



values

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

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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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Editorial : On Proper Loyalty

FOR nearly twelve years in this magazine, month after month, I and others have employed our poor wits trying to present a clear portrait of that great wisdom teacher, Narayana Guru. The result in India seems negligible. Let us face the problem again.

It is really very simple. It is a case of proper loyalty. You have to understand what a Guru is. That is fundamental. A Guru is the name given in India to a person who has attained to *absolute certainty* about truth or reality. Then by his life, by word and by writing, or even by silence, he teaches the way to this attainment. Having attained to this realization of the nature of the Absolute, he is what we have called an absolutist. Those who do *not* know are still caught up in the world of relative truth, ways and values. They are therefore what we have called relativists.

The Chief Problem, then, centres around this distinction between absolutism and relativism. In the Narayana Gurukula and in this magazine we stand for both theoretical and practical absolutism as a wisdom way of life. Our vision of Narayana Guru as an absolutist is not our own interpretation; for in his own writing he stood for *Brahmavidya* which means the Science of the Absolute. There is no doubt about it.

Now surely, since the Guru stood for this absolutism, it cannot be right, to lower his Guruhood status to that of a socialized man, a mere social reformer, and at the same time to speak of loyalty to him? Isn't there something degrading and wrong in all this? And yet it goes on all the time. "Oh yes," you are told, when you mention Narayana Guru, "We know all about this great social reformer of Kerala. A great man who uplifted the backward classes." Never a word about his status as a Guru. His Guruhood is ignored completely as if it were something disgraceful.

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Then there are the pretenders. Although every year the Guru is remembered by an official public holiday, and his name visible from end to end of Kerala State, there are people from Kerala who, when you mention you try to follow his teaching, declare blandly that they have never heard of him.

And so, between the people who call themselves his followers and who exploit his reputation for communal ends and social purposes, and those who pretend to ignorance about his very existence, the Guru gets crucified twice over.

How much better it would be if they left him alone. By all means go ahead and collect support for this or that community, but in the name of justice why exploit the reputation of a man who over and over again insisted that the community to which he and all people belonged was the entire human race? And why drag a Guru of his status into local politics? Souvenirs and booklets are produced during the time of the Guru's birthday in which cheap politicians are given pride of place, and meetings are held where all sorts of wrong and misinformed statements are made about Narayana Guru, which are painful to listen to.

As a Western-born Disciple of the spiritual Guru successor of Narayana Guru, what in heaven's name do you suppose I have to do with all this social reform and caste politics? The very reverence I have for the Guru is because he was *not* local, because he was a *world* Guru, a global figure, with a message addressed to mankind and not for a specially picked-out community, however backward they were or how forward or what not, from the West Coast of India. And if this means being disowned on such communal grounds, I couldn't care less. To me this only means they have renounced their claims to be loyal to the Guru and what he stood for.

Let me say that I am sick and tired of requests to contribute writing to relativistic publications in which what I have to say gets mixed up by association with other writers who have not the slightest intimacy with the writings or the teachings of the Guru and I prefer to write directly to the public so that there will be no confusion about where we stand. It is the problem once again of not being able to distinguish between absolutism and relativism; of not being able to distinguish between a wisdom teacher and a social reformer, between a world philosopher and a tribal leader, between the *dharma* of a man outside society and the *dharma* of a relativistic group inside society.

If any relativist reading these words were suddenly to realize fully what the *dharma* of a Guru is, they would throw away their position in society and take to the open road of *sannyasa*. That would be following the full *dharma* of Narayana Guru, instead of jostling for a more advantageous position in the world of society. Narayana Guru was never a social man. I cannot speak plainer than this.

It Would also Mean recognition of the Guru-Disciple succession, and of full respect for the preservation, by this way alone and no other, of the wisdom tradition which Narayana Guru himself recognized, and whose wish it was that this should be maintained. This wish is not respected properly. People are strangely jealous of giving proper status to the Guru-Disciple succession. Although this principle and method of handing down wisdom from Guru to disciple is one of the oldest in the world, it is apparently not understood by most of those who use the name of Narayana Guru.

No socialized body can preserve this tradition. No socialized body can preserve the teaching of a Guru which stands above or beyond society. The relative cannot support the Absolute. Wisdom needs its own apparatus. It requires full-time absolute dedication, with no other interfering interests.

This is where the Narayana Gurukula comes in. Surely this is plain enough to see. I know there are many who do not see eye to eye with Nataraja Guru for trivial tribalistic reasons which take the line "He is only the son of Dr Palpu" etc, forgetting conveniently the fact that Nataraja Guru has repudiated the ideas of Dr Palpu, for when Nataraja Guru took to the life of a disciple of Narayana Guru, from that moment Narayana Guru became, in spiritual principle at least, his father. In any case the fact remains that Nataraja Guru has been accepted as having Guru status and as the only disciple of Narayana Guru who has this unchallenged rank.

Relativism is a Spiritual Disease. In fact, it is the one thing which prevents the wisdom of a Guru from being applied for solving all the troubles of mankind. There *is* a way of solving the many problems of humanity, in the light of the Guru's teaching, whether in economics, politics or social justice, but it can never be piecemeal or local. It is not the politics of Kerala or even of India. It is the politics of one world, and it involves the idea of world government, world justice and world economics. These things are as simple as the world postal service which enables you to get letters easily anywhere on earth, or the radio telephone by which you can talk to people over land and sea.

The Guru's vision was always universal and world-wide, seeing no frontiers, cosmopolitan, global, and therefore only global solutions truly represent him within the field of human life. Actually his field covered the human as well as the non-human in one solidarity. He continually pointed out how man not only exploits other men, but rips and ruptures the fabric of life by ruthless behaviour to animals, the earth and the atmosphere.

If the many organizations using the name of Narayana Guru and pretending to have a casteless formation were really so, we would expect them to show the proof of this with a generous inclusion of people from all parts of India, let alone from other countries. But the fact is that it is only the Gurukula which has brought the teaching of the Guru as a way of life intended for wisdom enlightenment on a global basis and with the goal of absolutist emancipation, to large numbers overseas. My own heavy correspondence is evidence of this, as well as visits by Narayana Gurukula members overseas and of visits to India by disciples from Europe and America.

Our very survival as an absolutist organization, even against immense odds, is proof enough that the absolutist way is right or correct, as long as it is safeguarded from relativistic compromise and interference. The flame of wisdom still burns brightly and should continue to burn brightly to give its light to the generations to come. I have no doubt that they will look with astonishment at the blindness of the generations behind them.

The Insight and Appreciation of that future generation will come. This is not guesswork prophesying. Caste and community are dying things. People from abroad are not the least bit interested in Ezhavas, Tiyyas, Nairs, Menons, Nambudris and all the other mind-made divisions of the Kerala world. It makes no more sense to a European or American than would the history of the Smiths, Browns, Jones, Wilsons or any other groups of English names.

It is a mistake to think that social reform is needed. This present society needs *abolishing completely*, not reformed. Only then can plain humanity come into its own. Marx knew this when he looked forward to the withering away of the state. Let the teaching of Narayana Guru percolate into Russia and see what a wonderful peaceful revolution in terms of enlightenment would ensue! The Russians are descendents of Vikings and Asians and absolutists by instinct, surviving grandly in a hostile world.

