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Vol. VIII

DECEMBER & JANUARY

Nos. 3 & 4.

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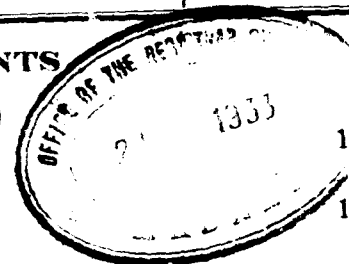
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To Mahatma Gandhi.

On the day thou first said, "I will Serve," and
set thy resolution to the rhythm of reality, thou
becamest a god. For, in service is the symphony of
self-realization.

In the spinning wheel dost thou hear the
music of the spheres; in the toils of the tiller of
the soil the song of suffering humanity.

Thy hand is a handmaiden of harmlessness,
thy eyes the ocean of compassion.

Thou art the high-priest of holy poverty; thy
bare body the temple of unveiled Truth.

Thy head is in the heavens, thy feet on the
dusty earth.

Thou art a gazer of the star,—the star of Self.

Wayfarer.

A Much Wanted Reform.

By W. B. Gokhale.



THIS is an age of reforms, be they political, social or of any other type. The genius that sways to-day is critical. There is a tendency to remove the outworn, to correct the perpetrated wrongs, and to wash away the dirt and scum. This is to be seen in almost all fields of human activity. But there is one field in which little work has yet been done, and it is high time that serious attention be focussed on it. We have recently watched with considerable interest the movement for dress reform. Its success or otherwise need not detain us here. It is a move in the right direction anyway. But it is very much to be regretted that while we are so solicitous about our dress reform, we should be so piteously lame or forgetful in any case to reform the dress of the muse. The apparel in which our muse is clad is not only much too old, it contains some mistaken cuts and botches. To be direct, our alphabets need reform. *The Pioneer* once devoted an article on a similar subject when it dwelt editorially on the curious nature of English spelling and pronunciation, and seriously hinted at reform. Indeed, the language sometimes presents difficulties and complications thereby. There is obvious arbitrariness in some cases, and it passes comprehension why it has been so long allowed to continue. Why POOL is 'pool' and BOOK is 'book' is as interesting as the question why 'Cook' should be pronounced with 'k' and 'Cycle' with an 'S'.

In this connection, the effort of some of the South Indian literateurs is much to be appreciated at least for their pioneer work in this direction. They have changed some of the Devanagari characters; and some they have abolished altogether. The *Shraddhanand* perhaps still continues to print its columns in the 'reformed' alphabet. But while the effort and the spirit that impelled it are noteworthy, we feel the reform was unwanted, and in fact was hardly a reform, and in our opinion, this explains the unpopularity of the movement. The so-called reformed characters are more tedious to write than the old ones. The reason is not far to seek; the Devanagari characters have been boiled down to their present state through successive stages and have undergone various changes and reforms so that as they exist to-day, they form by far the most perfect and scientific script that exists; which does not stand in need of reform so much as some of the other scripts. We will not talk of the

Bengali, the Punjabi or other scripts of similar type, for they are more or less variations of the Devanagari itself. The Roman script requires reform. While it lacks in symbols to signify various vocal combinations, it has an unnecessary duality of letters to pronounce the same sound. Why should some words be spelt with 'C' and others with 'S' when both have a sibilant sound? Why again should 'C' be used where 'k' can do? Similarly 'G' should be used only for the guttural unaspirate and 'J' be left in undisputed possession of the palatal unaspirate. There should also be no interchange in the functions of E and I and so on. Besides, many other additions and alterations can also be made to make the alphabet more comprehensive in its governance of phonetic combinations and the collocation of vocables.

The Urdu script equally needs a thorough overhauling. While it has some undisputed excellences, particularly in its aesthetic aspect because of its decorative flourishes and its easy flowing nature, it suffers from not a few defects. From the phonetical point of view it is also seriously handicapped. If the Roman Script lacks a symbol for the soft 't', Urdu has two for it. The soft sibilant is represented by no less than three letters, while too many dots create confusion at times. A process of addition and elimination is, therefore, equally necessary here.

It will be a great service in the cause of the muse if her high-priests in the Universities or elsewhere take up the work seriously and in right earnest. Long has the subject been neglected and sooner our attention is directed towards it the better it will be. Many defects will be removed, new ornaments added and the muse's garb would become up-to-date.



Mysticism.

By F. H. Aldhouse, M. A.



FEAN Inge of St. Paul's has always taken a profound interest in Plato neo-Platonism and mysticism in general, and has written very charmingly on those subjects. He has, for instance, shown that Protestantism has quite as good an account to give of itself as the Mother of mystics.

The Lutherans, Jacob Boeman and Immanuel Swedenborg need fear no comparison with Catholic mystics, who, though they may produce St. John of the cross and St. Thomas a Kempis etc., can only equal but not surpass them. Indeed, the Englishman, John Bunyan, too is a mystic of whom any country might be proud.

That Dublin has produced a mystic who is both poet and painter, 'AE'—Mr. George Russel—should be better known than it is. Mr. Russel is a member of the Church of Ireland.

