

The Triveni Quarterly



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# The TRIVENI Quarterly

Editors

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU  
BURRA V. SUBRAHMANYAM



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'Triveni' is devoted to Art, Literature, and History. Its main function is to interpret the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects.

'Triveni' seeks to draw together cultured men and women in all lands and establish a fellowship of the spirit. All movements that make for Idealism, in India as well as elsewhere, receive particular attention in these columns. We count upon the willing and joyous co-operation of all lovers of the Beautiful and the True.

May this votive offering prove acceptable to Him who is the source of the 'Triveni'—the Triple Stream of Love, Wisdom and Power !

he that laboureth right for love of Me  
Shall finally attain! But, if in this  
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure!

—THE SONG CELESTIAL

## Gurudeva

BY MALLAVARAPU VISWESWARA RAO  
(Translated by the author from his poem in Telugu)

Oh, Splendid Orb,  
Oh, Poet,  
Heavenward hast thou gone,  
Leaving the forlorn world in utter darkness.  
Heavenward hast thou gone,  
Oh, Gurudeva!

\* \* \* \* \*  
Oh, thou full resplendent Sun,  
Oh, Poet,  
Hast thou, responding to the call of the inevitable,  
Bending thy lovely head,  
Seated thyself in the chariot of vanishing years,  
And started out on thy last great journey,  
On the invisible road to Eternity?

\* \* \* \* \*  
Who, henceforth, unto the groping children of this earth,  
Will show the unerring light that guides them on,  
Oh, Gurudeva?

\* \* \* \* \*  
Thou wert the gracious snow-covered heights of the Himalayas.  
Thou wert the fountain whence rose the everlasting springs  
of Poesy.

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From the red-lotuses of thine unreached mountain-lakes,  
Thou hast taken the lotus-sweetness,  
And made it flow to earth.

\* \* \* \*

In but the span of a lifetime  
Thou wert the maker of an epoch——  
Heavenward hast thou gone,  
Oh, Gurudeva!

\* \* \* \*

Oh, thou glorious and mighty Orb,  
Oh, Poet,  
Thou hast drawn the last nectarous moisture of beauty  
From the secretest hidden corners of the Night and the Day;  
Thou hast drunk of the beauty, till the heart was full;  
Thou hast drunk of the beauty of Creation,  
From Season to Season,  
Living, revelling in the fragrance of sublime poesy.

\* \* \* \*

Heavenward hast thou gone,  
Oh, Gurudeva!

\* \* \* \*

Let thy departing breath,  
Upon this earth, spread deep into the future world of thought.  
And let the love thou gathered on the earth  
Add one more symphony to the music of the heavens.  
Let the penetrating light of thy wisdom  
Move out in waves unto the very ends of Space.  
And let the loveliness of heaven and earth  
Meet in the flood of your imagination, in many a vortex.

\* \* \* \*

Oh, Splendid Orb,  
Oh, Poet,  
Heavenward hast thou gone,  
Leaving the world in darkness.  
Heavenward hast thou gone,  
Oh, Gurudeva!

## Love

BY KILIMANGALAM-KIZHAR

(Translated from the Tamil by P. N. Appaswami)

[Note:—The lady tells her maid of her desperate condition; and criticises the stupid world, which knows nothing of love and yet condemns her.]

They, who blame me, know not love.  
Even like the turtle's brood,  
Which grows by looking on the mother,  
Love grows  
By looking oft on the face of the beloved.  
But when it is forsaken by the beloved,  
Entombed in the heart,  
Love pines and dies,  
Like unmothered eggs.  
Alas! How else could poor love end?

(KURUM-TOKAI: 152)

## God Succour Them!

BY PERUM-PADUMANAR

(Translated from the Tamil by P. N. Appuswami)

[Note:—The hero and the lady elope, and seek to cross the desert. Other travellers in the desert will observe them and talk among themselves thus:]

A bowman with warrior-anklets on his feet;  
A maid with bracelets on her arms  
And tiny anklets tinkling on her tender feet.  
Alas! Who are these good folk?  
God succour them!  
They intend to cross  
The wild desert,—  
Overgrown with bamboo,—  
Where the white pods  
Of the *Vahai* trees,  
Tossing in the wind,  
Rattle like the drum  
Beaten at a rope-dance.  
May God succour them!

(KURUM-TOKAI : 7)

## The Village Bride

FROM FOLK-LORE

(Translated by M. Anantanarayanan, I.C.S.)

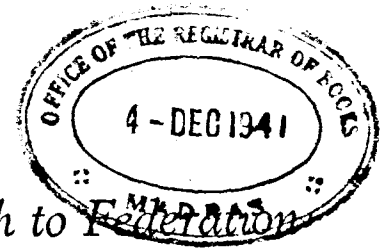
I have come to this new life,  
and the mud-walls enclose it,  
the creak of the well-pulley disturbs my dreams.  
Even when my body is asleep,  
I polish the brass pots with ashes,  
and tremble at the sound of a chiding footfall.  
My mother-in-law stands at all doorways,  
and has voices harder than a poor man's fate.  
A death has parted me and my playmates,  
my child-life is cremated,  
and many times I am hurt for the trees of my village  
and the peace of the village-shrine.  
But on Fridays I bind my hair with flowers,  
and my blood is a tide—when I see flowers.  
I can only think of them so.  
Each pool is a glass, and I bend over.  
What is this god come into my life?  
He comes into my hours like the fitful sun on a monsoon day,  
his shadow is bright as he walks into the dim room.  
I go about with downcast expression,  
and hear the laughter of village-women mocking me.  
They whisper nameless jests, and their laughter pursues me  
but my heart is proud like the *Sirisha* bloom on the bough.  
I am sore with the trammels of this life,  
and I press against the wall with downcast eyes;  
but my heart laughs when I hear a voice.

## Boatman

BASUDHA CHAKRAVARTI

(Translated by the author from his original Bengali composition  
in folk style)

Anchor not your boat today, oh boatman!  
True, there is a storm and the waters are in blood-tide;  
Yet I beseech, do not aspire to return home.  
In the first rains of this earth, you sailed in your boat:  
What makes you want today to return?  
You have gone from place to place; and now at last  
you think of returning. Your hope is that at the  
landing stage near your home, you will see a light.  
Alas! You know not:  
In summer, your house caught fire and was reduced to  
ashes;  
She who was in it—nobody knows where she is gone:  
do you then intend to seek her from place to place?  
Say the villagers: she has gone far away, she cares for  
you not!  
You will find your house deserted: how should you bear  
it, returning after so long?  
So I say: let us not now return there;  
Rather, let us sail on in our boat.  
At the landing to some market, we shall halt:  
And we shall ask the people:  
"Have any of you seen her whose eyes are black?  
Have you heard any song like hers that vibrates in the  
sail of some boat on the river far away?"  
Perchance, some afternoon we shall sight her:  
We shall see her come to the river for water—  
And then, Oh boatman,  
She won't recognize you—  
She will go back after filling her pitcher:  
And again float on the waters shall we:  
You and I, Oh boatman!



## A Fresh Approach to Federation

BY V. NARAYANAN

The atmosphere in India is richly laden with ideas of federation. It has been so from the earliest times. Many people have come into India through her mountain passes and across the seas. They have come as aliens, as enemies. They have settled down after their initial victories, and become one with the many and diverse peoples already in the land. There has been no struggle for existence, no attempt to make every one conform to a uniform manner of living. To live and to let live has been the Indian ideal. The atmosphere has been one of generous toleration, of healthy emulation, of individual development without any superimposition by superior force. There has been an unconscious assimilation of the fundamental truth that, behind and beyond all apparent diversity is one essential unity. The Greeks, the Muhammadans and the Parsis have been living in this land side by side with the people of other races and creeds, without the need of any protective safeguards against the tyranny of the majority. The fact is there is no majority in India. The Hindus are heterogeneous, and it is folly to suppose that they are one and form a majority. If a sense of unity prevails among the masses, it transcends the feeling of Hindu, Muslim, Parsi or Christian, and the whole people feel as one. As for the sense of diversity and the feeling of opposition, there are as many sects and divisions within the Hindu fold as outside it, either among the Muslims or the Christians. But the Hindus, Muslims and Christians are all Indians, for, with the atmosphere of India, they have imbibed the spirit of freedom and toleration. The Indian loves liberty, no doubt, but he loves toleration more than liberty, because his love of liberty is individual as well as social. Freedom to lead one's life according to one's own ideas of well-being implies submission to the exercise of such freedom by others in the neighbourhood. Consequently, it is easy to form a federation of the Indian peoples with the existing divisions of Provinces and States as governmental units, for the Indians, be they Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh or Parsi, are disposed to submit to a Government by themselves, provided their fundamental rights as

individuals to freedom of thought, of expression and of religious worship are not touched. The troubles in India have been largely fomented by those who are ambitious to wield governmental power or to retain it in their hands, not realising that to rule over the willing masses of the Indian people must be considered a special honour and a sacred trust, and not as an opportunity for the exercise of individual power or for the amassing of property. It is this expression of the idea of trusteeship that has reconciled the masses to foreign government and endeared the Empress Victoria to the Indian people.

As Sir William Le-Warner pointed out, "the inhabitants of India have from time immemorial possessed certain traits of character and customs conducive to union, which Western countries have lacked. To a large extent, men have been accustomed to look beyond themselves, and to feel that they are members of a wider circle than that of their own separate families. The spirit of mutual helpfulness and the sense, shared by all classes, of dependence upon government and a higher providence, are influences which even today (1903) tend to draw the people of India towards one another." Even the latest non-official apologist for Great Britain, Mr. Rushbrook Williams, admits the basic unity of India in these words: "In normal circumstances, particularly in the villages and small towns, Hindus and Muslims are neighbourly enough; and although their habits and ways of life present extreme contrasts, so that the Muslims generally prefer to live all together in a separate street or locality, they exercise a good deal of mutual tolerance."... Talking of Hindu-Muslim unity, I am reminded of the Vedic parable about the struggle for supremacy among the five essential parts of the human body. The quarrel was between the tongue, the eye, the ear, the mind, and the breath. If the Hindu element in India be compared with the tongue, the Muslim element may be compared with the breath. The passage runs in these words:

"The breath, when on the point of departing, tore up the other senses, as a horse, going to start might tear up the pegs to which he is tethered. They came to him and said, 'Sir, be thou the master; thou art the best among us. Do not depart from us.' And so the fight ceased. And people do not call them the tongues, the eyes, the ears, and the minds, but the breaths. For, breath are all these."

The 'sporting offer' of Sri Rajagopalacharya shows that India feels as an organic whole, willing to sacrifice, if necessary, unessentials in order to preserve her organic life.

But this view that India is one nation is not accepted by the advocates of Pakistan, who claim that Muslims in India form a separable and separate nation. Dr. Ambedkar, in his latest book, 'Thoughts on Pakistan,' lends weight to this view. He says, "It is no use contending that there are cases where a sense of nationality exists but there is no desire for a separate national existence. Cases of the French in Canada, of the English in South Africa, may be cited as cases in point. It must be admitted that there do exist cases where people are aware of their nationality, but this awareness does not produce in them that passion which is called nationalism. In other words, there may be nations conscious of themselves, but without being charged with nationalism. On the basis of this reasoning, it may be urged that the Mussulmans may hold that they are a nation but they need not on that account demand a separate national existence. Why can they not be content with the position which the French occupy in Canada and the English occupy in South Africa? Such a position is quite a sound position."

Dr. Ambedkar assumes that the Indian Muslims have a separate nationality and constitute a nation by themselves. What constitutes a nation? We have the answer of Mr. Muir in his book on 'Nationalism and Internationalism.' A nation is defined as "a body of people who feel themselves to be naturally linked together by certain affinities which are so strong and real for them that they can live happily together, are dissatisfied when disunited, and cannot tolerate subjection to peoples who do not share those ties." The Indian masses do not contemplate the separation of the Hindu from the Muslim or of either from the Christian. They have all been living together, and happily. They would certainly be dissatisfied if disunited. No doubt, strong local patriotisms exist, based, through historical circumstances, upon deeply marked differences in race, culture and language. "But," says Mr. Rushbrook Williams, "even if the different peoples of India do not, on that account, always see eye to eye on every issue, they possess quite sufficient consciousness of common unity to realise that they are very different from the British." These facts therefore are proof that India is a nation. The attempt

to cut it into two nations, Muslim and non-Muslim, reminds one of the dispute between two women about the possessing of a child. The woman who wants or agrees to the child being cut into two is certainly not the mother of the child, for the child truly belongs to her who agrees that it might be handed over to the other claimant. The moral is that the Congress, not the Muslim League, is the rightful mother of India's millions.

The history of India from the earliest times proves that the Indian people have always instinctively felt as one nation. The old Indian idea of a Rajasuya emphasised the concept of a federation of the fifty-six traditional States of India under one 'umbrella.' This ideal was adopted by the Moghul Emperors. It was the propelling force of the Maratha federation. And it is this sense of innate unity which permeates the masses in India, be they Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, which welcomed the coming of the United East India Company to power, and facilitated the affiliations of the Indian States which, before the days of Lord Dalhousie, were all together more than half of India. Volumes have been written about the place of Islam in Indian politics. Islam is the religion of no particular nation, and its followers form parts of several nations in Asia, Africa and Europe. Islam is essentially a religion of peace and does not advocate the spread of the faith by use of force. Nor does Islam confer on her adherents any special benefits or privileges. It has been pointed out that the Koran urges perfect equality of treatment between the faithful and the infidels. Nor does the Prophet object to submission by the Muslim to temporal power if it be non-Muslim. On the contrary, he advocates it as his primary duty. If the Muslim invaders from Eastern Asia into India or Europe carried everything by the sword, they fought as blindly among themselves as against those of alien faiths. Timur, and later on Baber, fought against brother Muslims before they fought the Indians, Muslim or non-Muslim. It is a wrong reading of history to state that the Muslims fought a successful Jihad when they established an Empire at Delhi. They, like others before them, fought more to bring all India under one sway than to spread their faith. But the fight for place, power and influence, not infrequently assumes the disguise of a religious war to appeal to, and win the support of, the masses of their co-religionists elsewhere. So it has been with the Europeans also. When the European traders found themselves

in power in India, they appealed for moral and financial support from Europe on the plea of spreading the Christian Gospel in India. The same twist was given to Macaulay's plan of Western education. As Mr. Rushbrook Williams says, "The theory underlying the plan actually adopted was this. It was assumed that, when once the literate classes had been educated in English, Western learning, of which English was the medium, would gradually filter down to the masses. Eventually everyone would be educated, everyone would be westernised, and—as a result—everyone would become a Christian."

Let us consider another authoritative definition of nationality. Mr. A. N. Halcombe refers to the concept of nationality thus in 'The Foundations of the Modern Commonwealth':

"A corporate sentiment, a kind of fellow feeling or mutual sympathy, relating to a definite home-country, and binding together the members of a human group, irrespective of differences in religion, economic interests or social position, more intimately than any other similar sentiment..." Differences in language, race or religion do not negative the existence of the national spirit; on the contrary, they not only indicate its existence but endow it with irrepressible vitality. A number of languages may be spoken by the same nation. Three languages are used in Switzerland. "The churches," says Mr. Buell, "would not serve as the unthinking instruments of political jingoism in the future. The growth of religious toleration is gradually taking the religious factor out of national as well as international politics." Nor is race the determining factor. The British nation is composed of various races. Ethnology has not become an exact science; and in recent years considerable doubt has been thrown on the theory of an Aryan invasion of Dravidian India or of an earlier invasion of India by the Dravidian race. The doctrine of self-determination for racial minorities has been the bane of modern European politics. "Literally interpreted," says Mr. Buell, "the doctrine of self-determination would sanction the resistance of any minority to the will of the majority. Extended still further, it would authorise any individual to resist the law. Where should the line be drawn between a real nation and mere particularism?" In another place, the same author says: "In the twentieth century, self-determination has become a disintegrating force which, uncontrolled, will lead to very serious consequences

for the peace of the world and for the welfare of the nations themselves."

At the end of the last war, President Wilson declared: "People may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril." Excessive regard paid to this idea of self-determination has led to the rise of small States in Europe, which have become mere pawns in the game of high politics. Richness of composite national life is lost, as well as the neighbourly toleration of the major State out of which the new small States were carved. The desire for separation and segregation arises because undue emphasis is laid on the unity of language, race or religion as the primary requisite of a nation. Another misconception relating to nationality is the belief that the existence of a nation as nation depended on force, and that its neighbours are all out to destroy it. This mutual distrust of neighbours is giving place, thanks to the present war, to trust and friendly co-operation with neighbour nations. Europe is realising the futility and hollowness of the doctrine of self-determination, which only serves to bring out the acerbities of all isolated groups into prominence. The emphasis is now shifting to the neighbourly spirit of accommodation, and the truth is slowly dawning that good social life results in ineffable calmness of mind arising out of peaceful co-operation with fellow-beings.

If it is neither race nor religion nor language that makes a people a nation, the question arises: how is a nation born? A nation is born of geography, and grows with its history, developing characteristics of its own out of its geographical unity and historical continuity. In 'India and the West,' Mr. Marvin points out that "India, like England, has won her way through centuries to a growing sense of unity based on substantial facts of geography, history and the actual conditions of life and thought." Vast and diverse as the peninsula is, it yet has geographical features which mark it out as a unit. These alone have made possible the partial political unity achieved by the Moghuls, and the much more complete organisation of recent times. "Nationality," says Mazzini, "ought only to be to humanity that which the division of labour is in a workshop—

## A FRESH APPROACH TO FEDERATION

the recognised symbol of association; the assertion of the individuality of a human group called by its geographical position and its traditions to fulfil a special function in the work of civilisation." "The characteristically Indian point of view," according to another modern writer, "may be called the socialistic point of view. It means that the needs, wishes and character of the individual are subordinated to those of society, and that, in general, an individual effaces himself in order to subserve, to the extent necessary, the needs of the family, tribe, caste, clan or other aggregate which forms the unit of society."

Every nation is said to possess certain special characteristics. The Germans have been marked by a thoroughness in scholarship and a willingness to submit to the exactions of the State to a greater extent than other peoples. The British, it is said, are characterised by their ability to effect political compromises and by their disdain of political labels. Similarly, we can characterise the Indian spirit as a spirit of tolerance embodied in the maxim of 'live and let live' and in the commandment, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Mr. Rushbrook Williams sees this spirit "in the determination to respect the rules of one's own caste or creed and at the same time to respectfully avoid infringing the rules of the neighbour's caste or creed." This characteristically Indian spirit is sustained by the mystic perception, by the Hindu and the Muslim alike, of the truth that all are equal before God and deserve the triple freedom of thought, of speech and of worship, each in his own way, so long as he does not aggressively affect his neighbours. This fact has led some casual observers to imagine that Indians are international in outlook, and that they have no national feelings, no patriotism at all. But true patriotism is geographical. "While perhaps men should accept obligations world-wide in scope, in practice they inevitably confine their service to those about them, whom they know." And there are limits set to the feeling of patriotism. "Ask yourselves," says Mazzini, "whenever you do an action in the sphere of your country, 'If what I am doing were done by all and for all, would it advantage or injure humanity?' If your conscience answers, 'It would injure humanity,' desist—desist even if it seems to you that an immediate advantage for your country would ensue from your action." This advice is only a

paraphrase of the creed of non-violence that through the ages India has set its heart upon. And when other nations act in accordance with this advice in the wake of India, the purpose of the existence of India as a nation would have been fulfilled. The truest national spirit is that which is born, as in India, entirely out of the geographical unity of the country and the very human desire to be at peace with one's neighbours without the adventitious aids of the unities of race, religion or language.

If Indian history be read aright, it would be evident that, from the earliest times, the people of India, whether they were invaders who had settled in the country or the earlier inhabitants, have all had a sense of a common home-land which prevailed over their local patriotisms and impelled them again and again to struggle for the establishment of a central government wherein their local patriotisms could be sublimated into national feeling. Sovereign powers therefore must be conceived as existing in the peoples of the different provincial units who agree to part with their sovereignties, so far as it is necessary, to the creation of a federal government welding the several provinces into one Indian nation both for international and for inter-provincial purposes. That the formation of the local governments have been haphazard and due to fortuitous circumstances, as in the case of the British Indian provinces and the Indian States, does not negative the existence of the separate personalities of these provinces and States, which would be hurt by any re-alignment on racial, religious, linguistic or other rational ideas of formation of States. In his book on 'International Relations,' Mr. Buell points out that so many complications are involved in changing boundary lines that much is to be said in favour of the principle of *status quo*; and he concludes that "unless the inhabitants involved are denied the right to retain their national traits, there is little justification for the violent alteration of boundary lines." Neighbourly life under a common government, whether of a province or of a State, coupled with the inherent accommodating spirit of the people, has resulted in the development of intense local attachments which would not willingly submit to partitions and reallotments of districts on what may *prima facie* appear rational grounds of religious differences as in Bengal and in the proposed Pakistan, of language differences as in the proposals of linguistic provinces, or of administrative convenience as in Sind, or of alleged

racial differences as in the proposed Dravidistan. In the new Federation that is to be India, schemes of realignment of the provinces or the states which form the constituent units, on considerations of race or religion or linguistic or administrative convenience, have no place. The approach to Federation should be cleared of all disputes and dissensions that might crop up, if these considerations are allowed to prevail. The fresh approach to Federation that I desire to advocate is the old approach envisaged by Lord Hardinge's Despatch, cleared of the jungle of complications that have grown with the discussions of the last twelve years. The Despatch of the Government of India of 1912 stated:

"The time was coming when India would be composed of a number of autonomous provinces somewhat similar to the different states of the American Union with a Federal Government directing and controlling them all, in all matters of inter-state or foreign policies and administration." After stating the difficulty of the problem, the Despatch affirmed: "The only possible solution of the difficulty would appear to be gradually to give the Provinces a larger measure of self-government until at last India would consist of a number of administrations autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them all and possessing power to interfere in cases of misgovernment, but ordinarily restricting its functions to matters of imperial concern." The same idea finds clearer expression in the Montford Report:

"Our conception of the eventual future of India is a sisterhood of states, self-governing in all matters of purely local interest. Over this congerie of states would preside a central government increasingly responsible to the people of all of them; dealing with matters both internal and external, of common interest to the whole of India; acting as arbiter in inter-state relations and representing the interests of all India on equal terms with the self-governing units of the British Empire." And the attitude of the rulers of the Indian States appeared equally clear from the statement made by the ruler of Alwar in 1922:

"My goal is the United States of India, where every province and every state working out its own destiny in accordance with its own environment, its own tradition, history and religion, will combine together for imperial purposes, each subscribing its little quota of knowledge and experience in a labour of love freely given for a higher and a nobler cause."

The complications arose from the Round Table Conferences and the elaborate proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Houses of Parliament, which contrasted so unfavourably with the quick progress of the Montford reforms and led the people of India seriously to doubt whether the British Government meant business. But nothing is an unmixed evil. The Government of India Act of 1935, which satisfied no group or class of Indians, has by setting up a sort of autonomy in the Provinces made the path easy for Federation; for the premiers of the British Indian Provinces are analogous to the rulers of the Indian States and can join them as equals in status and agree to a scheme of federation. To them the people of India may well address their prayer for concerted action on the lines of the old Vedic prayers:

संगच्छध्वं संवदध्वं संवोमनांसि जानतात् ।

'Come together, speak in harmony, may your minds see alike.'

समानो मन्त्रस्समितस्समानी । समानं मनस्सह चित्तमेषां ॥

समानं मन्त्रमथिमन्त्रयेवः । समानेन बोहविषा जुहोमि ॥

'Become one conclave, deliberate as one body, and let your minds and thoughts be concordant. I invoke you all together, I worship you all with equal offerings.'

To this approach to Federation through co-operation, there are difficulties raised from all sides. These difficulties arise from two assumptions: that the sovereignty of the British Indian Provinces vests in the British Parliament, and that the sovereignty of the Indian States vests in their rulers; these assumptions require therefore to be clearly examined. The British Indian Provinces and the States were alike under the sway of the Moghul Emperor at Delhi whom the people looked up to as the emblem of their inherent sovereignty. Like the States, the Company were feudatories of the titular sovereign of India, and entered into treaties with the several States in their capacity as virtual rulers of the several Provinces in their possession. Even before the assumption of sovereignty over the whole of India by Empress Victoria, Parliament had declared that it considered itself as the trustee of the Indian peoples. The proclamations of successive sovereigns and the statements of the Viceroys and Secretaries of State have made no distinction or difference between the peoples of the

British Indian Provinces and those of the Indian States. The Queen's proclamation declared:

"We trust that from the highest to the humblest all may feel that under Our Rule the greatest principles of liberty, equity and justice are secured to them, and that to promote their happiness, to add to their prosperity and to advance their welfare are the ever present aims and objects of Our Empire."

The new year message of King Edward VII in 1903 stated:

"To all my feudatories and subjects throughout India, I renew the assurance of my regard for their liberties, of respect for their dignities and rights, of interest in their advancement, and of devotion to their welfare, which are the supreme aim and object of my rule."

It is quite a debatable question whether the sovereignty of all India, which vested in the Crown, passed on to the House of Commons, when the British people effected the transfer of real sovereignty of the British Isles from the other two joint-holders of it, viz., the Crown and the House of Lords, exclusively to the House of Commons. The Dominions have successfully established that the sovereignty of each Dominion passed back to it when the King of Great Britain and the House of Lords suffered their sovereign power to pass on to the elected representatives of the people. It may similarly be argued that the King-Emperor alone represents the sovereign power in India which belongs really and justly to the Indian people. The point was taken by the Viceroy Lord Curzon when he appealed to the King-Emperor over the head of the British Cabinet, though it was not pushed to a decision. But the doctrine of trusteeship first propounded by Burke in the course of the impeachment of Warren Hastings implied the recognition of the inherent sovereignty of the Indian people; and it is again implied in Clause V of the Preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919, which runs as follows:

"And whereas concurrently with the gradual development of self-governing institutions in the Provinces of India, it is expedient to give to those Provinces in provincial matters the largest measure of independence of the Government of India which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibility...."

After the last war, it was recognised on all hands that India had no further need for this trusteeship, and that she

was fit to occupy an equal place with Great Britain and the Dominions not only in the counsels of the British Commonwealth of Nations but in the counsels of the world as well. She had her place in the counsels of the Empire and also in the League of Nations, although her place was filled for her by her trustee. Pessimistic views regarding the future of India, which were in vogue both in England and in India early in this century, had given way to a wave of optimism justified by the course of events after the last war had ended.

This change in temper is best illustrated by the change in the tone of the Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri's speeches before and after the Great War. In 1912, he said:

"Even if we imagine, what is certainly impossible, that by an extraordinary act of self-denial on their part, all European and Asiatic powers left us to ourselves, and even if we imagine further that, by an extraordinary stroke of good luck, we settled down to a career of peaceful and ordered government, it is fairly certain that we shall divide into innumerable little States which it would be impossible to weld together into any federation, for the secrets of federation are still held from us." But, in 1919, he felt that Indians were entitled to collaborate on equal terms with Englishmen in the framing of a constitution for India. And he continues to feel the same today. It is unfortunate that, while with the progress of India towards self-government such fears about the future have given place to sane and robust optimism among all classes of Indians, Britishers resident in India, like Mr. Macintosh of Bombay, pompously trot out such fears and say that, to them, "unconditional abdication by the British Government seems unthinkable and completely divorced from that sense of responsibility and realism which, the war has taught them, must be possessed by all forms of Government if the people those Governments represent are to retain their liberty." It is to such as these that Edward Carpenter addressed the following words:

"To place a nation squarely on its own base, spreading out its people far and wide in honoured usefulness upon the soil,

"Building up all uses and capacities of the land into the life of the masses so that the riches of the earth may go first and foremost to those who produce them and so onward into the whole structure of society,

## A FRESH APPROACH TO FEDERATION

"To render the life of the people clean and gracious, vital from base to summit and self-determining—

"What a pleasure!"

But this supreme pleasure of starting a nation on its independent career will be denied to the British people so long as they do not recognise the fundamental truth that one cannot both eat the cake and have it. There is, as the authors of *Federal India* point out, an essential incompatibility between Parliamentary control and federalism which implies sovereignty in the constituent States and Provinces. Unless Parliament takes its hands off entirely from the federal machine, federation will be only another engine of outside oppression, as the Provinces, in partially surrendering their sovereignty to a central authority, cannot possibly have the sense of security and complacency arising from the consciousness that they surrender it only to themselves. It is a trite saying that of all forms of foreign rule, government by a foreign democracy is the worst. "Now if there be a fact to which all experience testifies," says Mill in his *Responsible Government*, "it is that, when a country holds another in subjugation, the individuals of the ruling people who resort to the foreign country to make their fortunes are, of all others, those who most need to be held under powerful restraint. They are always one of the chief difficulties of the Government. Armed with the prestige and filled with the scornful overbearingness of the conquering nation, they have the feelings inspired by absolute power without its sense of responsibility." As more and more evidence of the callousness of the present Secretary of State for India is forthcoming, the truth of the remarks of Jowett about the British temperament is becoming more and more obvious. Jowett says: "The English and Indian tempers can never harmonize. The Englishman has no sympathy with other nations. He cannot govern without asserting his superiority. He has always a latent consciousness of difference of colour." The vision of Edward Carpenter seems to be likely to prove prophetic:

Blind, fooled, and staggering from her throne, I saw her fall,  
Clutching at the gaud of Empire;

And wondering, round her, sons and daughter-nations  
stood—

What madness had possessed her;

But when they lifted her, the heart was dead,  
Withered within the body, and all the veins  
Were choked with yellow dirt.

We have seen that the difficulties of the Britisher are mostly of his own creation. Similarly, the difficulties regarding the Indian States exist largely only in the imagination of the rulers of these states and their advisers. They do not realise that the days of autocracy are gone, and that the engagements and treaties with the East India Company, which were later on accepted by the British Crown, are in reality treaties between the people of their States represented by them and the people of the British Indian Provinces represented by the Crown. If the Parliament has no jurisdiction over a particular State, it is all the more evident that the Paramount Power vested in the Crown and exercised by the Viceroy is derived from the people of the British Indian Provinces and the other States so far as external affairs are concerned, and from the people of that State so far as interference with the internal administration is concerned. Lord Reading put it mildly when he wrote to His Exalted Highness, the Nizam, that it was the right and duty of the British Government, while scrupulously respecting all treaties and engagements with the Indian States, to preserve peace and good order throughout India. In recent years the Indian States are encouraged to assume an attitude of independence when authority cannot compel but only treaty and argument persuade. Where was this sense of independence when the Viceroy, on the King Emperor's behalf, exercised not merely full control over foreign relations and relations with British Indian Provinces and with the other States but interfered with the internal administration as well through the agency of his Political Agents? The relationship of the Viceroy towards the States has been exactly the relationship of a Federal Government towards its constituents; with this difference that, while the Provinces have some voice in the Government of India, the States have no voice in the administration of the political department of the Viceroy, so that the ruler of an Indian State is in some respects in a worse position than a British Indian subject. He cannot appeal to the Parliament against the autocratic decisions of the Viceroy. He cannot hold property in British India without the Viceroy's consent. And until the proclamation

announced the intention of the Paramount Power not to interfere with the right of adoption, no adoption could be made to a sonless ruler without the consent of the Viceroy. The position of the Indian Princes bears a strong resemblance to the position of the Barons in England under the Norman Kings. They too claimed without much success the right to unrestrained rule over the serfs and tenants resident in their baronies. In course of time they recognised their proper position as leaders of the people and obtained for their benefit the Magna Carta. Will the rulers of the Indian States urge that the Provinces should attain to that measure of local government which they possess in their States and consent to submit in all matters of all-India nature to a Federal Government to the extent to which they now submit to the autocratic demands of the Viceroy? If they do not willingly do so, it is possible for the British Government to follow the example of Premier Asquith who coerced the House of Lords with the threat of creating new Lords, and to threaten to set up the different Provinces as independent States and vest the Paramount Power in a federation of those States. Such a threat would not be improper and would be quite in consonance with facts and with the principles of natural justice. For the Provinces have all along been feeling themselves separate units in British India. The idea behind the provincial loans has encouraged the growth of this feeling. When the Viceroy was at Calcutta, Provinces other than Bengal were largely left to themselves without undue interference in their affairs. The Governments of these Provinces have developed each in its own way and have represented their individual views strongly in matters relating to the Central Government also, thus paving the way for a federation of these Provinces. As Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan observed, when delivering the Right Honorable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri Endowment Lectures:

"From the point of view of provincial rights and liberties, it might be stated that the Provinces had each been welded into a unity of feeling and tradition, that justified us in regarding them as possessing individuality. And they have developed certain characteristics which marked them off from one another."