I am inspired when I think of what the teaching of Narayana Guru could do when applied to world affairs. I can see the great problems of colour bars, inequality and poverty vanishing because most of them are in the mind. It is the mind which sees the distinctions of pariah and brahmin, of communist and capitalist, of black and white. These little minds must go, and wisdom holds the method, the Guru-disciple know-how to let humanity out of its mental cage into the boundless unconditioned freedom of the Absolute Mind.

For the relativist this is too much, too frightening. It is a case of "what will the neighbours think?" There would never

be a Guru if he cared for the thinking of little minds. To reduce the unconditioned mind of a Guru to the peanut size of the little relativistic mind buzzing round in its pillbox is tragic, for it blocks truth and worse still keeps us away from enlightenment.

The Trouble with a Spiritual Genius is pin-pointed here. The Guru's thought ranges far beyond the conditions of his time and place. I feel confident that the younger generation must see a bit more clearly into his thoughts. Those who are able to break loose from the conditioning of their parents, from mothers and grand-mothers particularly, who are not infected with the malignant germs and memories of a caste world that is dead, will catch on to the word of the Guru. Narayana Guru, Nataraja Guru, the Buddha too and all Gurus who were geniuses, have all had to do this bit of genealogical self-surgery, so do not accuse me of being a single breaker up of parental relationships! I do not say this is the path for all. Only the few have the deep capacity and God-given grace to go the whole hard way.

What others can do, as Narayana Guru said, in the *Atmapadesha Satakam*, is to recognize, revere and support the few. This is the true loyalty, to be always on the side of the absolutist, to be without compromise on this question of wisdom and Guruhood. The Guru asked for this kind of loyalty and no other. For even in loyalty there must be absoluteness!

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I, John Spiers, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated March 15, 1967.

(Signed) JOHN SPIERS, (Publisher).

A SIMPLETON

IN the autumn, the season of ripeness, when final redness
Comes to the ore and the earth is with child by Sun,
Like the bright gold spangles fall'n from the light of Nature
Fying over the happy fields, the Simpleton
Feeling the warm gold ripen, sat by the wayside
—His broad face having an animal nature (the beast of burden
Who has turned prophet, the beast in our earth unconscious),
A simple creature, happy as butterflies,
Or as the dancing star that has risen from Chaos.
And the world hangs like a ripe apple—the great gold planets
Lying with Evil and Good in the ripened core.
The old men, Abraham-bearded like the auburn
Sun of harvest, walk in the holy fields
Where the Sun forgives and remakes the shape of Evil
And, laughing, forgives lean virtue... Gravity yields
The gold that was hidden deep in the earth, in the map-like
Lines of a smile made holy by Light, and the Sun
With is gold mouth kisses the skin that shines like red fire,
And shouts to the lowly, the dust that is his lover:
' See how of my love and my shining I never tire,
But rule over thunders and Chaos: the lore of the bee and the
great lion's raging
To me are equal in grandeur, the hump of the cripple
And the mountain that hides the veins of brute gold are as one—
And to me the jarring atoms are parted lovers! '
And this is the lore the Simpleton learns from his nature—
Lifting his face in blindness and happiness up to the Sun.

SONG FOR TWO VOICES

' O DIONYSUS of the tree—you of the beard, you of the
ripeness
Among the branches of my arm and hair
As the boughs of the vine hold the plane-tree—
You came like the wind in the branches.'
' And to the earth of my heart, O golden woman,
You are the corn-goddess.'
' O wind, come again to my branches.'
' O darkness of earth—O ripeness.'

Right and Wrong Belief

BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

THE extract that follows is a moving protest against the crimes and follies perpetuated in the name of religion by those sixteenth century Reformers who had turned to God without turning away from themselves and who were therefore far more keenly interested in the temporal aspects of historic Christianity—the ecclesiastical organization, the logic-chopping, the letter of Scripture—than in the Spirit who must be worshipped in spirit, the eternal Reality in the selfless knowledge of whom stands man's eternal life.

Its author was Sebastian Castellio, who was at one time Calvin's favourite disciple, but who parted company with his master when the latter burned Servetus for heresy against his own heresy. Fortunately Castellio was living in Basel when he made his plea for charity and common decency; penned in Geneva, it would have earned him torture and death.

"If you, illustrious Prince (the words were addressed to the Duke of Wurtemberg) had informed your subjects that you were coming to visit them at an unnamed time, and had requested them to be prepared in white garments to meet you at your coming, what would you do if on arrival you should find that, instead of robing themselves in white, they had spent their time in violent debate about your person—some insisting that you were in France, others that you were in Spain; some declaring that you would come on horseback, others that you would come by chariot; some holding that you would come with great pomp, and others that you would come without any train or following? And what especially would you say if they debated not only with words, but with blows of fist and sword-strokes, and if some succeeded in killing and destroying others who differed from them? "He will come on horseback." "No, he will not; it will be by chariot." "You lie." "I do not; you are the liar." "Take that"—a blow with the fist. "Take that"—a sword-thrust through the body. Prince, what would you think of such citizens? Christ asked us to put on the white robes of a pure and holy life; but what occupies our thoughts? We dispute not only the way of Christ, but of his relation to God the Father, of the Trinity, of predestination, of free will, of the nature of God, of the angels, of the condition of the soul after death,—of a multitude of matters that are not essential to salvation; matters, moreover, which can never be known until our hearts are pure; for they are things which must be spiritually perceived."

People always get what they ask for; the only trouble is they never know, until they get it, what it actually is they have asked for. Thus, Protestants might, if they had so desired, have followed the lead of Castellio and Denk; but they preferred Calvin

and Luther—preferred them because the doctrines of justification by faith and of predestination were more exciting than those of the Perennial Philosophy. And not only more exciting, but also less exacting; for if they were true, one could be saved without going through that distasteful process of self-naughting, which is the necessary precondition of deliverance into the knowledge of eternal Reality. And not only less exacting, but also more satisfying to the intellectual's appetite for clear-cut formulae and the syllogistic demonstrations of abstract truths. Waiting on God is a bore; but what fun to argue, to score off opponents, to lose one's temper and call it "righteous indignation," and at last to pass from controversy to blows, from words to what St Augustine so deliciously described as the "benignant asperity" of persecution and punishment!

Choosing Luther and Calvin instead of the spiritual reformers who were their contemporaries, Protestant Europe got the kind of theology it liked. But it also got, along with other unanticipated by-products, the Thirty Years' War, capitalism and the first rudiments of modern Germany. Dean Inge has written, "I am more and more convinced that the worst evil genius of Germany is not Hilter or Bismarck or Frederick the Great, but Martin Luther...It (Lutheranism) worships a God who is neither just nor merciful". Right belief is the first branch of the Eightfold Path leading to deliverance; the root and primal cause of bondage is wrong belief, or ignorance—an ignorance let us remember, which is never completely invincible, but always, in the last analysis, a matter of will. (from *The Perennial Philosophy*, Collins, 1958).

[END]

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WHO IS THE LIGHTNING...?

By FRED HAAS

*Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue?
Where is the frenzy with which you should be inocu-
lated?—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE*

NOT only where is the lightning, but who is the lightning?—This is the question we must ask ourselves: "Who is the lightning?" The answer?—"Dionysus is the lightning."