To define exactly what a mystic is is not easy. The mystic of the Elusinian mysteries were those whose lips were closed against telling anything that had been committed to them at their Initiation. In the modern sense, it also means those who have had a revelation, but this new vision of Heaven and earth, as far as words can describe it may be imparted. All of us have gone home late and many have done so to the Dublin suburbs. Here is what AE, returning to his home Rathmines, says of the stars ("Star Teachers"):

Even as a bird sprays many-coloured fires
The flames of paradise, the dying light
Rays through the fervent air in misty spires
That vanish in the height.
These myriad eyes that look on me are mine;
Wandering beneath them I have found again
The ancient ample moment, the divine,
The God-root within man.
For this, for this the lights innumerable
As symbols shine that we the true light win
For every star and every deep they fill
Are stars and deeps within.

It is remarkable that a former Dublin shop-boy has touched deeper experiences in religious feeling, in verse than any contemporary clergyman of any denomination:—

Sometimes when alone
At the dark close of day

Men meet an outlawed Majesty
And hurry away.

They come to the lighted house;
They talk to their dear
They crucify the mystery
With words of good cheer.

When love and life are over
And flights at an end
On the outcast Majesty
They lean as a friend.

With the facile 'religious' talk that one sometimes hears, this is a contrast and a healthy and stimulating one. I have often wondered if Father George Tyrell's brief, sharp reproof to Father Dolling—who went in for 'Hail Fellow I well met' with everyone and was known as 'Brother Bob' and was everlastingly putting rather vulgar familiarity into his sermons, was not well deserved. "Stop!" he said, "Make not my Father's house the playground of fools!" There is nothing but what is beautiful and profound in the thoughts of AE, a draper's assistant—in the "Refuge"):

Twilight, a timid fawn went glimmering by,
And night the dark-blue hunter followed fast.
Ceaseless pursuit and flight were in the sky
But the long chase had ceased for us at last.
We watched together while the driven fawn
Hid in the golden thicket of the day.
We from whose hearts pursuit and flight were gone,
Knew on the hunter's breast her refuge lay.

Everyone cannot be a poet or a mystic, but the great majority of people can be taught to know the difference between what is mediocre and what is noble. It surely is the business of all friends of Youth to save them from the fate of 'Peter Bell'.

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.

The Irish people are an intensely imaginative people. It would seem that to help that imagination to form beautiful not base pictures, to seek 'that which is above', may be at least a part of duty of our Church of Ireland in the future.

'The eyes of a fool are at the ends of the earth'. Here is our lot, here is our inspiration if we will seek it. I do not think controversy or politics or mere 'up-lift' work by themselves will go far. *Cor ad cor loquiter*, let us seek the things Eternal, and all other things will be added.

Elements of Tragedy and Fatality in Byron's Life.

By K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, M.A.

I

IN November last I chanced to overhear in the grim stack room of the University Library at Chepauk an animated discussion on the quality of Byron's poetry between a pair of spectacled under-graduates of the penultimate Literature Honours Class. One was saying: "The critics accuse Byron of gross insincerity, and when you read him, you feel they are right." The other retorted, with almost unbecoming vehemence: "It is all cant. People don't read Shakespeare or Milton, but like wise folk keep silent. Neither do they read Byron or Browning, but nevertheless they conspire to sing in chorus that the one is insincere and that the other is obscure. Let me tell you, brother, insincerity is *their* monopoly, not Byron's. I am disappointed in you that you should have joined the Professors and the Mandarins." "Not so fast, my friend," came the rejoinder, "you cannot accuse me of ignorance. You know I have read a good deal of Byron. Nay more: I have read Nichol's Life and Q's lecture. I, at any rate, don't condemn Byron unheard." A mischievous smile played for an instant on the other's lips and he spoke in drawling accents: "I grant it, brother, you are above suspicion. How could I forget that you are the cream theory specialist? Doubtless you have read the *Prisoner of Chillon*, *The Isles of Greece*, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, and the poems on Jephtha's daughter and on the destruction of Sennacherib. Possibly you will read *The Vision of Judgement* before your Exam. Indeed, what would you more? Why should one bother himself with *Don Juan* and *Manfred* or with Byron's Letters or Journals? And you have read John Nichol and Q. They are safe persons. Why waste one's precious time with Harold Nicolson and Colburn Mayne, Drinkwater and Mac Carthy and Andre Maurois? How assinine of me to question your right to criticise the quality of Byron's poetry!" And professing some urgent business, he took leave of his companion and so disappeared.