A third source of difficulty is the opinion of certain British Indian leaders that the Indian States do not deserve their co-operation in their endeavour to build a federal constitution. But it must be remembered that, for the purpose of federation,

the rulers are placed in the same status as the Premiers of the Provinces, as they really represent, though arbitrarily, the peoples of the respective States. "These peoples," as Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan points out, "belong to the same race as their neighbours in the British Indian Provinces." They are inspired by the same national sentiments and are sustained by the same ideals for their motherland and have the same outlook on life. There is no Chinese wall that marks them off from the British Indians. The people of the two parts of India intermingle and intermarry. Trade is common, and social intercourse close and constant. The reluctance of the British Indians to associate with the Indian States is mostly due to the fear that the British Government will buttress itself with their rights of paramountcy, making them tools of Great Britain in the federal government. It is therefore essential that Parliament should disown such intention expressly and vest the residuary sovereignty in the people of the Provinces and the States respectively.

All the above difficulties exist. They can be removed, if they will not vanish of their own accord, by bestowing sovereign power jointly on the Provinces and States, without insisting on an agreement among the several leaders in the Provinces and the rulers of the States. We have seen that differences in race, language or religion do not affect the true national spirit and the growth of corporate sentiment out of the geographical conditions of the country and the circumstances of its history. The geographical conditions have made India a nation and the circumstances of history have made the Provinces and the States individual units, each with its own special characteristics developed through the passage of years under a common administrative authority. These constitute therefore the natural units of the federation of India. The differences in detail that prevail in these Provinces and States are often trotted out for the purpose of arguing that there is no Indian nation. Those who argue thus refuse to see the wood for the trees. They would not see integral India but only its isolated parts. Mr. Marvin states the truth when he says, "Only in some form of federation can the two aspects of Indian nationality find permanent reconciliation—the greater rationality due mainly to Hinduism and British organisation, and the smaller due to language and local patriotism. If federation was the natural solution for

the problems of the United States, it will appear even more necessary to secure both an actively local interest and the new national harmony of the three hundred millions of India." The Indian Federation may be likened to a concert: "In a concert, the individual notes are not only dissimilar but are different; and yet they all contribute to a common and harmonious effect which can never be attained by unity or uniformity." The most practical way to achieve such a Federation is to build with the existing Provinces and States as foundations. To dig at the existing foundations or to dispute about the alterations that theoretical engineering might suggest is to postpone the building indefinitely. And to all the parties concerned in building the Federation, of India, Britishers, British Indians, and Indian States, the words of Edward Carpenter will come with special appeal:

Except Love build the house,  
They labour in vain who build it.

## Sri Aurobindo's "Life Divine"

BY V. CHANDRASEKHARAM

Science would derive the universe from an initial, limited stock of energy through fortuitous evolution and assure it a quiet end by means of the law of increasing entropy. Blind chance is the builder of the worlds; for the random behaviour of quanta or the basic infinitesimal units of energy takes on in the mass the character, by statistical effect, of an order or system governed by uniform laws. Anyhow, the order of the world is the order of an invariable, though not a necessary, sequence. Modern science finds the notion of chance understandable and the notion of necessity mystical. But it would appear that the chance it contemplates is not one arising out of a pure and unmitigated chaos, but one leaping into play from a system of attractions and repulsions with which it endows its basic units. And even if such a chance may perhaps be admitted as being able to issue in some sort of necessity called statistical, both of them, the chance and the necessity, can only be the expression of some inherent imperative truth of world-energy. What that may be Science does not tell.

The older Science that believed in a world governed by necessity, boldly declared that, given perfect knowledge of any one moment in the world-sequence, it could know all other movements, backwards and forwards, of the entire sequence. With the exception of the sub-atomic realm which is now given over to indeterminacy, with some reservations of a purely theoretical import as regards future happening, that declaration even now stands. Only modern science would like to reduce necessity to chance; that would be more in accord with its hypothesis of a self-sufficient energy. And that all world-phenomena can be reduced to some physical energy is an article of faith, even for modern science; only some scientists would prefer to give the name 'neutral stuff' to the basic energy.

But there are fatal difficulties in the way of this belief. First of all it is well to remember that science cannot give a complete account of the world for the simple reason that it limits its

investigation to particular aspects of it. Science successfully studies the workings and results of some of nature's energies. It discovers the regular sequence within the workings and the constituent factors of the results. This knowledge often gives us control over those workings and results, but does not provide us with their fundamental explanation. Going a little further into detail, we see that Physical Science studies the structure of phenomena and hopes thereby to understand their whole variety and range. This would appear to be an impossible hope, for, even of the phenomena it studies, it knows only the structure but not the nature. We see new and unpredictable qualities coming into being with new complexities of structure. If structure is wholly responsible for the qualities, that is, if it is their entire cause, we should be able to predict them; but it is not the case. That is why it appears unlikely that Chemistry could ever be reduced to Physics. But how about the emergence of creative Life and purposive Consciousness? There is no question of equivalence between life and the physico-chemical conditions that are the occasion of its manifestation, between the energy that it takes into itself and that into which it is transmuted by it. The upward tendency of life, which is so obvious in the ever more complex forms that it throws up, cannot be accounted for by Science, and can belong only to a creative energy striving for higher and higher expression. Life is an energy that is building up in a universe that is running down. Deathless in the germ-plasm, it is at least *de jure* immortal—an infinite. And as for consciousness, its nature becomes incomprehensible if we try to look at it as a product of living matter, and its activity, too, becomes quite un-understandable if we try to see it as wholly determined by forces acting upon it from outside. It is a light on the pathways of life's creation, it is a thing of freedom striving to widen the close meshes of necessity in which it is held captive. It is not a functionless phosphorescence occurring in the track of molecular disturbance in brain matter, nor, worse, is it something which has the nuisance function of engendering vain illusions of free-will and purposiveness. It is a herald of the Spirit Creative-ness. Purposive will and freedom cannot be born, it is evident, out of necessity or even mere indeterminacy. It is strange that Science, which has thrown shaft after shaft of penetrating light into the material term of Nature and revealed it as a fit dwelling

for the gods, should end in darkening our understanding of Life and Spirit.

We can neither shut our eyes to the most obvious facts of life and consciousness, nor black out our deepest and most persistent intuitions as regards the universe, even for the sake of scientific theory. Starting on a metaphysical enquiry into the truth and origin of things, we find ourselves forced to the conception of an Absolute—an Indeterminate that is the source of all fundamental determinates, an Infinite supporting all relative infinites. Mind cannot achieve this concept with any degree of satisfaction; it is fascinated by it and yet staggered by the many contradictions that arise from it. Some vital truth of the Absolute is caught by man's intenser consciousness and intuition, but is invariably crushed under the destructive weight of a philosophical system which the intellect builds upon it. Kindly agnostics warn us that this seeking after the Absolute is an absolute futility, but consciousness tells us that it is there in us for utter and complete knowledge. The Absolute can be known in a knowledge beyond the mind's knowledge. The contradictory deliverances of even intuitive knowledge need not dishearten us; for every contradiction, however obstinate and irresolvable, is an indication to consciousness, not for turning back but for a higher ascent wherefrom to achieve a more total perspective. At some level of consciousness it must be possible to resolve all contradictions and arrive at a unified all-knowledge. Sri Aurobindo tells us that it is in the global vision of the Supermind—"of which intuition is only a sharp edge, or intense projected ray"—that we can escape from the oppositions of all partial views and come into possession of the Supreme Truth.

But it is not to be supposed that the Supermind is some tranced state that is numb to the difficulties of our reason and the paradoxes of our experience, or that it is some wonder-realm where arbitrary miracle achieves harmony out of conflict. It is quite the contrary, for it is Supreme Reason. Its logic is the logic of the Infinite, of the relations of spiritual existence. It is this reason and this logic that resolve the oppositions between oneness and diversity, flux and identity, being and becoming, the infinite and the finite, the universal and the individual, that confront us everywhere and pursue us in different forms into every order of phenomena and into every level of experience.

In the final illumination of the Supermind they find their perfect reconciliation and harmony.

But meanwhile it is not necessary that reason should abdicate or wait, helpless and ineffective. For example, it is able to understand and organise the infra-rational instinct in man; something similar it can do with intuition until it becomes perfectly sure of itself. For this purpose it has to become subtle and sensitive to a deeper range of reality. It has to revise its concepts and remould its categories, not arbitrarily or speculatively, but in living response to a compulsive deeper experience. If reason could not overleap its mechanistic limitations, it would not be able to explore realms of reality other than material, and silence would be the only way of dealing with the ineffable Absolute. But it is because reason could do this in some measure that it becomes possible to have a science of reality which is something more than a synthesis of the science of nature.

To the understanding of such a large and plastic reason Sri Aurobindo presents, in this second volume of "The Life Divine," a uniquely integral view of Reality which harmonises its conflicting aspects, a synthesis of opposed lines of spiritual experience which shows them meeting on the level of the Supermind, beyond mind and Overmind, and a comprehensive conception of the Absolute which resolves the difficulties and contradictions which the intellect finds in its effort to reach it. There have been at all times philosophies that tried to envisage the ultimate Reality as mechanical—the Reality being regarded as absolutely self-sufficient, though not necessarily infinite; there have been other systems that tried to identify the Absolute—regarded at least as the supreme though not as the only Reality with some principle of life or consciousness as we know them such as desire or will, idea or phantasy, dream or false imposition. But the Veda and the Upanishad—the founts of Spiritual knowledge for the ages—have regarded the Absolute as an Absolute of Existence, Consciousness and Delight and the Universe as its self-manifestation. The full meaning and implications of this conception have been already explained in the first volume of 'The Life Divine.' An original and unique exegesis of this Vedic doctrine of the world as a progressive self-expression, of the one and the Omnipresent Divine Reality, an exegesis which helps as none other has done to bring down its truth from the level of vision or self-evidence

to the intellect and enable it to see how it is that there arises this staggering opposition between the nature of the world and that of the Divine Reality, and also a further original development of this doctrine as regards the nature of man's fulfilment—all this in true accord with the body of the spiritual experience that we find recorded in the Upanishads and the Vedic hymns—is what one is privileged to read in these volumes. Here we are far from the din of dialectical battles, we are lifted quite above mere controversy, though dialectical skill and logical acumen of the rarest order make themselves constantly felt. But behind the movement of ideas and arguments of the Master we sense a stream of seeing thought flowing into the Mind and filling it with a liquid brilliance which can image in itself the form and feature of spiritual truth. We have a traditional way of expressing our gratitude to the cleansing and life-giving streams of our land: it is to take as much water from them as our joined palms can hold and give it back to them as the only adequate offering. What is intended by the present study is something similar in spirit.

If our concept of the Absolute is to have any significance at all, we must conceive it not only as the sanction and support but also as the essence and the source of all determinations. Surely the Absolute is indeterminable; but the true sense of this and other kindred negative statements about the Absolute is not negation but affirmation. The Absolute is free from limitation by its own determinations and free to release from within itself infinite self-determinations. Indeterminability is in the sense a necessary condition of free infinite self-determination. The one implies the other and there is no opposition between them. They are two aspects, one essential, the other dynamic and creative, of the Absolute. If indeterminability and free infinite self-determination were not both of them complementary elements in our conception of the Absolute, the Absolute would be reduced to the position of an indeterminate void or of a fixed determinate, or it would become a mere sum-total of fixed possibilities of determination inherent within it. The opposition between an indeterminable Absolute and a universe of determinations is merely conceptual; the universe need not therefore be an illusory projection of the Absolute or a mysterious super-imposition upon it.

Again, the statement of the Absolute's illimitable freedom, freedom from form and name, quality and feature, and so on, is not meant to limit by negation the Absolute to an essential condition without form and feature. It is a positive statement of the Infinite's capacity of infinite self-expression. It denies that any sum of its self-expressions could ever sum up the Infinite. Similarly there is no real opposition between essential, infinite oneness and infinite multiplicity of manifestation. It may be said, on the other hand, that the fullest power and truth of the unity of the one is expressed in its utmost differentiation of itself. The same conciliation occurs as regards the opposition between being and becoming, that is, between unchangeable Identity and incessant flux; for what characterises Being is not the self-identity of eternal blankness or of one fixed formation, but the unchangeableness that persists unimpaired through endless formation of Being. We see, therefore, that the fundamental negative statements about the Absolute are not really opposed to their corresponding positives; they deny only the limitations that may be there implied in the latter. And if our thought tries to reach at the Absolute with the help of an all-excluding negation, we should not forget that it is compelled at the same time to conceive of it as the Supreme Positive of all positives. However, the great elucidation of these conceptual perplexities can come only when the nodus of the Absolute and the Relative is seized in experience.

To a knowledge by Identity to which man's inner being has access, the Absolute is revealed as an Infinite of self-existence, self-awareness and self-delight of Being. These three primal aspects of the Reality are an inseparable trinity. However, on the level of Mind and Overmind, each of them may be entered into to the exclusion and even obliteration of the rest, while lower down they are felt as divorced from each other. Each of these primal aspects of infinite Existence, Consciousness and Delight has its fundamental spiritual determinates, fundamental because they are the necessary postulates for all its self-manifestation. The fundamental determinates of the Divine Delight of Being are Love, Joy and Beauty; of infinite consciousness-force of Being, Knowledge and Will—expressing themselves as the Power of conceptive creation or Maya, as the self-effectuating executive Force or Nature or Prakriti, and again as the Conscious Power of the

Divine Being or Shakti which works through both the modes of Conceptive Creation and dynamic execution. And the aspect of Infinite Existence reveals itself as Self or Atman, as Conscious Being or Spirit or Purusha, and as God or the Divine Being or Ishwara. Now it should not be thought that these determinates are exclusive of each other. The distinctions made here do not imply a division in the Spiritual Reality: for in it there could be no division, as in matter, but only self-variation, self-limitation and self-absorption; and even in matter, it is well to remember, there is division but not isolation. A status of Being, for example, is a self-variation of Infinite Being in which that status prevails while other statuses are withheld from actively manifesting themselves within it. It is the same with a mode of Consciousness-Force.

The One Existent appears as the Cosmic Self with regard to the universe, but as the Supreme Self he is transcendent of the universe and at the same time individual-universal in every existence. Transcendence and impersonality are the characteristic features in the individual's experience of identity with the Self. But Conscious Being or Spirit or Purusha is seen as intimately connected with Nature, for He is the Self as originator and enjoyer of the forms and works of Consciousness-Force or Nature, and assumes various graded poises of His Being appropriate to each of her varying gradations. He is identical with the Self, in that He is individual and cosmic and transcendent: but He is characteristically the Impersonal-Personal Spirit in all existence: impersonal because it is undifferentiated by personal formation, and personal because it is that which presides over every individualisation of existence. But the true regard of Spirit to Nature is that of mastery over its own executive force, and this aspect of mastery comes out in its fullest power in the Divine Being or God or Ishwara. For He is the Infinite Being in its transcendental and cosmic consciousness and force, Creator and Ruler of the universe, Friend and Refuge of all creatures, the All-Person who is the source of personality. And of Him cosmic Joy and Beauty and Love are the most intimate revelation. Thus seen, this is the most comprehensive aspect of the Reality. For He is the Absolute or the Supreme Brahman, He is the Supreme Self, and He is also the Supreme Purusha. The Divine Being is that Supreme aspect of the Reality which is master

and enjoyer of its own self-existence, ruling from above and guiding from within its own self-manifestation. The Divine Being thus regarded is not the personal God or Gods of popular religions who are limited representations of certain divine qualities and powers. Neither is He to be identified with Saguna Brahman—the Reality manifesting itself in infinite quality and action—for the Nirguna or the Reality not manifesting in quality and immobile is also an aspect of His Existence.

But as in the effort of Pure Reason to reach the Absolute, so also in the striving by direct experience to get to the Infinite Being, man is faced by the perplexity of conflicting deliverances. Here too the cause is similar. It lies in pitting one partial experience against another and in trying to found the whole scheme of things on that partial basis. But it may be asked how at all authentic spiritual experience could be partial. The answer to this is to be sought in the nature of Spirit's self-manifestation, which is a process of involution and evolution. If we look into this process a little closely, we shall be able to understand the origin of the movement of Ignorance, in which Mind is a critical stage, and then it would be easy to see how it is that, like mental reason, spiritual experience too can be partial.

We must accept free self-variation as a power of Spirit, for it is a necessary postulate for its self-manifestation in the universe. And self-variation would involve the consequence that the One Being could be aware of itself simultaneously in different real statuses of consciousness. There would be no impairment, however, of the knowledge of infinite oneness. Another power again, a power of free self-limitation, we should be able to accord to the Infinite, for it is a necessary pre-condition of its self-determinations. As a consequence of this power, we can imagine infinite Consciousness moving into a special determination of itself to preside over and base a world or a world-principle such as Mind, Life or Matter; and taking one more step, we can imagine it moving into a still further specialisation of the World Being in that special determination and assuming the status of the individual self or spirit. And so far too, Consciousness would be limiting its action with full knowledge of all itself. As a result of another power inherent in Spirit and indispensable for creation, the power of self-absorption, we have the luminous trance of the Infinite, where infinite consciousness is swallowed up in pure

Being that is merely self-aware—the state of Super-conscience, and its opposite pole of dark trance which appears as an infinite non-being—the state of Inconscience. And by a partial action of the same movement as of this two-fold infinite Self-absorption, we can imagine Infinite Being becoming aware separately of one aspect or status of itself, and consciousness limiting itself to one field of being and to a particular movement of itself. Integral consciousness would now be abolished, though always recoverable. Here would be the source of the downward movement of Ignorance. And these powers of Spirit—of self-variation, self-limitation and absorption—provide the key to the mystery of the process of spirit's self-manifestation, that is, of Creation.

Now it would be easy to see how consciousness may, in its descent or ascent,—descent from the integral to the limited and ascent from the limited to the integral—identify itself with one status or movement of itself to the exclusion of the rest. A fundamental double status like that of Nirguna and Saguna, each based upon a truth of the absolute, becomes possible in the infinite consciousness. And man's limited consciousness rising to or reflecting one or the other may be inclined to claim that a Pure Being actionless and immobile, or an Infinite Person upholding and directing the works of the world, is the Supreme Reality. It thus happens that an opposition is set up between these statuses. We can form some figure of such differing and conflicting statuses in infinite Being from the normal experience of our limited consciousness, for instance, from the duality arising in us between our consciousness, for that is involved in the automation of some habit, and the rest of it that is relatively free. That their duality can be much more than a figure of speech is brought home to us when the conflict between them becomes formidable; yet the truth is that they are not two different things but a dual status belonging to a single consciousness, and that in both of them there is the same consciousness, in one tied up and in the other relatively free. Thus comes about the danger of the truth of one authentic experience being set in opposition to other truth of a different but equally authentic experience. Only a profound intuitive sense that all aspects of the World-Reality, however conflicting and contradictory in appearance, must find their complete reconciliation in the Supreme Truth can guard us from this danger.

There is, for instance, the opposition that is made between Personality and Impersonality, and it is often facilely assumed that the Impersonal view of the Reality is the higher and final truth. We are impressed by the universal and impersonal character of the inconscient energy of Nature creating a world of countless forms, all modifications of itself. And we try to imagine the relation between the undifferentiated Spirit and the personal individuals as something similar to that between the inconscient energy of Nature and its modifications. We argue that a modification is name and form merely, and that the basic energy alone is the truth. But obviously this is a partial view, for the truth also of its modifications enters into the truth of basic energy. Diamond and coal are both of them carbon; but we know more fully of the nature of carbon when we have known that it can appear in the form of coal or diamond. Form is not figment. It is significant, evidently of some essential truth, and is rooted in it. It is wrong therefore, even in the case of inconscient existence, to think that universality is the truth and individuality a transient and baseless phenomenon. But we take over this wrong outlook into conscient existence, think that personality is something belonging only to its manifestations, and conclude that conscient existence at its source and origin must be impersonal. But the truth of personality is rooted in conscient existence itself. The chief reason, however, for accepting the impersonal view of the Reality as the ultimate truth would seem to be the over-whelming nature of the experience of the impersonal Self. However convincing and far-reaching this experience, and however necessary too, for the spirit's transcendence of Nature, it must be held to be a partial experience. The experience of the Reality as personal has been held to be equally convincing and far-reaching. There is no opposition, however, between these two aspects of the Reality, the personal and impersonal, for what we mean by Person is conscious Being, and what appears impersonal may be said to be a power of the Person or Conscious Being. An Infinite Self-existence is the highest Reality; but of this basis and ground, as the Gita puts it (14, 27) in other words, the truth and significance may be said to be the Supreme Being, transcendent and eternal—an Infinite Person, so to say, because it is his being which is the source, essence and truth of all personality.

Such is the integral view of the Reality, a Reality manifold of aspect, status and movement, and whose oneness is absolute and nowise or nowhere suffers the least impairment, that Sri Aurobindo presents to us. This view has been implicit in the Upanishads and the Gita, but it has been missed ever afterwards, or it has never been brought out with such clarity and convincingness. It should be now easy, we presume, to realise what great help Sri Aurobindo brings to the understanding of the Upanishadic view of creation. The Upanishad speaks of creation by the Reality through 'seeing'—the expression it often uses is 'It (the Reality) saw and it became' or 'It saw and it loosed forth from itself'—and through meditation and Tapas or intense self-concentration and self-absorption. There is no tinge here of illusion or false imposition or ignorance. Neither is it anything like the potter making his pots. It is a creation by infinite Consciousness which realises whatever it sees within itself. And naturally arising out of this view of the Reality, and of creation as self-manifestation, is Sri Aurobindo's view of the aim of man's life and the nature of his fulfilment. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is above all else the philosophy of a divine life, and this aspect of it may be said to be his greatest and in a way his special contribution. But in order to know if the integral aim of a divine life on earth which Sri Aurobindo has presented to humanity is at all possible, it would be necessary to form a clear idea of the truth of man's individuality; for if man's individuality were such that only in its abolition lay its fulfilment, there could be no basis for a really divine life in the fullest sense of the word and it is only by courtesy that a life of striving devoted to the annihilation of individuality could be called the divine life.

The essential fact about individuality is that it is a centre in consciousness (this is spatial language but it is inevitable) for experience, for all-vision and self-vision. It is more than a particular individualisation of the world principles of matter, life and mind. It is the Divine Nature, by which is upheld the world-nature, that has become the individual; it is an eternal portion of the Divine Being (Gita 7, 5; 15, 7), not subject to the phenomenal incidents of modification, and beyond mortality and Time (Gita. Chapter 2). The true individual or person or Self is a power of being of infinite self-existence, a self-limitation in it with full knowledge of all itself

and untouched by the separative ignorance. It is of one essence with the transcendent Reality. Going beyond the separative ego a formation of world-nature, we reach the true individual that is our Self, (Mudaka 1, 3, 1...3) and thus come into possession of the joy of union and identity with the transcendent and cosmic Divine and with the other selves, that is, we come into possession of the joy of a perfect self-manifestation, unclouded by ignorance, which is a movement of world-nature, of the Divine. It is on the supramental level of Being, or in Vijnana, that we reach our true spiritual Self, and it is from here that can be brought down the Light and the Power that can entirely transform, so as to accord with the divine Will and Idea, the lower nature and its workings in the mind, in the life and even in the body. Then would be the Divine Life a perfect self-expression of the Divine, even in the lower nature as in the higher Divine Nature. This, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the divine consummation of the evolutionary urge in the material universe, of the great human enterprise on this planet. This is no escape from nature; it is mastery over it and through that mastery its transformation. It is a divine fulfilment, possible even here—not beyond; possible even now—not in timeless eternity.

But the logical mind has its difficulties again in comprehending this integral aim of a divine consummation of the soul or Spirit expressing itself through a divine life and divine works in Nature. If the liberated individual becomes one with the Supreme Reality, who is it that is left to enjoy the divine union or live the divine life? But if a divine life based on a divine union is insisted upon as man's fulfilment, it may be perhaps accepted as a stage in it, but not as his final fulfilment; for in the latter, there could not be even a shadow of difference between the Transcendent and the individual, and, for a continuing relation of union with the Divine, some sort of difference would seem to be necessary. In the highest liberation individuality must cease. Individuality must be phenomenal or even illusory, for there could not be a multiplicity of real individuals in the One Reality.

To answer these objections with countering logic would be futile, for we have here to understand the basic relations of infinite Self-existence. The appeal should lie to experience; the concepts of identity, difference, identity in difference, and so on, fail to express adequately the relation of the Individual to the

Eternal. The physical notions of part and whole, of continent and contained, do not apply at all to the indivisible Spiritual Reality. Again such poetical analogies as that of the streams losing themselves in the sea and becoming one with it, or of the sun and his reflection becoming one with the removal of the reflecting medium, and so on, though they succeed in bringing home to the mind and the heart some element of the truth, fail to touch the others, and, pressed too far, end in distorting it. The Upanishads describe the condition of the liberated Individual as one of mergence in the universal, and of utter ineffable identity with the Absolute; also as one wherein he sees all beings within himself and himself within all beings, for all beings become his very self; and as one wherein he sees all beings and himself in God, and God in himself and all beings. Obviously here is no annihilation of the Individual Self, and the relation between the Self and other Selves and between the Self and God, is not one of mere psychological contact. It is a relation of mutual inclusion and clearly separateness is not the basis on which spiritual individuality stands. And in that case, all the logical difficulties, which have been indicated above, of a mind that reasons from its own experience of separative existence, must get convicted as fallacies. The only way to understand all deeper spiritual experiences is to see that the transcendent and the universal and the individual are the three terms of existence, each of them including, either overtly or behind the veil, the two others. The liberated individual consciously possesses his unity with the transcendent and the universal, which is veiled by Ignorance in the ordinary individual. It is such a liberated Individual who, with the mastery born of his liberation, transforms the mental, vital and physical nature which is the basis of his existence here and lives a divine life. But one objection might still be made; it might be said that so long as we can speak of these three terms of existence, the transcendent, the universal and the individual, we are in the realm of manifested Reality, and that in the ineffable Absolute they cease to exist. But the position taken by Sri Aurobindo is that their truth must, however ineffably other than what the highest Spiritual experience knows, be pre-existent even in the Absolute.

Now it is unnecessary to stress that the great aim of a supra-mental transformation of human nature is in many ways a

new and original envisagement of life's possibility. It is a new aspiration. It is the crowning spire of a great shrine of Spiritual knowledge that Sri Aurobindo has brought into being, through his vision, for a new humanity. The Gita, adumbrating as it does the philosophy of the Divine Man, has made some advances in the direction of an integral aim such as is implied in the Vedic aspiration of Swarajya and Samrajya or Self-dominion and All-dominion, which the succeeding ages unfortunately allowed to lapse. But even the Gita, influenced probably by the pessimistic trend of Buddhistic thought, often formulates to the seeker his aim as escape from birth and death. As an element in the divine fulfilment and as meaning complete mastery over Nature and its gravitational force towards earth-existence, this aim may be unexceptionable; but stressed in its negative aspect and envisaged as the whole content of man's fulfilment and destiny, it has its dangers. The adequate statement of the full aim of man's evolution is not of little practical importance, and is not merely a question of high theory, as might be supposed; a narrow aim goes down cramping the course of human life and endeavour along its entire length, often resulting in a disastrous constriction. We are grateful, therefore, to Sri Aurobindo for having placed before man the goal of his destiny in its largest scope, however vast and tremendous and even unrealisable it may appear to our mind of ignorance.

We have tried to give an idea of the thought and vision of Sri Aurobindo as regards the fundamental problems of existence, that is, of the central theme of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. It is not possible here to go into its further development and elucidation, which the present volumes of 'The Life Divine' take up, in relation to the downward movement of consciousness into the separative Ignorance, and then with regard to the upward movement from the Ignorance to the integral consciousness. The future will record as one of the main achievements of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy that it has stemmed finally the currents of world-negation and world-refusal that one of the greatest personalities of all time, Buddha, had let loose in the stream of Indian philosophic thought. Some chapters in these volumes are devoted to a complete and thorough-going refutation—the last word on the matter—of the elusive doctrine of illusionism, which has been not unjustly characterised as

Buddhism in disguise, and which has been driven deep into the heart of India by Sankara—an intense flaming spirit solely intent, in the midst of the Buddhistic debacle, upon making India hark back to the Upanishadic message of the immortal Spirit. The problem of world-evil—it is this which throws up the philosophies of world-negation—Sri Aurobindo faces squarely. As long as the world is not divinely justified, the divine is imperfectly known. But the various efforts of the intellect to solve this insistent problem may bring to the mind a more or less precarious conviction, the heart in its moments of grace may echo the mystic's cry of rapture that this world with all its evil is a world of glory and delight; but the knowledge that would annul the problem for us, it would seem, could be securely possessed only far beyond the boundaries of the mind. Even those that have crossed them seem unable to transmit the knowledge through the word. Or is it that they have spoken but we are unable to understand? Perhaps it is as well that it should be so, and this too may be a part of the scheme of things. For what else, if not the lure of this knowledge, could give us such driving power to transcend ourselves? For transcending, we could transform evil, along with its ground, the dark earth-nature in us and around us. That is the aim of the integral perfection which Sri Aurobindo holds before us. No other philosophy or religion, positivist or spiritual, gives to life on the earth such high significance as Sri Aurobindo gives. He affirms that our outer nature too has a claim to deliverance, and that it can be divinely transformed. Human life is not merely a preparation for the soul's perfection elsewhere. Human life itself can and should become the manifestation of that perfection. Sri Aurobindo has presented in these volumes an organic body of thought and knowledge, concerning man and the universe, which has the character of a perfectly natural and inevitable synthesis of all that is valuable in the various main lines of intellectual seeking and vision, of aspiration and discipline, for upward effort and aim, of the ancient and the modern world, of the West and the East. This is not a synthesis of the kind we know, in Spencer, for instance; this seems to grow out of vision, which is by nature synthetic and total. Resurgent India has in 'The Life Divine' a world view worthy of its glorious past, and formative of a more glorious future.

## *The Reformed Constitution of the Hyderabad State*

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### I

In his learned paper on "The evolution of the Legislature in Hyderabad," read at the last session of the Indian Political Science Conference<sup>1</sup>, Professor H. K. Sherwani of the Osmania University put forward the view that the reforms introduced into the State in 1939 formed "a bold, unique and definite departure from the principles which were supposed to have been the last word in the application of democracy to India," that they obviated the short-comings of the graft of a purely European democracy to Indian conditions, that they constituted a great step forward in the matter of representation, composition and powers of the legislative assembly,<sup>2</sup> and that in certain respects they could even serve as a pointer to British India<sup>3</sup>. The implications of this view are that the reforms are democratic in their nature, that there is a type of democracy specifically European in character and therefore unsuited to Indian conditions, that the type devised for Hyderabad possesses certain novel features to which there is no parallel in the democracies of the West, and that this is the type of democracy that deserves to be extended to the rest of India. As it appears that the term 'democracy' has been used by the learned professor in a rather loose sense, it is proposed to examine his view, and incidentally to describe the real nature of the reforms.

It may be noted at the outset that according to him there are three remarkable features which give a uniqueness to the reforms under consideration. The first is the division of the State into a series of economic rather than geographical constituencies; and in bringing this about Hyderabad has, in his view, made

<sup>1</sup> The Indian Journal of Political Science Vol I. No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 431—2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 438.

history. The second is the establishment of a unicameral instead of a bicameral legislature. The third is the tremendous increase in the number of the elected members of the legislature from four to forty-two, on which he remarks that it is doubtful if in any other recent constitution such an advance is to be seen.