The dancing Dionysus gave us lightning: the white heat of frenzied joy is his *gift* to mankind. The unchained god of absolute wonder gave it, and while he gave it, he sang and danced!—*Within and without, Dionysus still dances!*

From Dance to Dogma: It was also Nietzsche who said, "I cannot believe in a god who does not dance." If Nietzsche went one step further he might have added, "I cannot believe a man is truly religious if he cannot dance." Whether he is a Dionysus-possessed European Pagan or a Siva-possessed Hindu *bhakta*, both are Supermen drunk with the frenzy and lightning of god-possession. This is what Nietzsche meant when he conceived of the Superman as a person who "must surpass himself." Such a man must surpass all relativistic conditioning and the feeling of a separate ego-self which cuts him off from the frenzied awe-full wonder of mystical absolutism.

Can a Church Christian ever think of Jesus as dancing? Or better yet, what about his mother Mary? What about a singing and dancing Mary? Can a Semitic conditioned mind ever think of a dancing carefree Holy Mother? A god-drunken dancing Mary—a singing, swinging Madonna? What healthy original sin this would be! And what about the poor dance-starved orthodox Jew and Mohammedan? A dancing Prophet!! A dancing Jehovah!!—Heaven forbid.—David was a dancing sinner and so was Solomon. (The naughty Solomon, full of sin, whom all Semites secretly admire!) They were both healthy and heathen, and they danced! The whirling Sufi dervishes danced on the head of stiff orthodoxy. And of course Jesus was full of dance, which is the same thing as being full of Pagan values. He attended wedding feasts and at one of them he was supposed to have turned water into wine. And who is connected with wine? Yes, Dionysus!

The dance of god-possession goes beyond good and evil, sin and salvation, belief and heresy, and all other dualistic pairs. When the human mind is twisted and tormented by sin-obsessed,

believe-or-be-damned, theocratic priests then the Dance is damned and dogma dominates. Relativistic law replaces absolutist Light, and the mystic Word is denied in favour of brainy word-theology. A joyful absolutist Guru is replaced by a whining, cringing moralist dying on a cross, or by a legalistic doomsday, everything-is-sin Paul or Calvin, or worse still by a power-seeking political church pope and his henchmen. The Sufis are murdered and the dogmatic intolerant mullahs grab power. If man does have such a thing as "original sin" it is only his perverted desire for fixed legal and dogmatic religion. This is no doubt the death-wish of the relativist wanting social or tribal security at all costs, even to the extent of killing off all genuine spirituality found in ecstatic religious life. The concept of original sin is Semitic in origin and arose because men arrogantly denied and defied their own absolutist spiritual nature.

Three Divine Types:: There are basically three types of divine manifestation. The first is the negative-divine. Kali and Khronos are pure representatives of this type of spirituality. Both take their names from the root meaning of time: *kala* in Sanskrit and *khronos* in Greek. The destruction they create is of an absolutist kind and is *will'd* by Nature. There is no element of sadism or revenge, as commonly understood, and destruction is only one aspect of the eternal cyclic process of non-evolutionary phenomenal becoming. Kali and Khronos are not demons or *asuras*. They are the divine personification of the time destruction cyclic element in Nature. They are "moving images of eternity" mythologically represented. A pure demonic or *asuric* type is the tribal monster Jehovah. Sadism of the most cruel kind is his signature. No negative-divine figure would ever cast innocent unbaptized babies into an everlasting hell. Jehovah was lifted out of the closed tribal context of Judaism and made into a universal monster by the Church Christians. He is their monster-god, and though usually covered over with a goody-goody non-Guru Jesus and a weeping Madonna, Jehovah is still the foundation of Church Christianity.

The second type is the positive-divine. Vishnu and Apollo fit into this category. Vishnu is full of *kalyana-gunas* or auspicious qualities. He is very positive and preserves the respectable side of life. His absolutism does not reach the white-heat of Siva or Dionysus. Vishnu as *Ananta-Sayana* reclines joyfully on the coils of a snake representing Eternity or again as *Narasimha*, the man-lion, who fights the *asuras* to preserve the three worlds. Krishna who is an *avatar* or manifestation of Vishnu has dionysian qualities as a young shepherd who has many love affairs with beautiful milkmaids. Generally, however, Vishnu is a very positive social god, a preserver of the *status quo*. The highly refined and sophisticated city life in ancient times required this type of god to preserve its values. The same is true of Apollo

who is the preserver of social law and order in Greece. Dionysus and Siva are too free and absolutist ever to become social gods.

The third type is the super-divine. This type is represented by Siva and Dionysus. Both cut down all relativistic opposition. Both unite themselves with the absolutist devotee or *bhakta*. While they can never fit into any fixed dogmatic and legalistic religion, they can easily become the foundation for an absolutist religion and philosophy.

Opposition to God-possession: In *The Bacchae* of Euripides, opposition to Dionysus takes form in the relativistic behaviour of Pentheus towards the god. In the end Pentheus is killed while ruin falls on the house of Cadmus and the city of Thebes. This is because Pentheus, its ruler, refuses to recognize Dionysus. At first he mocks the god and when confronted with him openly question his godhead. Later on when he sees the hold that Dionysus has on the people, he damns the god and wants to destroy him. But he fails. Euripides is showing us a battle between relativism and absolutism. Pentheus stands for the respectable Apollonian values of the city-state, and the dynamic frenzy of Dionysian god-possession he sneeringly calls "feminine." He wants a secure religion with order and plenty of safe, run-of-the-mill relativistic devotion. Pentheus comes to a tragic end because he refuses to recognize Dionysus. In doing this he also refuses to acknowledge his own absolutist mystical nature.

In Euripides' drama we find this interesting dialogue almost at the end of the play between Dionysus and Pentheus' grandfather and mother, Cadmus and Agave. This dialogue gives us the clue as to why the drama had to end the way it did.

DIONYSUS.....I, who tell you this, am Dionysus, son of no mortal father, but of Zeus. If you all had chosen wisdom, when you would not, you would have found the son of Zeus your friend and you would now be happy.

CADMUS: Dionysus, have mercy on us; we have erred.

D: You recognized me too late; when you should have known me, you did not:

C: All this we have realized; but your vengeance is too heavy.

D: I am a god; and you insulted me.

C: Gods should not be like men, keeping anger for ever.

D: Zeus my father ordained this from the beginning.

AGAVE. All hope is gone, father. Our sentence is passed; we are exiles.

D: Why then put off what is inevitable? ¹

¹ p. 226 *The Bacchae and other plays*, trans. by Phillip Vellacott, (Penguin, London, 1954) slightly revised.

Dionysus requires wholehearted devotion. Nothing half way will do. Pentheus, Cadmus and Agave were basically relativists. Dionysus was deliberately insulted by the arrogant Pentheus, while Cadmus and Agave indirectly insulted him because of their relativistic approach. Although Pentheus was doomed to destruction right from the beginning, Cadmus and Agave could have saved themselves if they had immediately and wholeheartedly affiliated themselves to Dionysus. The tragic end is inevitable because of the character types involved in the drama.

Dionysus Still Speaks: Dionysus constantly renews himself making his godhead manifest throughout the world. The mistake of Church Christianity was to think it could destroy Dionysus. In the end Dionysus will be the absolutist destroyer, restoring the old Pagan religion to Europe.

European man has been spiritually raped by the Church. Still he has had his moments of glory. As Jung rightly points out, "The great events of our world as planned and executed by man do not breathe the spirit of Christianity, but rather of unadorned paganism."² It was Goethe who said he was the last of the Pagans, and his life-long spiritual companion Schiller, soaked himself in European Paganism. One can almost hear the thunder of the great Dionysian drum and see the god-possessed sacred dancers in his poem, *The Gods of Greece*:

The lively Thyrsus-swinger

And the wild car the exulting Panthers bore,

Announced the Presence of the Rapture-bringer—

Bounded the Satyr and blithe Faun before;

And Maenads, as the frenzy stung the soul,

Hymn'd in their madding dance, the glorious wine—

As ever beckon'd to the lusty bowl

The ruddy Host divine!