This little colloquy set me thinking for a while. The commendable cocksureness of the one and the cynical distrust of mandarinism of the other were the illuminating two sides of the critical shield that was there open for my examination. I wondered why our teachers of the University deliberately tried to create an erroneous impression of the life and work of Byron in

the minds of their students. Byron has been for decades the favourite of the Boards of Studies and of the Text-Book Committees. And yet only those poems are prescribed which reveal him the least, or even distort his magnificent personality, and only those details of his remarkable life are allowed to escape into the class-room which make the man either a fool or a cad. While in general a proper study of an author's life is of invaluable help to a correct appreciation of his work, in the case of authors like Byron, Goethe, Baudelaire and D. H. Lawrence intimacy with the details of the march of their lives is absolutely indispensable to any appreciation of their work worth cultivating. Byron never wrote for money and rarely for applause. The main bulk of his poetry was engendered in periods of intense anguish and was delivered as an apt medium of self-relief. His life is the one clue we have to evaluate his poetry at its true worth. But the tragic and the fiercely fatalistic landmarks of his life are taboo in class lectures and *Students' Guides*. Should no departure from tradition be possible in this particular, it would be better if Byron is never prescribed for the University Examinations. Rather than he should be tackled from a wrong stand-point, it is juster Byron's place in English Literature is completely ignored.

II

The pivotal event in Byron's life was the incest with his half-sister, Augusta. The turbulent spirit that was part of the Byrons of Newstead and part of the Gordons of Gight and the remainder the effervescence of the gnawing consciousness of the lameness—that spirit had found its fulfilment in the tangible consummation of "sin," for which there could be no possible expiation. Byron was one with the fallen creatures now. He had sensed the sombre fatality of his life at an early age and the long looked-for blow had been dealt him. His head was bloody, but still unbowed. He was not like other men—he was a genius, he was an example, he was a prophet, he was an incredible amalgam of Lucifer and Apollo. Had he realized that twentieth century would have lightly condoned his incest,* Byron would

* Cf. Bernard Shaw: "We are beginning to realize the important fact that the absence of romantic illusion as between persons brought up together, which undoubtedly exists, and which used to be mistaken for natural antipathy, cannot be depended on as between strangers, however close their consanguinity. Ibsen took this modern view that consanguinity does not count between strangers. I have accepted it myself in my play *Mrs. Warren's Profession*."

Also M. Andre Maurois: "Everything here was combining to seduce Byron. It was possible for this young woman (Augusta), who attracted him to visit him quite freely. They were not safeguarded against love, like normal brothers and sisters, by the wear-and-tear of their affection.....They had neither the same mother nor the same family. Augusta, in Byron's

probably not have attached so much sinister significance to his experience and permitted it to colour the whole tenour of his life and poetry. It is probable also he would not have broken away from his wife in such tragic circumstances, nor have enriched English poetry with the most glorious cantos of *Don Juan*, or the hauntingly beautiful lines of the *Prometheus*, or of some of the passages in the dramas. Nor perhaps would he have undertaken that "Last Journey" to Greece as a "Pilgrim of Eternity," nor achieved the final victory of conquering the heart of every lover of freedom that to this day the Greek peasant says of Byron, with conviction and gratitude: "He was a very brave man—and he came to die for Greece because he loved freedom." But in the heyday of the Napoleonic era Byron had no doubts about the enormity of his "sin", and the tragedy of it, the terrible fatality of it proved at once his conviction and his vindication. Chafing under the strain he grew caddish and callous, but he also grew colossal and magnificent. Of all this there is no more ordered and authoritative account than the outstanding thesis of M. Charles du Bos's, recently translated into English by Miss Ethel Colburn Mayne. **

III

I learn from *The Times Literary Supplement* that "M. du Bos is a therapist and a clairvoyant in moral psychology, whom literature exalts into a sort of waking trance." I can readily believe it, for even his book exalts us "into a sort of waking trance". It is not as delightful reading as M. Maurois's or Miss Mayne's study of Byron. But the partial portrait of M. du Bos's grips us and haunts us and subdues us to a more intense degree than any other study of the poet. M. du Bos is under no illusions about the exact scope of his study. It is neither a biography nor a critical study of Byron's poetry. The "aim is exclusively psychological—it might even be more precisely described as zoological; for what solicits me here is not the *psyche*, but the *species*." Again: "I have concentrated my attention on the period of four years that begins with the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* (March 10, 1812) and ends with the departure from England (April 25, 1816) and, even during this period,.....he is focussed strictly from one point of view, focussed as the man of fatality: it is self-evident that if I did not believe that both the

eyes, retained all the glamour of a discovery.....It could almost be said that it was Byron, and he alone, who, by giving to this quite natural love for an unknown half-sister the name of incest, transformed the lapse into a crime."

** *Byron and the Need of Fatality* by Charles du Bos, translated by Ethel Colburn Mayne, Putnam's Sons Ltd., London & New York, 10 sh. 6 d. (March, 1932.)

period and the point of view were central, the book would never have been written".

Four years, so unlike no other four years of Byron's life! The party at Melbourne House and Caroline Lamb's entry in her journal: "Mad, bad, and dangerous to know," and two days later this other, "That beautiful pale face is my fate,"—the liaison with the daughter-in-law and confidences with Lady Melbourne—with the Latinist enchantress of Elywood, Jane Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford,—the proposal to Annabella, that "Princess of Parallelograms," courteously rejected but not from conviction—Augusta and Byron, the incest, the fiendish pleasure all the more vital for the brooding acceptance of sin, the lucid consciousness of the fall and the thrill of Revolt and the surge of Remorse,—Annabella again, the fatal fascination over her of Genius, whose dark spots she hoped to remove, and the equally fatal fascination which her purity and character exerted on him,—the renewed proposal and the acceptance,—betrayed confidences, the wedding, the ghastly ride to Halmaby, the honeymoon, the stay at Number 13, Piccadilly Terrace, London, Augusta Leigh's ominous visit to the Byrons, increasing friction, madness and badness in tragic alliance, the vacillation and irritable weaknesses of Augusta, the demoniac violence and uncertainty of Byron's temper,—Annabella's regrets, tribulations, mystifications,—gathering clouds, and thunder and scandal, the separation and the departure from England: what a career of complex cross-currents and awful completeness, to be crowded into the tiny span of four years!

