles from Calcutta. It is on this island that Kapila attained wisdom and where he taught the Samkhya doctrine.

This great pantheistic display of divinities, sacred places and objects, and Guru figures, all goes very deep into the Hindu's consciousness. It is a form of pure pantheism which serves as a basis for absolutist philosophy. As all these idol-symbols have deep inner meaning and value, they ultimately refer back to the Self or Atman. One can say that man makes idol-symbols, but one can also say that idol-symbols make man. Both viewpoints are correct depending on how the subject is looked at. In the *Maitri Upanishad* (VI. 8) we read how the gods and value-categories like Truth, the Vital Breath, etc. refer back to the Self:

"This Self indeed is Isana (the Powerful Overlord), Samba (Siva as the Beneficent), Bhava (Siva as Pure Becoming), Rudra (the Awe-full), Prajapati (the Lord of Creation), Visvasrij (the Emanator of the Universe), Hiranyagarbha (the Golden Germ), Satya (Truth), Prana (the Vital Breath), Hamsa (Spirit), Sastri (the Teacher), Vishnu (the Preserver), Narayana (the Son of Nara or the Original Man), Arka (the Shining Sun), Savitri (the Vivifying Sun), Dhatri (the All-Bearer), Vidhatri (the Ordainer), Samraj (the Kingly), Indra (the Ruler of the Vedic Gods), Indu (the Moon). It is He who emanates light, who is covered with a thousand-eyed gold ball, like a fire (encompassing) a fire. Him, assuredly, one should desire to know. He should be sought after."

From the Many we ascend to the One. While the rays or idol-symbols emanate from the Sun-Self, they also ultimately return to the same source. This is a cyclic process of idol-symbol bursting forth into meaning, form and value and des-

cending on to the idol-symbol field, and finally ascending back once again to the Sun-Self. The One is the Visvasrij, the Emanator of the Universe and when the One is viewed as the neutral Sun-Self Emanator all the psychological and cosmological forces are brought into play by an unfettered display of idol-symbols.

The Clogging by Monotheism : To the moralist and other such relativistic types pantheism must be destroyed in favour of a monotheistic god. This itself is a battle between the gods and a demon. How can pantheism ever be tolerated when there are idol-symbols who are devilish and immoral to the moralist's sick mind? How can we expect a joyful wisdom from one who views with horror and disgust the innocent sportive absolutism of Krishna or the frenzied dance of Siva? The sin-soaked moralist *must* insist on a one-and-only god and when this happens the natural process of pantheism gets clogged.

This insistence on a monotheistic god whom one *must* believe in and *must* blindly obey is utter childishness to the ordinary Hindu who feels that since there are many types of humans in the world, so there are many types of divine manifestations. The moralist down on his knees beseeching a jealous Jehovah to save him will never understand this. How can absolutist spirituality of any kind find its way among relativistic moralism and obey-or-be-damned theological dogma? When the Hindu addresses an idol-symbol he either does so by standing up or by fully prostrating. There is no halfway compromising bended-knee beseechment. It is also true, as missionaries assert, that Hindus never pray like Christians. This is because Hinduism has no doctrine of original sin, and the idol-symbol is something not merely to be believed in but experienced and realized. The final conclusion of idol worship is found in phrases like *Sivoham*, "I am Siva!" Jesus also took this position when he said, "The kingdom of God is within." Unfortunately this phrase has been twisted around and now reads, "The kingdom of God is at hand." From the point of inner truth and realization this great dictum, which is the essence of Jesus' teaching as we know it, has become something outside the individual, something to be hoped for in a hypothetical future life through beseechment and spiritually degrading humility.

In Hindu pantheism the great field of idol-symbols are cosmologically related to Brahman the Absolute and psychologically related to Atman the Self. Final realization is found in the great Upanishadic dictum *Aham Brahman Asmi*, "I am the Absolute!" The Absolute, the Self and the idol-symbol field become unified when the field and Self as the knowing experienter of the field become One or the Absolute. This is the *yoga* or dialectics of Hindu pantheism, which in the end does not become monotheism or even monism, but non-dual absolutism or *advaita*.