And here is a supposed Christian, Henry Vaughan, singing Dionysian airs in his poem *Rhapsodie*:

Let's laugh now, and the prest grape drinke,

Till the drowsie Day.Starre winks;

And in our merry, mad mirth run

Faster; and further than the Sun;

And let none his Cup forsake,

Till that starre againe doth wake;

So we men below shall move

Equally with the gods above.

² p. 11 *Psychology and Alchemy*, trans. by R. F. G. Hull, (Pantheon, N. Y., 1953).

(Continued on page 182)

8. Searching for a Gurukula in the South of France

By NATARAJA GURU

IF you ring the door-bell at any one of the residential houses in most of the cities of central or northern Europe in early summer, you will most likely be responded to by a girl in charge of vacant houses whose sloganized words are "*a la campagne*."—off to the countryside. You are expected to be satisfied and turn away.

This state of exodus to the South in search of warmer seas and bluer skies has become almost a craze or a passion, not to say fashion, not only for the middle classes, but percolating to much lower economic strata. The richer group plan larger overseas travels and intellectual life in universities remains only nominally alive. The professors themselves prefer to wander like hobos sometimes with a guitar or a paint-brush in their hands, having a free time after the drudgery of the darker winter months when they really work hard.

World of the Automobile: There was therefore no use my trying to seek any more intellectual contacts in the cities of northern Europe. The contagion of the love of the *Rivieras*, whether Spanish, French or Italian did not leave me unaffected by its craze, which amounted to a sort of fever. Jean Convent had his car overhauled and correctly conditioned and was waiting eagerly to make a dash across France, passing through Ermenonville, Paris, Fontainebleau, through the undulating countryside of Provence to the very borders of the *Alpes Maritimes*.

Jean by temperament loved fast driving and was also proud of the fitness of his car to make the performance which had its unforgettable features for me because it opened out to my view a post-Hitlerian Europe of straight autostrads sometimes fifty miles long. The dozens of parallel lanes were marked out on which one kept the car at top slot speed doing nothing more than touching the steering wheel all the time. These autostrads fitted the spirit of the automobiles correctly if they had any spirit at all except what was derived from gasoline. One entered by a certain number indicated by the starting point of the race where a policeman who resembled a marionette in his move-

ments or like an automaton received the cash and the ticket was delivered with "thank you", and a bell, which gave the okay for one to set off. All was correctly decided upon and no accidents were supposed to happen at all. But even under such strict conditions the love of blind speeding for its own sake caused graver accidents than ever, as in one case I heard about where a whole family were crushed to death while they parked for a minute in a side space declared to be safe for such purposes. The speed-free spirit of automatic drivers behind steering wheels keeping their own directions were sometimes oblivious to the contingency of a family thus taking it leisurely by the roadside as in the olden days. It had dramatic consequences too gruesome to imagine.

Rousseau's Ermenonville: On the Ghent-Paris route the first lap of the journey that lay before the adventurous spirit of Jean Convent was the landmark of Ermenonville, for which we had to take a side road from the main auto-routes. It was the place where Jean-Jacques Rousseau is said to have spent his last days in a castle by a lakeside and an extensive park which seems still preserved intact by the Touring Club de France. Strangely also it has a region covered by sand dunes which seems to put a bit of Africa into the heart of northern Europe. This is used as an entertainment park for children who ride live camels or mechanical merry-go-rounds.

One enters these historical preserves enclosing the lake, the park and the original tomb of Rousseau (his body is in the Pantheon in Paris) at the centre of the island of poplars bordered by extensive lawns with conifers of all varieties, making of his place of last repose a calm paradise reflecting his own love of nature's peace.

We had already picnicked in some of the wayside thickets and had parked the car outside the gates while we walked on the lawns round the lake, including some sort of universal temple of peace half-finished and neglected and built that way by some Rousseau worshipper of his time, not omitting to notice some imitation "prehistoric" remains on the grounds; but we could not help being affected by the same spirit of that Nature which made Rousseau exclaim at the very opening sentence of his *Emile* "Everything is good coming out of the hands of the Author of things; all degenerates in the hands of man."

Nature with Rousseau was not just the love of nature poetry as with Wordsworth or Keats, but included a state of the soul understood in deeper philosophical terms. Nature referred to the whole of the habitual dispositions proper to human nature. When the spirit is tuned to such a Nature, one could become as sentimental as Rousseau himself, as when he is said to have shed his tears in Lake Leman at Geneva for no other reason than by mere sympathy with its beauty. Although the sturdy English spirit of an H. G. Wells would call this behaviour undignified and

sentimental, in the contemplative mystical spirit that was my own I found here a sympathetic light and an echo which gave me perhaps the surest contact with the soul of Europe even whose presence I had seriously suspected during my superficial student days in India.

Rousseau lived here with his servant who was also his life companion, married only nominally to him after she functioned as such for many years. She was only a common representative of her sex and bore him two children whom he is charged with having neglected. In spite of his apologies for such and other reasons which generous spirits must grant to such a great soul, there are prudes and gossip old women who still enjoy pelting him with this same stone which they picked up lightheartedly from his own deep confessions, pretending to be morally superior to Rousseau himself. Therese herself is said to have her own failings as all human beings have. This is just what makes them human and God himself must have left a margin for this. No flame can be considered utterly smokeless except when the flame and light are treated as the same.

With such thoughts we walked out of the gates of Ermenonville park into a wayside restaurant, and as we sat sipping our cups of strong French coffee, the proprietor himself sat at our table and began a most interesting conversation, saying that he had a son-in-law in Bombay who once sent through the Indian Embassy in Paris, a whole dinner cooked in India, for some function. The proprietor was M. Henri Levet, a sort of bibliomaniac, specializing in rare manuscripts referring particularly to Rousseau; so much so that he could be said to be buried in a Rousseau world wherein he found full satisfaction for himself. He soon offered to waive the bill for the coffee and was so interested as to conduct me across the pebbled road where he showed us many etchings, emblazonings and rare prints which he said no Rousseau collections elsewhere possessed.

This contact has since then grown in intimacy, and a whole group of Rousseau pilgrims met in the same place on September 26, to which event we shall come presently. After this pleasant interlude, filled with reveries of the solitude of Rousseau, we were soon driving through the main auto-routes which are a feature of modern Europe, especially pronounced as we came to the great city of Paris, over whose embellishment much American money seems to have flowed. The rest of the journey was not much more than a press-button business, except when nearing the busy outskirts of that great city, which really began when measured outwards from the centre, where the Metro stations ended.

With Garry Davis in Paris: Garry Davis had already telephoned to me at Ghent and given me the address where I had to call on arriving at the heart of Paris. We had to

contact him at his office to confirm the hotel reservation he had made somewhere near La Madeleine. He took care of the charges himself and we were lodged in one of those typical Parisian hotel rooms with big windows fitted up with lace curtains and overlooking a quiet garden of some big office building. The prices of hotels in Paris which I remember to have counted at less than twenty francs a day had soared up more than a hundredfold and even in the gold francs, each of which was a hundred times more than when I first knew Paris in 1928, had soared very high indeed. I was not used to such high costs and did not therefore prolong my stay in that costly city which suited more only the pockets of American businessmen or their staff.