Byron had lived his life. It but remained to turn his experiences into glowing poetry and function as the chronicler of the history of his fall. Augusta and Annabella, between them they had finished Byron: and in his turn he had transformed the Princess of Parallelograms into a recluse and the forward half-sister into half an imbecile and half an inveterate confessor. "Great had been his fall: and the very grandeur of the crash gave him exactly what he needed—a great role to play, satanic though it be. In this rejection by the whole of society there was a certain beauty. Already chased forth from his inward paradise, he now saw himself as the exile driven from his own country by a social ostracism far more definite and brutal than any potsherd voting."*

IV

M. du Bos traces step by step, with appropriate extracts from letters and journals and the *Astarte* of the Earl of Lovelace's, the course of the love between Annabella and Byron (if the love was on both sides), laying bare the often inconsistent workings of

* Maurois. *Byron*, p. 255.

their mind and making the way clear to an impartial verdict on the whole question. Critics unfortunately commit themselves absolutely to the view that the one or the other was wholly to blame. The truth was, in the words of Prof. H. J. G. Grierson that "what each saw in the other was not the whole truth". I may also quote the considered view of M. Maurois's: "Lord and Lady Byron had both irritating faults, and both had great virtues. They were not made for a life in common..." But Annabella never ceased to love Byron; and the latter, once he found that she was lost to him for ever, regained his great esteem and regard for her, which perhaps even developed into love, and though the channel and so much of Europe separated them, he thought of her often enough and presumably yearned for the happiness that would never be his. His final inarticulate message to his wife through his faithful Fletcher and the inordinate solicitude with which she tried to get it out of the helpless servant—in that twin circumstance M. du Bos finds the justification of his suffering and of her patient longing. "That on his death-bed," says M. du Bos, "desiring above all to send a message to Annabella, to open to her at last the heart that she had to abandon all hope of ever reaching, Byron should have found the message beyond his power to articulate; that, on the verge of access, Annabella, should have seen reft from her the promised land of memory to which the messenger would so fain have led her in—ah! it is on that diptych that these two must be left, in the hour when though words forsook them for this once the intentions had met."

I must add a word about the frontispiece to M. du Bos's book. It is a print of a "portrait of a Man by Gericault, known as of Lord Byron, in the Musee Fabre, Montpellier." It is like no other portrait of Byron I have seen, just as M. du Bos's psychological study is like nothing else that has been attempted. Miss E. C. Mayne, the author of the standard life of Byron in English and the only authoritative Life of Lady Byron, has some illuminating things to say about this portrait in her review of M. du Bos's book in the March number of *The Stork*, the official journal of the House of Putnam. I will quote a few remarks here: "'Morose': on that word M. du Bos lays emphasis, and it is the right word. Morose to the utmost 'his' Byron is, and so is Gericault's; one might say, the Fatal Being chewing the cud of his ruin.Not the beauty of this picture, as a work of art, is what impresses one.Ravaged, as Byron was; resentful, yet luxuriating in resentment, as Byron did; the 'need of Fatality' as last responded to by the 'self-destruction' which (as M. du Bos points out) with Byron as with Nietzsche alone could fill the measure of that need."

Auto-Suggestion and Health.

By Swami Jagadiswaranda.



APPLIED psychology in the West is marching ahead on its mission of minimising human sufferings from day to day. In the first quarter of the present century two notable discoveries have been made in the European continent: one is Psycho-Analysis of Sigmund Freud of Austria and another is Auto-Suggestion of Emile Coue of France.

The Coue method of drugless healing has achieved phenomenal success during the last two decades, and Coue Institutes have been started in many cities of Europe and America. The initiator of this simple method of Nancy is called the apostle of optimism and the Henry Ford of psychology. He was himself a reputed doctor, but disgusted with medical science he occupied himself exclusively with this for about 20 years and has come out successful with his gospel of Auto-suggestion as the sublime fruit of his indefatigable researches. This great philanthropist is a vegetarian and ignores money for his cures which are all gratuitous.

In order to understand properly the phenomena of Auto-suggestion, it is necessary to know that two absolutely distinct selves exist within us. Both are intelligent. The one is the conscious self which we all know, but the other being unconscious generally escapes our notice. It is, however, very easy to prove its existence. Everyone knows that a somnambulist gets up at night without waking and does a lot of things without being in the least aware of them. A drunkard attacked by *delirium tremens* makes a scene of carnage in his vicinity, but when he recovers his senses he looks with horror on the same without realising that he himself is the author of it. These are the phenomena of the unconscious self.