(2)

The documents bearing on the subject make it clear that the object of the reforms is not the introduction of democracy, either of the European or the non-European type, into the State. It is on the other hand the more humble one of creating some institutions for helping the government in obtaining 'a knowledge of the needs and desires of the people.' In the message conveyed by the Nizam to his Legislative Council, announcing the appointment of the Reforms Committee, he stated that the problem for which he wanted the Committee to discover a solution was that of increasing the association between his people and his government by the creation of a body or bodies representing the main interests in his State, from which his government could derive adequate and constant knowledge of the needs and desires of his people<sup>1</sup>. The terms of reference to the Committee were defined as follows: "Keeping in view the conditions in and the requirements and circumstances of the State, to investigate and report on all suitable alternatives for the more effective association of the different interests in the State with the government whereby the latter may be placed in continuous possession of their needs and desires."<sup>2</sup> The Committee strictly adhered to these terms and the chairman gave a ruling that the subject of responsible government did not come within the terms of their enquiry.<sup>3</sup> The changes which the Committee recommended and which were subsequently approved by the Executive Council and the Nizam have only brought into existence a few bodies like an enlarged Legislative Assembly containing forty-two elected members out of a total strength of eighty-five; a number of advisory committees attached to departments of administration like Agriculture, Education, Finance, Industrial Development

<sup>1</sup> Reforms Committee Report (R. C. R.), P. VI.

<sup>2</sup> R. C. R., P. VII.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. R., P. 126.

Public Health, Hindu Religious Endowments, Muslim Religious Endowments, and Religious Affairs consisting of an equal number of officials and nominated non-officials; District Boards and Municipal Committees with an elected majority, and a provision for annual district conferences in which the inhabitants of an area can make representation on matters of local interest to the Subedar.<sup>1</sup> It is on the strength of changes like these that Professor Sherwani refers to the reforms as democratic in their character.

The mere existence of representative bodies does not make a constitution democratic. What is fundamental to it is the amount and nature of power transferred to them. It is only in the degree in which political power is exercised by them that the state acquires a democratic character. The Legislative Assembly established in Hyderabad is not endowed with a final power in respect of any matters whatever. In the first place important items like the administration of Sarf-i-Khas, the relations with the Paigahs, the Executive Council, grants of land or cash by the Nizam, salaries, allowances, pensions, and gratuities, and the military and other armed forces are excluded entirely from the jurisdiction of the Legislative Assembly.<sup>2</sup> Even in regard to items which are within its purview it has no final authority to legislate or withhold legislation. The Head of the State has the right of vetoing the bills passed in the Assembly, and also of enacting laws not approved by it. Its sanction is not necessary either for the levy of taxes or for the appropriation of revenues. It can only discuss the budget in a general way and move resolutions of a recommendatory nature in respect of expenditure on items included within its jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>

The fact of the matter is that democratic government is inconsistent with the basic conception of the Hyderabad polity as envisaged by the Reforms Committee and as accepted by the Executive Council. This conception has been expressed in the following terms: "The Head of the State represents the people directly in his own person, and his connection with them, therefore, is more natural and abiding than that of any passing elected representatives. He is both the supreme head of the State and the embodiment of his people's sovereignty. Hence it is that,

<sup>1</sup> His Exalted Highness' Firman P. 1-2 .

<sup>2</sup> The Executive Council's Arzdasht, P. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Arzdasht, P. 6.

in such a polity, the Head of the State not merely retains the power to confirm or veto any piece of legislation, but also enjoys a special prerogative to make and unmake his executive, or change the machinery of government through which he meets the growing needs of his people. Such a sovereignty forms the basis on which our constitution rests, and has to be preserved."<sup>1</sup> So long as this principle is taken as the basic foundation of the constitution it is not possible to raise any democratic superstructure—European or non-European—on it. The view that the hereditary ruler of the State is a more direct, natural and permanent representative of the people than those specifically elected by them is in entire conflict with the elementary notions of democracy. It is more in consonance with the theory of Divine Right upheld by the European monarchs of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, with the theory of virtual representation and the Whig trusteeship put forward by Edmund Burke, and with the metaphysical theory of Hegel that the State is a self-conscious ethical substance of which the monarch is the external symbol.

Democracy is government by consultation, conference and discussion, and it works only where there is freedom for the organisation of political associations and parties and for criticising the actions of Government on the platform and in the press. As one eminent writer<sup>2</sup> has put it, "the emergence of constitutional Government, and in particular the crystallization of the systems of popular representation as we know them, are inextricably interwoven with the growth of the modern press. Without it constitutional Government is unimaginable". The truth of all this is recognised by the Reforms Committee which described<sup>3</sup> the press and the platform as "safety valves of public life, the closure of which often develops the canker of discontent in the body politic". But the recommendations which it has made for guaranteeing freedom in these matters are of a halting and inconclusive character. The Executive Council has also not gone very much beyond these recommendations. Conveners of public meetings have still to give previous intimation to the competent authority which is empowered to prohibit them.

<sup>1</sup> R. C. R., P. 7—8.

<sup>2</sup> C. J. Friedrich: Constitutional Government and Politics. P. 424.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. R., P. 23.

A new press regulation more or less on the same lines as the legislation in British India and suitably adopted to local conditions has been promised.<sup>1</sup>

One should also hesitate to speak of the reforms as democratic when one finds the representation of specific economic and industrial interests (the one unique feature of the new constitution) advocated and defended by the Reforms Committee<sup>2</sup> on the ground that, "this is the trend of the modern progressive thought on which rests the theory of the Corporative State. Economically, Hyderabad is not highly advanced. There has not as yet been any effort of a voluntary and spontaneous character on the part of the different economic groups—peasants, agricultural workers, industrial labour, etc., — to organise themselves into associations to safeguard their interests through collective action. In such a situation the introduction of the principles of the Corporative State will certainly result in economic organisations being started under Governmental auspices and completely bureaucratized.<sup>3</sup> This is of the essence of Corporativism as it has manifested itself in Italy, the land of its birth. It is the economic basis of the Fascist State. And any one with the least acquaintance with Fascism can easily understand how wide a gulf separates it from democracy. One really has to ask oneself whether in the reformed constitution of Hyderabad one does not find the germs of the Fascist State.

The assumption made by many students of politics in India—and Professor Sherwani is typical of them—that there is a type of democracy specially European in character and therefore unsuited to Indian conditions is an entirely mistaken one. The mistake is the outcome of the failure to distinguish between democracy as an ideal and democracy as a group of institutions which are the instruments for achieving the ideal.<sup>4</sup> As an ideal, democracy stands for responsible government and for an equal right of all men and women in a community to a share in the benefits of civilised life. It is opposed to the view that the rulers have an inherent or a divine right to rule, that in what they do or fail to do they are only responsible to their conscience

<sup>1</sup> Arzdasht: P. 11.

<sup>2</sup> R. C. R. P. 54

<sup>3</sup> C. J. Friedrich, *op. cit.* P. 463

G. D. H. Cole: Some relations between political and Economic theory.

<sup>4</sup> C. Delisle Burns: Democracy (Home University Library). P. 41—43.

or to God and not to their people. It is also opposed to the view that the blessings of a civilized life, like security from external and internal violence, adequate wealth and leisure, health and education, should be the monopoly of only a few privileged classes, and that the rest should only toil for the advantage and the happiness of these classes. It declares that it is not enough that rulers have good intentions but that they should by their work produce results in terms of the welfare of each and every individual, irrespective of his race, language or religion. There is nothing specially European about democracy as an ideal. It is of universal validity and deserves to be realised as effectively in one country as in another. If the reformed constitution of Hyderabad is to be considered democratic it should be only with reference to this ideal. Judged by this test it has no claim to be so considered. It has not recognised the principle of responsible government and it has not conceived the need for a new social order based on the abolition of the privileged classes like the nobles, the Jagirdars and the Maashdars.

No elaborate argument is required to show that there is no uniform or standardized type of political institutions in all the democratic countries of the west deserving to be labelled as European. There is a large variety in the machinery of democratic government. In respect of systems of representation, the status and powers of the second chambers, the relation of the executive and the legislature, the place of the judiciary, the organisation of the Civil Service, the degree of decentralisation and local self-government and the extent to which representative advisory and consultative bodies are used—in these and in various other matters which go to determine the real nature of the political and administrative machinery employed in a state, no two democratic countries are exactly similar, and there is nothing therefore which should be styled as European democracy. Moreover the forms of democratic government have been undergoing change from time to time in accordance with the changing needs and circumstances of each State. The position of the Cabinet in England today, or of the President in the United States, is quite different from what it was a quarter of century ago. The Civil Service also occupies a quite different position. The relations between central and local authorities have also undergone a great transformation in all democracies. The fact is that there

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is no rigidity in democratic machinery. Like life itself it is experimental in its outlook and character. Whatever success it has so far achieved or it might achieve in future is due to its flexibility and adjustability. It is not wedded to unicameralism or bicameralism; it does not ignore the utility of functional representation for certain purposes. It is therefore unscientific to speak of a standardised form of European democracy and of the shortcomings of its graft to Indian conditions.

It is in the light of these considerations that one has to form an estimate of the significance of what Professor Sherwani calls the remarkable achievements of the Hyderabad reforms—their unicameralism and the economic basis of representation. Bicameralism is not now regarded as an essential part of democratic machinery in the sense in which it was advocated in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. There has been a complete change from the view as represented by the *Federalist*<sup>1</sup> to that as represented by Professor Laski,<sup>2</sup> an ardent advocate of unicameralism. In the majority of democratic states, second chambers have gradually been losing their power and influence—the only important exception being the Senate of the United States. Moreover those who still support the institution of a second chamber do so on the ground that the large power usually vested in the lower house should be checked by an upper house. This ground is not applicable to Hyderabad. In the first place the unicameral legislature does not possess any real authority which requires to be checked by a second chamber. In the second place it is so constituted that the elements and interests which serve as a check against the rashness of a lower house in the democratic states are effectively and more than adequately represented on it. The holders of Samsthans, the Jagirdars, the Maashdars, the agents of the Ilaquas, and the large members of nominated officials and non-officials together with the members of the Executive Council constitute a formidable block to check the power of the elected element, so much that there is very little left for a second chamber to accomplish. Under these circumstances the unicameralism of the constitution is of no significance.

<sup>1</sup> The *Federalist*: Essays LXII and LXIII.

<sup>2</sup> Laski H. J.: *Grammar of Politics*.

One is forced to draw a similar conclusion regarding the claim that, by constituting the legislature on the basis of economic rather than territorial interests, Hyderabad has made history. In the first place the Assembly is not constituted wholly on that basis. It is not known exactly what economic interests are represented by the four holders of Samsthans and Jagirdars, the two Maashdars, the two graduates and the six members representing the District Boards, the District Municipalities and the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Thus out of the forty-two elected members fourteen may be said to represent no economic interest—if by an economic interest one is to understand a group of producers of economic goods. In the second place there is a large nominated element which does not represent any economic interests as such. And it follows from these two features that it is not likely that legislation undertaken by the Assembly, the resolutions discussed in it and the other kinds of business transacted by it, will be based on a consideration of the interests of the main economic groups in the State. In the third place there is no support for the view that in introducing an element of functional representation Hyderabad has done something that is novel or unprecedented. The Executive Council has taken a saner view of the matter and expressed itself as follows:<sup>1</sup> "Outside India the experiment is not new; in India itself, the constitutions of British India and of some States provide partly and in the case of certain interests for a similar basis." In the legislatures in British India as they evolved during the last fifty years, provision has always been made for the representation of interests like Chambers of Commerce, Landholders, Planters etc; and Hyderabad has only enlarged on this precedent. In all the democratic states of Europe, Councils and Chambers constituted on a functional and economic basis have in recent times formed an integral part of their governmental machinery.<sup>2</sup> The German Economic Council under the Weimar Republic, the French Economic Council, the British Economic Advisory Council, and similar Councils in Czechoslovakia and other States of Europe demonstrate quite clearly that the need for functional representation has been realised. And when one keeps in mind that

<sup>1</sup> Arzdasht: P. 7.

<sup>2</sup> H. Finer: *Theory and Practice of Modern Government*, P. 888 ff.

much of the legislation today is undertaken not by parliaments but by administrative departments, and that bodies representative of the concerned interests are invariably attached to these departments—there are ninety-seven such Permanent Advisory Committees in England today—<sup>1</sup> one should hesitate a great deal before ascribing any novelty to the system inaugurated in Hyderabad. After a survey of the part played by Interest Groups in the modern State, Professor C. F. Friedrich has rightly come to the conclusion that, wherever we turn, functional representative devices are forging ahead as decisive elements in any representative scheme under modern industrial conditions.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Sherwani has not made clear anywhere what those conditions and circumstances peculiar to Hyderabad are, which necessitate a departure from what he calls European democracy and the setting up of a democratic legislature on a functional basis. It is true that the Reforms Committee went into this subject in accordance with the first portion of the terms of reference. But it has not succeeded in establishing any kind of connection between its analysis of "The conditions in and the requirements and circumstances of the State" in Part I of its Report and the functional representation which it recommended in the Second Part. The only features characteristic of Hyderabad to-day<sup>3</sup>—according to the Report—are the comparative illiteracy of the people in spite of the increasing expenditure on education; a general awakening throughout the Dominions manifesting itself in the convening of conferences, the formation of societies and journalistic activities; an awakening among women, an increase of expenditure on the construction of roads, railways, bus service, telephone, radio and electricity; and the impact of the outside world on the people of the State. These are features which are characteristic of almost every part of India, and no inference can be drawn from them as to what type of popular participation in the government of the State is desirable under these circumstances. One or two other points also deserve consideration in this connection. It is one thing to have councils and parliaments organised on a functional basis if they are mainly to be advisory and consultative; it is quite a different thing to

<sup>1</sup> John A. Perkins: *American Political Science Review*, February, 1940, p. 85-96.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 472.

<sup>3</sup> R.C.R.: p. 9-17.

have legislative bodies with final authority to make laws constructed on the same pattern<sup>1</sup>. Pure functional representation for legislative purposes is found today in the U.S.S.R. and Italy. These legislatures are able to function in spite of the diversity of interests of the different economic groups represented on them, primarily because the power of ultimate decision is not in their hands but in those of the dictatorial parties—the Communists and the Fascists—which control and co-ordinate all activities in the State. But for this kind of party dictatorship, functional representation would have created such a large amount of friction making community-living wholly impossible. Similarly in Hyderabad a functionally organised legislature will not create disturbance so long as it continues to be an advisory body—as is the case with it at present—the real authority being wielded by the hereditary Head of the State and his executive council. But the moment it is contemplated to transfer real powers to it and to introduce democracy into the State, a breakdown will have to be faced. The common interest whose furtherance alone is the object of the State cannot be promoted by a body constructed to represent the diversity of interests in society. As Professor Finer puts it,<sup>2</sup> the real difficulty in the management of the State, which integrates thousands of different personal, local and syndical interests, is not soluble by disintegration and the consequent encouragement of guild conceit and selfishness, but by integration first, and then devolution, legislative and administrative, and always consultation of the associations and localities.

Unicameralism and functional representation are not the essential features of the scheme of reforms in Hyderabad. Its basic characteristic is the attempt made in it to solve what is generally known as the communal problem; and it solves it by giving equality of representation to the Muslims and the Hindus not merely on the Legislative Assembly but also on all other deliberative bodies like the District Boards, the Municipal Committees and the Village Panchayats. The Muslims form about eleven per cent, and the Hindus about eighty-six per cent of the population in the State. In spite of this, the number of Hindu representatives is to be exactly the same as that of the

<sup>1</sup> This distinction is admirably brought out by Professor E. Pendelton Herring in "The American Political Science Review," 1930, p. 439-450.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 908.

Muslim representatives. There are districts, towns and villages where the Muslim population is not even seven or eight per cent; but even there they are to share equal representation with the Hindus on local bodies. And when account is taken of the need to set apart a few seats at least to Christians and Zoroastrians, there is the possibility of the Hindus who constitute a large majority of the population becoming a minority on the legislature. There is no precedent for the grant of such heavy weightage to a minority community as has been given to the Muslims in Hyderabad. There is also another anomaly. While Muslims are treated as a homogeneous community in spite of the existence of acute differences between the Sunnis and the Shias—differences which were recognised<sup>1</sup> in some of the previous proposals for constitutional reform—the distinction between caste Hindus, Harijans, Depressed Classes and Lingayats is raised to the status of a political principle and this distinction is bound to reduce still further the influence of the Hindus on the legislature. A still further anomaly is that the principle of equality between the two communities is not extended to the Executive Council and the Civil Services where the Muslims enjoy an extraordinarily preponderant share. The Firman of the Nizam<sup>2</sup> issued in connection with the reformed constitution refers to Hyderabad as a Muslim State, and the scheme of representation it provides for results in the perpetuation of the ascendancy of the Muslim inhabitants who form a sort of privileged community in the State. This is the central feature of the new constitution.

In support of this position the only argument that has been put forward is: "The importance of the Muslim community in the State, by virtue of its historical position and its status in the body politic, is so obvious (?) that it cannot be reduced to the status of a minority in the Assembly."<sup>3</sup> This only means to say that because the community has for so long been in enjoyment of a privileged position it should continue to do so for all time. Here is a claim which is not based on justice or fairness.

Long ago, Hamilton, that master of political wisdom, with his deep insight into realities of government, expressed himself thus in respect of the claim for equality made by the individual States

<sup>1</sup> R. C. R. Chart on p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Firman, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Arzdasht: p. 7.

of the American Confederation even though they differed from each other in point of population:<sup>1</sup> "Every idea of proportion and every rule of fair representation conspire to condemn a principle which gives to Rhode Island an equal weight in the scale of power with Massachusetts, or Connecticut, or New York; and to Delaware an equal voice in the national deliberations with Pennsylvania, or Virginia, or North Carolina. Its operation contradicts the fundamental maxim of republican government, which requires that the sense of the majority should prevail. Sophistry may reply, that sovereigns are equal, and that a majority of the votes of the States will be a majority of confederated America. But this kind of logical legerdemain will never counteract the plain suggestions of justice and common sense. It may happen that this majority of States is a small minority of the people of America; and two-thirds of the people of America could not long be persuaded, upon the credit of artificial distinctions and syllogistic subtilities, to submit their interests to the management and disposal of one-third." It is this false doctrine of group equality that lay at the basis of the theory of concurrent majority put forward by Calhoun<sup>2</sup> with its advocacy of nullification and secession and that drove the American States to a civil war among themselves. And it was also the doctrine which was responsible for that equal representation of the English Upper Canada and the French Lower Canada on the Canadian Legislature before 1867, which led to the ultimate breakdown of constitutional government in that country.<sup>3</sup> One should not commit the mistake of the kind that the problem as to how different religious and linguistic groups inhabiting the same State should be enabled to learn the habits of peaceful living is peculiar to India and that other countries have not been faced by a similar situation, or that we are capable of suggesting novel solutions for it. Both as a warning and as a guide, the history of other countries has great lessons to teach us in this connection.

In our habit of talking in terms of groups and communities, we are apt to forget that what we have to be really interested

<sup>1</sup> The Federalist: op. cit.: Essay XXII.

<sup>2</sup> J. Mark Jacobson: The Development of American Political Thought. P. 437 ft.

<sup>3</sup> R. G. Trotter: Canadian Federation, Chapter V.

in is in the welfare and happiness of individual men and women. There are no interests of communities apart from those of the members constituting them. Viewed in this perspective communal equality and weightage imply undue advantages to certain individuals and undue suffering to others. An individual is denied opportunities of serving the State as a legislator, an administrator or as a civil servant or as a member of the fighting forces, not because he is not qualified for it but because of his following a particular faith. Persons with greater skill and capacity are relegated to inferior positions because of the community to which they belong, thus creating in the minds of a large number a sense of frustration and disappointment, leading to violent popular outbreaks and revolutions.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the goods which can only be provided through the instrumentality of the State are distributed among individuals not according to their needs but to the accident of their membership in this or that community. The hunger of a Muslim or his ignorance is considered to deserve relief more than that of a Hindu or Christian. It is this fact, that weightage in the exercise of power leads to weightage in the enjoyment of the benefits arising from State action, that constitutes the injustice of all systems of communal representation, like that of Hyderabad.

The injustice is not very much mitigated by the provision that representatives should be elected in joint and not separate electorates as is the case in British India. The reality of representation depends on the freedom of the electorate to choose the candidate considered best fitted in its opinion; and such freedom is absent when the voters are called on to elect only Hindus or Muslims. Much also of the virtue of functional representation which has been considered as the cardinal feature of the reformed constitution is lost when each interest has to distribute its choice equally between Muslims and Hindus. A candidate who can better represent the interests will have to be ignored if his choice results in the election of more Hindus or more Muslims than what is permitted in the constitution. This restriction of choice leads to another anomaly. In no case is it open to an economic interest like Commerce, Industries, Banking, etc., to elect a Christian or a Zoroastrian or any one else who is not a Hindu or Muslim even though he happens to

<sup>1</sup> Pitirim Sorokin: The Sociology of Revolution.

occupy the leading position in the particular economic group. One is reminded in this connection of the observation made by an eminent scholar that the wisest way of abolishing a Parliament is to let it stand, but to fill it with your own trusted nominees.<sup>1</sup>

No real change or reform in the constitution of a State is possible unless a new constituent power comes into existence. By a constituent power is meant that body or group of people within the State which possess the effective power to make a constitution for it and operate it against all opposition. It is upon the character and the views of that body that the nature of the constitution depends. History shows that it is only when, owing to changes in the economic or the social structure of a people, new groups emerge with sufficient strength to bring pressure to bear on existing governments, dictate to them, and thus become the constituent power in the State, new constitutions come into effect, reflecting the views of the emerging groups. Every constitution embodies the principles according to which political power is organised and used in a given State; and a reform of the constitution means a change in these principles. It therefore involves a new alignment of power in the community. No change which does not involve a fresh arrangement or distribution of power deserves to be called a constitutional change. This is the reason why charters and reforms voluntarily granted by rulers and governments do not really result in constitutional changes. No one will voluntarily agree to a reduction in one's authority. The case is different when owing to the emergence of a new politically conscious group governments are compelled to grant new constitutions. It is in this way that dynastic States of Europe became transformed into middle-class democracies; and it is the rise of the proletariat that is transforming the latter into mass democracies.

This explains why the Hyderabad reforms have not brought about any changes of a constitutional character. Power is now located in the same persons in whom it was located before the introduction of reforms. No new constituent power has as yet arisen in the State. While the Nizam has the formal constituent power in his hands the real constituent power is the British Crown. It alone has the authority to determine what should be

<sup>1</sup> H. Finer: *Mussolini's Italy*, p. 256.

the character of the constitutions governing the Indian States. It is one of the incidents of paramountcy. It sets a limit to the kind of reforms that the Head of an Indian State might introduce. This is the conclusion—and no other conclusion is possible—arrived at by the Mysore Committee<sup>1</sup> on Constitutional Reform (1939). There is no ground for thinking that the position of Hyderabad in relation to the paramount power is in this respect different from that of Mysore or any other Indian State. All doubts in this regard were set at rest by the letter of Lord Reading as Viceroy<sup>2</sup> to the Nizam in 1926. The constituent power therefore in respect of Indian States now rests with the British Crown. It does not favour the introduction of a real democratic Government into British India, and it will not look with favour at such a step being taken in Hyderabad. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that any real constitutional development in the Indian States is intimately connected with the progress of events in British India. Nothing is more unrealistic than the attempt to frame constitutions for individual States irrespective of what is happening in the rest of the country. The fortunes of democracy in Hyderabad are closely bound with its fortunes in British India; and one has to wait for the rise of a new constituent power different from the British Crown if there is to be a reformed constitution anywhere in the country.

<sup>1</sup> Report: p. 70—74.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Indian States (Butler) Committee: Appendix

## Over a Cup of Coffee

BY C. L. R. SASTRI

I do not know whether by writing under the above caption I lay myself open to the charge of *lese majesty* to howsoever slight an extent. The fact is that there is a kind of implicit copyright in these things: which implicit copyright has a tendency, if I may borrow a phrase from the legal text-books, to ripen by prescription, like many other cognate matters. To infringe such a title is far from my intention. Besides, I have, it will be noticed, taken ample care to make an alteration in the operative part of that jumble of words. In one sense, of course, there is not much difference between a cup of tea and a cup of coffee. Both are beverages, and both are mildly stimulating; and both are most indubitably in the fashion. Nowadays, when one drinks anything, apart from the pure element, one drinks, whatever be the season, either the first or the second. (My observations, I need hardly remind my readers, are confined to the country of my birth: I am only too well aware that, in more hardened climes, requiring stronger 'pick-me-ups,' recourse is had to liquids of proportionate potency.)

\* \* \* \*

There is, then, a lot of resemblance between tea and coffee and, if that were all, my change of heading would be tantamount to no change at all. But, underlying this superficial resemblance, there is a good deal of subtle distinction also; and, in my opinion, the latter far outweighs the former. 'Over a Cup of Tea', no doubt, sounds simpler: it is more easily 'understood' of the children of men. But—I speak subject to correction—'Over a Cup of Coffee' has the more resonant intonation. It is more alliterative—like Fluellen's 'Macedon' and 'Monmouth' ('and there is salmons in both.') And, last, not least, it is more accurate—in my case. That, I suppose, is, after all, the clinching argument. So far as the first person singular is concerned, there is a much greater sense of realism in it. At one fell swoop, as it were, it accomplishes two objects: it contrives that it shall be true to 'the kindred points of heaven and home.'

## OVER A CUP OF COFFEE

As a South Indian I am properly addicted to coffee, taking tea only when the tastier, healthier, more aristocratic beverage is not available. Naturally, even if someone else had not preceded me in writing under the caption, 'Over a Cup of Tea,' I should have chosen my present phrase, 'Over a Cup of Coffee'; and now that someone else *has* thus preceded me, I am under a double provocation to employ that in preference to the other. As for any intention of entering into competition with my predecessor, that, of course, is ruled out as soon as it is posed. One usually does not do such a rash thing as to oppose oneself in the lists to a veteran. It is sheer madcappery. Then, again, there is another difficulty. If in the domain of law, possession is nine-tenths of ownership, in the vastly different region of journalism, priority is at least seven-eighths of success. By sheer weight of that, one can generally bear one's rival down. No: rivalry, competition, crossing of pens, *et hoc genus omne*, are completely out of the question. They are not *my cup of coffee*. What we have to do here is only the spirit of emulation, that is all: the entirely proper ambition to walk in the footsteps of our betters and, wherever possible, to beat them on their own ground. Nor are our betters likely to feel any chagrin over *that*, as they will, doubtless, apply to themselves these lines of Walt Whitman:

"I am the teacher of athletes,

He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own  
proves the width of my own,

He most honours my style who learns under it to destroy  
the teacher."

\* \* \*

Now that the matches connected with the Ranji Trophy have happily concluded, a few words of mine on sport in general may not be altogether out of place. I am, unfortunately, not a cricketer. In the days when I used to chase a ball, it was either with foot or with racket; and, on very rare occasions, with stick. Somehow I never could bring myself to view cricket as a game worthy of a man's prowess. It may be the 'king of games' all right, but I have always been a republican at heart, and so could do without the royal touch in sport. It seems to me that, speaking purely as a layman, cricket has been written up more than it deserves. A vast literature has grown up around it and is steadily increasing in volume:

'All Balzac's novels occupy one shelf,  
The latest edition fifty volumes long,'

says Browning's Bishop Blougram; and a like predicament is in store for cricket. The only thing that can be said in its favour is that most of it is exceedingly readable. I have known tennis fans who have waxed really eloquent over their own particular doxy; and there are two or three rugby-football enthusiasts who convey the impression that their pens also can be inspired at will. I have not scoured sporting journals for expert reports on badminton and water-polo, but I am certain that diligent research can track them to their lair. Boxing has its devotees, and Hazlitt's description of the fight between Bill Neate and the Gasman is among the world's classics; and, in our own day, Mr. Bernard Shaw has not disdained to give of his best to fisticuffs—especially when his, as well as my, idol, Georges Carpentier, was one of the contestants. I have not yet forgotten his memorable article on the Carpentier-Beckett fight in the columns of the old *Nation*. That bout was so remarkable that another great writer, the late Mr. Arnold Bennett, was commissioned to write on it in the columns of the *New Statesman*.

George Borrow was another author who loved boxing, and in *Lavengro* he has depicted an excellent scene of a fight, that, namely, between Lavengro himself and that terror of the countryside, the Flying Tinman, alias 'the half-and-half,' Anselo Herne. He has even given us a female character, the immortal Isopel Berners, who revelled in boxing phrases and in boxing itself, of which, indeed, she was no mean exponent. Her favourite blow, if you will remember, was the 'Long Melford,' as she called it; and in that sequel to *Lavengro*, *The Romany Rye*, we find these words of hers in her farwell letter to her erstwhile partner in 'Mumper's Dingle':

"Fear God, and take your own part. There's Bible in that, young man: see how Moses feared God, and how he took his own part against everybody who meddled with him. And see how David feared God, and took his own part against all the bloody enemies whosurrounded him—so fear God, young man, and never give in! The world can bully, and is fond, provided it sees a man in a kind of difficulty, of getting about him, calling him coarse names, and even going so far as to hustle him: but the world, like all bullies, carries a

white feather in its tail, and no sooner sees the man taking off his coat, and offering to fight its best, than it scatters here and there, and is always civil to him afterwards. So when folks are disposed to ill-treat you, young man, say, 'Lord have mercy upon me!' and then tip them Long Melford, to which, as the saying goes, there is nothing comparable for shortness all the world over."

'The nobleness of life is to do this', said Antony, and kissed Cleopatra. 'The nobleness of life is to do this', said the late Miss Katherine Mayo, and wrote her *magnum opus*, 'Mother India'. The impulse, it will be seen, is the same in both cases. It is nothing less than love. And, as if to make assurance doubly sure, she confided to an interviewer, close upon the publication of her book, that she had the cause of the people of this poor country very much at heart. In fact, she gave utterance to this sentiment on more than one occasion. She might, I feel, have spared herself the trouble: we had known it already. 'It is', in the words of the imperturbable Sam Weller, 'what is called a self-evident proposition, as Cates—the meat-man—said to the house maid when she said he was no gentleman.' Moreover, one does not write a book like 'Mother India' and fail to impress its readers as to the precise nature of the feelings that prompted it. No: that is palpably impossible. We make no doubt of Miss Mayo's unbounded affection for us: only, we must be excused if we do not approve either of the form taken by it, or of the spirit in which it has been exhibited.

My present subject is neither Miss Mayo herself, nor her book, or books. Quite a lot of contentious literature has accumulated around both, like barnacles around a ship's bottom or precedents around the main body of law, and it is not my purpose, here and now, to contribute my quota to it: the cup if I may say so, is already full to overflowing. My intention, rather, is to make her my spring-board—a sort of jumping-off ground, in fact—for my disquisition.

Both Miss Mayo and others of her persuasion are passionately fond of attacking our religion—directly as well as indirectly. In fact, their life-work, as conceived by themselves, would be incomplete, would be a sort of broken arc, if they did not, at certain frequently recurring intervals, have a fling or two at our sacred things: just by way of 'shoulder-loosening, so to speak, just to keep themselves in practice. And they set

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about it with touching piety. Indeed, their unanimity of purpose is remarkable—is marvellous. One after another says the same thing over again only in a louder and more blatant voice.

'The stubborn spearmen still made good  
The dark impenetrable wood,  
Each stepping where his foeman stood  
The instant that he fell'

They are all crusaders in the same sacred cause: even to the extent of going headlong *per fas et nefas* to their object of ridding our cherished faith of what, in their opinion, are putrid excrescences. The old gentleman in *Romany Rye*, it will be remembered, found his deliverance in studying Chinese; and I am almost inclined to believe that the present-day Westerners find their deliverance in falling foul of everything Oriental, especially of everything Hindu. But, fortunately, we, Hindus, are not essentially the poorer for it. As some one has said, 'You do not rob anything of its value to its possessor by treating it with scientific contempt, or with artistic condescension.'