Garry was working for the Culligans now, and, although not yet in affluence, was heading towards some financial stability, being in charge of sales of their water-softening device over a large area. He came with two important friends interested in World Government, one of whom had read my Memorandum on the subject and was interested in meeting its author. He came with his lady friend, who was of Indian origin though now fully domiciled as a Parisienne. Garry came back after dinner with these friends and we talked till about midnight. Garry promised to come early next morning, which he did as we were preparing to pack and depart after a typical *petit-dejeuner* served in the room.

There is something unchanging which persists even though Paris is for ever changing its facade. Bathrooms had to be fitted into odd corners of bedrooms as more and more standardization of accommodation became imposed by the pressure of modern demands. Hotels thus lost much of their classical air and proper Parisian ways had to bend low to please the standard demands of today. The true spirit of Paris must have felt its humiliation.

Garry had just enough time to discuss plans for meeting at Ermenonville on Sept. 26, and to discuss his other ambitions about World Government, enthusiasm for which has persisted with him at all times that I have met him, with equal fervour though with changing stress on aspects of the same problems for one world. He was more subdued and mellowed in his ambitions now and felt cowed down as a breadwinner for about half a dozen of his family. The depth of his absolutism was, however, always the same, and this was what made our friendship equally dear to both of us. Nothing else was interposed between this love of the Absolute. We understood each other fully and took the cash of absolutism from each other, letting all other credits go to the winds.

Our friendship thus got a character of being one of a unique type. It was based on something beyond good and bad. Later letters from Garry have helped to confirm this belief and

shown amply that good friendships can effect changes on both sides by an osmotic interchange of interests, always in the interest of the absolutism that must prevail above all else.

The bills were all taken care of by Garry as he waved us off from the pavement in front of the hotel at nine that morning. I could not help but notice the weight that seemed to hang on his features now, as the responsible father of a family trying to make both ends meet. Prodigality and parsimony were hard to combine, except in a neutral absolutist dedication in life.

A Cottage in Provence: The leisurely pleasures of traveling through the countryside of old France are now nearly forgotten except for a short stop for lunch off the main road near Fontainebleau. We sped along at a high rate, passing forested areas, crossing famous rivers and bridges and many monumented city squares and gardens. We stopped over for a cup of coffee again at Valence and, after a short spell of ease under the plane tree avenues in front of quaint cafes, already Provencial in style, we entered the more undulating country roads near turretted castle hilltops here and there as we drove on in the afternoon through narrower and more winding roads. Sometimes we passed neglected churches reminiscent of the Middle Ages and the landscape soon became that of the familiar grey coloured stones piled up to form walls and spires of places of worship, some of which were still attended by Christian believers.

Nyons was a typical Provencial town that we passed soon after, with a panoramic view of the hills near round Mount Ventoux, an area where retired artists and authors loved to live in renovated houses often with adjoining grottos sometimes used by hermits in ancient days, as also, more rarely, in modern times for living in by those who loved solitude.

Soon Jean found a narrow avenue which went into an open space in view of a grand old pile of stones in full view which was lit by flood-lighting at night so as to reveal the antique beauty of the church, marking the transition between early and modern Christianity. A neglected Roman road was cut through a valley nearby and it was on its precipitous sides that Alma, one of the Gevaert family, lived in her rumble-tumble renovated house with Bob, her husband, an engineer who worked at Grenoble and who came only at week ends to visit his wife and three children. The last of these was Bernard, a typical *enfant terrible* of seven years or so.

The family was at supper when the car drew up on the upper lawn, from where rude steps led downwards to the cosy but antique-styled dining-room. Beds were all ready for us in barn-like rooms or lofts at a higher level than the dining-room. The cool air had a bracing and life-giving freshness which made me think of my own home in the Nilgiris, where the air, though equally bracing, seemed to lack that inwardly nourishing quality

which, except when the cruel Mistral blew over Provence, gave to the air of the Alpes Maritimes a refreshing quality of its own. Here I received some letters awaiting me from India and America, and rested my tired limbs after long speeding through highways. I must have dreamt of old India although I do not remember the dreams clearly. Dreams are best, anyhow, when quickly forgotten.

Plans for another Gurukula: My stay in and around Mirabel-aux-Baronnies (the little town near which Alma lived), that beauty spot surrounded by a range of much-furrowed hills, lasted from July 8 to August 2. Some of my friends had the idea of exploring this region in view of a possible Gurukula centre. Marc Gevaert had taken the first initiative and had entered into an understanding with one M. Chamberger who, with his pretty wife of Indian extraction, was himself the founder of a spacious home for artists and idealists, the house dominating a whole hilltop at a place called Pigeon. The idea was to merge a Gurukula community in this centre and to run both on revised lines after my arrival. But petty clashes of interest split the minds of the two leaders concerned and they fell apart.

But the plan for a Gurukula was pushed further by Marc, who located a beautiful abandoned city next to Vaison-la-Romaine, which fully represents, even now, a whole array of exhibits of Roman colonization of the South of France, the Roman "Province." Caesar's Gallic wars must have been carried out here. The remains of forts, causeways, aqueducts and whole areas strewn with amphitheatres and other monuments of Roman colonization give to this region, with its olive groves and orchards laden with various fruits, some features of a much coveted paradise. The blue skies and mild climate attracted holiday makers.

Marc went so far as to pay an advance for a large domain of land with a barn and living rooms within its precincts. As he could not fulfil the conditions of payment in time, Madame Vishnevsky of Brussels, herself interested in a kind of health and cultural centre, paid for the land, and my hopes of using the same for a Gurukula centre were still high. The nucleus for a self-sufficient Gurukula, with its own cooking arrangements, library and class-room, was established in the upper rooms of Alma's own house at Mirabel. Visitors came to this tentative centre and I conducted a *homam* (fire ceremony) on Sunday, July 18 at 10 a.m. in the large garage of the half renovated house. A group of interested people from the surrounding area attended this function and were favourably impressed by the ritual and the Indian dinner that followed, but quite an equal number of the more conservative type seemed to have dropped off although previously sympathetic to my projects and plans. The atmosphere was surcharged with a revised form of Catholicism, and Bohemians, both artists and authors, had their own free ways.

Mr and Mrs Ratel, who were highly sympathetic to Indian spirituality, lived in a sumptuous house not far off. They had more pronounced mystical predilections and my own "matter of fact" and basic approach did not have that touch of luxury or other distinction to appeal to them completely as I could see. I tried to buy a piece of land with a grotto and a spring next to Alma's house, and while still living with Alma, was interviewed by the broadcasting officer of the Marseilles area, who with his wife accorded a long interview with me. Later in the same area the television authorities screened me sitting near the grotto I was bargaining for and talking or walking with the people in various colourful postures. I only heard reports of this television programme in which I became a 'proverbial Indian swami' so as perhaps to be recognized readily if I should go there again any time. But I left before popularity could follow at my heels and curiosity could not be satisfied.

Projects and Hopes: I visited another site of forty acres where a friend with similar ideas lived, a site which had forests, ravines and grottos. This place, in the region of Mirandol, had an interesting history of its own on which my hostess was a specialist, and rattled away with details which were all easily forgotten. I had hopes of linking my ambitions with this couple, but the plans fell through again for vague reasons.