The unconscious self presides through the intermediary of the brain over all the functions of our organism, such as blood circulation, digestion, respiration etc. It is provided with a marvellous and impeccable memory called imagination, which registers without our knowledge the minute events. This faculty of imagination is credulous and accepts with unreasoning docility what it is told. The faculty of will volition belongs to the conscious self. This will that we claim so proudly, though it may seem rather paradoxical, always yields to imagination.

Contrary to accepted opinion, it is the imagination which over-rides the will always when there is a clash between them.

One can easily walk over a plank placed on the ground without slipping over the edge. But when it is raised to a height above the ground, before one takes two steps one would begin to tremble and inspite of every will one would be certain to fall to the ground, like the poor wretch in the quick-sands who sinks all the deeper the more he tries to struggle out. Such vertigo is entirely caused by the picture we make in our minds that we are going to fall. If tillers and carpenters are able to accomplish this feat it is because they think they can do it. A person suffering from insomnia cannot force himself to sleep by his will. The more efforts he makes the more restless he becomes. The more you will to remember the forgotten name of a person the more it eludes you. Who has not suffered from the attack of an uncontrollable laughter which bursts out more violently the more he tries to control it? We are in reality wretched puppets of which our imagination holds all the streams.

Properly speaking, suggestion does not indeed exist by itself. It does not and cannot exist except on the *sine qua non* condition of transforming itself into Auto-suggestion in the subject either by the suggestion, example or speech. The unconscious or the imaginative being on which Auto-suggestion plays a prominent part is like an unbroken horse or an indomitable torrent, which when trained, yeilds wonderful benefit but when used wrongly is very dangerous. Auto-suggestion is the influence of imagination upon the moral and physical being of man.

When imagination is favourable, unscaleable mountains become mole-hills to a man. In conscious Auto-suggestion it is not the re-education of will but the training of imagination that is necessary. The most essential point is that the will must not be brought into play in practising Auto-suggestion. There are two classes of persons in whom it is difficult to arouse conscious Auto-suggestion: one is the mentally undeveloped who are not capable of understanding what you say to them and the other is those who are unwilling to understand. But fortunately they represent three per cent. of the whole.

The principle of the simple method which is within the scope of everybody is this: It is impossible to think of two things at a time, that is to say, two ideas may be in juxtaposition, but they cannot be superimposed on our mind. Every thought entirely filling our mind becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into action.

Effort means will which is merely a fragment of man's whole being. It is almost muscular. It is the nervous system which dominates the whole organism. The unconscious self, the grand director of all our functions, is a magazine of incalculable

power which when controlled properly, makes one almighty. Health is the normal state of man and sickness is an anomaly, a sort of back-sliding disorder, which can be regained when unconscious self simply imagines that. Drug is an artifice; for instance, in gum-hemorrhage in the case of a tooth-extraction the wound is artificially patched up at the contact of a hemostatic like adrenalin, but if imagination trains the unconscious, it will send orders to the small arteries and veins to stop the flow of blood and obediently they would contract naturally.

The chiselled epitome of this novel method is a brief formula of a few magic words: "Every day in every respect I am getting better and better." This must be recited like a litany in a rather monotonous, droning voice, twenty times with the help of a string with twenty knots in it which serves as a rosary. It ensures mechanical recitation which is essential. It must be repeated with eyes closed, moving the lips in a position favourable to the relaxing of the muscular system twice a day at night just before sleep and just after dawn when mind is drowsy.

In one's mind one should emphasize the word in "every respect" which applies to every need, mental or physical. This general suggestion is more efficacious than the special ones. Be sure, conscious auto-suggestion made with confidence and faith realises itself, mathematically on condition it is within reason. The words 'difficult' 'impossible' 'hard' must disappear from the vocabulary of the practitioner. If one does not obtain better results, it is because at the back of the mind there is some unconscious doubt or one makes efforts. Self-confidence is absolutely necessary in this method. He who distrusts himself is a constant Guignard with whom nothing succeeds. Fear of failure is almost certain to cause failure.

The simple method obtains amazing cures of moral ailments and bodily taints, either congenial or acquired. Neurasthenia, so common now-a-days, marvellously yields to this method. In-born kleptomaniacs are miraculously cured by auto-suggestion. In a few weeks their thieving propensities lessen, and in a few months they entirely cease. Stammering, aversions, certain cases of paralysis, insomnia, occasional fits of ill-temper, impatience, depression and fear; nightmares, organic lesions and almost all ills that flesh is heir to are cured. Contrary to common opinion, physical diseases are far more easily cured than mental ones. Even eczema, tubercular abscess, deafness, blindness, all obey alike this method. By his soothing and soporific method Coue chisells away, as it were, the incrustations and crystallisations of life-times on human minds and almost unbelievable and dramatic results

are obtained, the cases of castaways given up as hopeless by every remedy known to science. Coue says that he does not heal himself but he makes every one the healer of himself. He only removes the green devil of doubt from the unconscious minds of the cure-seekers when a faith almost mystical arises in them and hopefulness dawns on their faces.