\* \* \*

The main charge against us is—or seems to be—that we are excessively superstitious, inordinately dependent upon mystic signs, esoteric rites, and all such *abracadabra*: on top of all of which old-fashioned junk, on top of all of which flotsam and jetsam of outworn creeds and forsaken faiths, we are (*O tempora! O mores!*) idolaters, naked and unashamed. But, I submit in bated breath and whispering humbleness, we idolize God: whereas the West (again I say *sotto voce*) idolize Mammon in all its manifestations. There is at least a hint of God in our idols: I shall be happy to know what hint of God there is in multi-millionaires, cinema-actresses, trans-Atlantic fliers, champion-boxers, and all such wild-fowl. Our enemies point out to us that we are sunk beyond redemption in the mire of superstition. But our superstitions (or the most of them) have, in the last resort, some sort of foundation in sense. I should like to believe the same of the superstitions of the West. And, anyway, what is superstition? Listen to Emerson: a Westerner speaking to Westerners:

'We boast of our emancipation from many superstitions,  
but if we have broken any idols it is through a transfer of the

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*idolatry*. What have I gained that I no longer immolate a bull to Zove or to Neptune, or a mouse to Hecate; that I do not tremble before the Eumenides of the Catholic Purgatory, or the Calvinistic Judgment Day—if I quake at opinion, the public opinion as we call it, or the threat of assault or contumely, or bad neighbours, or poverty, or mutilation, or at the rumour of revolution, or murder? *If I quake, what matters it what I quake at?* (My Italics.)

That is the stuff to give them! Emerson as usual, hits the nail on the head. The label of superstition may be attached to lots more things 'than are dreamt of in our philosophies, Horatio!' And even in regard to the commoner matters, what fine shade of difference, I ask, is there between, say, my refusal to start on a journey on a particular day, or at a particular time of a particular day, and the Westerner's at first sight equally muddle-headed refusal to form members of a party of thirteen, or to walk under a ladder or to receive certain kinds of presents, or to do (or to refrain from doing) any one of the thousand and one things with which we have been made familiar either through hearsay, or through actual contact with them in the rough and tumble of day-to-day life? To my unsophisticated intelligence, at any rate, there seems to be none. In these matters we are all either equally foolish, or equally wise: we are blood-brothers, in fact. As Kipling puts it:

'The Colonel's lady and Judith O' Grady  
Are sisters under their skins?

\* \* \*

If there is a difference between our superstitions and those of our traducers, it is, I think, mainly this. We make no bones as the saying is, about our superstitions. We are completely above board in our dealings with them. We lay *all* our cards on the table. In fact, I shall go so far as to say that we *wear* our superstitions on our sleeves—for doves to peck at.' With the result that, as we know to our cost, 'the doves' (in the shape of the Westerners) have not been slow to 'peck' at them. There is, really, if one comes to think about it, an *open-airness* about our superstitions, that is almost disarming. At any rate, our superstitions do no harm to anybody. The superstitions of the Westerners are more subtle: there is, if I may say so, more *art* in them. Certainly they—or some of them—are not on the surface: we have to dive 'deeper than e'er plummet sounded'

to locate them. They are *everywhere*—and that is why sometimes we are hard put to it to specify where they are. Our superstitions are, at best, localised: theirs envelop their lives completely. Emerson gave 'a local habitation and a name' to them—as only he, with his wonderful percipience, could—in the pasage I quoted above from his well-known essay on 'Character.' In a word, the Westerners (God bless them!) are steeped in superstition: and, like the dyer's hand, are subdued to what they work in.

In this connexion, I may point out that the *Nation* of London, some years ago, started a 'Questionnaire' in its columns to ascertain the proportion of believers and non-believers in God in England. The results showed that the number of non-believers far exceeded that of believers. Curiously enough these are the very people that, every now and then, shower an incessant rain of abuse upon us. If it had not actually happened, no one would have believed it: it would be excruciatingly funny were it not so painfully tragic.

'Who but must laugh if such a man there be?  
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?'

Westerners generally, and Englishmen and Americans in particular, pride themselves on possessing a sense of humour. Why, then, does it desert them when they are dealing with Orientals? 'Manners makyth a man.' But, apparently, they do not make a nation; and the very first thing that Westerners have to learn is to behave decently towards Easterners. But you cannot, as the saying is, make 'a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and, *mutatis mutandis*, you cannot expect the commonest decency from races whose whole mentality is top-heavy with a most overweening pride.

Harking back to this subject of superstition, I take leave to say that there is no end to the fun each person can make of the other's superstitions. Just as it has been said that one man's meat is another man's poison, I may say that one man's superstition is another man's scepticism. The wisest course is to cultivate a healthy respect for the superstitions that we do not like or possess. In this matter, we are all living in glass-houses and it is not for the likes of us to indulge in the vicious game of stone-throwing. The fact is that if certain ideas exert, or are

allowed to exert, a strangle-hold upon us, to the utter exclusion of others, are made to dominate our minds day and night to such an extent that, to adapt Emerson's words in regard to Burns's songs,

'the wind whispers them, the birds whistle them, the corn, barley, and bulrushes hoarsely rustle them, nay, the music-boxes at Geneva are framed and toothed to play them; the hand-organs of the Savoyards in all cities repeat them, and the chimes of bells ring them in the spires.'

then we are said to have a bee in our bonnets: in other words, we have become a prey to superstition, we have become superstitious with respect to those ideas. In this way we may say that Mahatma Gandhi is superstitious with reference to hand-spinning and the *charka*, that the Nazis are superstitious with reference to Jew-baiting, that the Russians are superstitious with reference to communism, that our rulers are superstitious with reference to our communal differences and our so-called consequent inability to govern ourselves, and so on and so forth. All of us, of course, are not made of this stern stuff. We take the world as we find it, we are happy-go-lucky, like the bees we go to this flower of an idea now, and to that flower of an idea an instant later, and so make a mess of life—come to nothing; in fact, we most ignominiously fail to know or realise ourselves as Carlyle was never tired of exhorting us to do. In spite of this handicap, however, we, too, in our several ways, are superstitious, if only the truth were known—if not incessantly, at any rate intermittently. My contention is that, in the larger sense of the term, we should not be ashamed of being superstitious: on the contrary, we should bend all the muscles of our will to attain to that *O altitude*. Whatever we feel, we should strive to feel fiercely, we should strive to feel in every fibre of our being, in every cell of our body and mind: we should, in other words, boil over with enthusiasm. What is religion if it is not enthusiasm first and foremost? Even the kingdom of Heaven, it has been said, suffereth violence: your lukewarm fellows, those whom Wordsworth characterized as being conscious of 'the nicely calculated less or more', will not, I am sure, succeed in getting even near the gates of it, not to speak of entering them. In my connotation of the term, superstition is nothing but enthusiasm; and enthusiasm is—or so I take it to be—eminently good.

There is this danger in scorning superstition, that we never know where we shall fetch up in the end; as the saying is, in for a penny, in for a pound. It is like the tiger's first taste of human blood. It is like the slippery slope from where, once our feet slip, we go down to the bitter bottom, like the Gadarene Swine. Once we are subjected to this disease we do not pause in our feverish desire to question the validity of *everything* under the sun—from a lady's commerce with her looking-glass to man's intercourse with his Maker. As Browning says:

'To such a process, I discern no end.  
Cutting off one excrescence to see two:  
There is ever a next in size, now grown as big,  
That meets the knife. I cut and cut again;  
First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last  
But Fichte's clever cut at God Himself?'

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One of my ambitions is, and always has been, to be the 'strong, silent man' beloved of our modern political historians. I am, I earnestly hope, 'strong' but, alas, decidedly not 'silent.' It is, perhaps, in a manner of speaking, begging the question, because a man that is in the habit of contributing articles and essays to the papers every now and then may pretend to several things but certainly not to silence. It is not—worse luck!—through the mouth alone that we betray what is within. Written words, it seems to me, have the same ill-effect. However much one may be naturally astute one cannot but reveal at least a portion of oneself to others by scribbling one's thoughts down on paper. On the principle that nature abhors a vacuum, it cannot but be that those heiroglyphics serve the function of ambassadors between the writer and the reader. It so happens that, hourly, and even minutely, we are giving ourselves away in sundry diverse fashions. One may not shrug a shoulder or lift an eyebrow without calling on the heavens to witness what sort of a person one actually is. If, as Emerson phrases it, we are averse to 'spilling our souls,'—why, then, we have nothing for it but to immure ourselves in a cave or on some desert island. So long as we elect to move among fellow human beings we have no option but to make ourselves a 'motley to the view' a thousand times in a day. One's inner privacy is a fortress that is being

continually stormed by a variegated assortment of forces, armed with a multitudinous array of weapons—pick-axes, cutlasses, tanks, muskets, machine-guns, *et hoc genus omne*. In sleep also—wonder of wonders!—we do not entirely forget our identity but must needs often babble and—tip the fat into the fire . . . . . To what do all these signs and portents point? To but one thing, and that is that the 'featherless biped' commonly known as man—*homo sapiens*—craves inordinately for self-expression, whether waking or sleeping or (horrible to contemplate!) even after shuffling off this mortal coil. Rather a ticklish business—is it not?—and calling for, as Herman Melville would have put it, a strong decoction of Seneca and the Stoics.

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I have remarked that one of my ambitions is to be the 'strong, silent man,' beloved of modern political historians. The strength, I contended, is there, but not the silence. I have never ceased to bemoan this. There *might* have been a time in the history of the world when exuberance was reckoned a virtue, but I am afraid that that time has long since become quite out-moded. I am thoroughly convinced that, as a human quality, exuberance can never be too much over-rated, because I am convinced that it partakes of the angelic touch. But, then, angels do not visit the earth nowadays, and so the proper audience to appreciate it is conspicuous by its absence. It is always like that. In countries where rank is regarded but as the 'guinea-stamp,' and a man is a man "for a' that," the ceremony known as a 'coronation' naturally loses all its significance, and people will hardly abandon their hearths and homes and run pell-mell to be on the spot, as though *not* to be there were a sin against the Holy Ghost. In places where the flesh of animals and birds is the staple diet even such priceless vegetables as potatoes and cauliflowers and sweet peas will be definitely consigned to the dust-heap—just as, where strict vegetarianism is the rule, even 'Bellamy's pork-pies' (the last mortal wish of Pitt the Younger) will be surely left to look after themselves. The times in which we are living are not exactly propitiatory for that carelessness of largesse, which is known as exuberance. Those who, having an infinity of the mind's and heart's riches, love to fling their treasure abroad with the recklessness of Omar's rose:

"Look to the Rose that blows about us — 'Lo,  
Laughing,' she says, 'into the world I blow.  
At once the silken tassel of my Purse  
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw',"

—those, I say, who, having an infinity of the mind's and heart's riches, love to fling their treasures abroad with the recklessness of Omar's rose, are, in my humble opinion, in this fourth decade of the twentieth century, asking for trouble. There is no longer any room for a Dickens or a Thackeray, for a Charles Reade or for a Charlotte Bronte. These are the days of the *small* writers — of your T.S. Eliots and of your David Garnetts. So also in the broader sphere of life in general. If you are content to be petty and peevish and mean and silent, you can—well, open the world like an oyster. Be large-hearted and continue—in spite of repeated rebuffs—to believe in human nature, and you will find yourself sooner or later—sooner rather than later—relegated to the scrap-heap.

\* \* \*

That is all the law, and most of the prophets. No: the 'strong, silent man' I shall worship from afar, but I am afraid that I shall never be able to become one myself. *That* ambition of mine, alas, must remain unfulfilled to the last—like all my other ambitions.

## War Financing

BY K. T. SHAH

The financing of a great war in modern times, of the scale of the one now raging in Europe, is a most complex problem. All past precedents are of little avail in solving that problem in our own day. For war expenditure today is not merely payment for troops and their maintenance and equipment while on active service; it also involves a whole series of industrial activities and utility services, mobilised and directed for purposes of prosecuting the war, for which very little past experience of previous wars would provide any analogy. The production of munitions, including guns and shells, ships and planes, cars and waggons, food and clothing, drugs, medicines and hospital appliances of all sorts, transport and communications of all types, and actual equipment of fighters and their auxiliaries of innumerable kinds, presupposes a vast network of modern industrial organisation, which is further emphasised by the methods of totalitarian warfare adopted by the enemy. And even that does not comprise, at least so far, the requirements of chemical and bacterial warfare, and the measures of defence needed against them, which must be held in reserve, in case the other side makes one more in-road upon solemn international conventions. It is possible, moreover, on the background of a highly industrialised community, which can produce all or as large a section as possible, of its requirements, from its own resources leaving the minimum to be acquired or imported from outside. The problems, again, of this acquisition or import from outside are a material part of modern war financing; as much as the industrial re-orientation that may be necessitated by the war is part of the same problem.

For this variety and complexity of the problem, figures, such as we frequently see published regarding war expenditure in England today, hardly convey anything like a fraction of the facts involved. For instance, in the financial year just closed, Britain is reported to have spent an aggregate of over £3800 million of which more than two-thirds may well be said to be for purposes directly connected with the conduct of active hostilities. Of these £3800 million, over £1400 million, or a little over 40%, is said to

have been raised from the current resources of revenue; while the balance has had to be obtained in one way or another from local or outside borrowing. What proportion this outlay represents of the total national income is difficult to estimate, not only because of the statistical uncertainties regarding a Census of Production nowadays; but also because, thanks to the disturbance in the price-levels brought about by the War and its attendant reactions upon money and credit, and thanks also to our expressing this effort in terms of money, the figures given above have become misleading. To illustrate, the pre-war estimates placed England's total national income at somewhere about £4000 million per annum; while today the corresponding figure is nearly £6000 million on the same basis of calculation. An overwhelmingly large proportion of this output is for purposes of destruction only; while in pre-war times a fair proportion of the national income represented a surplus of production over consumption, which was available for re-investment in further production effort. In the last pre-war year, roughly about £1100 million—or a little over 25%—were reported to be taken for purposes of expenditure by the National Government. A large proportion of this was really a mere transfer within the community itself from one set of pockets to another. Another considerable amount was also raised by local governing bodies, which also ended in the same manner—an internal transfer. At the present time, according to the statistics now made available, the outlay of £3800 million, out of a total national income roughly estimated at about £6000 million, without counting local taxation, represents nearly 65% of the total national income, disbursed through the National Government, and the bulk of it for destructive purposes. While in the last pre-war year somewhere about £3000 million may be said to have been left in the hands of the public for their own consumption, little over £2200 million may be said to be similarly left now to the public for their own use. In terms of percentages, while in the pre-war year about 75% of the national income may be said to have been left for everyday consumption by the public, now not more than 35% can be said to be so left. This means that not only is production controlled in all branches; but also consumption has had to be rationed and regulated in all items to facilitate the prosecution of the war.

But even these do not express the real state of affairs. A good deal of the £3800 million spent now, as against a good deal of the £1100 million spent in the pre-war years, is returned, in one form or another, to the British public, by providing services of employment expended by war needs. What is thus provided yields income to the people, which could legitimately be said to add to the people's ability for consumption, or to improve the quality and utility of their consumption. The only portion which can be said to be strictly used up or lost, and so become a net deduction from the people's own consumption, could only be that portion which is actually destroyed in war, and which was paid for by incurring foreign debt. As the debt due to America on account of the last war had ceased to be paid for since 1931, no item on this head could be regarded as a net deduction from the resources of the British people, in their pre-war national finance.

In the course of the present war, there is, no doubt, considerable destruction of property or income-yielding assets, like houses, factories, ships, and other means of production of new wealth. But a good deal of it may be said to be capital destruction, which, no doubt will react on the income-earning capacity of the people so affected; or which may manifest itself in the reduced consumption capacity of the same community. Such destruction of capital assets will leave a legacy far beyond the actual war, and cripple the productive capacity of the community in the years to come, of which little account can be taken at the present time.

On the other hand, even this may be a blessing in disguise — though very much disguised. Just because of this destruction, whatever is reconstructed to replace the assets so lost would be much more up to date, and, therefore, presumably more efficient and effective, than what has been destroyed. To take but one illustration: The great destruction of house-property in the East End of London largely affects that slum area, which was a disgrace to the City of London. Its replacement, whenever it comes, would, it may be hoped, be of a much more decent and human kind. And the same may be said, following the analogy of German industrial reorganisation after the last war, of such industries and other means of production which are today suffering destruction because of the war, and which will

have to be replaced, when the War comes to an end, by the most efficient equipment for the purpose then devisable.

This is, of course, not to say that War does not bring any real destruction! Or that it does not affect the productive capacity, — and, therefore, the general well-being, — of the community engaged in the war. But a nation in arms, — and that is what the British people as a whole are to-day, — has a potential fighting capacity, far more considerable than may be evident from a mere study of figures such as those given above. If the people as a whole are determined to make sacrifices of their personal comforts; if they are resolved to devote every spare ounce of their energy and capacity for waging the war to a successful end; if they have made up their mind to put up with any losses, or accept any substitutes for what they were accustomed to before the war; and if they do not object to the gradual though silent elimination of money economy from among them, it would be extremely difficult to say how long, in those conditions, a well-established community like the British may keep up the fighting operations, even though occasionally some such operations go against them. Needless to add, the psychological value of successful warlike operations is, of course, much greater for keeping up the morale and maintaining the fighting capacity, as was evident in the case of Germany last year.

In the case of Britain, moreover, a very considerable proportion of what is said to be spent for war today is only a transfer of the surplus wealth of the community through the channels of Government Departments from one set of pockets to another. Payments made on account of wages or salaries to the fighting troops, or allowances given to their families, or to civilian defence forces, or by way of insurance against destruction of shipping, factories, houses, etc., or even on account of such items as building up of new factories and workshops, needed for the conduct of the war and engaged for the present exclusively in war work, is really no loss, in the ultimate analysis, to the community collectively—except, of course, so far as any capital asset has literally been destroyed as a consequence of warlike operations. The only real deduction which must be made from the British national income of today—apart from the loss of capital assets, which may be provided for by some sort of insurance arrangement, and the loss spread over a much larger

space of time, — is in connection with the amounts spent in buying warlike 'material' from outside. Wherever an actual payment of such a kind has to be made, and the commodities thus acquired are intended for and used up in destructive operations, that would represent a net deduction from the national wealth, which must affect the aggregate wealth of the community unquestionably.

If the national ability to produce new wealth in the future is not to be unduly affected by this inevitable destruction, payment for this foreign import must be made, either from Britain's own current production, or from her accumulated wealth of the past. The former course is now not feasible in any considerable measure, not only because of Britain's own war needs; but also because of the immensely increased scale of such foreign imports. Even the "invisible exports" from Britain of pre-war days are not now available. The latter is thus the only course open to obtain such of the war requirements as cannot be produced within her own frontiers. It was for this purpose that, almost at the commencement of the present war, legislation was enacted in Britain to acquire, compulsorily, the foreign securities held by British citizens, so as to make them available for paying for such imports, and so maintain the exchange value of the British currency unit. The protraction of the struggle, however, and the size and intensity of the demand, make even this course inadequate.

The scale of effort now needed would be excessive, even for a wealthy community like the British, and its effort may show signs of flagging, but for arrangements of the kind recently expedited on a large scale on the so-called Lease and Lend legislation of the United States. The details of payments, if any, which will have to be made, eventually, by Britain for the war material lent or leased by the United States, are not known. But it may be surmised, without too much violence to commonsense, that the actual process of liquidating these obligations would be far more novel and indirect than any that has ever been attempted in the past. Payments in kind such as the recently effected lease of naval bases for the United States on British possessions in the Atlantic may assume very much larger dimensions; and so modify the incidence of the burden now being incurred by lease or loan. If moreover, we are to trust the

recent declarations of such personages as the Duke of Windsor, it seems unlikely that the bill would either be presented by America in full; or if presented, that it will be liquidated in cash in the old-time orthodox manner.

Whatever that may be, war-financing, as carried on in England today, has attempted to raise as large a portion as could conveniently be raised from the current revenues of the country by sharp increases and extensions in taxation. Only that part of the war expenditure, which could not be so covered by tax-increases, is met from borrowing, or by passing on a portion of the burden to the generation to come. This is, of course, not to say that every possible penny is being raised from the current income of the community by means of taxation, while only the unavoidable is raised by borrowing, or by passing on a portion of the burden to the next generation. Such margin as there still remains in the current income of the community, which may be acquired by taxation for purpose of the National Government, will very likely be trenched upon in the next budget to be presented to Parliament after Easter. On the other hand, the scale of operations is growing; and so too its costliness. Borrowing may, therefore, have to be resorted to in a like or even greater measure in the next year of the War. Those, however, who have the conduct of the British war finance in their hands cannot be unmindful of the fact that, however necessary such borrowing may be at the present time for meeting part of the war expenditure, borrowing would still more be needed for post-war reconstruction, not only because of the absence of any capital reserves under war-time necessity; but also because of the need for industrial reorganisation and replacement of destroyed income-yielding assets, to which reference has already been made above. If, therefore, the post-war problems of reconstruction are not to be complicated unnecessarily by war-finances today, every care must be taken to see that the national effort, in the years following the war, is not burdened unnecessarily because of the exacting needs of the present moment.

## Shankara's Philosophy and Action

BY V. SUBRAHMANYA IYER

(Retired Registrar, Mysore University.)

‘Do not sit quiet, nor renounce action. If thou art ignorant, do thou perform action.....If thou art wise and knowest the truth, do thou perform action’.....Shankara.

Shankara, whom a modern European philosopher considers as ‘one of the greatest philosophers of all times and countries,’ and of whom another eminent western scholar, well known in India also, says, ‘Shankara is thus a figure for whom it is difficult to find a parallel, as, indeed, to furnish comparisons, we have been compelled to resort to imagination, a philosopher of the highest rank, who, not content with the world of thought, went forth into the world of men,’ does not need much introduction. Nevertheless, he is not so well known in Europe and America as in the land of his birth, and the scene of his labours. Much has been said, not only in Sanskrit and modern Indian languages, but, even in English, French and German, about him as metaphysician, theologian, reformer and polemic writer. But almost everyone of the authors has laid emphasis on the literary aspect chiefly. They all ignore the other features of this teacher’s life. They seem to hold that he is purely a man of ‘thought’ and no more than a visionary in matters of ‘action’ of practical value, and that his doctrine of the ‘illusoriness’ of the apparent world unfits his followers for grappling with the stern realities around them. The late Mr. Tilak and those of his way of thinking appear even to trace India’s misfortunes partly to the deleterious consequences of this doctrine, inasmuch as it is supposed to engender and nourish a spirit of pessimism, passivity, indifference and callousness.

The best interpretation of Shankara’s philosophy is that furnished by his own life which illustrates how action (Karma) and Thought (Jnana) are “inseparable,” and that Jnana (thought, wisdom or philosophy) does not “in the least” imply inaction. Nor does “mithyatwa” (illusoriness) justify indifference to life, or callousness. All the same it is true that a great many have misunderstood him, because of the conflicting interpretations. Nay,

the mistake has been perpetuated by some. But he never sought any cave or temple or monastery for refuge or retirement or mystic realization, as so many Yogis, Sadhus and Sannyasis do. He was 'ever' moving about the whole continent of India, 'organising' and 'teaching,' with a view to helping all men to realise the underlying oneness or 'unity.' And it was this restless 'activity' that probably led to his very premature demise.

Again, by the doctrine of "mithyatwa," i.e., illusoriness of appearances, he proved the truth of the irrefutability of the Reality of the One in All, which alone, he held, would help to bring about the practical realisation of "Unity and Harmony" among mankind.

Now, what appears to have made the critics take a one-sided view of Shankara and infer that his followers lack in fitness for the struggle for existence is not merely the philosophical doctrine of "mithyatwa" but also the confusion caused by some of his followers in their interpretations of the asceticism of Sannyasa Ashrama. And since Shankara himself belonged to the order (Sannyasa Ashrama), the impression seems to have gained ground that he disregarded 'the world of action, agents and results,' and that he could not be a desirable guide to men of the modern world of action.

It is asked why this philosopher, who talks so big of absolute 'oneness', does not lift even his little finger to encourage freedom in eating and drinking or inter-marriage between different races and communities, and pull down such other walls as divide man from man. His acquiescence in some of the old-world notions of caste has tended only to foster the growth of the social evils which have marred India's history and prevented her from keeping herself abreast of the progressive nations of today. It is also contended that his failure to throw open the Vedas to men of all castes and creeds is irreconcilable with his doctrine of Unity. To these charges it is no satisfactory reply, it is held to say, that the problems which appear to have now attained such importance as to be made the tests of 'greatness,' were not of much consequence in Shankara's days over a thousand years ago. For, as Shankara himself puts it: 'What may be considered right or good action at one time or place may be considered otherwise at other times or places or occasions.'—S. B. 31, 25. And that would only mean that he could not think ahead of his time,

In the first place, though such reforms do conduce in a way to human satisfaction, yet history has not proved that they in themselves make for the good of mankind in general. Shankara's test of human progress evidently appears to be based on a higher idea of unification of interests than that of a concord secured by facilitating merely the gratification of the sex and the palate, or by gulling the simple-minded folk into the belief that human happiness could be attained by a uniform 'labelling' of men as followers of this or that religious school or scripture. The history of our own times has proved that discord is becoming rife even among men of such reformed religions or philosophies. Nor could he be satisfied with seeking remedies for a few social maladies. He strove to get at the root of all evil and find a cure, 'if possible,' for 'all' the ills to which human beings are heirs everywhere. And the role of a reformer of a few evils of his own times could not satisfy his ambition. For, his motto in life was, as Vidyaranya points out,—

'May 'all' be happy, may 'all' enjoy perfect health,  
may 'all' find the highest good in their heart,  
may 'none' come to any grief.'

And it must be specially noted that Shankara sought for a remedy in 'this' world, not in other worlds after death.

His attitude towards 'Philosophy' is often confounded with his attitude to 'Religion.' Religion is no doubt a valuable factor in life. But Shankara, who held that 'the world should disown him who considers the world as different from his self', could not think of a religious fold exclusively for himself and his followers. He did not seek to add one more to the already long and still growing list of such differentiations or denominations. He did value every religion 'from this standpoint also' to the extent to which it served this object. Religion is one of the best incentives to 'action' without feeling the disappointments in immediate return or reward. Accordingly he addressed himself first to the task of solving the great problem of universal suffering, in doing which he would not be satisfied with imaginary or fanciful hypotheses or dogmas 'however pleasing or satisfactory for the time being.' He pursued a characteristically disinterested enquiry in the light of 'fact' and 'truth'. Religion has value so long as it is combined with a disinterested search

after 'Truth,' and, the moment it is divorced from it and wedded to dogmas, it proves in due course ineffectual, nay sometimes even positively harmful 'to society at large,' however great be the peace and satisfaction that it may bring to the 'individual.'

He has therefore had, in the history of the world, the 'unique' distinction of having been known as an establisher or reformer, not of any one particular sect or creed but a supporter of 'all' such faiths 'of his day' as were compatible, even partly, with a search after Truth, for which reason he is known as 'Sanmathasthapanacharya' (supporter of six religions). Persons of any colour, creed, caste, age or sex, nay any human being, is according to him, 'qualified to seek Truth' and 'to attain it at the end.'

That Shankara did not believe in calling any particular religious cult his own, and that this was his 'deliberate' view is evident from the 'singular' fact that he and his followers, to this day, have never thought of a proselytising campaign. Shankara's highest knowledge and bliss being open to 'all' beings alike, he had no cult which demands a 'change' of names, or scriptures, or robes or marks or beads or seals, or ceremonies, or modes of cropping the head, or shaving or growing the beard, or eating or drinking, or of other observances and appearances. The one and the only thing required, according to him, is a sincere pursuit of 'Truth' which could be attained by 'any' human being of 'any creed,' provided he perseveres in seeking that light.

How then did Shankara himself apply this principle to his own life? He held that 'when one realises the Truth, one is one's own master.' He himself associated with the lowest of untouchables, and accepted one of them as his master. He set at naught the ceremonial rules in regard to the obsequies performed at his mother's death. When he went to Mandana's house, he broke the religious rules of the Sannyasa order. In ignoring thus the old restrictions, in other words, in effecting changes, all that he did was to stick to his fundamental principle of keeping his eye on the basic Truth of Oneness. As the knower of Truth could exercise perfect freedom, he is said to be an 'Ativashramin,' (one beyond the rules of caste and Ashrama). But all such freedom is permissible only to those that possess 'Jnana or wisdom', but not to children or child-like men who are guided by instinct more than by wisdom or Truth.

To what extent any human effort, social, religious, political, ethical, or any other, approaches the 'actually ascertained,'—not the dogmatic, the mystical or the hypothetical—Truth, to that extent would mankind in general attain happiness. Shankara does welcome every reform, provided it is for the good of mankind. Shankara's special effort as philosopher was therefore to set before the world the marks of Truth so that men may know the True from the False.

He who cares not to ask for the 'meaning' and the 'characteristics' of 'Truth' before everything else seeks in vain to understand this teacher. To him who thinks that whatever he 'believes,' or whatever 'pleases' or satisfies him, is Truth, not what 'after enquiry' is 'proved' to be Truth, Shankara's philosophy 'cannot' be a guide in practical life. He who knows this universal Truth is at liberty to choose for himself, whatever line of action he thinks necessary or right, as Lord Krishna also says in the Gita, XVIII, 63.

If the tests of the 'worth' of such teachers be not based upon an application of the principle of 'Truth' to life in any field whatsoever of the world's activities, religious, ethical, scientific or political, Shankara would have no claim for being called a teacher or Guru.

Next, this Indian thinker's attitude towards asceticism has been much misunderstood. Though it is generally admitted that the 'Sannyasa Ashram' is but a 'course of discipline' leading to 'Sannyasa', yet these have been indiscriminately used as synonymous terms. But later Vedantic writers observe a distinction.

Though he himself belonged to the Sannyasa Ashrama (order), yet he denounced those that nominally belonged to the order and knew nothing of 'Sannyasa', "Men wear yellow clothes, shave their heads and beards merely for the sake of their stomach (living)."

The distinction between 'Sannyasa' and 'Sannyasa Ashrama' is thus clearly set forth in the Gita:

'Who attends to all acts whatever, without attaching himself to the result is the Sannyasni, the Yogin, not he who gives up the worship of the household fire, nor he who renounces action.'

The question now is whether Sannyasa Ashrama or Sannyasa, as understood by Shankara, are obstacles to one's discharging

the responsible duties of life as efficiently as others. It is generally believed that the disciplines of Sannyasa Ashrama are indispensable for God-realisation. But besides serving as a means for the attainment of Sannyasa, God-or Truth, this Ashrama is of the utmost value in helping one to achieve great objects in the world, such as that of working for the welfare of mankind and in rendering other selfless service as setting ethical examples. It is said in the 'Sannyasa Paddathi' of Rudra Deva:

'He who enters the Ashrama declares that he does, so that he may render service to the world and that he may teach the Dharma.'

In the two former cases the ascetic life helps to concentrate one's energies and thoughts in full on objects of spiritual or 'public' (temporal) interest, inasmuch as it frees one from the fetters of private or domestic concerns or self-seeking diversions. The Ashramite is best qualified to be a public teacher of religion or philosophy for no one else can so effectively impress the public. And they who wish to enter upon 'enquiry' into God or Truth, and are in need of a teacher, cannot evidently distinguish one with such knowledge unless there be some external marks. It is said:

'These eyes of flesh can never see the knowledge of the knower of Brahman'. (Suta Samhita).

And specially a beginner can see no more than the outside. The best course would therefore be for him to seek for a Guru 'among' men of the Sannyasa 'Order' which has recognisable 'external' marks.

"In all acts whatever, whether of commission or omission, there is nothing 'save absence of attachment,' to distinguish the fool from the man of wisdom." (Vasishtha).

"Even the gods feel puzzled while trying to follow in the footsteps of those who realize themselves in all beings and who are always devoted to the welfare of 'all.'" (Mahabharata).

Next, what was Shankara's view of 'Sannyasa' itself? After passing through Sannyasa Ashrama, or by means of other disciplines, without going into the Ashrama, if one attains 'internal' Sannyasa, i.e., Sannyasa in spirit, one can perform one's duties in life 'best,' as Shankara has repeatedly pointed out in his commentaries. It is this frame of mind that is characterised by

'non-attachment,' which Sannyasa means, and which is most needed and is of the utmost help in doing what would be of the greatest benefit to the world, including even such acts as those of fighting on the battle-field. Men of 'true' Sannyasa are those that are ready even to go to war, like Arjuna or Drona, if necessary and just. What is more, one possessing 'Sannyasa' is at perfect liberty to choose whatever activities will benefit mankind in general.