The arrival of a daughter of Mme Vishnevsky, along with the Comte d'Arschot and his disciple Noel who had full sympathy with my own plans, having visited me earlier at Ghent, took place late one evening when we were about to retire at Alma's place. They had driven all the way from Brussels and wanted only to go to bed straight away which they did on improvised beds. Madame herself was to arrive next day and my hope was still to see if something favourable would not happen if I followed the lead of the Tao in proposing to go with this group to the same site for which Marc had bargained first.

Thus we left in two or three cars for the hilltop a dozen kilometres off, where the farmhouse with spacious loft and a drawing room below stood neglected and unoccupied dominating the Roman city of Vaison already described. Noel, disciple of the Comte d'Arschot, loved to make a living picking fruits, for some time at least, in the same area, and joined me to begin to live in this new place by ourselves, while the more respectable company found rooms in country hotels nearby and visited me off and on.

Here again I lived from July 23 to August 2, again nourishing in my mind the chronic weakness of wanting to form a Gurukula in some unknown or new place—a pattern of behaviour which has haunted me all my life since my college days. I could hardly look at a beautiful hilltop or valley without imagining myself living there, grazing cattle or growing vegetables.

Although such a project did not actualize, life at Vaison gave me almost the same satisfaction as if it had. Noel Michel was a good listener to all I said while cooking and washing together using the old-fashioned iron stove fed by logs of wood in plenty all around which he helped each day to gather. Dr Megong, who was interested in what I taught, although affiliated to his own macrobiotic school of dietetics and treatment from his own mentor—a Japanese called Oshawa,—was also a good listener, as he took profuse notes of all that I said, for use with his own quasi-religious congregations in and around Bruges in Belgium.

My second fire ceremony was conducted at Vaison on July 23. I did not extend formal invitations by name, and as a result much of the rice and curry which I had cooked, anticipating a spontaneous crowd, had to be consumed by a group of unexpected visitors in the evening. The ceremony was held under a cicada-infested lime-tree, the shrill voices rising and falling in crescendos having a note of wilful persistence and an orchestral rhythm of its own throughout the summer days.

Peaches and the Pope's Palace at Avignon: We put in a visit to the fashionable centre of the little historic town of Vaison-la-Romaine, as I expressed the wish to eat ice-cream, a gesture which I made to Marc in gentle protest against the chivalrous exaggerations of macrobiotics which seemed to have affected the company present, consisting of the count and his disciple and Madame Vishnevsky's own family.

We peered at the Roman statues through the railings and walked with Sunday holidaymakers through the amphitheatre still being used, and returned to our hilltop again.

On other sallies outward by car, which were several in number, Madame Vishnevsky drove me in her Volkswagon throughout the countryside adjoining Orange and Avignon. The Pope's Palace at the latter place not far from the Pont d'Avignon, by its huge proportions and dimensions was a revealing site for me to show how the Papacy prevailed in all its force, even outside Rome itself. Thus I had a chance of drinking fully of the atmosphere of romanized Provence, during the best part of the season, for peaches and plums galore could be plundered or had for the mere picking, because only the best grades went in tissue-papered baskets to the wayside shops in towns.

Under the full avenues of lime-trees Madame Vishnevsky treated me to coffee and cakes on the pavement seats and I remember pocketing the fancy sugar packets with a sense of kleptomaniac enjoyment in doing so.

Greek tragedies were being enacted to crowds of thousands, by international actors in the courtyard of the Pope's Palace. Avignon was caught in full holiday spirit, but I had no time

for interests other than my main work of writing my last big book. However, I did meet an interesting actor and his wife, who stopped specially to greet me, seeing an Indian waiting near the central fountain for Madame Vishnevsky to return with her car repaired and reconditioned. The beautifully bangled Turkish lady who sat in the car insisted that the husband greeted me as she had done, because she had, as I understood, recently visited Bombay. Such wayside friendships have their own side-lights of interest which could even be sometimes unforgettable.

On the Road to Rome: On returning again to our own new home, I understood from Madame that her husband had his own business-like plans for the place, and my own dreams soon faded away into the background again, and Marc's payment was to be adjusted or waived. The search for a Gurukula in the South of France thus came to a close because I too realized that such a centre away from the heart of Europe would only be duplicating conditions already available in India for the Gurukula movement. My mind turned to Ghent itself, which is not an uninteresting city, more useful for possible visitors from India to benefit from contacts, and equally accessible to and from London, Paris, Brussels and Berlin.

On August 2, Jean Convent who had been spending his days painting with another artist lady of his own age, teaching each other their particular techniques, came again for a long cross continental drive through Avignon to the environs of Rome. The passport office of Avignon was closed and we had to think of Nice as an alternative and so we went at breakneck speed throughout, taking by-passes through canyon regions, stopping for refreshments only at long intervals.

I should have remembered to mention the sad news that Father Edgar Gevaert had died in Ghent two days before we left Vaison. Alma brought the news to our residence on the day we were out in Avignon. She had already left Mirabel for Ghent when we went there to get details. Her father seems to have had a peaceful death and collapsed while working in the garden, having sent his daughter Celine to England to save her the shock of his death which he must roughly have anticipated. Thus ended the life of one of the most interesting personalities I have met in Europe. He was a combination of Paganism with a perfected form of Christianity with both art and authorship to his credit, together with haunting music and a staunch sense of world citizenship. He was an honest man although not necessarily logical in his words by conventional standards, even though such were his intentions.

(To be Continued)

Who is the Lightning ..? (Continued from page 172)

D. H. Lawrence, who was anything but a Christian, wrote these magnificent lines in *Spiral Flame* :

Yet, oh my young men, there is a vivifier.

There is a swan-like flame that curls round the
centre of space

and flutters at the core of the atom,

there is a spiral-flame that can lick our little
atoms into fusion

so we roar up like bonfires of vitality

and fuse in a broad hard flame of many men in a one-ness.

And here is a sample of the Dionysian spirit found in Walt
Whitman's *Children of Adam* :

O something unprov'd ! something in a trance !

To escape utterly from others' anchors and holds !

To drive free ! to love free ! to dash reckless
and dangerous !

To court destruction with taunts, with invitations !

To ascend, to leap to the heavens of the love indicated
to me.

To rise thither with my inebriate soul.

To be lost if it must be so.

To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness
and freedom.

With one brief hour of madness and joy.

And how many others were there. Keats, Shelley, Baudelaire, and of course William Blake who was always critical of "priests in black gowns" and "Priests of the Raven." And what about the Pagan, Arthur Rimbaud, who never went back to the Church no matter what the lying priests and his sin-obsessed sister said. Rimbaud was divinely mad and this is why so few understood him in works like *A Season in Hell* :

"Do I know nature yet? Do I know myself?—No more words. I bury the dead in my belly. Shouts, drums, dance, dance, dance, dance. I cannot even see the time when, white men landing, I shall fall into nothingness.

"Hunger, thirst, shouts, dance, dance, dance, dance."

Finally here is another German Pagan, Holderlin, who is even today admired by existentialists like Heidegger. Holderlin, like Nietzsche, went mad, but in his poem *Hyperion's Song of Fate* he is simple and clear :

So you delighted my heart,

Father Helios and like Endymion

I was your darling,

Holy Luna.

O all you faithful
 Kindly Gods.
 Would that you knew
 How my soul loved you then.
 True, at that time I did not yet
 Call you by name, and you
 Never named me as men do,
 As though they knew one another.
 Yet I knew you better
 Than ever I have known men;
 I understand the Aether's stillness
 The words of men I never understood
 I was reared by the euphony
 Of the rustling grove,
 And learned to love
 Amidst the flowers.
 In the arms of the Gods I grew up.