This infant science of drugless healing has a very bright future. Apart from curing moral complaints and physical ailments, it will render a greater service to society by turning into honest folks the wretched children who people our reformatories and who only leave them to enter the army of crime. If a woman, a few weeks after conception, makes a mental picture of the child endowed with physical and moral qualities with which she desires to see it and impresses on herself the same during her period of gestation, she will have the desired child. "The greatest power ever given to man," said Socrates, "is the power of doing good." Emile Coue says in our mind and nowhere outside lies the inexhaustible reservoir of power, and if one consents, this will become the patrimony of every one without exception. The miracle is within oneself, only man must be aware of this heavenly heritage. All the healing powers are within us. Medicine is only an artificial suggestion to arouse that power. It is this power which cures and not medicine; man must depend more upon himself for the cure of his ills than on any outside agency. The modern science of medicine is also trying to reduce the use of drugs as far as practicable. Charles Baudouin, a disciple of Coue and professor at the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute of Geneva, says in his famous book *Auto-suggestion and Suggestion* that man will be a fountain-head of good to himself and to others if he can thus train his imagination.

The Gita as the Synthesis of the Antinomies of Human Life

By M. K. Venkateswara Iyer, Advocate.



HE word "Antinomy" corresponds to the word *യമസങ്കട* in Sanskrit. The word literally means the mutual incompatibility, real or apparent, of two laws. Very often human reason is at war with itself in the sense of being impelled by equally strong arguments towards alternatives contradictory to each other. The difficulty arises from a confusion between the spheres of noumena and phenomena, i. e., an unknown or unknowable thing as it is in itself and the form through which it becomes known to the senses or understanding. It is this confusion and the resultant misunderstanding that account for all the problems of life. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* is the most concise and the clearest book which helps the students in uprooting all such confusion and misconceptions, thereby enabling them to reconcile all the apparent antinomies of life.

Vidyaranya Swami says :

യല്ലമാ വർത്തതേ തന്യ തഥാത്ഥം ഭാതി മാനത :

അന്യഥാത്ഥം ഭൂമഭാണതി നൃപായായം സാവലോകിക :

All will agree to the following proposition : viz., that things appear to us as they really are when we observe them in accordance with right methods of understanding, whereas they appear to be different on account of our misconceptions. "The singular and surpassing strength of the Gita lies in its comprehensive outlook and understanding of different types and temperaments ; of the higher ideals and truths into which all men are not equally awakened and yet into which, it is inevitable, all have to grow ; of the clash of interests and duties devolving upon man in his attempt to maintain a harmonious relation between his own higher interests and ideals on the one hand and the stern realities of life on the other, between his interests and those of others, between his part as a member of the family and as a member of the society....."

The antinomies of life discussed in the Gita may be summarised as follows:—

1. *War or Sanyasi's Garb*—The effect of the whole teaching of the Gita on Arjuna is his decision to carry on the war as a duty cast on him as a Kshatriya.

* This essay received the First Prize—a Gold Medal—in the recent Gita Day competition that was conducted by the Samskrita Academy, Madras.

Is war justifiable in any case? Is it not a violation of the principle that non-injury to any living being is the highest virtue? Will it not lead to social disorder and the wiping out of holy family traditions, religious rites and sacred customs? Will not the confusion and corruption consequent on a war affect the sublime ideals of sexual purity and chastity?

In particular, was it justifiable when loved comrades and friends stood on both sides with wringing hearts of anguish? Could Arjuna slay those to whom he owed veneration, love and duty? Was it not a sin to break family ties by bloodshed? Is he to take up arms against Bhishma, his venerable sire; against Drona his guru; and against his kinsmen, cousins, brothers and benefactors?

On the other hand, was not Arjuna, a Kshatriya, bound to vindicate right and title, to destroy an usurper who was oppressing the land? Was it not his duty as a prince and warrior to fight for the deliverance of his nation and to restore order and peace? Was it not a sin to leave the people in cruel bondage?

Naturally there was a clash between his personal and domestic duties and his duty as a Kshatriya. Which was the right way? Justice must be done; but how could that be brought about in the circumstances without slaying many which apparently is a sin?

The answer to this question is the burden of the book.

We have to realise that Iswara alone has infinite outlook and insight, and He has imposed duties on all, in all aspects of life, in a way which will lead to ultimate peace and happiness. We are not justified in ignoring His commands and defining duties for ourselves based on a partial view of things and fallacious reasonings. *Individual will* must submit to *His will*. We must identify ourselves with Him by devotion and discharge the duties prescribed by Him.

Just as a mother's loving duty in forcing castor oil down the throat of her child that suffers from constipation, even though unpleasant at first sight, is justifiable on the ground of ultimate good for the child; so Divine Dharma, which may appear to be unsatisfactory from a partial view, is always really righteous.