"A Spark of My Brilliance": So many names, so many forms, yet one ultimate Reality. This is the position from which Hindu pantheism emerges. The descent from the pure Sun-Self-Absolute into the field of idol-symbols implies that one is entering into the world of name and form. The secret is to see the relational unity between the idol-symbol field and the pure Sun-Self-Absolute beyond name and form. When this is understood then we have a non-dualistic or advaitic form of pantheism. This is brought out very clearly in Pushpadanta's Tantric work, *Mahimnastava* (The Greatness of Siva).⁵ Tantra is a contemplative wisdom discipline dealing almost entirely with symbols. In this Tantric work, Siva is referred to as the "smallest of the small" and "the greatest of the great. "He is "everything," yet "beyond all this." He creates, preserves and destroys yet is beyond all action. All names refer to Him but He is beyond all names. Pushpadanta also says in verse 32 that it is impossible to completely express all of Siva's emerging values or attributes. This is also implied by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (X.40) when he tells Arjuna :

"There is no end to My divine unique values, O Paramtapa (Arjuna); what has been said of these unique values is but indicatory of their (possible) extensive elaboration."⁶

The tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* which deals with the meaningful emerging values or attributes of Krishna as the Absolute runs along much the same lines as the *Mahimnastava*. Krishna explains to Arjuna what some of his values or attributes are and he does this in a graded series beginning with the Self seated in the heart of all beings. Hypostatic values such as the radiant Sun (Ravi), the Moon (Sasi), Vishnu, Indra, Siva, Mount Meru, etc., are all brought in. And then in the next to last verse Krishna says:

"Whatever entity is unique in perfected value, in grace or in radical strength, understand that to have manifested itself from a (mere fractional) spark of My brilliance."⁷

In the final verse Krishna asks Arjuna, "But what use is there for you, Arjuna, in this pluralistic world?"⁸ And answers his own question, "Supporting this whole world by a single fraction (of Myself), I remain still (as ever)."⁹ The Absolute as the support of the world is what Arjuna must not lose sight of. If he becomes entangled (i.e. conceptually fixed) in the pluralistic world or field of idol-symbols without having the support of the Absolute he will be taking a one-sided position. To see both sides, taking a balanced position at all times is the secret that Krishna time and time again always seeks to impress on Arjuna.

5 translated by Arthur Avalon (Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1963)

6 p. 461, *The Bhagavad Gita*, translated with commentary by Nataraja Guru, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961)

7 p. 462, *Ibid.* 8 p. 463, *Ibid.* 9 p. 463, *Ibid.*

A Royal Road to Spiritual Freedom : A pantheistic idol-symbol religion and a symbolist philosophy of the Absolute broadens the vision of the seeker by the very fact that an unlimited array of idol-symbols confront him and he is able to give philosophical meaning to them all, finally arriving at the pure Sun-Self-Absolute. The danger, and this is most important always to remember, is when an idol-symbol becomes a fixed concept. Great idol-symbols like Vishnu, Siva, Krishna, Uma, etc. are not fixed concepts to be blindly believed in. They are hypostatic values wherein a variety of equally valid meanings emerge. Philosophical symbols like *nirvana*, *brahman*, *atman*, *moksha*, etc. are symbolic because they are non-conceptual and non-metaphysical. These symbols can only be understood by pure intuitive realization. They have meaning and value in the intuitive awareness of the seeker.

The Hindu world of idol-symbols and philosophical symbols is perhaps the greatest stumbling block in the search for the common ground where East and West can meet. Writers sympathetic to the East, like F. S. C. Northrop conceive of *nirvana* as an "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum."¹⁰ This is conceptualizing *nirvana*, and over and over again we have been warned against this. One must leave the world of conceptual constructs in order to enter into the world of symbol. Western metaphysics is purely conceptual and it is only through a symbolist philosophy of the Absolute that the metaphysician of the West can escape from his own prison of concepts, if he so chooses. It is a difficult thing for most to do, but as a beginning a serious study of Western Alchemy and Hindu and Buddhist Tantra, Taoism and Brahma Vidya would be the right start.

Man in his search for ultimate Reality cannot do better than to have symbols serve him as a pointer on the way. The world of idol-symbols, be they Hindu or otherwise, not only gives the seeker a richer and deeper spiritual experience, but when correctly applied lead him on to the Absolute beyond all name and form; which is the Symbol of all symbols. Pushpadanta in the *Mahimnastaya* (verse 29) shows us how this is accomplished in Tantra :

Adoration to the priceless One !

Adoration to Him who is so far and yet so near.

Adoration to the destroyer of Kama.

Adoration to Him who is the smallest of the small and
the greatest of the great.