The Trinity of Trivia: One either buries or burns a rotting corpse. Only a fool would try to inject life into a stinking heap of flesh and bones. The Church and modern science are like rotting corpses. When the necessary and vital spark of life is gone an injection of Dionysian absolutism is useless. The same is true of those verbose nut-crackers, the academic philosophers. As Jung says, "Our philosophy is no longer a way of life, as it was in antiquity; it has turned into an exclusively intellectual and academic affair."³ Jung himself was not merely another academic philosopher or psychologist. He was a man of deep wisdom who used the academic world as a spring-board for his own intuitive insights into the nature of man. He visited India and was deeply attracted by the spirituality of Ramana Maharshi whom he met in 1937. He also appreciated the wisdom texts of India and China. In both his outlook and life, particularly in later years, Jung had the qualities of the real philosopher, the *rishi* of India or the Pythagorean sage-mystic of Greece. But Jung is a rare example of a modern man who finally gave up the pretensions of the academic world in favour of wisdom and truth.

From Descartes to Russell, the whole edifice of systematic philosophy is rotten and will sooner or later die from an overdose of its own poison. What good is philosophy if it is not a way of life, a spiritual quest and joy, a search and love for the highest values? What purpose do the croakings of moronic logicians and fancy systematizers serve if all they do is add to the already existing confusion? What good is a trained academic mind if all it means is a conditioned mind? What spiritual purpose is served by reading the verbose and spiritless works of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Bergson and others, when they fail to include the mystical or *numinous* which is the very heart of all spirituality and philosophy? What good are all these

3 p. 84, *The Undiscovered Self*, trans. by R. F. C. Hull, (The New American Library, N. Y., 1958).

Intellectual windbags when their academic teaching fails to include *darsanas* like *bhakti*, *yoga*, *sannyasa*, *dhyana* and *nirvana*? To the dogs with such pretenders! They have usurped the role of the philosopher. They have strangled philosophy with dead systems and theories. They have sacrificed the goddess Sophia to a cold zombie with a cheque book found in a musty academic temple!

These are the people who are supposed to represent European philosophy! What a joke! There is not a singer or dancer among them! Just puffed up academic windbags. Even a simple fisherman in Norway or Greece, or a plain unlettered peasant in Germany or Ireland has more spirituality than all these academic job-loving professors put together! So we can bury once and for all this rotting dead-letter Trinity of Trivia, this interconnected lifeless and joyless world of academic philosophy, modern science and Church Christianity. We can ignore them and go to the real source of European spirituality. As Jung knew it is the philosophers and Gurus of antiquity who lived a harmonious spiritual life. And the further back we go the richer the spiritual content. Let evolutionists like Julian Huxley and Teilhard de Chardin *evolve* to some higher plane of academic absurdity. They can be left in their cities and academic chairs of virtue to ponder over the problem of what to do after their highly touted civilization collapses. We shall dance!

A Rose-Garland Crown: Dismiss these pretenders and return to Dionysus. Return to laughter, joy and wonder. Learn once again to see infinity in a grain of sand, to hear the harmony of the spheres, to feel the dance of life in a majestic mountain or beautiful sunset, to witness the love between bird and tree, mountain and stream, to gently merge in the living universe as a moving image of the Absolute, to worship the stars and planets as living gods and goddesses, to become like a child with a pure untroubled mind. Or as Lawrence once said, "Know yourself and then *be* yourself." Dismiss these pretenders and murderers of the spirit, and return to your natural centre, the Self. All comes from the Self and all returns to the Self. As Nietzsche says:

"You higher men, the worst thing in you is that you have not learned to dance as you ought to dance—to dance beyond yourselves! What does it matter if you failed!

"How many things are still possible. So *learn* to laugh beyond yourselves. Lift up your hearts, you good dancers, high, higher. And do not forget the good laughter.

"This crown of laughter, this rose-garland crown: to you, my brothers, do I cast this crown. Laughing have I consecrated; you higher men, *learn* I pray you—to laugh".⁴

[END]

⁴ p 332, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, (Random House, N. Y., 1956), slightly revised.

PAEAN OF PAGAN JOY

By AVADHOOT MAHENDRANATH

COME walk a little while with me
To ancient oak or banyan tree,
Where serpent king does hold his court
And Nature's sacred laws are taught ;
The tree where naked Gura lives
And to select disciples gives,
While sitting at its fertile root
The Wisdom of the Absolute.

When night does fall and teaching ends ;
The silver light of Moon descends ;
The sleeping fire is fanned to flame
As Guru calls the sacred name.
The dancers come and whirl and shout
As bodies twist and turn about,
And drums begin to roll and beat
In time with stamp of dancing feet.

Who can forget erotic nights
Of Pagan joy and mystic rites :
With Moon and fire and twinkling lights ;
A magic world of secret sights,
An ecstasy of untold heights
When souls were free on pleasant nights ;
Abandoned dance and passion's kiss :
Who would this joy of Sabbat miss ?

Oh, Murugan, put up your spear ;
Of Kama's power we have no fear ;
Before the warm and sacred fire,
We worship you with our desire.
Three thousand years have not outworn
The magic of the fertile horn ;
When horn of plenty overflows
Into the pink and yielding rose.

With sacred fire and flickering lights
And herbs we cut on moonlight nights,
Worship the phallic tentacle
With magic star and pentacle :
The men and maidens joyful sing
And to archaic customs cling.
My heart will always worship still
The phallic emblem on the hill.

Beneath the sacred wisdom tree,
Lord Nataraj shall dance for me,
The Cosmic Drama to advance
When Siva does his naked dance.
What need is there for fright or fear,
The Goddess of the World is here,
A pattern ordained for mankind,
The Mother with her Lord entwined.

POETRY

By HENRY MILLER

IF the mission of poetry is to awaken, we ought to have been awakened long ago. Some have been awakened, there is no denying that. But now *all* men have to be awakened—and immediately—or we perish. But man will never perish, depend on that. It is a culture, a civilization, a way of life which will perish. When these dead awaken, as they will, poetry will be the very stuff of life. We can afford to lose the poet if we are to preserve poetry itself. It does not require paper and ink to create poetry or to disseminate it. Primitive peoples on the whole are poets of action, poets of life. They are still making poetry, though it moves us not. Were we alive to the poetic, we would not be immune to their way of life; we would have incorporated their poetry in ours, we would have infused our lives with the beauty which permeates theirs. The poetry of the civilized has always been exclusive, esoteric. It has brought about its own demise.

from : *The Time of the Assassins*

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THE TAO TEH KHING

Treatise on the Absolute and Its Nature

By LAO TZU

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

XL

(Cyclic) return is the action of the Tao

Weakness its useful quality;

All things under heaven come from Tao as named
Existent

While the Existent comes from the nameless Non-
Existent.

XLI

When men of the highest type hear of the Tao, they
strive diligently to adopt it.

When men of the mediocre type hear of the Tao, they
seem to hold on it and lose it.

When men of the lowest type hear of the Tao, they
laugh loudly at it.

If it were not thus laughed at, it would not be the Tao.
Hence the sayings of the ancients:

"The absolutist light to most seems dark,
While those who follow Tao seem drawing back,
And up and down seems Tao's level track."