The duty of a surgeon in performing a necessary operation, which causes severe pain to the patient, is never condemned as wrong. Similarly, there are Divine commands for apparent *himsa* which is ultimately for the common good. The harmonising of the various aspects of duty by God is called Yoga. The inner harmony of this Dharma is called Buddhi Yoga, and the translation of the same into practical life is called Karma Yoga. When all the constituents of man have been harmonised in a way that they vibrate

in perfect attunement with God, He reveals Himself first in our hearts as *Atma* and then as the *Atma* in all. He who practises Yoga, as stated above, will become Divine in mind, be a sincere Bhakta, make a complete self-surrender to God, sacrifice everything for Him and completely rely on Him for everything. Such a Bhakta realises that every *being* in the world is only a partial manifestation of the *Supreme Being*, and is only a medium for the Divine current to flow out into the world for the evolution of all to realise supreme happiness. He realises that there is no killer or killed in a true perspective. Life in accordance with these teachings will keep the equilibrium and balance of mind and will be calm, peaceful and happy.

It is obvious from the above that the personal, domestic and sentimental objections of Arjuna to the discharge of his duty as a Kshatriya were overcome by a clear exposition of Dharma which harmonises all aspects of duty to person, family, country and God.

We may note three stages in the evolutionary changes which take place in the mind of a true student of the Gita:— viz. (1) In a crisis when moral courage is put to the test, one ordinarily becomes a prey to fears, doubts and despondency. (*Soka*) sorrow and (*Moha*) or confusion overpower the faculty of thinking and lead to a misconception of Dharma (2) When he finds a trusted teacher, he makes a sincere confession of his moral weakness and earnestly seeks guidance and (3) He completely relies on the teacher and is prepared to submit to his decisive guidance, making an unqualified surrender of his individual will to the will of the teacher. The Gita uprooted the *Soka* and *Moha* of Arjuna and made him see things as they really are, instead of having a biased and partial view. He escaped from world-phenomena and experienced noumena. Thus he was able to discharge his duty as a Kshatriya whole-heartedly by fighting without passion or desire, without anger or hatred. He acted as a Karma Yogi having his soul free.*

2. *Nishkamy Karma*. നിഷ്കാമ കർമ്മ Sri Krishna insists on performance of duty and objects to the doer having anything to do with the results (i. e. *Karma Phala*) either for determining what duty is or for enjoyment of it. At first sight this may appear to make all Karma or action aimless. But it is pointed out that ഇശ്വരപ്രാപ്തം or surrender of all *Karma Phala* (കർമ്മഫല) to God will lead to the same result as കർമ്മമല ത্যাഗ or non-attachment

* Ref. Gita Chapter I slokas 26 to the end and Chapter II slokas 4 to 8, 31, 43, 70.

Do. III sloka 8.

Do. XI sloka 33.

Do. XVIII slokas 58, 59.

to *Karma Phala*. And this shows that the advice is analagous to one's asking children to surrender all their earnings to their father who will distribute the same in the family according to the needs of the several members in a prudent and sympathetic manner. Similarly all *Jivas*, being children of one infinitely wise and loving father called God, should surrender all their *Karma Phala* (കർമ്മഫല) to Him whole-heartedly, recognising Him as the only one who is qualified to determine what the Dharma or duty of each is. A clear and comprehensive outlook and insight of the whole universe are necessary to determine what our Dharma is and God alone has that qualification. Hence *Dharma Achara* or discharge of duty without reference to the results (i. e. നിഷ്കാമ കർമ്മ) is not aimless as it appears to be at first sight.

3. *Karma-yoga*. If attachment to *Karma Phala* (കർമ്മഫല) is the real objectionable element in Karma, it may be asked why should we perform Karma at all, as there can be no attachment to *Karma Phala* (കർമ്മഫല) in non-performance of Karma, because there is no *Karma Phala* (കർമ്മഫല) there. The answer to this is: "There is no harm in non-performance of action if there is no lurking passion or attachment in mind or drowsiness, indolence and ignorance of thorny questions in life-problems. It is only a real *Gnani* (ജ്ഞാനി) who is free from such attachment. Hence it is said that a real *Gnani* (ജ്ഞാനി) alone is entitled to give up Karma. All others are bound to perform Karma but should not shape their Karma according to result or their wish for the same. For Karma Yoga, the union of Karma with buddhi elevated above the mind, is necessary, and this buddhi is the essential element in Gnana Yoga. That is why Karma Yoga and Gnana Yoga are said to be one in essence.

4. *Equality and Caste System*. സമത്വവും and ചാതുർവർണ്യവും. Sri Krishna says that the wise do not make any difference between a learned and modest Brahmana, a dog, and the low-caste man, the cow, and the elephant. And He also says that it was He who divided people into castes and that all should respect *Varna Dharma* and *Swadharma*. A superficial view will make one imagine that the two are contradictory. But the Lord makes reference to the love which we should bear towards the various classes of souls referred to in the first statement, and does not intend to lay down that there is no difference for other purposes. We love every limb and organ of our body equally. But we make a difference among them for certain purposes. For example, if we touch certain parts of our body we think it necessary to wash our hands; but not so when we touch other parts of the body. Similarly, we allot different quantities of food to our children, though we love them all equally. In the same way, it is possible

to love a learned modest Brahmana, a dog, cow etc. equally and at the same time to treat them differently for defined purposes.