Adoration to the three-eyed (Siva).

Adoration to you who are everything.

Adoration to you who are beyond all this !¹¹

[END]

10 see Chapter IX, *The Meeting of East and West* by F. S. C. Northrop (Macmillan Paperbacks, New York, 1962)

11 Our translation.

The Autobiography of an Absolutist

(Continued from page 266)

Except for some-brief engine trouble, the ride from York to London was very enjoyable, especially because a well-groomed young English waiter smartly handed me coffee and biscuits on the way which one took without having to get up from one's seat. This opulent touch marked the difference between train travel in India and in England, but in terms of cash value one paid almost ten times less in India. The livery and polished boots and buttons absorbed the value paid rather than the food itself. I reached Kings Cross by lunch time. A coloured porter was available to put my baggage in one of the taxis that queued up at the entrance to the station, and Celine, the good guardian angel for me in my troubles in Europe, was seen waiting for me and all was thus made easy for my moving about in London again.

Lyons Corner House near the Strand: Depositing first my baggage in the corridor of the Strand office of Asia Publishing House, who had nearly sold out the first edition of my book on the Gita, and ordering a presentation copy to be sent to Christopher who said he had not seen it, our first concern was a buffet lunch at the nearest famous Lyons Corner House, the counterpart of similar chain restaurants in New York. Self-service through automatic gadgets was more perfected in its cafeteria system. One had to ask the pretty service girls here, while pressed buttons brought cups of coffee for you by the slot system. Different London Corner Houses had automation introduced to a greater or less degree. One had to compose one's own menus carefully if one was to have a good meal. The crowds and confusion often made one forget what one really liked or wanted so as to satisfy a hunger that could be half actual or belong to an imaginary world of luxury choices.

I asked for mashed potatoes and baked beans but Celine was wiser than me in her selections. We sat down with our own selections at tables and a dubious lunch was all we had because our minds were not quick enough to decide what was best for us.

The Asia Publishing House office had only one Parsi and another West Indian girl working in the office at the end of lunch hour. Soon after, the head of the office came and I finished my business with him and went to the Belgian Consul for renewal of visa but the office there thought it was not necessary according to the date stamps omitted at the Luxembourg border which I had not noticed myself. The vagaries of the passport rules are endless. One has to learn as one goes on finding one's way within a forest of stamps, endorsements, cancellations, additions, amendments and other entries. Paper troubles are sometimes more nuisable than actual ones. At long last, I found myself before evening, at 32 Cecil Park, Pinner again, to rest my wearied limbs.

A Tangle of Telephone Calls: The next trouble that awaited me was that of getting involved in a tangle of engagements

through letters and telephone calls which led to nothing finally. One of my main intentions in visiting Europe at that time was to contact intellectuals especially a woman mathematician and scientist. Young Toby Hodgkin had a tour of India about 1954 and had stayed with John at the Bangalore Gurukula. His mother Mrs. Dorothy Hodgkin was a scientist, mathematician and Nobel Prize recipient for her study of crystal structures. She taught in Somerville College, Oxford. Edna Kramer who taught higher mathematics in Columbia University was another lady whom I admired and wished to meet. Mme Lucille Caslet whom I had met at Lyon nuclear physics laboratory was another of those ladies for whom I had a soft corner of secret admiration. They conform to a Hypatia type and represent the absolutist principle when it tries to show itself through brilliance of brain reputation or beauty through otherwise negatively weighted feminine nature. The Gita refers to this Portia touch and certain women and Rousseau's Sophie and Heloise belong to the same Joan of Arc order together with Dante's Beatrice and Goethe's Gretchen. The Saint Theresa type makes women mystics absolutist in another sense altogether.

It was with Mrs. Hodgkin of Oxford that I was somewhat strongly interested in, when at Pinner, London, on my return from Harrowgate. I had already had a first disappointing reply from Dr. Dorothy Hodgkin, whose letter had reached me at Harrowgate itself a week before, in which she had said that she was going to the Far East and would not be available when I proposed to motor from Pinner to Oxford. She said, however, that her elder son, Luke, was better qualified than herself to enlighten me on such subjects as the Unified Field Theory of Einstein and allied questions. Lucie went to the telephone for me and first contacted Toby the younger son, but he was too sleepy at about 10 p.m. on Saturday 18th September and his brother Luke whom Lucie was able to contact at another number got through the first, sounded, as Lucie reported, only Luke, warmly interested in meeting me the next day, which was proposed for a Sunday outing at Oxford.