Shankara, the philosopher, was thus, as some other events of his life show, not less great as a 'man of action' than as a 'man of thought'. No estimate of his can be complete or true, which does not take into account both these aspects.

As for the effect that a belief in "mithyatwa" (unreality) is said to produce in actual life, here are a few statements:

Being firmly 'convinced of the unreality' of the world, wise men, without experience of pain, are 'engaged' in 'wordly concerns' proper to them. —Vidyaranya.

'One may be engaged in the practice of Yoga, or in the activities of the world of pleasure, or in the duties of social life. Only if such person's heart finds its delight in Brahman, rely upon it, the person has attained the goal. —Shankara.

A knower of Truth (of the non-reality of the world), may freely engage in worldly concerns, e.g., even ruling over a country. —Vidyaranya.

(Vidyaranya is quoted here especially because he was an absolute 'advaitin' and at the same time one of the most successful Ministers of a great Empire.)

Further, like 'all' ordinary beings, even the Jnanis who are convinced of the illusory (Mithyatwa) nature of the world were and are found in all walks of life, in all grades, or kinds of society. Confining ourselves to historical facts, we may find Jnanis among rulers of royal blood, like Janaka and Aswapathi, or administrators of plebian origin like Vidyaranya and Gouri Shankara, who were the builders of medieval empires and makers of modern States. It is needless to refer to Jnanis who were hunters, traders, palanquin-bearers and so forth.

To quote again here from the European author referred to above:

'Many of the finest scholars and most influential men among the followers of Shankara.....are also graduates

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of the English Universities in India, and are prominent as lawyers and administrators.'

To sum up Shankara's teaching 'on this subject:

'Philosophy' aims at revealing the final Truth 'of all existence.' And from a knowledge of this Truth, to quote 'his own words,

"He, the Knower of Truth or Brahman, helps 'everyone' to rise above all grief." "He regards the pleasure and pain of 'all' creatures equally with his own (i. e., realises that they would affect them just as they affect himself), by knowing the value of 'Unity.'"

And, what is more, with this knowledge:

"one is able to decide rightly on the spot in matters demanding 'prompt attention.' He does not take the side of a friend and the like. He habitually 'renounces all such actions' as are calculated to secure objects for one's own self whether of this world or of the next."

According to Shankara, who follows the teachings of Sri Krishna:

"Thus has Jnana (Philosophical Truth or wisdom), more secret than all that is secret, been declared to these by me. 'Reflect' thou over it and 'act' as thou pleasest."

Nowhere has Shankara or his divine teacher, Lord Sri Krishna, said 'Philosophise, look upon the world as illusion and be quiet, sink into Yogic Samadhi, or go to sleep'. From the point of view of Action, may we not ask: Which philosophic or religious teacher, Socrates or Plato, Kant or Descartes, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed or Confucius, ever travelled over an area as large as that between the Himalayas and Rameswaram, and between Dwarka and Jagannath,—1,800 miles each way—with a view not only to teach, but also to found institutions to help 'all' mankind to realise their 'indivisible' and 'eternal' 'oneness', the Highest Truth?

What by his own life Shankara taught is the supreme necessity for 'action,' but combined with 'thought.' When the two are divorced, men become either day-dreamers or run for refuge to caves and monasteries, or turn slaves, rushing after action, without any thought of its consequences. Often India appears to be suffering from the effects of this divorce.

The late Mr. Tilak seems to have taken a one-sided view of Shankara. What Shankara taught was 'the most practical' of

### SHANKARA'S PHILOSOPHY AND ACTION

philosophies. In the words of a great Western thinker Gibbon what India needs is not only 'A heart to resolve and a hand to execute' but also 'A head to contrive.'

Shankara emphasises, above all, the Gita lesson 'Buddhi Nasat Pranasyati'.

(From loss of Judgment or Wisdom, he is ruined.)

# The Bengali Sonnet

By KALIPADA MUKHERJEE, M.A.,

"The sonnet will do wonderfully well in our language."

—Michael M. S. Dutt.

## I

The Bengali sonnet was born full-grown Minervalike. Though the first Bengali sonnet under the title 'The Poet's Mother-tongue' was written in Bengal by Michael M. S. Dutt, curiously enough, the first Bengali book of sonnets was written by the same poet in Europe. Written in France, it was sent to Calcutta for publication. Michael M. S. Dutt who had started for England in the June of 1862, with his French wife Emilia Henrietta Sophia and four children, after a year and a half there, went over to France and lived at the historic city of Versailles for two years. While there, he learnt French, Italian and German; and read for the first time the sonnets of Petrarch who inspired him to write Bengali sonnets. The sonnet he now cultivated regularly with the result that the first tricklings of the stream welled into fulness in his own pioneer work as a sonnet writer.

Yet, his sonnets are no imitations of any European poet, except in their form: the subjects treated are all Indian except five or six. These can be classified as follows,—

1. Sonnets of Nature.
2. Commendatory Sonnets.
3. Sonnets on Indian Epics, Dramas and Poems, popular gods and goddesses and popular customs and ceremonies.
4. Personal Sonnets.

The book 'Chaturdaspadi kavita-bali' (Sonnets)<sup>1</sup> is important from the autobiographical point of view. The poet, a Hindu by birth and a Christian by adoption, who had apostatized in his epic poem by belittling Rama worshipped as an Incarnation of God by the Hindus, here laid bare his whole soul and showed his regard for the religion and customs of his forefathers. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> Literally 'fourteen-lined poems'.

## THE BENGALI SONNET

for a proper understanding of the inner life of the poet, one must go to this book of sonnets, for it shows clearly that he was an Englishman without, but a Bengali within, as he himself admitted to one of his friends. Some of the titles of the sonnets will show this clearly;—Deva Dol (The Swing Festival in Honour of Sri Krishna), Sri Panchami (The Festival in Honour of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth), Asvin Mas (The month of Asvin when is celebrated the greatest Hindu festival in Bengal, Durga Puja or worship of the Goddess Durga), Vijaya Dasami (The last day of the above festival when the immersion of the goddess takes place), Kojagari Lakshmi Puja (Festival in Honour of the goddess Lakshmi in an autumnal night of the full moon).

.....

The sonnet (either from Provencial 'sonet' diminutive of sonor sound or from Italian 'sonetto' a diminutive of sonus or sound) was probably first composed by an Italian poet of the 13th century, Fra Guittone d' Arezzo. The Italian sonnet consists of eleven, the French sonnet of twelve, the English sonnet of ten, and the Bengali sonnet of fourteen syllables.

The titles of his sonnets on Nature may be rendered as — Evening, The Evening Star, Night, The Milky Way, The Canker in the Flower, The Banyan Tree, The Garden of Nandan (The Indian Eden), The Kapotaksha River, The Bee, The Tank in the Garden, The Cobra, The Boat on the Sea, The Star, The Zodiac, Saturn, The Sun, The Creation, To a Bird in Spring, The Shyama Bird, and The 'Bou Katha Kou' Bird.<sup>1</sup>

The Commendatory sonnets we should begin with that containing his homage to Petrarch,—

Italy is a grove of poesy fair,  
Where cuckoos numerous sweetly sing,  
Raining sweet dew of nectar rare,  
And filling the heart with the joys of spring.  
Even the sweet-voiced bird was born there,  
Famous Petrarch, whose upbringing  
Did Minerva look to with utmost care,  
The golden lyre for his hands did bring.

<sup>1</sup> The bird has got its name from its peculiar call which means "Bride Speak".

He did find this precious small gem,  
And laid it in his fane at Minerva's feet.  
Mother, I weave a wreath with the same.  
Do thou with boons this effort of mine greet.  
At the feet of Bharati of India's fame  
I offer this guerdon, deemed as meet.

Two sonnets were written on the venerable Pundit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, but for whose constant and timely help the Poet would have to suffer endlessly in Europe and at Calcutta. In his sonnet on Iswarchandra Gupta, the Poet put forward the plea for a worthy memorial for one of Bengal's worthy sons. He wrote a sonnet on Satyendranath Tagore, the second elder brother of Poet Tagore, who was the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service. He also eulogised the Bengali writers of the Ramayana and Mahabharat, Krittibas and Kasiram; and Jaydeva, and Valmiki, the Indian poets' Poet.

But, the most important of this series of sonnets, are those on his contemporary European poets and savants, Victor Hugo and Alfred Tennyson, Theodore Goldstucker, the celebrated German Indologist; and the one on Dante. He wrote a sonnet on Versailles also. Tennyson also wrote a sonnet on Hugo, 'Victor in Drama, Victor in Romance': so, we reproduce below a rendering of Madhusudon's sonnet on the French Poet,—

Play, play on the lyre by Minerva giv'n thee,  
Play sweetly and with full joyousness.  
Thy country is full of thy fame's nobleness,  
As Gokul with boku, flowers doth glorious be  
Maddened is the mind that is in me  
In spring, with thy flower's nectarousness.  
Victor thou art, victor among men I see,  
To Death thou dost show a boldened face.

Thy name will live ever as the Tree of Life,  
In the grove of thy country — live for aye.  
A poet is a prophet, the idea's rife  
Through all the world. When dire decay  
Shall dissolve stone-pillars in the strife  
For existence, thou shalt still find thy day.

The most interesting yet of all the sonnets is the one on Dante composed on the occasion of the tercentenary of the great Italian poet, afterwards translated into Italian and French and sent to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. The King was so delighted that he remarked, "It will be a ring which will connect the Orient with the Occident." But these were words that contained the motto of Madhusudon's own life,—the mingling of the East and the West. And, in these sonnets he appeared before the world as our first great cosmopolitan in letters, who believed with Tennyson that—

..... England, France, all men to be

Will make one people ere man's race be run.

Of the third group of sonnets, we should begin with 'Kamale Kamini' (The Lady on the Lotus), and 'Annapurnar Jhampi' (The Treasure-chest of Annapurna). In these, the Poet paid poetic tribute to our older Bengali poets, Kavikankan Mukundaram Chakravarty and Raigunakar Bharatchandra. He wrote separate sonnets also on 'The Coronet of Srimanta', a subject from Mukundaram's 'Chandi' poem, and on 'Isvari, the Boatwoman' a subject from Bharatchandra's 'Annadamangal'. Two sonnets are on Kalidas's 'Meghadutam' (The Cloud Messenger). In a sonnet on Sakuntala, he sings of her great charm on the minds of all, and of her sorrow when she had to live in separation from her husband. Throughout life, the Poet greatly revered Sita, the type and Ideal of Indian womanhood, on whom also he wrote a sonnet. Later, in a couple of sonnets on 'Sita Banabase', or 'Sita in Exile' he sang of her woes in her forest exile. He wrote also a sonnet on the Mahabharat, in which he sang the praises of its great author, and one on the Kirat-arjuniyam by Magha. He wrote separate sonnets on themes and characters depicted in the greatest store-house of Indian themes the Mahabharat,—The Abduction of Subhadra, The Fight with the Maces, At the Battle of Gogriha, In the War of Kurukshetra, Subhadra, Urvashi, Dussasana, Hidimba, Pururava, Shishupala, and The Death of Draupadi on Hari Mountain. Sonnets which can be grouped with these are,—The Temple of Fame, Poesy, Saraswati, Imagination, Fame, Fortune, Worldly Knowledge, Language, Rhymed Verse; and the five sonnets on his favourite 'rasas' or literary emotions,—The Pathetic Feeling, The Heroic Emotion, The Amatory Emotion, and the Emotion of Awe.

Besides the above, Madhusudon wrote two sonnets which may be termed politico-patriotic. These breathe patriotic fervour and are instinct with the Poet's great personality. The first sonnet 'Bharatbhumi' (India), bears as motto, these two lines of Filicaia, with their Bengali rendering,—

Italia! Italia! te tu eni feo la sorte

Dono infel ici di bellezza!

In the magnificent 'Amra' (We), the Poet looks back to the days of India's past glory—the splendour that was Ind—and gives expression to his sense of humiliation while sojourning in an independent country, France.

A couple of sonnets he addressed to a French beauty. These were originally written in French and then translated into Bengali and are probably in the nature of an overture, like the Italian sonnets of Milton on a Bolognese lady, and another with whom he probably fell much in love.

Last of all, we come to the personal sonnets having in them great and solemn beauty as revelations of a great spirit. In 'Past Time', the Poet who had given up his religion, and society and parents, lamented his past, and asked how he could retrace his steps. The next sonnet is on his beautiful and virtuous wife, Henrietta Sophia. In a sonnet on Hope, he sings how hope beguiled him into his many trials in life. And in 'The Last Sonnet', the Poet with a heavy heart, bids farewell to his Muse for ever.

The sonnets of Madhusudon like those of Milton, conform more to the Petrarchan type. Like Milton and Wordsworth, he used the sonnet for occasional purposes, Petrarch's sonnets being all on his love for Laura. Madhusudon wrote all his sonnets after he had written his dramas and poems and the great epic poem 'The Slaughter of Meghnad.' Wordsworth too was a favourite poet of Madhusudon, whose sonnet of apology for the sonnet he knew by heart and once recited with wonderful effect. Like Milton, he wrote two double sonnets on the same subject; and even wrote like him an irregular sonnet containing a line of eight syllables. The sonnets of Madhusudon are not only among his own glories, but are among the glories of Bengali poetry. The note that rings in them is the one of union between aspects of nature and the thought and emotion of man. "With the key of the sonnet, like Shakespeare, Madhusudon

unlocked his great heart; and as in those of Milton, in his hands too, the thing became a trumpet whence he blew 'soul-animating strains'".<sup>1</sup>

## II

After Madhusudon's death on June 29, 1873, the sonnet was for long out of favour, till it fell into the hands of his great successor Rabindranath Tagore. Neither Hemchandra Banerjee nor Nabinchandra Sen wrote sonnets. Rabindranath came under the spell of the sonnet decidedly about 1885 when he published his 'Kari O Komal' or 'Sharps and Flats'. It has become a favourite form with him, so much so, that he has used it many times since. 'Kari O Komal' which was the crowning achievement of his earlier poetic career, is remarkable for its group of sonnets, some of which at least can be pronounced splendid. These are fifty in number. The titles of some like The Language of the Heart, The Swell of Music, The Female Breast, The Breast of the Mother, To A Lover, The Kiss, The Nude Beauty, The Arms of a Beauty, The Two Feet, The Portrait of a Woman Sleeping, The Sky of the Heart, Imagination as a Bee, The Perfect Union, The Prisoner, Illusion, Bodily Union, The Body, Memory, Satiety, Why?, Chaste Love, Song-making, Night, The Desire of the human Heart, The Setting Sun, On the Other Side of the Sunset Mountain and The Smile, show the nature of their subject-matter. Some of these have been derided as fleshly for their oversensuous strain; but properly speaking, most appear not to be so, when read in the spirit of appreciation and not of hostile criticism. These wounded the susceptibilities of some of his readers who pronounced him daring and wicked!

The form used by Rabindranath in these sonnets, is extremely irregular, one only being Shakespearean, and another having only 13 lines. And this form he used for several years, till he evolved a special form, that of seven rhymed couplets,—'an easy-flowing form,' 'the Muse in slippers.' The form used in 'Smaran' (Remembrance) is really feeble. But a close examination of the same form used in 'Naibedya' (Offerings), reveals that it is not really easy-flowing, as the couplets are not end-stopped. The

<sup>1</sup> A full discussion of all Madhusudon's sonnets is in my 'The First Bengali Sonneteer,' published in 'Triveni' (Madras), May-June, 1931.

feeble sonnet form of seven rhymed couplets was for its artlessness probably used in his exquisitely pathetic 'Smaran' or 'Remembrance' written to the memory of his wife in 1902, which contains eleven sonnets. What this form is like, will be clear from this rendering of mine of a sonnet of this book, if the reader remembers that the Bengali sonnet has lines of fourteen syllables,

No more is she to be found in my home:  
I enter it hopeless, and out I roam.  
O Lord, my home is of but little space,  
Whatsoever is lost there, leaves no trace.  
Thy home is limitless, the world's Thy home:  
To seek her therein, O Lord, do I come.  
I stand to-day in the setting sun:  
To Thee I look, and my tears do run.  
I bring my sick heart where nothing is lost,  
No face, no happiness; no hope is cross'd.  
No thirst is lost there. O Thou, do drown  
My sick heart in the nectar which's Thine own.  
The touch ambrosial which I so miss  
At home, do I find in Thy world of peace.<sup>1</sup>

Chaitali (1895)<sup>2</sup> was the first book to be written almost entirely in this flowing, peaceful form of seven rhymed couplets. The sonnets are a succession of rural pictures of simple, artless beauty, dealing with the commonest subjects like a girl with a buffalo, a baby and a kid, a prostitute, the ferry-boat plying between villages, folk going forth to their labour at daylight. The Poet makes them all sub specie aeternitatis. In 'Bangamata' or 'Mother Bengal', he says, "Mother, you have seventy million sons who are Bengalees, but not men."

In Manasi (1890), there are four sonnets of which 'Tabu' or 'Yet' 'Hridaya Dhan' or 'The Treasure of the Heart,' and 'Nibhrata Ashram' or 'The Lonely Sanctuary' are in Shakespearean form; while, 'Nishfal Prayas' or 'The Fruitless Attempt' is very irregular.

Tagore's greatest book of sonnets is probably Naibedya, the worthy sequel to the Bengali Gitanjali, which gave to the English Gitanjali many of its lyrical gems. These sonnets are seventy-

<sup>1</sup> Tagore's In Memoriam—Triveni, by Kalipada Mukherjee.

<sup>2</sup> Chaitali—the late rice gathered in Chaitra, the last Bengali month.

eight in number. Some of these have been translated by the Poet himself into his own inimitable English, one of which we quote below,—

The rain has held back for days and days, my God, in my arid heart. The horizon is fiercely naked—not the thinnest cover of a soft cloud, not the vaguest hint of a distant cool shower.

Send thy angry storm, dark with death, if it is thy wish, and with lashes of lightning startle the sky from end to end.

But call back, my lord, call back this pervading silent heat, still and keen and cruel, burning the heart with dire despair.

Let the cloud of grace bend low from above like the tearful look of the mother on the day of the father's wrath.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the thoughtfulness of these sonnets, and the great and noble sentiments they embody, have invested them with a peculiar grandeur, which their easy form has in no way impaired. The Muse of the Poet here soars into the highest regions of thought. At times he appears God-intoxicated; at others, as a great patriot, he fulminates against the social and religious abuses of his own countrymen; sometimes, he inveighs against the materialistic West rushing impetuously towards its own annihilation; while at others, he preaches to the world the great messages of the Upanishadic seers who walked in love and by faith in forest hermitages, 'with God and Nature communing.'<sup>2</sup>

With the living Sonnet writers of Tagore's Age, who have so to say, risen and flourished in his shadow, I shall not deal here; but shall treat of the sonnets of three who are no more. One of them was the great Bengali lawyer, politician and poet-patriot C. R. Das (1870-1925); and the others were the greatest Bengali poetess Mrs. Kamini Roy (1864-1933); and Mrs. Priyambada Devi (1871-1934).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 86, Naibedya; No. 40, English Gitanjali.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note in this connection that number 126 of Shakespeare's Sonnets, is one of six rhymed couplets. It is idle to insist that a great creative artist should use the Petrarchan form of the sonnet only, because it is rather difficult. Critics should remember that it is at the same time somewhat artificial. As a writer of hundreds of sonnets, I have found the Shakespearean form to be the most natural. Opinions may vary in this respect according to one's literary tendency.

<sup>3</sup> One sonnet writer of Tagore's age, who is now no more, was Davendranath Sen, the poet of 'Asok-guchcha' or 'A Bunch of Asok Flowers', who found the sonnet 'a honey comb' of 'hoarded sweets'; and whose sonnet on 'Ma' or 'The Mother' in which he regarded the mother as the holy of holies, though slightly defective, is well-known, being still included in many school anthologies.

The late Mr. C. R. Das wrote only five books of poems all very small, the longest being 'Sagar-sangita' or 'Sea Songs', and thus 'arrayed his temples with the Muse's diadem'. His poetry has not anything common with that of Tagore: it has a distinctness all its own. His 'Sagarsangita' contains eleven sonnets, six of which contain seven rhymed couplets, and the rest are of the Shakespearean type. These were written in 1912. Earlier Mr. Das had written three sonnets in 'Malancha' (The Bower), all the three being of three four-line verses of alternate rhymes ending with a couplet. These are all on love. In 'Akanksha' or 'Desire,' the Poet asks his sweetheart to come beside him and create an Eden on the pale earth. But in 'Jagaran' or 'Awakening,' he sings that he has awakened from his illusion, and bids her finish her song as 'the call of the world fills my life'. But in 'Trisha' or 'Thirst,' the Poet says that his life is probably an unslakable thirst, and that his whole life is one long sleepless night.

In 'Sagarsangita,' the sonnets are of a devotional nature, revealing a genuine Vaishnavite heart. The sea is a devotee of God, and so is also the sky: and as brother devotees they are his friends. Some of the sonnets are addressed to the sea, but the last two, to God. I close this account of the sonnets of C. R. Das with my renderings of the last two sonnets of 'Sagarsangita.'

Does light burn like a mystery on that shore  
Which no eye has seen at dawn or twilight?  
Does music sound there, does it sound evermore,  
That's unheard of all in day-time or at night?  
Does anyone sit there on soft sea-sand  
Yearning like me for an embrace that's whole?  
Is there seen thy heart's own self on that strand—  
Boundless and peerless—the dream of thy soul?  
O thou great Sprite, I am dying for thirst;  
I am very thirsty in my inmost soul:  
Drown me in thy waters with a burst,  
Float me to that shore where thyself dost roll;  
Will then be fulfilled my heart's sweet dream?  
And this lowly heart like a sovereign's seem?

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I'm tired of this crossing from shore to shore:  
Take me to Thy shoreless sea for e'ermore.  
My soul is a drift—it does find no beach—  
Thy beachless sea it does yearn to reach!  
A deep darkness does enshroud me all around:  
I cannot hear in my heart any sound!  
My eyes are tearless—they only weep:  
My soul is maddened for Thy soul's great deep!  
I've sought Thee in the midst of many waves.  
In those places which Thy sweet music laves.  
And, in Thy mysterious light and shade  
Each day and night I have my search made!  
O my life-long Friend, O my Pilot true,  
Take me to Thy shoreless sea without rue!<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Kamini Roy, regarded by many of our critics as the greatest Bengali poetess, crowned her life with her sonnet sequence of exquisite self-revelation and spiritual autobiography, 'Jibaner path' or 'On the Path of Life.' This is a book of the same class as Mrs. Browning's 'Sonnets from the Portuguese' and Christina Rossetti's 'Monna Innominata'; and will, like them, retain permanent rank, for

"Soft is the music that would charm for ever;  
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly."

The book is divided into three sections,—Companionship, Alone and The Fallen Flower. The first deals with the maidenhood of the poetess, with its hopes intermingled with fears. Here is a picture of her life as it had been before she met her lover,—

Afar I dwelt, and you to bring me near,  
Dared even death. What was the wizardry  
That made you see a goddess' aureole here  
About the brow of a woman such as I?  
And all unasked you lavished at my feet  
The treasure that was yours. High on the height  
I lived, my heart like ice. To the valley sweet  
You brought me down, and chill and hard and white  
I am no more. Your love has thawed my soul,  
Melting it drop by drop. O love, slake

<sup>1</sup> A full treatment of the Sea songs of C. R. Das, is in my 'Studies in Bengali Literature', A. H. Stockwell, Ltd., London.

Your thirst, with this my cup be satisfied.  
 ..... O let me hide  
 Within the sanctuary of your heart.  
 But if the spell dissolve and your love fly,  
 What resting place in all the world have I

This is reminiscent of Tennyson's,

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.'

She yet doubted the truth of her lover, and remained unmoved  
 But he still came and said:

'I have come again for you ...

Come, let us walk together in this light,

Our perfect life's fulfilment to attain.'

Yet, she would not listen, for,

"And if your heart's desire be thus fulfilled,

Would not new longings rise again unstilled?"

He asked her to place implicit trust in his love, as

"Your love is the only goal of my desires."

She could not but now give herself up, and said,

"Let this your love lovely and fruitful be."

She added,

"Burdened with ill

And heavy with load of pain, a woman halts

Weary through life; but heaviest she bears

The burden of herself. O lift this load

And help me."

She now believed,

"Safe in the heaven of your arms is peace."

At some future time, this love was to suffer a rude shock.

Utterly bewildered, she asks, "Is my spring-time done?"

The fickleness of love greatly perturbs her; and she asks,

"Is it impossible that love and peace

Any joy in work together ever dwell?"

She prays, therefore, that 'pity be the band

That holds us each to each.'

Towards the end of the book, she becomes great with the glory

of self-effacement and self-abnegation,—

"Let love go and let joy forsake our lives,

Let hope be shattered and in fragments hurled,

But memory knows no death, it still survives,

Let us not drift afar in this cold world.

Then death intervenes, and her lover is no more. She is alone in the world. But she is not really alone, for she believes in the life after death, and in the fuller union with the lord of her life. He is always with her, so she believes, though not in body, yet in mind, and spirit.

'On the Path of Life' is certainly one of the greatest sonnet-sequences ever written. Its diction is chaste, sweet and faultless. Its metre is that of the Petrarchan sonnet; and it ranks with the noblest efforts of that great form. In it, like Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Roy said to her lover,—

"If thou must love me, let it be for nought

Except for love's sake only."

This book of sonnets shows that in the chaste heart of this votress of Apollo, uninfluenced by the power of outward change, there bloomed a flower

'That breathes on earth the air of paradise.'<sup>1</sup>

A graduate of Calcutta University like Mrs. Roy, and proficient in Sanskrit, Mrs. Priyambada Devi lived for about 63 years. But she was very unhappy in life. In 1892, she was married to Taradas Banerjee, a lawyer practising in the Central Provinces, who died in 1895. In 1894 was born her only son and child Tarakumar, who also died in 1906, while a student of Benares University. Thus bereaved of both husband and son, Priyambada devoted the rest of her life to literary and philanthropic pursuits. Her writings fall under three categories, poetry, juvenile literature, and religion. To my mind, her chief title to fame rests on her book of exquisite spiritual self-portraiture 'Patralekha',<sup>2</sup> a collection of short poems and 26 sonnets of which three are of the Shakespearean type, one irregular and the rest of seven rhymed couplets. She dedicated this book to the memory of her husband, which shows her inner life of eternal love and everlasting affection. This book has appealed to me very much, for it contains among many exquisite poems, a sonnet on tender mother-love, the like of which I have never read in any literature.

<sup>1</sup> All the quotations from Mrs. Roy's sonnets are from 'Sonnets from the Bengali' by Mrs. Jessie Duncan Westbrook, The Modern Review, Nov. 1929. A fuller exposition of all Mrs. Roy's books, is in my 'Studies in Bengali Literature,' A. H. Stockwell Ltd., London.

<sup>2</sup> Painting the face or the bosom with sandal paste, much practised anciently and even now by the Hindus, men and women.

I give below my own rendering of this sonnet of seven rhymed couplets,—

Nevermore wilt thou be born in the house of man, no more  
to call any woman mother,  
with thy voice as sweet as nectar to give fulfilment to her  
life of a woman.

No more wilt thou thrill the heart of any woman, by sucking  
her breasts in the fulness of joy,  
with thy tendril-like ruddy lips.

No more wilt thou gaze on any other face, prattling the  
while, thy tender hand resting against her rounded cheek,  
Ah, thou wilt nevermore sleep in fearlessness, thy little head  
nestled on the breast of any other woman!

But thou wilt ever remain a sweet memory to me, only mine!  
The happiness thou gavest me and the pain, will remain mine  
alone ever and ever, through the endless cycle of my  
births.<sup>1</sup>

Well did Michael Madhusudan prophesy, "The sonnet will  
do wonderfully well in our language." For, as the years roll,  
there will certainly be, as there are at the present day, many  
Bengali poets, who, like Wordsworth, having felt the weight of  
too much liberty, will find delight in being bound

'Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground.'

<sup>1</sup>The Indian P.E.N., August, 1939. Mother-love in Bengali Literature by  
Kalipada Mukherjee.

## "English Poetry between two Wars"

BY V. M. INAMDAR

### I

Contemporary criticism is strangely divided in the matter of  
its judgment on post war poetry. There are some who raise the  
modernist adventurers in English poetry to the heavens and  
hail them as the harbingers of a greater era of poetry, while  
there are others who cry them down as nothing more than pre-  
tentious mediocrities undeservedly much made of. Contemporary  
judgments have always betrayed this kind of contradiction, but  
what makes the present case strangely enigmatic is the fact that  
both the sets of critics, ranged on opposite sides in respect of  
contemporary poetry are strangely unanimous and appreciative in  
respect of Milton or Keats—a fact which is adequate assurance  
that both of them are perfectly conversant with the canons of  
poetic criticism and are in possession of a good taste necessary  
for the appreciation of poetry. Every reader is prepared to  
appreciate the comparatively relative character of the judgements  
passed by critics when they are not removed from the object  
of their criticism considerably in point of time. He knows that  
the sifting process of time is the best judge of literary re-  
putations or the lasting quality of a particular literary product.  
But in the case of postwar poetry, the critics, strangely enough,  
separate themselves by a rigid line and flatly contradict one another.  
Charles Williams, himself an interesting poet, who edits the  
"New Book of English Verse" (1935) says that during the nineties  
there were two poets of importance, Kipling and Yeats.

"One tended to turn from the myths, the other to trans-  
late them into his own parables... Where Tennyson and  
even Hardy had occasionally been a little sad about their  
loss of simple faith, the newer poets much more healthily  
forgot it. The wistful atheist disappeared. Christianity became  
to every poet either a necessity or a nuisance, and the  
lesser myths... merely a nuisance. Flecker and Francis Thomp-  
son picturesquely delayed them a little. Eliot for a moment  
recovered Agamemnon; Chesterton made them ceremonial  
with apocalypse. But in general they were done, and it  
was time. Pan is dead."

The divergence of critical opinion about the relative value of our moderns becomes both amusing and interesting when we compare the above finely-worded but inconclusive generalisation with what C. D. Lewis, one of the younger poets, says, succinctly summing the situation:

".....Then came for poetry, in spite of Hardy and de la Mare, a period of very low vitality. The Georgian poets, a sadly pedestrian rabble, flocked along the roads their fathers had built, pointing out to each other the beauty spots... The winds blew, the floods came... one only rode the whirl wind: Wilfrid Owen killed on the Sambre, spoke above the barrage and the gas cloud. The poetry is in the pity. When it was all over it was given to an American, T. S. Eliot, to pick up some of the fragments of civilization, place them end to end, and on that crazy pavement walk precariously through the waste-land. Postwar poetry was born amongst the ruins. Its immediate ancestors are Hopkins, Owen and Eliot and Yeats, the last in the aristocratic tradition, remains the most admired among living writers... a lesson to us in integrity." There is still, concludes Lewis "a hope for poetry."

## II

### THE PREDECESSORS IN THE FIELD

The classification of poetry, as prewar and postwar, with reference to chronological sequence is only a matter of convenience. The process of evolution in literature is one and continuous, taking colour from the environments of a particular period, and shaped or misshaped by influences to which it may be subjected. The present is only a continuation of the past into altered surroundings. This makes it necessary, in speaking about the present day tendencies in literature to pay some attention to the spiritual affinities which the present has with the immediate past. Moreover, no literary movement can, or ever did, start straight into the blue without affinities or associations with what has gone before. The postwar period in English poetry, is mainly a period of deliberate experiment. The nature of the experiments and the degree of success which the innovators attained are likely to be better understood when we are in possession of the actual state of poetry just before the War.