5. *Impartiality of God and Creation*. Sri Krishna says that He created the world and the castes, that He supports the world, and that He dissolves the world. We find differences in the position and qualifications of the *Jivas*. It may be asked whether the differences we see are not evidence of partiality of God. The answer is that God enlightens, inspires and invigorates all only according to their past *Karma* and so He is the only infinitely wise and impartial Judge and loving benefactor of all. And the past Karma of *Jivas* is based on *Avidya* or ignorance which is without any beginning.

6. *Atma and Jiva*. It is said that *Jivas* have transmigration and that they are really *Atma*. It is also said that *Atma* has neither birth nor death. The apparent contradiction is due to the view of noumena (or an entity as it really is) and phenomena (or an entity noticed through the senses or understanding which are defective media.)

7. *Divine Impartiality and Bhaktas*. Sri Krishna says that, though He makes no difference between one and another, He responds to prayers of sincere *Bhaktas* more readily. This apparent conflict is similar to light emitting itself differently through various kinds of coloured, broken and unbroken chimneys. As a matter of fact, light does not make any difference between the various media. But the appearances become different on account of the differences of media.

8. *Equanimity in Opposite Experiences*. Sri Krishna says that his *Bhakta* should be alike to friend and foe, fame and ignominy, pain and pleasure, heat and cold and success or failure. How is this possible? If we identify ourselves with the witnessing consciousness which is our real *Atma*, we shall feel that the opposites and counter parts are something like characters in a drama where we do not have any partiality towards a particular actor. We witness the parts played by all equally.

9. *Action in Inaction and Vice Versa*. Sri Krishna says that he who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise amongst men and is a yogi. How is this possible?

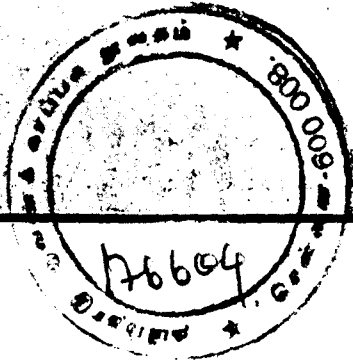
The wise man incessantly experiences his *Atma* and communion with God, though he is in the midst of all kinds of complications and vibrations in the world. In other words, He realises Unity in Diversity. He further experiences that the active world entirely depends for everything on *Atma* as the source of inspiration and invigoration. He knows that it is true to say that all wisdom in every branch of knowledge is nearer true wisdom the

more it sees one in many. A realisation of this wisdom will make us experience *Nirvikara Atma* permeating the world phenomena and being the final resource and refuge of all.

10. *Impersonal Divinity and Personal God*. It may be asked who is the wisest of the following two classes of Bhaktas: viz., i. A worshipper of Personal God. ii. One who realises Impersonal Divinity.

The answer is:— As it is very difficult to realise "*Impersonal Divinity*" നിർവ്വക്തവ്യം, it is advisable to continue in the worship of "*Personal God*" സ്വരൂപം or ഇശ്വരം as this is the stepping stone to the former. If we view the whole world as the embodiment of God, we shall love and serve all whole-heartedly. In that state we shall be alike to friend and foe, fame and ignominy, pain and pleasure, heat and cold, success and failure and gain or loss. We shall not be captivated by anything and shall have a balanced, steady, and equanimous, mentality. Our position then will be like the light of a drama, which though enlightening all, is unaffected by the drama or disappearance of the same. Similarly, one who has realised "*Impersonal Divinity*" (*Paramatma*) is unaffected by *Kalpa* or world phenomena and *pralaya*, its dissolution. He is eternally, and supremely happy, a sincere and prudent worshipper of "*Personal God*" whom he finds revealed in everything in the Universe, and also enjoys incessant supreme happiness. Hence the preference is due only to the difficulty of realising "*Impersonal Divinity*" though both will lead to final peace.

11. *Wisdom alone or with Karma* സമാധി alone or സമാധി സമുച്ചയം. Some say that the Gita teaches *Gnana Karma Samuchchaya* i. e., a combination of wisdom and performance of *Karma* as being essential for final salvation. Whereas Sri Sankaracharya says that *Atma Gnana* or wisdom alone is sufficient according to the Gita and other Sastras. According to him, *Karma* is only for purification of the *Antah-karana* or the inner mechanism of the human constitution and for the cleanliness of the body. Though this purification is essential at first, pure meditation alone is sufficient for realisation of *Atma* after the mind becomes pure. And after realising *Atma*, there is nothing to be done further. In fact, an *Atma Gnani* sees that the whole world phenomena is only like a dream or magic. And the field of *Karma* is within that dream or magic. The position of *Atma-gnani* being like that of a man awakened from a long dream, the wise man is absolutely free from bondage of *Karma* and the necessity for its performance. Hence the theory of *Gnana Karma Samuchchaya* or the necessity of a combination of *Karma* and *Gnana* for final salvation is untenable and *Atma-Gnana* alone is sufficient for and inseparable from eternal supreme happiness or *Brahmanandam*.



THE BLESSED BHAGAVAN
(Sri Ramakrishna Deva)

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