Tao's highest way seems abysmal ;

Tao's sheer brilliance seems dull ;

Tao's most adequate way seems insufficient ;

Tao's greatest solidity seems flimsy ;

Tao's pure nature seems worthless.

The largest square has no corners ;

The greatest vessel is the slowest made ;

The greatest music has the faintest notes ;

The greatest symbol has no shape ;

For Tao is hidden and nameless; and yet it is Tao that
gives its backing to all things and brings them all
to fulfilment.

COMMENTARY: These two verses belong together.
Verse 40 states the principles of the Absolute Tao while verse
41 describes the reactions of men to the teaching of the Tao and
why it is so little regarded, except by the most exceptional.

Obviously, if human beings were wise, the world would be a different place. We are always hearing about progress, meaning development in a forward direction, in greater complexity of standards of living, with more and more dependence upon artificial mechanical aids, with new materials and greater possessions spread out over greater numbers. The achievement on the surface is spectacular, but underneath in the region of happiness, contentment, peace and fulfilment, the human condition seems further away than ever from its original joyful state of "crude" or "brute" nature (or "savage" "primitive," "barbarian", "undeveloped" and other derogatory names).

The teaching of our author stands for this crudeness, for its initially basic simplicity, as sannyasins in India likewise may be said to stand, as well as the ancient philosophers of Europe, the Cynics and Stoics especially (cf. Diogenes the anarchist living in his "tub.") This position which is more drastic than Rousseau's "back-to-nature" or than members of modern movements using this phrase can conceive, is very hard to accept by those who like "the amenities of life".

Lao Tzu and his great interpreter, Chuang Tzu, have a vision of man as totally absorbed in Nature as any other part of this whole, as animal, bird, fish, tree, mountain, cloud or anything existent. They insist that to be happy, to be true to the great Dharma of Nature, to be a full blast absolutist or Taoist, and also to be true to our own nature, we must abandon the hard strong desire to improve on what is given, let alone setting out to conquer all the existents, whether it is herding cattle or mining metals or flying off into space. It follows that we should submit to the original nature, and so the qualities of weakness, mildness, softness and gentleness are mentioned as being applicable to the way of the Absolute.

This however, does not mean that the absolutist who does so is physically or mentally "weak" in the sense of enfeeblement of character. Quite the reverse. It takes what can only be guts or rigorous wilfulness to break away from the life of the mass, and from the routine conventional patterns of behaviour and thinking with which we have all been conditioned from infancy. The way of Tao requires also a clear-sightedness, which only those with intuitive insight are endowed. The Chinese character which is translated as "men" here is translated as "scholars" by Legge. Taking his word, we can say that only the greatest scholars are bold enough to reach to what is beyond scholastic learning. Other scholars, the middling crowd, are cowed down by fear of what their colleagues will think of them. The followers of the Tao have to brave the contempt, sneers and laughter of the "educated".

These verses presuppose the theory of the Yin-Yang, the negative-positive cycle with all other pairs included, such as the

existence and non-existence pair mentioned here. When things have reached their perfection or completion, they "return" or move "onwards" or "backwards", in progression-reversion in a cyclic way to the state or statelessness where they were once before. All these manifestations including our own personalities and mind-bodies go round from non-existence to existence and back again to non-existence, but all within the power of the hidden Tao. The *Bhagavad Gita* (xviii, 61) gives the same picture:

"The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the heart region of all beings, by *maya* power whirling round all beings as (if they were) mounted on a machine."

Here the "Lord" (Isvarah) is a personified version of the impersonal-personal Tao, but the circular movement or cycle is what is important. There is nothing bad or wrong about this, nothing to feel grief about either. Non-existence can be just as wonderful as existence; indeed to the Buddhists certainly Nirvana or personal extinguishment is greater in delight or pure joy than Samsara or personalized circulation in existence. And in the transcendent teaching of the Mahayana, both Nirvana and Samsara are brought together as one and the same.

But one thing we should notice, and that is that this theory abolishes the perpetual forward-going theory of progress and evolution, or the single creation theory. Instead we have here pulsation, a cosmic heart-beat, an in-and-out breathing. To accept this cyclic process correctly is at least a step beyond any suffering that may be involved. We participate in all this as witnesses of the power or *maya* magic of Tao, along with the myriad names and forms in the whole cosmos; and when this is applied to birth and life and death, to our relations with all that exists with mankind and all that we see, then there must arise a sense of compassionate tenderness and gentleness to all, even to the ant as to the mighty suns and planets.

To Lao Tzu's third and lowest type, with his fixed mind, all this vagueness, this mysticism with its intuitional arguments and postulates will be baffling and irksome. The vision it presents needs total insight and relaxation. Otherwise it will seem "abysmal," "dull," "insufficient," "flimsy" and "worthless" or just plain chattering poppycock. Lao Tzu does not descend to argue with such types. Instead, he uses their attitude as proof in itself of the truth which he affirms, a psychological *volte face* which has its own unobtrusive sting.

We come to the last five lines. The largest "square" is Space and the "great vessel" is the Cosmos. When we think of universal Space we reel in trying to give it form. The mathematician-physicist also makes us giddy with his astronomical numbers whose magnitude induces a similar numbness or stupefaction because they are really unthinkable to the mind and thus brings us by his roundabout ways to the same sense of mystery.

Space has no corners and the "vessel" it contains has no finalized shape which could be called "completion," end, or purpose,—the pulsation process or cycle goes on and on. There is a reference also to music which would have delighted Pythagoras with his music of the spheres, a tenuousness of sound more conceptual than actual and felt perhaps by a transporting of senses as when we gaze at the infinitude of starry bodies on a moonless night and can "almost" hear the music of the immensities.

Form more than name has meant much to the Chinese whose written language consists of ideographic pictures, most of them symbols since the ultimate meaning of each one has to be determined by association with radicals in varied contexts. But here the Greatest Symbol, the mighty All which is the Absolute both with and without manifestation, is without definitive shape or form. The nearest to this notion is the Indian philosophic AUM which does not belong to any dictionary and which itself is a symbolic word, a Word of words, or Absolute among relatives.

Finally without the Tao's support ("financial backing" is the translation of the term used here, as Waley points out), this whole wonderful series of worlds and myriads of beings, coming in and going out in perpetual play of the Yin-Yang as life and death, would have no real being. And so at the end, after all, there is a trace of personification, perhaps unavoidable as it is in the *Bhagavad Gita* when dealing with the how and why, the beginnings and endings, the comings and goings, arrivals and departures, that have made so many philosophers and seekers of truth. In Chinese the word for truth is the same as the word for Tao or the Absolute. So we may say that even those who laugh must also seek truth in their laughter and especially when approaching the end of all laughter, when up against that Truth which is final and hidden and mysterious and wonderful. They may at least recall the cause of their laughter. One can laugh with the Tao but never at the Tao for long. The Tao is one of those beautiful haunting words which belong to all languages, and which once heard, can never be forgotten.

(To be Continued)

THE CRUEL TRADITION

A NEWS ITEM in the London *Daily Telegraph* of Nov. 5, 1966, reported Prince Philip along with five companions having gone shooting in the Sandringham estate. They shot 240 pheasants. The official church teaching would be that the rest of creation was made for man's pleasure, and that pheasants in any case have no souls. We need comment no further. No other animal but man behaves in this way.

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Just as we see the milk and not the butter ;
Just as we see the ornaments and not the gold,
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NARAYANA GURU, Atmopadesha-Satakam, verse 71.