The Georgian poets, the War poets, and the Imagist movement which was started just before the War, have all had their

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due share of influence in moulding the postwar poetic consciousness, and expression. The Georgians escaped into other worlds of experience with a reflex criticism implied of the existing scheme of things. Walter de la Mare slipped into the world of childhood and extra mundane forms. Sturge Moore took refuge into other ages, the Greek, the Jewish, the Persian, peculiarly perverting the sympathies of Keats or Tennyson and siding with the defeated or lost causes. Others like Rupert Brooke, rejecting modern life, tried to found a new world on the ruins of the old in which they no longer believed. Then there were others like Wilfrid Gibson, John Masefield and John Drinkwater who accepted whatever good they could find in existence and strove with the stuff of life to show of what it is made and to show to what high purposes it could be turned. Lastly there were a few other poets who could give acceptance, limited, yet definite, to contemporary intellectual and spiritual movements. Alfred Noyes represented this attitude completely and saw in the earlier glories of his country or in the career of science, a basis for the future like of mankind. All this negation, this disillusionment, this struggle, this partial acceptance, seemed, however, hardly productive of great poetry. The Imagists, then, came and charged the Georgians with flat failure and attributed their ineffectiveness to their persistence in the use of a language and imagery that had become hopelessly out of date, a circumstance which put them at one remove from the actualities of their own time. The Imagists, therefore, in direct opposition to the Georgians, set up altogether new models for poetry when they defined a poem as an image or a succession of images and an image as that which presents an intellectual or emotional complex in an instant of time. Such a conception of the subject matter of poetry to be expressed in the manner of the French Symbolists by way of association and suggestion gave birth to a strangely new kind of poetry. Started as it was on an essential misconception as to the fundamental basis of poetry, the movement, by 1917 was completely dead as a force in the literary world. But it had a profound influence upon the postwar poetry as a whole in its spirit of adventure and audacity in flying into the face of tradition and convention. It was in fact the first literary movement, to mark a complete revolt against Victorian tradition and its pale imitators, the Georgians. Then it was that the Georgians by their alleged

default or inability to respond to the needs of the time, and the Imagists by their spirit of defiance and experiment supplied the postwar poetry with the necessary stimulus in its start on a career of further experiment and greater and more accentuated defiance and rejection of conventional standards.

### III

#### THE CHANGE

I have mentioned the Goergian revival in poetry by about 1912, and the Imagist movement in some detail so that we may be in a better position to understand the innovations and the experiments of the later period. These two movements were in fact the spiritual predecessors of the modernist movement in poetry. Then there came the war which shaped or misshaped the whole poetic consciousness of the age. The war to end war only too completely frustrated the protestations of the optimists and the treaty makers. The "decade of despair" with its bloodless war and silent revolution only made it clear that the halcyon days of tranquillity which had seemed possible in 1919 had only receded in to unrealisable dreams. The prevailing spirit of general frustration and disillusionment darkened the spiritual environment of the poet and made him a bold, rebellious but soured spirit. Poetry could hardly remain cheerful and inspiring in an atmosphere impermeable to any kind of optimism or idealism. Optimism seemed impossible in the presence of the steadily deepening disillusion. Post war poetry was thus born amongst the ruins of the world catastrophe. The general attitude of questioning and scepticism weakened all faith in or respect for authority of the church, state, or the family. The new found freedom of the philosophy of free thought, the substitution of the principle of art as imitation or representation by the principle of art as communication, together with the spirit of literary individualism that had been gradually growing since the closing years of the 19th century, all contributed only to accentuate the need for renovation in poetry which the Imagists had attempted but had failed on account of their obvious misconception both as regards the matter and form of poetry. Thus, an orgy of experimentation with new words, rhythms, forms possible and impossible, followed, supported and encouraged by the audacities of the lately discovered

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work of G. M. Hopkins with his "sprung rhythm" and grammatical eccentricities.

### IV

#### THE NEW CONCEPTION

Of all the influences which changed the face of postwar poetry the acceptance of the principle that art is communication instead of representation had the most far-reaching influence. It entirely shifted the centre of activity from objective representation to the expression of subjective consciousness. The emphasis which so far rested on the "universal" was now shifted to the "personal". Poetry had been regarded great in so far as it had been able to embody or symbolise the universal in the particular. If the traditional poet represented his personal passion in his poetry, it was of such passion that he sang and in such manner that his readers found no difficulty in realising that what he had sung about was true of the poet's personal feeling as also of humanity as a whole. The modernist poet rejected the objective representation of his thoughts, feelings and passions but sought to communicate his own individual perception and strove to recreate for the reader the experience which he had in his *own unique perception* of the universe and in the *unique universe* which he had created about him, from the material out of *his own sensations*. The attempt to communicate an experience from a universe of his own creation, apart from the external world, represents in fact an infinite extension of the range of poetic consciousness. Poetry thus proceeded from the individual and particular 'worlds' of individual and particular poets. The poet became the law to himself.

### V

#### PSYCHOLOGY AND POETRY

This deliberate shifting of the centre from an expression of the imaginative apprehension of external reality, transfigured by the shaping power of a particular imagination of a poet, to the communication of the movements in the subconscious self of a particular individual and its expression in newfangled forms, was further complicated by the increased interest which the poets took in psycho-analysis. Much of the obscurity, occasional incomprehensibility, the need for annotation and "literary midwifery"

in modernist poetry proceeds from this preoccupation of the poets with the movements in the obscurer regions of the human mind. There came in evidence much deliberate effort to explore the world below the surface by methods of evocation and "Free Association." Modern psychology treats the mind as an affair of layers—the topmost being the layer of consciousness and volition—then the subconscious downward below and then further and far below extends the whole realm of the unconscious. We are told that there is a constant two way traffic between the subconscious, the unconscious and the topmost plane of consciousness. Thoughts and feelings slumbering in the lumber room of the unconscious or the subconscious in the depths of the mind may float up to the surface either unbidden or deliberately evoked. One thing suggests another and the technique of evocation may bring to surface thoughts, ideas and images, between which there may not be the least logical connection or any kind of unifying community. They are just "freely associated." The modernist poet concerned himself in expressing in words these thoughts and images, faint flickers of evanescent feelings, from the present, the immediate or the remote past, all rising in a procession in the poet's mind. Poetry thus came to be the image of the phantasmal shapes and shadows rising and vanishing in his mind. There can be no lyrical outburst, no narrative interest. There can neither be the rapture of joy nor the strong cry of agony.

## VI

### AN ILLUSTRATION

Here then is something quite strange and *outré* in the methods of the new poetry in its deliberate exploitation of what lies buried below the plane of consciousness. Suggestion has always been one of the recognised methods by which poetry obtains its effects but the difference in the manner of using suggestion by the traditionalists and the modernists will be clear when we take a concrete instance and notice the manner in which it is made to work: Macbeth on the eve of Duncan's murder, standing at the window and watching the night draw on, says:

"Light thickens and the crow

Makes wings to the rooky wood..."

or Duncan on his arrival at Macbeth's castle remarks:

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"This castle had a pleasant seat..."

In both these cases we feel that the whole is haunted and suffused with undertones and in either case there follows an infinite succession of associative images of the "darkness that does the face of earth entomb" in the first instance and of ironic contrast which the simple words convey in view of the fact that the "pleasant seat" is soon going to be the scene of the vile murder of the speaker himself. In T. S. Eliot's poem "Gerontion" we come across two cryptic lines:

"Vacant shuttles

Weave the wind..."

The commentators who have, always, fortunately for the average reader, been diligent in making the poems understood, tell us that a similar phantom procession of associative images musters at the gates of the mind. Those who complain that in the first two instances from Shakespeare, the lines apart from their symbolic suggestion or ironic contrast do yield some simple sense, easily comprehensible by a literal interpretation of the words, whereas the vacant shuttles weave the wind, weaving the mind literally vacant, are told, that what matters is not the literal or the surface meaning but the 'word' of associative images and thoughts which lies below in the subconscious depths of the speaker. The "Gerontion" is a sketch of the mind of an old man in reverie. Memories of his youth, of the then conflict between Religion and Desire, fragments of past and long forgotten incidents, of the Japanese gentleman he had met, of the lady who had given him a look when he was young, all are floating in his mind. It is too much trouble for the tired old brain and his thoughts wander aimlessly on:

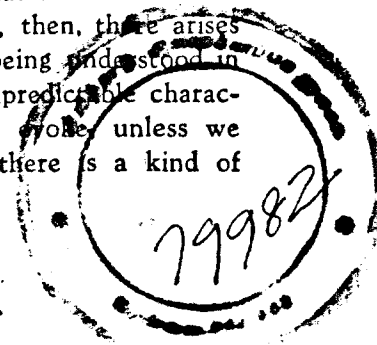
"Vacant shuttles

Weave the wind..."

The above illustration must have made it clear that the poet is making use of a method which involves an inherent difficulty. If the words of the poet are to mean, not what the literal sense of the words used convey, but something else, then, there arises the thousandfold possibility of his utterance being understood in thousand different ways, on account of the unpredictable character of the associations which his words may evoke, unless we assume, if only to defend the process, that there is a kind of

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general identity in the chain of thoughts and images conjured up by those particular evocative words and phrases. The difficulty is made all the greater by the absence of any logical coherence or conscious community in the series of evocations. Mr. C. D. Lewis explains that there is a sort of emotional sequence in such evocations but he does not explain how one can lead to another. The floating procession, therefore, when reduced to words for purposes of communication, betrays a corresponding incoherence in language so that the reader has every justification to suspect whether the poet has been talking in his sleep, or whether in his haste he hastened to the nearest telegraph office and communicated his poem in a series of incoherent and unconnected ejaculations.

## VII

### THE APOLOGY

All this, the apologists for the innovators tells us, was necessary to keep poetry in touch with contemporary life. The progress of science changed the environment of life both physically and spiritually. Poetry in the established traditional manner, we are told, with all its stock-in trade of rusty epithets and conventional images could not respond to the altered character of life in the 20th century. That the Georgian revival of 1912 was only a false dawn and proved inefficient in producing poetry in perfect harmony of spirit with the age was attributed to their still fondly clinging to an outworn tradition and their consequent inability to tap the deeper resources in the movements of national mind. They tried to keep poetry "poetical" and thus cut themselves off from contemporary life. It was thus professed that new methods in poetry in direct reaction against Victorian poetic technique and diction were long overdue so that the innovators devised a form of expression which was reckless of convention and which was calculated to include within the scope of poetical treatment, things like the gasometer and the electric power station and the rest—things around which traditional poetry had not woven a halo of 'poetic' associations. The break with the past was therefore as complete as it was deliberate. The apology, however, does not satisfy the reader whose appreciation of poetry has been moulded by an age-long tradition. He remains unsatisfied not so much because of the novelty or the quaintness of the new poetry but

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certainly because he fails to find in it something which he has always and invariably associated with great poetry. The long and unbroken tradition behind him tells him, that poetry, which one need not try to define, is the way of writing which can be identified as common to Shakespeare, Milton or Shelley, not to speak of Aeschylus, Catullus, Ronsard or Goethe. He has therefore every justification not to feel comfortable until he has been able to fit the 'new thing' into its old genealogical tree. "I very much doubt" says Mr. Young "whether there is such a thing as old and new in poetry; only, as it were, a travelling illumination passing from one area to another of continuous and indivisible surface, bringing out what a particular age wants to see, and the area upon which many of our latest poets play their beam is one that I cannot find in any map." It is difficult to be connoisseured out of oneself to admit that poetry in order to meet the requirements of the 20th century has changed its definition.

## VIII

### AN INTELLECTUAL ESCAPISM

Dissatisfaction with the present always produces a reaction and the afflicted spirit takes refuge in an escape from reality. De la Mare escaped into the world of childhood and the "dream of wake" and Edith Sitwell into an enchanted world of her own making. The modernist poets on the whole seek a refuge in an intellectually apprehended past and most of the later poets are extremely learned, greater scholars than poets. An intellectual nostalgia, a harking back to the peace and culture of past ages, a revival, as in the case of T. S. Eliot and his followers, of the intellectualising spirit of the declining Renaissance, are seen in evidence in the claim of the poets to be called the "New Metaphysicals". Eliot, Pound and Edith Sitwell are primarily scholars, and to a certain extent, no doubt, the metaphysical vein of poetry, dormant since the 17th century, appears to be revived with characteristic substitution of faith in the Marxist philosophy in place of the old Christian faith of Donne's School. But in the absence of the passionate and consuming imagination of Donne, which gave to his conceits a glowing ardour and vividness, the resemblance must needs remain superficial and confined to the crabbed and

tortuous audacities on the formal side of poetry. But for an equivalent pre-occupation with death, the 'fever of the bone', the post-war poetic imagination must be characterised as chill and anaemic. At best it betrays an intellectual ardour which indicates a general bent towards a sort of neoclassicism.

IX

POEMS AND PERSONALITIES

It is not possible within the brief scope of this article to study individual poets. Neither is it possible to compress within any one formula, the variety of tendencies which they exhibit. But something must be said about Eliot's "Waste Land"—a highly intellectual and depressing poem, which has exercised greater influence over postwar poetry than any other single poem. Its publication in 1922 marked the decisive beginning of the new technique of indirect suggestion of the symbolists. In the reading of the poem, the ordinary reader is as much puzzled by the wealth of its innumerable literary reminiscences and references as by the ease with which the writer uses languages other than English in the body of the poem. It has been both highly praised and severely condemned. Some critics went to the extent of calling the poem "the greatest literary hoax since Adam" but that represents an extreme view. It is possible to catch the general significance of the poem without the aid of the cumbrous notes added to it. It is neither a narrative of events nor a commentary but a psychological study in poetical form of the various intellectual and emotional cross-currents in the postwar world. It is an effort to "focus the inclusive consciousness" of a joyless and gloomy age. "The criticism has to be met" says Dr. Leavis "that the poem exists and can exist only for an extremely limited public equipped with special knowledge. But that the public for it is limited is one of the symptoms of the state of culture that produced the poem. Works expressing the finest consciousness of the age are almost inevitably such as to appeal only to a tiny minority." Here is an admission of an appreciative critic which is an eloquent testimony to the restricted appeal, the coterie spirit, the intellectual obscurity of the new poetry.

If Eliot faces the modern conditions and exposes them by an unsparing contrast with a bygone past, Miss Edith Sitwell

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escapes into a two-dimensional world of enchantment. In her manner, direct description is replaced by a method of communicating impressions by epithets designed to revive sensations previously experienced in contact with similar circumstances. Scrupulous avoidance of traditional imagery and metaphor, and attempts at adapting poetry to modern musical and dance rhythms, all combine in giving to her poetry an air of eccentricity. Ezra Pound's 'A draft of XXX cantos' (1930) outdoes even T. S. Eliot's 'Waste Land' in its literary allusion which is bound to be the reader's despair unless he is acquainted with the literatures of Provence, 15th century Italy and China. The theme is practically the same as that of 'Waste Land' and leaves the impression that all our boasted progress of civilization is not progress at all but only a gradual decay from the fineness of former ages. "Eternal flux" is his theme, and he hopes to give the impression that all is living, that there are no edges or convexities to check the flow. Equally obscure and equally pre-occupied with death and despair is W. H. Auden, but with a more excitable imagination. Of all the moderns, Auden and Spender—and in Spender we can see the happy blend of the modernist and the traditionalist who reveres "the truly great," whose "lips were touched with fire"—alone appear to have found a natural personal language in the modern idiom, and to be capable of moving with ease in the new-fangled costume without loss of their poetic individuality.

All this, however, should not blind us to the fact that these poets are capable of extremely good poetry which sometimes flashes in the midst of vast intellectual waste lands, breaking forth, in spite of them, as it were, through their deliberate freakishness of expression, as in Eliot's "Preludes," Sitwell's "The Ham-bone and the heart," Pound's "Homage to Sextus Propertius," Auden's "A bird used to visit this shore once," or Spender's poem beginning "I think continually," etc.

X

POETRY AND POLITICS

"Why is it," asks Hugh Walpole, "that there is not a single poet since T. S. Eliot who commands the attention of all the English-speaking people who are interested in literature? Not a single poet who is well known as 20 to 30 years ago Masfield,

De la Mare and Davies were known?" And he answers the question with an accusation against the moderns that they have grown politically-minded and *nothing* else. With the darkening of the European scene during the thirties of the present century, culminating in the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, a long crescendo of protest and denunciation rose through political writings and speeches, as also through the imaginative and creative literature of the period. A conviction that, in an age when all that is dear to the human heart is imperilled in the general uncertainty of fate in an impending disaster, all forms of artistic expression should remain the handmaids of politics, gained secure ground; and, during the thirties, the poet turned politician wrote much dreary and ephemeral polemic. Though it may be admitted that the poet cannot cut himself off completely from contemporary life, it is equally true that he ceases to be a poet so far as he merely engrosses himself in transient affairs. Escapism is dubbed as undesirable only by those who forget that all poetry is a sort of escape, and that great poetry is always composed in "Ivory Towers" far from "the herd, the community, (which is) hard, selfish and, to further its own efficiency, is a traitor to the human nature which expresses itself in solitude." (E. M. Forster.) None can deny that when political shibboleths shall shrink thin and melt away with the years, and shall be long forgotten, there will remain the wind, the heath, the human spirit. None can also deny that the poet's main concern is with life, beauty, birth, love, death, the unchanging cycle.

XI

CONCLUSION

Post-war poetry is thus poetry of reaction and experiment. It is the poetry of despair, gloom and pessimism. It represents a complete break with the past. It is much oppressed by psychology and its methods. It is certainly hazardous to risk any final word as to its lasting character. Shedding all that is unessential, the experiments of today may be the accredited practice of tomorrow, and the convention of a not distant future. That T. S. Eliot's 'Waste Land' has already 'dated' like the earlier plays of Shaw, to a certain extent, is a feature, however, far from assuring as to the permanence of much post-war poetry, and a sad criticism of its preoccupation with only what belongs to an age and not for all time.

## The Garden of Life

(A pre-human, inhuman vision!)

BY G. B. JOSHI & V. K. GOKAK

Scene 1

(A thick forest. In it there is a cave with an archway leading to its interior. Skulls of beasts are hung round on the red walls within. Faces just severed from the throats of little lambs are suspended in the midst of the arch. Weapons of all kinds are fixed into the walls of this archwise opening. And the weapons so meet at about the middle point of the opening that it is impossible for any one to enter without being hurt by them. Inside the arch there is the door to the cave, now shut. It is made of bones, and it opens and closes when the phrase "Ha-hi-he" is uttered.

It is evening, and there is a dim, reddish light outside the cave. A gentle wind is stirring the branches of a big tree that spreads far and wide in front of the cave. A creeper has woven its tangle as far as the main trunk of the tree. It is all pathless round about the cave and the lush grass is covered with sprouting creepers. The subdued sound of a waterfall far behind the cave is heard at a distance.

There enters a being not exactly belonging to any particular species of creation but a strange combination of all species, with horns on his head, big wings on his shoulders and a garland of roses round his neck. Nature is his clothing and his dark hair is let loose about his blackish body. His physique is gigantic and out of all human proportion. He comes, as if intoxicated, swinging his hands and legs freely, not caring a bit for the young creepers crushed under his feet. He bears a big dead sheep on his shoulders. Coming near the cave, he calls out in a hoarse voice, "Ha-hi-he." A dim light is seen in the cave. She—a female being of the same type—comes to the cave door from inside. The door opens. They meet and

embrace each other. Then they go inside the cave and sit on two different stones, with the dead sheep between them.)

*She*:—(Drinking blood from a crude pot of clay) How long, dear, shall we drink this blood of beasts? It is since beginning of the world that we are living on this. I am tired of this. I want some change.

*He*:—Oh! No question of that. Rest you content. I have found today that which will relieve the monotony of our daily life by bringing in some variety. Time has power from today to make the young old and the old young. An entirely new sight rewarded my search. Wandering in the forest I beheld a beautiful garden. The trees there—O! so rich they are!—will bear luscious fruits. Crush the faded flowers that repose on the grass below, and blood comes out of them—sweet, nectarous blood!

*She*:—Beautiful! But is there no one to prevent you from laying your hands on them?

*He*:—Ah! There was none when I had been there. And I will surely enter the garden when there will be none spying on me.

*She*:—Do. And bring me a cluster of fruits that I may taste them and drink their warm nectarous juice. You can go in the morning as usual and return when the west is stained with red.

*He*:—Hurrah! That I will do. I will bring you the pick of the lot, the glory of the garden. Come, now, to our wonted dance.

(They begin to dance hand in hand to the tune of a wild, primeval strain.)

## Scene 2

(The scene is the same. It is evening. He comes with an old and worn-out corpse on his shoulders and cries out hoarsely, "Ha-hi-he." The door opens. He enters the cave and embraces her who has moved thither to meet him.)

*She*:—Oh! How long have I not waited for you! Have you brought the cluster of fruits burgeoning on the trees, and the tender, little flowers blossoming among the leaves?

*He*:—Come, come, my dear. I have brought a new thing, at any rate. (Lowers the corpse from his shoulders)

*She*:—(Beholding the corpse) Oh! from where?

*He*:—From there. From the garden.

(They sit with the corpse between them and begin to eat it)

*She*:—Ahem! This is tasteless. There is no blood in this besides! This must have been a fallen fruit.

*He*:—Yes, my dear. It was lying withering on the grass. I had to pick it up. He asked me to.....

*She*:—Who asked you?

*He*:—Oh! that is a long story. I thought I had escaped unobserved into the garden. I was looking up and down at the wonderful trees that bore such a rich harvest for you and me. I felt how glad you would be to feel those delicate flowers and taste those splendid fruits. And I stretched my hands a little to have a cluster shining like the crown of stars at midnight. But it seems he knew me all the while. He approached me gently from behind and stayed my hand—

*She*:—Who stayed your hand?

*He*:—He did it—the keeper of the garden. And he chid me gently for having such a foul design on those sweet, little things of his. He pointed to the fruit lying withered on the grass, and said that I was at perfect liberty to use such things as I liked. But that if I permitted my mind to linger still on the pride of the garden, he predicted gravely that we would surely come to harm.

*She*:—And so you brought this fallen fruit?

*He*:—Yes, my dear. I had nothing else to choose.

*She*:—But! There is no blood in it to make it winsome. It is not worth our while. Your labour is wasted upon it.

*He*:—That is true. But can you not wait till tomorrow? I will hoodwink this swine of a gardener, and bring you fresh ones just plucked from the trees. Will not that satisfy you?

*She*:—Oh! that would send me into raptures. But you should not thus hazard your life, my dear. I fear it in my heart that you will be found out some day and then,—what is the good of it all?

*He*:—Never fear, my love. Time is ours now. Time has got the power to make the young old and the old young. I will surely cut the branch of fruits on which you have set your mind.

(They embrace each other and begin to dance.)

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### Scene 3

(The same scene. It is evening. He enters with the corpses of a young man and a young woman, and stands before the cave.)

*He* :—Ha-hi-he!

(The door opens. She comes and takes him by the hand. He throws the corpses on the ground and begins to dance wildly.)

*He* :—Here they are! The choicest fruits on the tree have crowned my toil to-day!

*She* :—(Stopping) Good. But are they—both of them—from one and the same tree?

*He* :—Ah! no! The one with the tender pulp is a more precious growth. It is indeed a rarity. But the other sort also is not common, I can tell you. If you would but like them! Or I will bring tomorrow the fresh young buds and the scented blossoms, my queen!

*She* :—Come, come, we will sit and eat it. We will make short work of it, with hunger gnawing at our very marrow.

*He* :—And sweet too!

(They sit on two different stones placed opposite to each other with the corpses between them.)

*She* :—(Tearing a limb and eating it) How this blood sings in the ear! How this rind melts in the mouth!

*He* :—(Satisfied) I thought you would say so.

*She* :—Ah! Yes! What of the gardener? Was he not there to-day?

*He* :—Oh! Don't worry. There is good news to tell. The gardener is in trouble. Mutiny has broken out among his ranks. Half his number are up against him and the spirit of rebellion is in the air. The leader of those blessed apostates is for assuming the robe of office himself. A pitched fight was fought and they have not yet come to terms. Nor are they likely to, till some days come to pass. And just think of it, my love! The garden is all the while practically unguarded!

*She* :—That is good news indeed. But you must still be wary. No amount of caution will be lost on your project.

*He* :—I will be cunningness itself. Shall we dance?

(They begin to dance, singing a wild strain.)

## THE GARDEN OF LIFE

*He and She* :—(singing)

Oh! till the heat of fight turns cool  
The garden will be ours to rule!  
Ours to smell and ours to smother,  
This fruit, that one, and the other  
They will lead us to a treat,—  
These, our never-ceasing feet!

### Scene 4

(The same scene. It is evening. He enters with the corpses of two little children on his shoulders.)

*He* :—Ha-hi-he!!

(The door does not open. He calls out again. But the door remains closed as before.)

*He* :—(Angrily) What has happened to this idling wench? She must sleep and dream, and I must toil till it is evening. And when I return to the cave by twilight—why, she must still be sleeping. Is she dead drunk with this new blood from the garden? Or is she travailing to beget a new being—my rival? I will try again. Ha-hi-he!

(The door remains closed. He gets wild and throws the corpses of the children against the door. He then breaks it open and finds her reposing motionlessly on the stone-seat. He goes to her impatiently.)

*He* :—Wake up, my good girl! Wake up! Have I not laboured day-long for you and brought you young buds of the choicest dye? If you but look at them for a while, you will find it in your heart to worship me for this brave deed of mine. What! Will you not wake? What drowsy makes you drowse? Ha! who are these, sneaking past my cave?

(Even as he entered the cave, five or six of the gardeners' servants have advanced from behind the trunk of the big tree and are making towards the entrance. They are looking now and then at the direction in which the gardener is standing unseen, for further instructions. Our "He" casts a bewildered glance at them and looks alternately at 'Her' and at the new-comers. The calm and crystalline voice of the gardener is heard at last and they rush towards the door.)

*Gardener*—Catch him! He has spoilt the garden!

## Education of the Masses

(BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA <sup>1</sup>)

My heart aches to think of the condition of the poor, the low in India. They sink lower and lower every day. They feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society, but they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. My heart is too full to express my feelings. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them. Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly, the Lord will show you the way. Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for.

A nation is advanced, in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education among the masses. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation comes in the law of nature.

My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only,

<sup>1</sup> A chapter from a forthcoming book, "*Swami Vivekananda on Education*" being the sayings of the Swami gathered and arranged by Sri T. S. Avinashilingam, M.L.A. (Central). Our grateful thanks are due to Sri T. S. A. for permission to publish this chapter in advance.  
—Editor, 'Triveni.'

hidden as it were in monasteries and forests—to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out the ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language, this glorious language of ours; and this difficulty cannot be removed until, if it is possible, the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life, and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study it thoroughly! Therefore, the ideas must be taught in the language of the people. Teach the masses in the vernaculars. Give them ideas; they will get information, but something more will be necessary. Give them culture. Until you can give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.

At the same time, Sanskrit education must go along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige, a power and a strength to the race. Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of the day—Pali. That was grand; he spoke the language of the people and the people understood him. It spread the ideas quickly, and made them reach far and wide. But along with that, Sanskrit ought to have been spread. Knowledge came, but prestige was not there. Until you give them that, there will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest.

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, "O ye Brothers, all arise! awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!" Go and advise them how to improve their own condition, and make them com-

prehend the sublime truths of the Shastras, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmanas. Initiate them, even down to the Chandalas, in these fiery mantras. Also instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.

Centuries and centuries, a thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes, kings and foreigners, have taken out all their strength. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and to believe, "I am the soul." "Me the sword cannot cut, no weapons pierce; me the fire cannot burn; me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent, I am the Omniscient." These conceptions of the Vedanta must come out from the forest and the cave; they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish, and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman and child, whatever their occupation, wherever they may be. How can the fisherman and all these carry out the ideas of the Upanishads? The way has been shown. If the fisherman thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if a student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better student.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. Suppose you open a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded self-sacrificing Sannyasins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening, with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc., they can teach a great deal of Astronomy and Geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a life-time through books.

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long like machines, and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact, and making a united front against this. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.

Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, "You are our brothers—part and parcel of our bodies." If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Buy some magic lanterns, maps, globes, and some chemicals. Teach them History, Geography, Science, Literature, and along with these the profound truths of religion through these.

Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, to feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates. Feel, therefore, my would-be patriots. Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step.

You may feel, then, but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet, that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands

against you, sword in hand would you still dare to do what you think is right? If your wives and children are against you, if all your money goes, your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily to your own goal? As the great King Bhartri-Hari says, "Let the sages blame or let them praise; let the Goddess of Fortune come or let her go wherever She likes; let death come today or let it come after hundreds of years; he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth." Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles.

• Let us pray, "Lead, kindly Light"—A beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. Let each one of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions of India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny—pray, day and night for them. I care more to preach to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. Who feels for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Him I call a Mahatman who feels for the poor. Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them? Who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly. The Lord will show you the way.

## *What India will Learn from the Films*

BY J. B. APPASWAMI

Is India ever going to be educated?—asks Mr. Edward Thompson in a recent article. His answer is surprising enough:

"Yes—by the films".

He tells how at a Bombay railway station he bought a packet of chocolate from a little boy. The boy asked him for the coupon in the packet. Mr. Thompson imagined that a set of coupons might bring this enthusiastic collector some useful article, but on enquiry he found that the boy was collecting to obtain a series of film star pictures.

"Ramshakle tents on lorries", the writer continues, "take the cinema to remote hamlets, I saw a tent in the shadow of a renowned Buddhist shrine. Tables of coloured drinks and cigarettes were before it, and from the tent came crooned jazz about 'My Baby'. India is producing her own films, bad Hollywood in Oriental clothes. The peasant's mind, untouched through milleniums, is going to be swiftly and thoroughly remade. In five years, both Hindu and Moslem cultures are going to be smashed, and India will be as daft as we are (on top of its own brand of silliness.)"

This is plain speaking and worth thinking about. In a land where the mass of the people is illiterate the film is the most obvious vehicle of new ideas and information. Thousands of the poorer classes are now going to the pictures, and cinema houses are springing up all over the country to meet the new demand. What sort of influence will the films they see have on the minds of these people?

Indian audiences are of two kinds: those who see pictures that talk English and those who see only pictures that talk an Indian language. From the standpoint of the future, of the five years in which the Hindu and Moslem cultures will be smashed, according to Mr. Thompson, the English-knowing audience are not very important, since they are a minority that will become relatively smaller and smaller as time goes on. It is true that they are an influential minority and that the American and English films they see will affect their conduct and thus

indirectly the mind of the people as a whole. But compared with the influences radiated by the Indian-language cinema their effect is negligible.

The vital difference between the two is that the Indian-language films reach audiences that cannot be reached in other ways. Indian women, who cannot read or write, who are unaffected by education or propaganda of any kind, flock to the cinema in the towns. With the collapse of the Indian theatre in most parts of India and the gradual abandonment of long-drawn-out wedding festivities, the cinema becomes the main source of entertainment.

\* And these are the films that Mr. Thompson calls "bad Hollywood in Oriental clothes." Just as Elstree copied Hollywood in its early days, Indian producers slavishly followed the themes of foreign films in their desire to be up-to-date and smart; till quite recently they imagined that bad Hollywood was good box-office.

They novelty of seeing Indian heroes in evening dress escorting Westernised heroines to cabarets did, at first, amuse Indian audiences. But unreality palls, and after the shine had worn off, producers began to see that there was something wrong with the Goldwyn-girls-and-gangsters formula.

At the same time, film producers, especially in South India, also carried on a line of mythological and pseudo-historical costume pictures. This was a legacy of the moribund Indian stage which also supplied actor-singers to the screen. This style of picture has also had its day, for it is also unreal and without application to modern life. Foreign producers know that an occasional historical picture is welcome, but that as daily fare it tends to become insipid. This fact is being discovered here.

The picture that will be made in the next five years will be different, for Indian producers will have to make some genuine contact with the lives of the people. Some pictures of this sort are being shown now. They are of varying quality; some are satirical, some romantic, most of them are overweighted with songs and are too long to sustain interest, but on the whole they are a fair indication of what we can expect in the future. It is doubtful if they will do anything to smash the Hindu and Moslem cultures. On the other hand, they do a great deal for both these cultures.

## WHAT INDIA WILL LEARN FROM THE FILMS

Is the effect of the films on daily life really as potent as Mr. Thompson assumes? Is the young film-goer—and there are thousands of them now—deeply influenced by what he sees?

No scientific enquiry has yet been made in this country on the effects of seeing motion pictures on impressionable minds. Some work, however, has been done by American sociologists and their findings are very instructive.