Thus my passionate hunt for a lady scientist fell through. All that it cost was a tangle of telephone calls with their waits, slot payments, wrong numbers and buzzes of engagement of line during busy hours and detailed spelling out of letters of an inaudible word by saying A as in Apple, etc. I have always for this reason and for the complicated variety of instructions in different telephone books of different big cities like New York or Paris, had a fear for the apparatus itself, and took care to keep at a safe distance from it. It had, to my eyes, an anti-contemplatively ominous presence at the corner of an otherwise nice sitting-room. Nothing is worse than when you had jumped out of a warm morning bath, hastily wearing a bathing gown or towel round you, to be told by a complacent voice at the other end of the ringing telephone, anticlimactically, that it was only a wrong number after all. I have never been at home with telephones although my father had one in the house when I was less than

ten while at Bangalore in 1902. I consider them a nuisance even today. One gets affiliated to a horizontal world of values through them. A buzzing door signal adds sometimes to the noises of the telephone, refrigerator or thermostat in certain modern houses. Screaming sirens, fire engine bells and other signals sometimes upset normal nerves, though only for seconds at a time, contributing to make irritable men and women.

Talks with a Schoolmaster and Meeting Romarin: Even after the application of two kinds of embrocation and wearing flannel underwear, my lumbago persisted, but for that reason I did not omit to visit the London County Council Library of the district and even walked down-stairs for long talks with a London headmaster who had served in America recently through an exchange system now prevailing between the two countries.

Conversation with this gentleman revealed, surprisingly to me, that the educational theories of Rousseau mentioned in the standard Monroe *Cyclopedia of Education*, as the Father of Modern Educational Theory, were not familiar even to a trained teacher with experience in two highly civilized modern states.

At the same late evening gathering, there happened to be present an unexpected and strange-looking guest who called herself Miss Rosemary or rather Romarin Grazebrook. She had bobbed light-copper-coloured hair and strange psychic eyes. Taciturn in her ways, with downcast looks, she had placed her light gypsy-style baggage at the entrance of Lucie's house as I returned from my visit to the library.

I was told she had crossed over from Brussels on the previous evening and had spent the night on one of the benches of a railway station in London in order to see me. I became alarmed at the prospect of having to deal with an abnormal woman, with which form of punishment I had already burnt my fingers more than once in my life. I kept watch on this stranger who hardly said a word, but listened attentively to the midnight conversation I was having with the big moustached schoolmaster I met in Lucie's place.

We sat talking till after midnight, when we proposed to disperse, before doing which the strange lady knowing that we were to cross back to Ooty the very next morning, asked to stay to be taken too. I tried to put her off by saying that she should ask Celine which she did not, but went off somewhere in London in the schoolmaster's car. I thought I had got rid of this strange lady, but how she was present at Dover next morning and how our relations grew through later years is a story yet to be told.

Lucie herself was the disciple of another Indian Guru about whose teaching we had several talks with others who belonged to this group under a reformed Sikh teacher of the Punjab. What he taught had many points of contact with my own teaching or that of Guru Narayana's. There seemed to be a whole group of Indians and English men and women who gathered and broke bread or had Indian style feasts together in the heart of London and in the counties round about in the name of this

Guru. A thirst for a new outlook in religious life seemed general in London at that time. In trying to convert and rule India, many Englishmen seemed to have been subjected to an involuntary sort of inner adoption as if by Nemesis, for everything Indian.

Miss Grazebrook's case revealed this strange reaction, as shown by her personal story, by which her father was a top military officer in the very Nilgiris where I myself sallied forth with my counter message to the West. Adoption and disadoption has a Nemesis principle involved.

Next morning, as the formalities of the Dover port made Mother Gevaert, Celine and myself, with just one seat in the car, wait for some more formalities to be over, who should we catch sight of but that strange lady whom I had tried to get rid of gently in the very early hours of the same morning. The same kind of coincidence took place at Marseilles later in the year and heightened each month the enigma that Romarin represented.

We soon crossed over by the same ship called *M. V. King Baudouin* and touched Ostend soon enough to enable us to arrive by the straight autostraat to the doors of the Gevaert domain, with the enigmatic lady whom Celine and Mother Gevaert were generous as ever to invite to live with the open minded family. Ghent was reached by about five p.m. on the 21st September 1965. (*To be Continued*)

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