Of 458 high school pupils who were asked to write their "motion picture autobiographies," 66 per cent said that daydreams had followed the seeing of pictures, 39 per cent were often moved to tears, 50 per cent had gleaned information about love-making, 20 per cent were dissatisfied with their own lives after seeing films where youth was free and opulent. The desire for travel had been stirred in 29 per cent of these adolescents and 51 per cent were infected with the desire for further education.

Baudelaire, in an essay on the effects of drugs on the mind, comes to the conclusion that the effect of a drug on a particular person depends on the frame of mind of the person before he took the drug. A sad man becomes even more melancholy, a cheerful man becomes hilarious.

Similarly, the American investigators found that what people get from the films is a crystallization of the attitude they already had. A young man, ready for love, is stirred to amoroseness by the same picture from which another gets tips on the latest styles in men's wear.

One young man wrote: "As I got into high school and into my sixteenth year I began to use the movies as a school of etiquette. I began to observe the table manners of the actors in the eating scenes. I watched for the proper way to conduct oneself at a night club, because I began to have ideas that way. The fact that the leading man's coat was single-breasted or double-breasted, the number of buttons on it, and the cut of its lapels, all influenced me in the choice of my own suits".

Little children who see robbery and violence in a film often imitate these actions at home. This is harmless imitation, for children are not very conscious of the difference between social and anti-social behaviour. Boys love blood-thirsty scenes and are thrilled by adventure stories in a way that is normal and healthy. The same cannot be said for adolescents and adults.

A year or two ago an outcry was raised in the United States against "gangster" films which glorified criminals of the type of Al Capone, and sex stories of the kind in which Mae West was starred. A censorship was set up to "clean up Hollywood." The result is a series of artificial and rather sentimental films and the narrowing down of the field to harmless and uninteresting themes.

In a recent article, Samuel Goldwyn, the famous producer, pointed out the gagging effects of film censorship. All racial themes were barred. Hollywood can no longer make a non-American a villain. If a villain were a Chinese or a Mexican China or Mexico would enter a protest. The result was that all villains had to be hundred per cent American.

In other words, the far reaching effects of the seeing of films on the minds of the people have already been gauged and the instilling of racial prejudice prevented to some extent. The film is a powerful instrument for propaganda as well as a means of entertainment.

The supervision of films should be carried out with great caution. The American researchers advise their classification under three heads—those for children, those for adolescents and those for adults. Horror pictures, sensual love stories and stories that show revolt against morality as being smart and modern should be banned for the first two groups. Adolescents should see pictures showing romantic love, adventure, travel, family relations, school and college life and mystery stories that do not stress horror. Problem pictures of adult life might also be shown to young people who are beginning to consider such matters, provided they are done with insight and sympathy.

There are European governments who control the film industry itself. But this is an extreme measure that tends to deprive the films of the entertainment value which is their drawing card. Mr. Thompson ends his article with these words:

"A wise Government would find the money—even if it meant cutting down the colleges, if it meant cutting down the swank and extravagance of its own higher circles—to provide everywhere a free service of instruction in elementary common sense, through the films (resisting the temptation to slip in propaganda in favour of itself). But this will not happen. No one fusses. No one is going to fuss."

What he means by free instruction in common sense is not very clear. But whatever the Government may or may not do with educational films of the kind now used in some schools, the Indian film industry has its own problems to solve in the field of pure entertainment. They have given up bad Hollywood and imitation opera, and turned their attention to the lives of the people in the streets and in the shops. What they will do with the material in their hands is of great importance to India. They have it in their power to mould the opinions and beliefs of millions of their countrymen. Will they do so? Time alone can tell.

## The Muslim League and our Future

BY PROF. N. SRINIVASAN  
(*Andhra University, Waltair.*)

The evolution of the politics of the League constitutes a curious episode in the contemporary history of India. Under the aggressive leadership of Mr. Jinnah, once its bitterest critic, as he is now of the Congress, the League has increased the catalogue of grievances of the Muslims and has moved from one extreme position to another till at last it stands forth as the champion of separate homelands for the Muslim "nation" in the north-west and north-east of India, and the setting up of independent states. The partition of India is the utmost that can be demanded as a "safeguard" for any community in India. With the demand for Pakistan, communalism must be said to have reached its logical and absurd limits. The League boldly challenges a continuous development of our history under Hindu, Muslim and British rulers for well over two thousand years. Pakistan is the last and desperate remedy for the much advertised tyranny of the majority in India, which the League offers as the most constructive approach to the problem of the Indian constitution.

It is necessary to follow the evolution of the League's politics since Provincial autonomy came into being, for a correct appreciation of its present position. Its politics appear to have been based on the rejection of a common political life for the peoples of India and of the principles of democracy. Without this assumption it would be difficult to explain the tone and trend of the League's politics in the recent past, its increasing demands and successive shifts of position.

In the elections for the Provincial Legislatures under the new constitution, the League won a dominant position in only two of the Provinces of India, the Punjab and Bengal. In the predominantly Muslim zone of the North West, in Sind and the North West Frontier Province, curiously it failed to make much headway. Elsewhere where the Hindus form the bulk of the popu-

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lation its position was that of a microscopic minority<sup>1</sup>. In two provinces it was able to form stable ministries with the Congress as the chief opposition group. It was natural under the Parliamentary system for the League to be left as an opposition minority in most of the other Provinces, in view of the exclusively communal basis of its organisation and its refusal to co-operate with other parties on a common political platform.

The obvious course for any religious group is not to isolate itself as an exclusive political body but to merge itself with the purely political parties drawn from other religious groups on the basis of a common economic and political programme unless it desires to commit political suicide. Such an union with political parties drawn from divergent religious and racial groups is the best safeguard for the religious as well as other rights of a minority. It affords the members of the minority groups the opportunities of leadership and service in the larger community and the chances of office as well as honour. By accepting the postulates of a common political life and the fundamental principles of democratic government and organisation of non-denominational political parties a minority can win for itself a unique place in public life. The members of the League, on the contrary insisted on their exclusive communal character and diver-

<sup>1</sup>The analysis of the return of the Provincial Elections of 1937 are as follows:—

| Provinces.        | Elected on the<br>League Ticket. | Total Muslim<br>seats. |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Madras            | 10                               | 28                     |
| Bombay            | 20                               | 29                     |
| Bengal            | 39                               | 117                    |
| United Provinces  | 27                               | 64                     |
| Punjab            | 1                                | 84                     |
| Bihar             | Nil.                             | 39                     |
| Central Provinces | Nil.                             | 14                     |
| Assam             | 9                                | 34                     |
| N. W. F. Province | Nil.                             | 36                     |
| Orissa            | Nil.                             | 4                      |
| Sind              | Nil.                             | 36                     |
| Total ...         | 106                              | 485                    |

Because of subsequent changes of party and of dual allegiance that several members owe, the strength of the League is greater than the figures indicate. But it is not enough to substantiate the League's claim to be the sole and authoritative representative of the Muslims of India. It is significant that in the overwhelmingly Muslim Zones the League's hold is not very high.

Lord Zetland observed that only a few Muslims had been elected on the Congress ticket. The noble Lord and indeed the whole body of official India seem to ignore the opinions of the vast number of independent Muslims returned at the last Provincial elections who are fundamentally at one with the Congress. (Zetland's speech in Parliament, November, 1939.)

gent programmes, and at the same time claimed office as a matter of right as a minority. This was very much like asking that a majority returned at an election must sacrifice its programmes approved by the people and accept to be bound by the League's dictation, and would have completely defeated the purposes of responsible government. By its exclusiveness the League condemned its members where it was in a minority and the members of other groups where the latter happened to be the minority to a position of permanent opposition.

The interpretation of the exclusion from office under Provincial autonomy and the programmes of the majorities in terms of the community has had very unfortunate results. The opposition has been unable to build up an alternative programme and a party to take its turn as the government when the time arrives as it must. Its criticisms have inevitably tended to be exaggerated, sometimes to the point of ludicrousness. Every measure has become an attack on the minority's cherished rights even when its connection with the minority is very remote, such as the Sales Tax and Tobacco-tax in Madras. There has been a needless admixture of religion and politics, which has only served to weaken the League's case for the recognition of the rights of minorities to a just share of power under the new order.

It was indeed natural for the members of the League to feel disappointed and discouraged at this prospect of a permanent opposition. But the causes they ascribed to it, the 'Hindu communalism' of the Congress, the Assurances which Mr. Jinnah described as Victory No. 1 of the Congress, presumably because it enabled the Congress, in his opinion, to constitute the Ministries without the representatives of the Muslim League, and the alleged alliance between the Congress and the British Government are very far from the being the true reasons<sup>1</sup>. Firstly the Congress is not in theory or in fact a communal organisation. There was no ministry of the Congress in which the Muslims were not represented. Secondly the assurances did not apply to the powers of the Governors for the safeguarding of the minorities. Finally the alliance of the Congress with the Government is pure fiction.

The root cause of this danger was the rejection by the members of the League of the fundamental postulate of parlia-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jinnah: article in 'Time and Tide.'

mentary government, of government by the political party which wins a majority at an election on the basis of programme. In other words the root cause was the strictly communal basis of its organisation. Without accepting a common political life and subscribing to a programme which a member of the minority community has as much right to shape, to insist upon office can be only construed as an attempt to wreck the programme. To insist on composite or coalition cabinets is merely to render responsible government useless to the people. We can and ought to have governments whose personnel is *composite* or drawn from the various groups constituting the body politic; but a government with a *composite programme* or conflicting policies is a useless absurdity. Yet this was what the League insisted upon in our Provincial government as a safeguard for minorities.<sup>1</sup>

Failing to obtain the coalitions or non-party cabinets or to prevent the establishment of responsible government in the Provinces where it happened to be a minority, the League began a new agitation. Mr. Jinnah proclaimed the failure of the Parliamentary system of government in the "Congress Provinces". He made the discovery, after turning the first few pages of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee, that India is not homogeneous and is inhabited by a number of nationalities varying so much among themselves as to constitute different nations. To apply a common political system to such disparate entities as are to be found in this country was, according to Mr. Jinnah, the root cause of all our constitutional ills. The criticism applied only to the Congress Provinces and not to Punjab and Bengal where the League's spokesmen were leading the Governments. This is rather curious since it is in these provinces that the communal problem is particularly acute and the communities are more evenly balanced. One should have thought that the working of the system of parliamentary government would be infinitely more difficult here than elsewhere in India.

A systematic campaign began to "prove" that the Congress Provinces had misused the opportunities of responsible government to oppress the minorities, and parliamentary government had failed in them. The campaign was conducted with an extraordinary lack of courtesy to the opponents and lack of regard for

<sup>1</sup> Jinnah: *ibid.*

truth. Political ethics and the morality of public discussion were cast to the winds. The League seems to have acted on the principle that any stick is good to beat the Congress with. Its one aim was to discredit the Congress and the means did not matter in the least. First came the story of the atrocities, broadcast with an astonishing flippancy all over the country from the platform and the press. It is revealing that the stories were spread first and then a committee was appointed to collect the evidence to support the stories. The Committee toured the country and prepared a book of grievances. The report itself was not given any publicity. A suggestion for a joint enquiry by the President of the Congress was put off by Mr. Huq. A proposal for arbitration was summarily rejected by Mr. Jinnah who stated that he had placed the matter in the hands of the Viceroy. Finally Mr. Jinnah made the preposterous suggestion for a Royal Commission to enquire into the "misdeeds" of the responsible ministers in the Congress Provinces. Mr. Jinnah must have been sure that no Commission would be appointed when he made the suggestion.

Turn to the 'Kulturkampf' alleged to have been carried out by Congress ministries. Hindi, Bande Mataram, the National Flag, the Wardha Scheme of education, the Charka and non-violence have been described as the means of this alleged attempt to undermine the culture of the Muslims of India. Even though these have no association with religion, the criticisms of the League have led to significant modifications. A few facts, however, must be noted before they are condemned. Hindi in Madras did not apply to Muslims schools and to Muslim boys, and the texts prescribed have won the praise of prominent members of the Muslim League itself in the Province. The objectionable portions of the Bande Mataram have been omitted, and it was directed that the Flag should not be displayed even if there was a single dissentient voice in any public building. The Wardha scheme is a novel experiment in education and certainly not directed against any community. Nor can the Charka be described as anti-Muslim, even though it certainly is not quite in line with modern scientific progress. It is merely symbol, and from an economic point of view not quite so useless as some would think. In a poor country like ours it has definite advantages. Nor can it be maintained that Muslims do not benefit from it. Finally the opposition to non-violence is quite incomprehensible in view

of the fact that a public life of reason would be impossible in India without preaching it in view of a tense communal atmosphere. The world has not yet proved the efficacy of violence in effecting social change. In any case here were items in a much larger programme which were open to criticism and amendment if the League's members chose the path of co-operation. It is further to be noted that the criticisms of the League have been purely negative. No alternative programme has been suggested by it.

The finale of this immoderate campaign of vilification was the Day of Deliverance ordered, to be kept, by Mr. Jinnah on his followers on the 22nd December, 1939, on the occasion of the resignation of the Congress Ministries and on the eve of his talks with Mr. Nehru for a communal settlement. That the end of self-government in the greater part of India should have been thought a fit occasion for the celebration of a day of deliverance from unproven if not untrue evils and of thanksgiving to God, brings out clearly the solicitude of the League for the principles of self-government for India. It is certain that the masses who follow Mr. Jinnah would soon realise if they have not already done so that the "tyranny" of their elected representatives is far more to be preferred to the strange "freedom" of bureaucratic rule which the League urged them to welcome with a Day of Deliverance.

Two significant developments in the policies of the League must be referred to as they bring out the latest tendencies towards Fascism and the complete disregard for the principles of democracy of the League, and the potentialities for evil in them. One in the protection afforded by the League to the militant organisation of the Khaksars, which has visions of a theocratic State to be achieved by means of violence. While the Congress was in office the organisation gave no end of trouble to the U. P. Government with the support of the League. Nor has the League condemned violence on the part of its own volunteers even when it has resulted in murder.<sup>1</sup> This is most unfortunate since such an attitude on the part of the leaders will convert our public life into fratricidal strife.

The second development is the organisation of the State People's Muslim League. There can of course be no objection

<sup>1</sup> Jinnah—Nehru Correspondence.

to this organisation as such. But its policies make it dangerous to the national and democratic movement. It is closely associated with the movement of the Khaksars. The League's attitude to the problem of the States is a contradictory one. In States with Hindu rulers but with a predominantly Muslim population the League is the champion of democratic rights. In States with Muslim rulers but with Hindu Subjects the League and its ancillary organisations send or promise to send thousands of volunteers for the preservation of autocracy and the suppression of popular movement.<sup>1</sup>

There is one other aspect of the League's politics which must be mentioned here. The League has not always spoken with the same voice. Its policy has been dual. While extremism has been running riot on the one hand with Mr. Jinnah as the spearhead, a conciliatory gesture and a more moderate approach have not been wanting. During the years the Congress has been in office, then and afterwards, the League has responded to several efforts for a settlement of the communal problem. These efforts have all ended in failure, and the reasons must be understood.

The League has always insisted on an impossible pre-condition for any negotiations with the Congress. It has claimed that it should be recognised as "the sole and authoritative" organisation of the Muslims of India. The implications of the claim must not be missed. It means no less than that the Indian National Congress should commit political suicide. It is a demand that the Congress should abandon unchivalrously the large numbers of Muslims on its rolls, the Shias, the Momins, the Ahrars and the large masses who are behind the Azad Conference, to the tender mercies of the League, to be represented or misrepresented by it. Obviously the claim of a political party to be representative of a religious group in a totalitarian way cannot be admitted without grave injury to the State. The admission of such a claim involves the creation of an imperium in imperio. It would be to set up, as it were, two kinds of empires, each claiming to be representative of a religious community. Besides such a claim can be justified democratically only when the masses of Muslims and Hindus have pronounced their confidence in the League or the Congress. In the presence of other parties such a claim is certainly an usurpation of democratic rights. The

<sup>1</sup> Aurangzebe Khan at Lahore, February, 1940.

results of the election of 1937 and the growth of nationalist Muslim opinion and other evidences prove conclusively that the League's claim cannot be sustained. The Congress quite rightly refused to arrogate to itself a function which belongs to the body of Muslims in the country. But it went as far as it could go, perhaps more than it should have done, and was willing to recognise the League as the most important of the Muslim organisations in the country. But the League was not satisfied. It was unwilling to negotiate on any other terms than its own. This claim to be representative of the entire mass of Muslims in the country without a willingness to submit that claim to them displays once again the aversion of the Muslim League to the masses and democratic principles, and brings out its true character as predominantly an organisation of the upper middle classes. It is further a sure indication of the unwillingness for an agreement.

Nor is this all. The problem to be negotiated has never been fully stated by the League. Its demands have been vague. Illustrative demands have been referred to.<sup>1</sup> But they have never yet been completely formulated. This places the negotiators on behalf of the Congress or any other party in a most awkward position. They have to accept completely unspecified demands, however unreasonable they may be, or admit a breakdown. In the illustrative points alluded to, which have appeared in the Press, there is nothing like a programme which must appear in a predominantly agricultural country with its population on the verge of misery. There is little of economic reform, or even educational reform. The issues that are prominently mentioned are questions of cow-killing, music before mosques, Urdu, the Flag, and representation in local bodies and Legislative assemblies, and above all jobs in the public services. The percentages demanded bear absolutely no proportion to the numbers of the population. With a programme that lays little emphasis on political advance or economic reform, it is not a matter for surprise that a party laying every emphasis on independence and economic freedom for the masses finds it exceedingly difficult to come to an agreement. If the fundamental objectives of freedom, economic advancement, democracy and a common political life were admitted by the League in word and deed,

<sup>1</sup> Nehru-Jinnah correspondence.

a settlement with it would perhaps have come a long while ago and we should not be left an unsolved communal problem today.

This brief review of the politics of the League makes it easy to understand its present position. The Lahore resolution of the League reiterates its rejection of the Government of India Act of 1935, and urges firstly that the whole constitutional problem should be examined *de novo* at the end of the present war, secondly that "no revised plan of constitution would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent" and finally that the new constitution of India must be based on the basic principles contained in the following words of the Resolution:—

"Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, namely, geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are in a majority as in the north-western and north-eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute "independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign, and that adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be provided in the constitutions for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective, and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

"This session further authorises the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with those basic principles providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all the powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."<sup>1</sup>

The Committee set up by the League has not yet reported. The details of the scheme of constitution therefore remain vague. But the main outlines of a constitution based on the principles

<sup>1</sup>Resolution of Lahore Session.

set off in the Resolution may easily be guessed. The basic principles are two. The first is the division of India into zones inhabited predominantly by populations of one or the other of the two faiths, Islam and Hinduism, the north-western and north-eastern and the rest. Two zones are mentioned, but more are hinted at. Whatever is left out after the Muslim zones are carved out will presumably form the Hindu zone. The zones will be "autonomous and sovereign" controlling every function of the government, such as defence, foreign affairs, customs, communications and others. They will inherit the powers of the present Central Government. No common organisation is contemplated for the whole of India. The zones are not to be sub-federations within a Federation of All-India as had been earlier proposed by some of the League's spokesmen. They are to be independent and to treat with one another as such. The present Provinces will continue as autonomous units of the zones, instead of being autonomous units of an All-India Federation as at present. To make the majorities of the Muslims and Hindus effective the necessary territorial adjustments will be made.

The second principle is that of "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards" to be devised in consultation with the different minorities in the different zones and embodied in the constitution. These concern the "religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests" of the minorities. The Resolution of the League demands these safeguards for the Muslim minorities in the non-Muslim zones and promises them for the minorities within the Muslim zones.

Certain obvious lacunae of the scheme must be pointed out here. There is no mention of the place to be accorded to the States, which constitute one of the most intractable of the problems of the maker of our future constitution. How are the States to be fitted into the zonal scheme? Would they be content to exchange the paramountcy of the British Government for that of the zonal Governments? What will be the relationship of the States to the zonal Governments? Will the rulers of the States and their peoples have no say in determining their future and the future of India?

The fundamental reason for putting forward the scheme of division is that the Hindus and Muslims constitute separate and mutually exclusive civilizations and that they are two nations

with no affinities between themselves. No common political life is therefore possible for them. A common political life, it is asserted, would lead to a permanent domination of the Muslims by the Hindus. The result, it is prophesied, would be the creation of "a Hindu totalitarian regime," and "the destruction of the States, Muslim civilisation and British commerce."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jinnah who has raised these extraordinary fears therefore claims for the Muslims the right of self-determination and separate homelands for the Muslim nation.

Self-determination in any comprehensible sense must mean the decision by the people directly through a plebiscite or indirectly through their chosen representatives on any issue. But the self-determination claimed by Mr. Jinnah is not of this character. The League is against any process of election by the Indian people or even by the Muslims in a separate electorate even though it claims to represent them. The League speaks for the Muslims as their "sole and authoritative organisation". The voice of Mr. Jinnah is the voice of the League and therefore of the Muslims.

Nor is this all. A people cannot claim an unqualified right of self-determination for itself and at the same time deny it to others. The League would not permit the other "nationalities" of India besides the Muslims and the Hindus, and according to the high authority of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee there are many more of them claiming the exercise of this right which it claims for the Muslims. To admit such a right would necessarily mean the splitting up of India, Muslim as well as Hindu, into a hundred bits. A political fragmentation of the country, comparable in appearance to the economic fragmentation of agricultural holdings with which we are familiar, will be the inevitable result of such an admission. Logically, if we are to have Pakistans and Hindustans, we must also have Khalsasthan, Jatistan, Aboriginistan and Dravidnad for which other "nations" in India have already voiced a demand at "representative" gatherings!

The second of the principles postulates that the safeguards for the minorities must be devised in consultation with them. No idea of the kind of safeguards to be so provided has, however, been given. Perhaps the detailed constitutional scheme

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jinnah's article in 'Time and Tide.'

of the League will formulate them. There is no way out suggested for the not unlikely contingency of a minority taking an attitude of intransigence and pressing the most extravagant claims. When the League rejects categorically majority rule, even when the majority assures it safeguards of its own choosing—why should not the minorities in the Muslim zones take a leaf out of the book of the League's politics and do the same? The minorities in the zones may well insist on their right of self-determination. They may want rights which negate the principle of majority rule. In the case of the zones it is certain that the majorities will be based on religious grouping and the majorities will be more absolute. The minorities therefore with more reason than the League may refuse to be bound by the decisions of the majorities; and they may refuse arbitration. Will the League coerce these recalcitrant minorities?

It might appear strange that a scheme for the partition of the country which has been long united into a number of independent and sovereign states should have been put forward at a time when the doctrine of the sovereign State has plunged a whole continent, professing a single faith, into anarchy, reduced its villages and cities into shambles, caused untold misery to millions by the barbarities of scientific warfare, and threaten to engulf the whole of civilisation. But Pakistan is a vision. Visions lead to strange courses. They often run counter to reason and commonsense and the hard realities of life. This is partly responsible for this reversion to the politics of the Middle Ages. Lest this be thought an unwarranted assertion, we quote the Maharaja of Mahamudabad, addressing the Bombay Provincial Muslim League conference:

"The State will conform to the laws laid down in Islam. It will deal justly and fairly with every community and every section of its constituent members. The unchangeable laws of Islam will *ipso facto* be applied and enforced. There will be no fresh legislation in regard to them because Islam has already legislated for them for ever and ever."....  
"There will be prohibition, absolute and rigorous, with no chance for its being withdrawn. Usury will be abolished. Zakat will be levied. Why should not we be allowed to make this experiment? In treading this path we shall not be crossing the path of any right-minded individual. Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians will benefit equally from beneficent, all pervading activities of this democratic theocratic state."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Presidential Address by the Maharaja, April, 25th (Hindu, 25th April 1940)

If one thing is established by history it is the inherent antithesis of democracy and theocracy. Theocracies in history have been the most odious of tyrannies and personal freedom is impossible under them. The "all-pervading activities" of the theocracy make it a spying, moral inquisitor, and makes the individual truly a slave. The theocracy of Turkey, no less than the Consistory of Calvin at Geneva, had perpetrated the worst horrors in the name of religion. Still the Maharaja Saheb would urge that democracy and theocracy are possible at the same time, and would hold up the ideal of Pakistan.

Can one escape the feeling that the League is either out of touch with the realities of the modern world or is consciously misleading the public? Crowds are unfortunately not trained to view things critically. But it is certainly the duty of political parties and their responsible leaders not to mislead the public with the promise of unrealisable millenniums. It is a pity that the Maharaja Saheb did not look around him when he eloquently explained the beauties of Pakistan for the conditions prevailing in independent Muslim States or nearer home to the Provinces where the Muslim League has been in power for well over three years. Why has Turkey discarded the Khalifate? Why have not Egypt, Turkey, Persia, Iraq, Afghanistan and other Muslim States dispensed with Legislative bodies if Islam has legislated for ever? Why do the governments of these countries send out their best young men to European Universities for the study of western Law? (The writer happens to know some of these students personally)? And why do their statue books get filled up with fresh legislation if Islam has legislated for all times? Why have not the Punjab and Bengal introduced Prohibition even as an experiment or suppressed usury and why have the spokesmen of the League been vehement opponents of Prohibition in other Provinces of India?

The resolution of the League came as a surprise to many people in this country. But really there need have been no surprise at all. It flows logically from the initial premises of the League's politics during the last few years. Pakistan has been a sword of Damocles hanging over the head of Indian nationalism for well over a decade. It is the logical end of the League's separatism, and the rejection of a common political life for India. Nor again could the constitutional machinery of the separate

electorate, first introduced in 1909 by the Minto-Morley Reforms, and since expanded to cut up the Indian people on the basis of religion, race, business and profession by the Communal Award of 1932, have led to any other consequence. The division of India has been implicit in it.

Mr. Jinnah has proclaimed that at last an ideal to live for and die for has been found. He urges a "fight to the last ditch" to achieve it. Pakistan is the salvation of the Muslims and the one and the only solution of the vexed question of minorities. It is a desperate remedy to be achieved by means equally desperate. Mr. Jinnah offers us the alternatives of Pakistan and the complete surrender of the rest of India to his demand or threatens a "reign of chaos," neither of which can be contemplated with equanimity.

If on the one hand Mr. Jinnah and his ardent followers announce Pakistan with the fervour of prophecy, on the other hand a section of the League—true to the dualism of its policies in the past—extends the hand of fellowship and conciliation to the Hindus. Evidence is not wanting to show that either the scheme is put forward as a weapon for bargaining a communal settlement or that a large section of the League have come to realise the dangers inherent in the scheme and its utter impossibility. The Premier of Bengal, Mr. Huq, who moved the Resolution on Pakistan at Lahore has said recently at a meeting in Malabar that it is "merely a suggestion." He has urged a conference of the Premiers of the Provinces to solve the communal problem and find a way out of the present constitutional deadlock. In his latest utterances he has pleaded for the unity of the country in this hour of peril. The Prime Minister of the Punjab has made a similar proposal for a small conference for the solution of our constitutional difficulties and has put forward a most eloquent plea for unity as the means of saving our liberties. It is inconceivable that these distinguished statesmen could think of the possibility of the co-operation of the Congress or other parties in India without the frank acceptance of the unity of the country.

If we set aside Pakistan for the moment, what is it that the League stands for concretely? Firstly it stands for an assured share of political power in the future government of India, and a share of the spoils of office of every kind. Secondly it

desires the religion, language (Urdu) and the culture of the Muslims to be adequately and effectively safeguarded by constitutional guarantees. Thirdly it asserts as a means to this end that the present constitution of India should be revised *de novo* and the constitutional plan for the future must have the consent and approval of the Muslims of India.

The moderate section of the League would probably accept a system of fundamental rights including the provision for the places of the minorities in the Legislatures, local bodies and public services of the country. It desires its majorities to be preserved in the Provinces of Bengal and Punjab but at the same time claims a weightage for the Muslims in the Provinces where they are in a minority. It seems to prefer the largest possible autonomy for the constituent Provinces of India with the residuary powers vested in the Provinces and a due share for Muslims in the central government of an all-India Federation. It desires further the opportunities of co-operation between the Muslim Zone Province for mutual purposes, an attenuated form of the Pakistan.

If such a programme does not compromise the unity of India as a whole, which is the indispensable condition of winning and maintaining our freedom, if the safeguards claimed do not constitute a patent injustice to the other communities, and if the approval and consent of the Muslim mean the consent and approval of the elected representatives of Indian Muslims, then there is hardly anything in this programme to which other parties in the country could not agree. The matter would be capable of adjustment round a table between the representatives of the parties or of the people.

But the issues are never presented in this wise. The mood that is dominant is the extremist one and we see the League insisting on the rejection of a common political life and on the division of India. The approval and consent of the Muslims of India is made to mean simply the desires of the leaders of the Muslim League. The League forbids the British Government to make a declaration of India's free status till it pleases the small group of leaders dominating it. This attitude can be described in the words of Mr. Jinnah himself on a former occasion as the attempt of the tail to wag the head of the dog. It raises serious and vital questions. Has a party, even assuming

that it is fully representative of a particular community, which is a minority and which is assured every reasonable safeguard for its future, a right to veto the political progress of the country? To admit the claim of the League to prevent the constitutional evolution of India unless its extravagant claims are met is really to "enthroned intimidation in the seats of power" and to throw aside both courage and principle for fear of alienating a few in pursuing the interests of the vast majority. When it is seen that the party claiming this extraordinary power is not in fact even fully representative of the Muslims of India, whom it professes to represent, it is obvious that the claim is utterly untenable.

In the politics and programme of the League, it has been already remarked, is a stranger dualism. It states its objective to be the complete freedom of India, "a free Islam in a free India,"—but it opposes the grant of freedom and celebrates a day of deliverance when the flame of self-government is extinguished in the greater part of India. It calls for communal harmony and urges the need of unity, but talks of the two nations, and advocates the vivisection of India. It prides itself on the democracy of Islam, but is intolerant of dissent from its own opinions by the followers of Islam, and refuses to take its mandate from the people, the very Muslims whom it claims to represent, and opposes the Constituent Assembly or any other democratic procedure for framing the future constitution. It advertises its deep concern for the masses but its programmes display scant appreciation of the pressing problem of these masses, of poverty and unemployment, and a preoccupation with places in the public services and percentages in the Legislatures, and religious grievances. It professes to scorn the Charka and non-violence as antiquated, but itself perfers a medieval theocratic ideal. It talks of the strength of the ninety millions of Muslims—no one in his senses will doubt that, safeguards or no safeguards, they are and will be powerful—but it appeals to Britain to recognise the leadership of the League and to have confidence in it. It protests its nationalism, but is unwilling to march in line with the forces of nationalism, and prefers to co-operate with its deadly enemy.

## *Whither, Carnatic Music?*

BY R. RAMANUJA AYYANGAR

We all know that our music has its origin in the mists of antiquity. Down through the ages, it has grown from strength to strength, thanks to the toils of eminent grammarians from Bharata and Sarangadeva to Venkatamakhi, and composers from Jayadeva to the immortal trinity of the last century. It is also a fact worthy of note that Europe owes the foundations of its music to ancient India. To quote a famous orientalist, "From India and the East, where many ancient historical traces are found, music followed man in his wanderings through Persia and Egypt. Like the light of the day, musical enlightenment moved from east to west, through Hebrews, Greeks and Romans." "A regular system of notation had been worked out in India long before the age of Panini, and the seven notes designated by their initial letters. This notation passed through Persia and Arabia and was introduced into Europe by Guido-de-Arezzo in the 11th century A.D."

The antiquity of the art, however, is not its sole title to our consideration. It is the perfection it attained even in the early centuries of the Christian era that compels our admiration. One may, therefore, dismiss as a mere fib the assertion that our music gained by contact with Muslims. Mahomedans were no lovers of music before they set foot on Indian soil. Their very religion set its face against it. It were nearer the truth to say that progress of the art was arrested by Muslim dominance. From aversion and apathy to patronage was a long, long way. And it is a glorious testimony to the enduring vitality of our ancient culture that music not only survived the onslaught on its existence, but captivated the hearts of men like Malik Kafur who found the art in such a flourishing condition in South India that on his return he took with him a whole army of Carnatic musicians to far-away Delhi. Nevertheless, the impact of an alien and unfriendly culture was so pronounced that North India lost its moorings for good so far as music was concerned, and developed a mongrel type of art which not even a Titan like the late Bhatkande could place on a definite, tangible, scientific basis. And

this leads us direct into what to my mind is an urgent problem. It is almost a fashion nowadays to plead for a fusion of North and South Indian music. Fortunately for the art, this harangue comes only from those who, thanks to their status in public life rather than to their acquaintance with music per se, open music conferences or preside over prize distributions. The richness and sonorousness of the North Indian voice, made very familiar to us in recent times through the gramophone and the Radio, have so overpowered us that the less informed and more enthusiastic among us have been carried off their feet. They cannot see that they in the north are assiduously helping themselves, the while we are thoughtlessly overturning the balance in a sort of wild goose chase. In fact, in Europe there has been a swing in favour of South Indian melodies of late. Hindustani ustads of the last generation were so indifferent to our music that they referred to solfaing extempore as playing the harmonium with the mouth. But the tide has long since turned. Frantic efforts are now made to sing kalpana swara, though the success achieved thus far does not appear to be considerable. The South Indian Gotu Vadyam has won an honoured place there, and has been rechristened the Vichitra Veena. The Suddha Maddalam used in our temples sails under the name of Pakwaj. Quite recently the violin, the shanai and the dolak have been forging ahead. Let us hope that before long the north will learn all the varied aspects of our music, take up all our instruments, and give us something more than the half a line of obscure words lengthening out into interminable acrobatics of the voice. Let us hope that it will bestow increasing attention on accompaniments so that the tabla and other instruments may come to enjoy some status and individuality, rather than figure as adjuncts to ensure an even tempo. Let us hope that our Melakartha Scheme with its Raganga and Janya Ragas in all their purity and subtlety will be studied in the north, so that order may evolve out of the chaos that prevails there today. And lastly let us hope that the various types of compositions like the Varnam, the Kriti, the Padam, the Swarajati and the Laya epitomes of Tirupugazh will be diligently studied by musicians in the north. Whereas we may copy the marvellous voice culture of the north, they have everything else to learn from us. Only on these lines can there be fusion between north and

south, if there is to be a renaissance of Indian Music as a whole.

Obversely it is our duty to set our house in order and keep it in good trim. But what do we see about us? The best in our hallowed tradition is challenged by disruptive forces from within and without. When music enjoyed the patronage of ruling princes and noble families, genius and originality had a congenial soil for growth and unfolding. Not only was the wolf kept off the door, but musical knowledge was freely and efficiently imparted under the Gurukula Sampradaya. In course of time this support vanished, and the musician who had hitherto cultivated art for art's own sake had to find a market for his wares if he was not to starve. Even a healthy social reform in the conduct of weddings indirectly hit the musician. Temples and kindred institutions, that provided a scanty meed of bread and board to a few, sank into a moribund condition hardly conducive to the vigorous, dynamic growth of art. The Gurukula system toppled down, since the teacher had been obliged to market his produce. Just now came the music sabha, with its democracy, its hydra-headed tastes, its box-office attitude, its intolerance of what is beyond its ken, and the perennial, disconcerting trek of paper bits to the musician on the dais. Anyone who tossed a few chips at the counter pushed himself in and claimed his right to call the tune. Consequently, there was a lowering of the standard. The creative artists, never prolific in number, found their occupation gone, in the face of the premium set upon cheap, tawdry stuff that tickled the ear for the nonce.

It was in this welter of confusion that the scale of values was upset and things like the harmonium and the Indian Orchestra, short-time summer courses and postal tuitions, came in. The general literacy of the musician went so low that it gave birth to a despicable practice which, perhaps, has no parallel anywhere else in the world. Telugu songs came to be written in Tamil, with absolutely no idea of the phonetics of the language, not to speak of the purport of the pieces. No condemnation is too strong for this melancholy state of affairs. A working knowledge of Telugu is easy to acquire. This has been made indispensable to all earnest students of music by Sri Thyagaraja and a host of distinguished composers who have wrought priceless gems in the language. It is said that the late Mr. Gokhale learnt Bengalee to enjoy the 'Gitanjali' in the original. What shall I say of

a monumental work in Telugu which I have been looking through with awe and reverence for the last 16 years and yet I feel I have touched but a fringe of it? I refer to the "Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarsini", a stupendous work of enduring art, compiled with superhuman effort and the most consummate skill, by the late Subbarama Dikshitar of Ettaiyapuram. The work is a veritable colosseum, and has also shared its fate at the hands of more than one pilferer. But it has not had the recognition it deserves, for two reasons. Firstly it is in Telugu. Secondly, the system of notation it adopts requires very good Swaragnanam, constant practice, infinite patience and above all a sound and practical knowledge of veena technique on the part of those who go to it. I cannot help in this connection, a reference to the late Dhanammal who followed the system with meticulous precision as I could verify during the twelve years I sat at her feet. The notation I have referred to is one of the most important aspects of our music. Unfortunately, however, it is not as widely prevalent as it should be. The need for popularising it is very urgent, especially after the decline of Gurukula and Karnaparampara traditions. Of the thousands of Sri Thyagaraja's compositions not more than 600 are extant today. Kshetragna records that he composed 4200 padams. Not more than thirty of them can be rescued from oblivion, if even now diligent efforts are made in that direction. The genius of Carnatic music being what it is, there is no other way of preserving classical compositions except through notation on the lines of the great work just now referred to. With more than 25 years of incessant practice, and having learnt over 700 compositions only through our traditional notation and sight reading, I firmly believe that a great deal of fruitful activity and yeoman service to music await our Universities and academies if only they will realise the wonderful possibilities. The importance of this cannot be overestimated, as the blessings it confers on a student of the art are manifold. For among others, it sharpens the sensitiveness of the ear, makes for ready and unerring Swaragnanam, gives a sure, analytical grasp of the principles of layam, renders the task of learning new things incredibly easy, effects considerable economy in time and labour, and is a convenient vehicle for transmission of musical material through writing. The neglect of this important medium of musical expression accounts for the paucity of well-

edited high class literature that may be classed with "Sampradaya Pradarsini." It is a great pity that not one of the numerous institutions that profess to labour for the advancement of music has felt the urge to form a committee of experts to collect and edit what little is still left of the compositions of great masters like Sri Thyagaraja, Dikshithar, Syama Sastri, Subbaraya Sastri, Kshetragna, Pallavi Gopalier, Dharmapuri Subbarayar, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Muthu Thandavar, Ghanam Krishnier, Anantha Bharati, Arunachala Kavi, Patnam Subramanya Ayyar, Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Ayyangar, Kavi Kunjara Bharathi and Srirangam Venkatadri Swamigal.

"Sampradaya Pradarsini," which has been referred to more than once, was a publication financed at immense sacrifice by the ruling family of Ettaiyapuram. The work contains quite a large number of compositions in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil by members of the family. The most distinguished of them appears to be Kumara Ettendra whose thirteen pieces are of surpassing beauty. Now another royal family is out to place the music world under a deep debt of gratitude. The publication of the multi-lingual compositions of Maharajah Swati Tirunal is in progress. It augurs very well indeed for the enterprise that the editing has been entrusted to the Grand Old man of Carnatic musicians, Brahmasri Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar, himself a composer of renown. We may, therefore, look forward to a publication of inestimable value, since Maharajah Swati Tirunal's compositions have already established a reputation far and wide, thanks to the resource and zeal of the royal patrons of Travancore.

Modern mechanisation is another powerful agent that can help to conserve our heritage. It has already brought about a revolution by making music a cheap article of everyday consumption and handing it to the masses. The gramophone and the Radio may be turned to very good account if a syndicate of musicians and patrons put their shoulders to the wheel in a spirit of service and brotherhood and create a co-operative trust, free from the clogs of commercialism and conflicting allegiances. If they hitch their waggon to the star, and get the best material available for purposes of recording, the gramophone may yet redeem itself and play its part well. The Radio is fast developing into a mighty institution whose influence on society may

be considerable. But its activities are not confined to music, nor is advancement of the art one of its aims. Its obvious pursuit is large-scale catering on a thousand lines. So enlightened public opinion has to make its weight felt, so that Broadcasting Stations may bring about necessary readjustments in their programmes. For instance they may easily cut down the number of artistes booked from day to day. This will save a great deal of money and labour, and improve the quality of music. They can do away with short programmes that only encourage superficiality and stifle spontaneity and originality. They can place an embargo on songs like Neeirangai, Intaparaka, manasasancharare and adumchidambaram that have been repeated beyond the limits of endurance. They can reassess the value of a twenty-five minute Veena recital at noon, a fifteen minute music lesson flashed across the ether, and the entire music of a film story brought from the silver screen to the mike. No institution under the sun is perfect. Broadcasting is no exception to this rule. As it brings music to the very door, it is a formidable rival to the music hall, and a potential force for good or evil. Hence it is incumbent on those in charge of music programmes to regard their work as a sacred mission, stand four-square against considerations of fear or favour, of reformist clamour or communal and sectional eruptions, and maintain a proper balance as between a fledgeling in art and a scholar, between talent and mediocrity. With this end in view, they can seek the co-operation of an advisory body of persons steeped in musical culture, and not of mere non-official dignitaries.

Next to the gramophone and the Radio, the talkie claims our notice. As a rival, if not a successor, to the South Indian stage, the talkie, perhaps, is on a lower level of taste and culture, so far as music is concerned. The success and popularity of a film story has largely depended on the extent to which its musical output has caught popular fancy and the number of song-hits it has sent into the street. Crude imitation of North Indian tunes, plagiarism of old pieces, and a discordant, ear-splitting, outlandish jazz, known as background orchestra, have combined in a murderous assault on Carnatic music. A veritable Pandora's Box has been opened and it does not look as if the fairy will make her appearance in the near future. Many must have noted with a bleeding heart how popular taste is being corrupted, especially

by things like the incoherent orchestral preludes to the song-hits of stars and satellities. It is all so un-Indian, if not unmusical, and alien to the genius, structure, delicate refinement and spiritual appeal of Carnatic music.

I have mentioned a number of factors that have a definite influence on the progress of music. The advent of democracy in the realm of art, as I said before, has not been an unmixed blessing. The art and its exponents were held in great veneration when the former was the exclusive property of a narrow guild. But it disappeared when every mountebank passed for an artist, and every frivolous music-fan claimed to be a critic and a connoisseur. High seriousness and dignity, somnolent repose, virile suggestiveness, and spontaneous free play of imagination are elements of excellence in art that must be carefully nourished if it is to stand the stress and hustle of modern conditions. With the time limit and the set programme of the reformist, came the thin end of the wedge. An interdict descended on distinctive features of cultural music like Swaram and Pallavi. The next step was taken when beautiful instruments like the kanjira and the ghatam fell into disgrace. Even the nagaswaram made free love to the tambura and mridangam, however ill-assorted and incongruous the alignment might look. Hurry was the prevailing key-note, and so elaborate Raga-alapana and pallavi ceased to be the forte of the nagaswaram player. He took a second to help him and both served out kritis and miscellaneous hits with a vengeance. The Veena and the Venu went to the wilderness, and so did the Harikatha, a glorious institution built up by illustrious veterans like Krishna Bhagavathar and Pandit Lakshmanachariar. Civilized life, constant travel, and other things ruined the vocalist's voice to such an extent that the Carnatic musician of today makes a dismal picture beside his compeer in the north, in point of pitch, range, volume, melody and flexibility of voice. Came the Brindaganam and the variety entertainment, and vandalism reached its limits.

So much about the ills that afflict the world of music. How shall we find remedies for them? I have suggested a few lines on which matters may be improved. Music is a vehicle of spritual culture. From time immemorial it has been reckoned an upaveda and a sadhana for higher pursuits. The hierarchy associated with it was drawn from the class of the siddhar, the rishi, the bhakta,

and the upasaka. Only when the musician fell away from his ideals and noble pursuits did he lose caste. Our land has never known such a thing as secular music. So nothing short of a sea-change in our attitude as a whole can achieve anything. To remain indifferent when a rare link with the glorious past like the late Veena Dhanammal languished in poverty and obscurity, and then to flood the press and the platform with messages and speeches when she had passed from our midst can not be of any use.

To start with, institutions connected with music should raise the standard of material either taught or purveyed. The place of honour should be assigned to ragam, madyamakalam, swara-kalpana and similar items that develop creative ingenuity. To say this is not to minimise the importance of building up an extensive repertoire, especially drawn from Sri Thyagaraja, with due deference to those who exalt other composers and start unedifying controversies. Plagiarism should be ruthlessly stamped out, so that the "என்ற மெட்டு" music may not pollute our ears any longer. Instruments should receive very great attention for the advantages they possess over the voice. Accompanying instruments that promote symmetry and provide scope for individual talent should be encouraged. Moreover, the music of the sounds has a wider appeal than the music of the words, and a good acquaintance with an instrument is an insurance against charlatanry. The veena should be rescued from the depths to which it has sunk. Ordinarily, it is a harmonium or a gotu-vadyam that emerges from it nowadays, and not genuine veena music. For the technique of the veeha is almost a lost art. The Broadcasting Stations in South India have been according a very liberal measure of encouragement to the veena in particular. One notes it with grateful thanks. But so far, quality does not appear to have weighed with them as much as quantity, and the proportion of solo to combined veena and vocal music may be more equitably adjusted. Lastly, false prophets who plump for standardisation and regimentation in music, and those who base their claims on mere heredity or "என்ற பதில்", should be given short shrift.

Another unique feature of music that South India has preserved through all the vicissitudes of time and tide is Bharata Natya. Caught in the cobwebs of ignorance and prejudice, consigned

to oblivion through popular indifference, and shunned by misguided reformism as an odious social excrescence, it was hanging between life and death for a long time. Now came upon the scene a frail, unobtrusive youth, the gifted scion of a long line of savants devoted to this branch of art. He waved his magic wand. At a single bound the art rose sphinx-like to the firmament. It shed the coarseness that had enmeshed it for a time, and revealed itself as a thing of immeasurable beauty and joy. He who had come as a messiah saw that his life's mission had been fulfilled, and art had come into its own. Just then the gods called him, and he went, though yet in the prime of life. May his soul rest in peace! This revival of dance has been greeted with great enthusiasm all over the country. Even our children have caught this new spirit so much that almost every child that attends a girls' school is a danseuse. The culture, refinement, and world-wide influence of Adyar should be sufficient to ensure the future of dance as a national expression of art. May this new-born enthusiasm bear fruit in sustained creative activity all round, so that we may yet hold our heads up as children of the home of art, our beloved Mother India!



## Reviews

### ENGLISH

*Modern Marathi Short Stories.* Edited by B. G. Shinde. (Published by B. G. Shinde, Saroj Prakashan, 249, Sharad Villa, Bombay, 19). Copies obviously can be had on applying to Mr. B. G. Shinde. Price not made known.

Speaking for myself, because I cannot claim to speak for certain others in literary matters, and there are plenty of them for whom the gods that made them must some day apologise, I must say that this collection of translations into English of some modern Marathi short stories, published by Mr. Shinde, evokes in me an enthusiasm which nothing else literary, of recent times, written by an Indian, or published by an Indian, in India or abroad, in English or in an Indian language, roused in me. I am so emphatic about this that I cease to think of the impropriety of my praising afresh, in these review columns, a publication that pays me the compliment of printing my opinion of Mr. Shinde's fine publishing venture on the book's coverlet! Living in a literary India that sees Tchegov in R. K. Narayans, it pains me to think that a volume like the one I am now reviewing might miss the notice of the high and the mighty in the world of well-sold newspapers. There can be nothing more agonizingly awkward than that an Indian, who speaks his own mother-tongue in his home, should attempt writing stories or novels about Indian life in English, and that some one else, ignorant and dark of mind, should talk of them as precious delineations of Indian society! If, added to this, there is flaunted, in the face of the literary world, the monstrous view, be it even in a most insignificant preface to a not too significant book, that the great Tagore, who created magnificent works of art in the language he spoke in his home, was a fake, and that the latest adventurer playing with English syntax, is a Tchegov, there is an end to tolerance. It is time one realised that Tchegov's place in the world's literature is quite unlike the claims of an Indian who, even apart from his astounding lack of depth, must, because of his choice of a foreign medium, only play with the surface of life in India, so as to be able to present, maybe the whole surface, but still *only* the surface, to an admiring, non-Indian audience to whom anything more Indian than the inanities of Mrs. F. E. Penny, of honoured memory, is gloriously Indian! The wise men who see a Tchegov in Mr. R. K. Narayan do not know their Tchegov—and do not know their India.

And that is why this collection of modern Marathi short stories appeals to me as a step in the right direction as far as the growth of literatures in the Indian languages is concerned. It is not that I cannot see the flaws in the publication, and, more, the flaws, too, in many of the stories collected here for translation. But one thing is beyond doubt. Each story is a

genuine attempt to interpret the various social forces at work in modern India. It is the authentic voice of literary India: not less authentic because some of the stories are crude, and some even immature. A few of the stories, of course, are perfect chiselled pieces. Mr. Phadke, I have always thought, is a master-craftsman, and, if his story, *Chandra*, in this collection, is very, very good, (and the *Triveni* published it a year or so ago) the story of his I liked best is one called *Love's Interlude*, or perhaps just *The Interlude*, published in the *Triveni* two or three years ago, which can rank with the world's best. Mr. Phadke has understanding, imagination, balance of mind, and excellent technique. He deserves more notice from the literary public in India than half a dozen Mr. R. K. Narayans reckoned together. Mr. Chinchlikar's story about a bit of a pencil is done in bad English at places, but it is a highly interesting and amusing story, and betrays no signs of crudeness or immaturity. Most of the other stories are ambitious attempts by very promising writers, but failing at one point or another towards the end of the story: in fact, just failing to be successful literary pieces. This must be said in particular of the stories: *The Guardian Angel* by Mrs. Krishnabai, *The Queen of the Night*, *Two Hearts* and *The Ordeal*. The last mentioned story struck me as one with beautiful possibilities, destroyed in its beauty by a melodramatic turn where the poor girl's stupid ordeal begins, and an ugly and needless unreality swamps all else out. The story of the prostitute, Rakhmabai, is well-conceived. Only, I think the author should have made the prostitute throw away the rupees into the street instead of merely into a corner of her room. The point about her searching for the money later would have been more effective, if she started searching with a torch-light or a lantern in the street.

Apart from the substance of the stories and the criticism thereof, it is my regretful duty to point out that the publication leaves something to be desired otherwise. It is necessary that the names of the writers should be mentioned not only on the page of contents, but also on the pages on which the stories begin. Also, there should be more correlation between the page of contents and the contents themselves: more of it than to leave it possible for the last story to be called *Two Hearts* in the page of contents and *The Heart* where the story is actually printed. These may appear to be but slight inelegancies, but meticulous attention to these details will enhance the value of the publication, and a publishing scheme like Mr. Shinde's, which contemplates publishing more such valuable volumes in future, should be more careful about details of elegant publication.

BURRA V. SUBRAHMANYAM

"*The Poetry of Valmiki*" By Masti Venkatesa Iyengar (Price Rs. 3-12-0 Address: 43-44, Gavipur Extensions, Basavangudi Post, Bangalore City.)

A book with the title that the present volume bears is sure to create expectations of the usual type of appreciation, written

by an Indian to satisfy the 'standards supposed to be set by Western masters' of literary criticism. But the author has followed a method which combines originality of approach to a vast subject as the Ramayana of Valmiki with a precision that is the strength of Sanskritists.

In evaluating such literary criticism of this "major item in the heritage of India," much could be said both by way of encouragement and disparagement. The idea of a literary criticism of the Ramayana is itself to be welcomed, especially in a country like ours, where the Ramayana has been more often read as a religious text than appreciated as a great poem. Again, we appreciate Masti Venkatesa Iyengar's arrangement of the various aspects of the poetry of Valmiki, as would impress a highly refined and well equipped modern literary mind. But there is the other side of the picture. Few could resist the eternal beauties of the epic in the original, which fail to re-live in our memory in a translation of the verses however well rendered. Moreover, many may deem the attempt at a narration of the story of the Ramayana as purely elementary in form and content. Yet the thoughtful among us need no great persuasion to admire the simplicity, which is the crowning virtue of any real art, marking almost every line from the pen of Masti Venkatesa Iyengar. His is not the recondite scholar's discourse on the fascinating problems offered by the Ramayana. Nor is his a mere repetition of what critics have already expressed on the subject. He has chosen the correct course for himself in presenting the Ramayana, signified more as poetry than as a religious text. In this he has done us distinct service.

As we peruse the concluding chapter entitled "Salutation to the Poet," a natural feeling occurs to us: "Why should this chapter be at the end? And why not at the beginning?" The following sentences occurring in that chapter: "'Will you have rather your Indian empire or your Shakespeare?' asked Carlyle, imagining a situation, and said that he would rather give up the Indian empire than Shakespeare. Indians have no Empire to lose: they have only Valmiki and his like," stir our hearts and our very being, making us realise at once with the author that Valmiki's "large heart, open mind, deep vision and rich utterance came from this population." Indeed, we find the ideals set up by Valmiki given expression to in various lives at various times, which give us continued proof of the persistence of a great civilisation amidst us.

The chief merit of this book lies in the delightful perception of the truth that "the Ramayana first went to the people as a poem. Religion thereafter took hold of it. To release it from this hold and treat it again as a poem is to do it service. When all is said and done, religions in the wide expanse of history are houses of lac built for a day. Now or a little later they are bound to burn and disappear. If the law of life stays in

them it is sure to come to harm. It is in the power of poetry alone to save it from injury; and by claiming poetry as poetry we help to make righteousness permanent." Wise words these are, and more fitting introductory lines could not have been chosen for a critical appreciation of our *Adi Kavya*.

In the sixteen chapters here devoted to an analytical examination of the poetry of Valmiki, we have got, interspersed here and there, narrations of the story, in order perhaps to give a sense of completeness to the reader, and especially to the foreign reader who may not be as familiar as we are with the episodes of Rama's life. The character delineation of the important personages in the Ramayana naturally attracts our attention, and we are made to feel the masterly strokes of the poet, which reveal the utmost that human nature is capable of, both for good and for bad. What the great Shakespeare is too often praised for in his tragedies as the crowning achievement of his understanding of human psychology, seems to have come quite as naturally and as easily of divining to this ancient poet of our land. And what is more is Valmiki's deft art, which brings in, at every stage in his grand narration of Rama's life, the life of the forest, and of the birds and flowers. Nature lives again and again, comforting and pacifying man in his various moods, and the message of Valmiki to posterity strikes us to be that man and nature living closely together will be the sole panacea for all the ills that man is heir to, otherwise. Mr. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar has, with true poetic insight, selected portions of Valmiki's descriptions of nature, which defy the best description of it in any other language known to us, or in the same by other poets that followed Valmiki. The chapters on the poet's "Skill of Narration", "Civilisation and Culture", "Some Questions", "The Valuation of Valmiki" and "The Good and the Sacred", have for us much significance as the valuable results of fresh thinking upon an old, old subject. No doubt, the author's theories regarding interpolations in the text may not attract the same amount of agreement among scholars and students who have made a special study of the Ramayana as must his critical appreciation in general of the many aspects of the poetry of Valmiki.

The need for a book of this kind from one who is out and out an Indian at heart, and a lucid writer and creative thinker in addition, has been long desired. True it is, as Mr. Venkatesa Iyengar himself feels, that "in days of loss and depression, when patience with opponents seems to bring one nothing better than exile and destitution, people very naturally question, if patience is the right article. Indians see the West enjoy more comfort and, contrasting with that comfort, the poverty and suffering of their own people, are likely to doubt if Valmiki's prescription is the right one." To this question and doubt we cannot give a better answer than what is again contained in this book, in such plain and yet valuable words, namely, "Indians today see good in terms of western achievement; they have lost their

heart to the beauty of western civilisation, much as Sita lost her heart to the golden deer. 'How bright, how beautiful is its face!' We send our soul in pursuit of it and wish to have it, as Sita did the golden deer, dead if not alive. The beauty and brightness to which we lost our hearts are, however, illusion; even if not illusion, they cannot be ours. We may be prepared to own them dead, and press the pursuit, but what we shall get for all our trouble is only a monster's corpse. Evil in Indian society today should not make its wise men question the fundamentals of this civilisation. Apparent beauty in another civilisation should not lead them to believe in the fundamentals of that civilisation in preference to this one. The evil in Indian life proves that something has to be done to improve that life; but that something has to be evolved from within by thought and by pursuing India's natural bent in growth."

The Ramayana is daily food to many in this country. But few have tried to take it to the rest of the world, while holding fast to its teachings. If Masti Venkatesa Iyengar has enabled us to see for ourselves that Valmiki, as a great teacher, has influenced Indian society deeply so far, we need have no doubt that it is also the best way in which he could show the rest of the world how valuable is the teaching of the Indian poet.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

*A Woman of India.* (Being the Life of Saroj Nalini) By G. S. Dutt, Indian Civil Service. Price Rs. 2. Printed at the Wesley Press and Publishing House, Mysore City. (Third Edition of an Oxford University Press Publication.)

The late Mr. G. S. Dutt, of the Indian Civil Service, in this most attractively got up, well-rendered and brief biography of his wife, gave us a very intelligent picture of a remarkable woman who, in her life, did not sacrifice either the home to society or society to the home; of an intelligent woman whose advanced views were discriminately tempered with keen understanding, commonsense and caution; of a sincere woman who appreciated and believed in the necessity for a change in the manner of women's lives, but also realised the value of beautiful traditions of the past; of a great woman whose gospel was that the ultimate truths of life can be reached only by the path of love and not of mere reason; of a noble woman whose passionate ambition was to organise the entire womanhood of Bengal for their educational, social and economic emancipation; of a woman with foresight and vision, whose message to her motherland was that only education, the creation of living ideals of true social service in the home, and genuine public spirit could restore the unparalleled glory of ancient India; and of a spirited feminist and social reformer, who yet could be a tireless housewife, a devoted wife and a disciplined mother.

The first eight chapters of the book are a unit by themselves, that could be called "True Love's Achievement." The last chapter is one of absorbing interest, for it deals in detail with the Women's Institute movement (Mahila Samitis)—which is the living symbol of Srimathi Saroj Nalini's inspiration, enthusiasm and devotion.

The publication of the present edition is timely, as we are in the throes of a great awakening among the women of India. And Srimathi Saroj Nalini's views about Indian womanhood, the remodelling of the schemes of women's education, the caste system, village uplift, the Purdah system, child marriages, and the remarriage of child-widows, would be valuable guides to the reformers who carry on the very difficult task of the social liberation of Indian women.

This book should be read by every man and woman in India.

SRIMATHI V. T. LAKSHMI

#### TELUGU

"*Rajaji Chitti Kadhalu*"—Published by A. S. Kuppuswami, Giddalure, Kurnool Dt. Price Re. 1.

It is rarely that a politician of the first rank is also an artist of high quality. That Rajaji (Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, *Ex-Premier of Madras*,) is one of the foremost leaders of the Indian National Congress and a very busy politician is universally recognised; but that he is an artist, capable of creating beautiful short stories, is not so universally recognised. Usually busy national leaders are too busy with their work to attend to the fine arts and to put forth their creative energy to create something beautiful. It is no doubt true that all those who have heard Rajaji speak are struck with the wealth and variety of apt parables nicely studded in his speech. Most of them, if not all, are original, but to set them down in black and white and make them artistic pieces is not an easy matter, and Rajaji has succeeded in it to a remarkable extent.

The book under review contains ten short stories. They are frankly propagandist in their nature. They deal with the various problems now confronting the villagers. The ruin of home industries owing to the establishment of factories, the unemployment resulting therefrom, the Harijan problem, the evils of drink, the caste system, Khadi propaganda, and malpractices in elections, are some of the problems that are dealt with in these short stories.

One story depicts how the home industry of hand-loom weaving in Salem was ruined, as a result of which a girl named Devana was driven through sheer starvation to beggary and prosti-

tution. Another story shows that unless the right spirit of service is infused, mere money and place acquired by a Harijan would alienate his sympathies from his caste and make him useless to the community. In another story a vivid description is given of how a man goes down the depths of degradation, and arrives at ruin and imprisonment, when he takes to drink. That Khaddar is not a new innovation introduced by Gandhiji but is only an exhortation to follow in the foot-steps of our ancestors, is the theme of another story. The various tactics and manoeuvres that we usually witness in Local Board and Municipal elections are depicted in another story. The rest of the stories deal with various aspects of the Harijan problem.

Thus all the stories deal with vital problems affecting the present and future of our country. They are stories with a message but that does not mean that they have no intrinsic value as stories. The descriptions are vivid, the incidents are well chosen, and the story interest is kept up unflaggingly till the end. Even as stories and as pieces of literary production, they are of a high order. The style of the Telugu translation is simple and direct. It can easily be understood by almost everybody who can read and write. The few words which are exclusively used in the Ceded Districts do not detract from the beauty of the style; on the other hand they enhance it.

Such stories as these play a prominent part in awakening the public to the needs of the day. They deserve to be read by everybody. The printing is excellent, but the price, Re. 1, is a bit high—not that the book deserves less, but that it may prove too much for the poor villagers. A cheap popular addition may meet the need.

SOMANCHI LINGAYYA

#### BENGALI

*A Pondicherry Novelist*<sup>1</sup>

Bengali poetry and novel have not lost the tinge of romanticism in spite of the flood of realism that is sweeping over literature in almost all countries. But the days of pure romance are over. The pronounced tendency is analytical. The technique is almost the same in the writings of all Bengali novelists. The attention is not on events and actions but on mental reactions. The days of grand passions, thrilling events and mighty actions are over. The royalty or aristocracy is no longer the hero. Commoners are the subject-matter of characters; their mentality is portrayed with all deftness and skill, and the mental eddies followed with meticulous care.

<sup>1</sup> Sandhane—By Jyotirmala Devi. Published by Culture Publishers, 25-A, Bakulbagan Row, Calcutta. Pp. 390. Price Rs. 2-12.

This may lead to mere psycho-analytical experimentations and produce nothing creative. Cynicism may become the chief note. One may simply play bagatelle with the principal theme—love. And soon novels may appear drab except for their story values. By this, one may of course serve the cause of realism; but too much of it blunts emotions and feelings, and the writer has nothing more worthwhile to do than to portray a few mental currents and cross-currents and show his deftness of style. At this stage romance may come to the rescue—romance not merely in the romantic sense but as the quest of the unknown. You feel thereby a new throb in your heart, your nobler emotions are stirred, a new mental horizon widens, and you hear the music of a new sphere.

This neo-romanticism is the key-note of the writings of two Bengali novelists of Pondicherry—Dilip Kumar Roy and Jyotirmala Devi. I am inclined to the opinion that in pure romanticism the latter excels the former. She revels in it in her first novel "Rakta Golap" (Red Rose), but comes to a broader and deeper and richer view of life in the second—"Sandhane" (In Quest). But both are following more or less the same technique. The stress is not on events but on the revelation of personalities through them. This is not the occasion to deal with Dilip Roy, and a comparison is not intended. Still, one must refer to some of Roy's fine novels like "Ranger Parash", "Dola" and "Ascharya."

Both Dilip Kumar and Jyotirmala are not concerned with problems and their solutions. In fact, they leave the problem unsolved. The tangle is illumined, the issues become clear but they need no *finale*. You may call it a tragedy—love unfulfilled, according to the commonsense view, no 'happily living ever after.' But it is not all tragedy, no grim frustration. The characters are left amidst sublime pathos, but they are shown in a halo of glow, with their inner selves revealed, their outlook widened and their passions sublimated.

To come to the story: Renu (Nilima) and her distant relation Supriya sail for England to continue their higher studies, and are preceded by Anupam, a cousin of Renu. Supriya is betrothed of her own accord to Anupam, but the marriage is put off at the instance of the latter. This caused a great stir in the family circle, but Supriya's father is a large-hearted man and gives free scope to the development of the daughter's personality. Supriya is quite unsophisticated in the ways of life, and thinks that her life's course is fixed, according to the ideal propounded by Anupam—duty, patriotism, dedication of life to a higher cause. This she reveals during talks with Renu on board the ship.

Her first shock is the pathetic inner history of Renu's life. Renu chanced to be the object of love of a fine youth named Bimal while she was a student in an upcountry medical school.

She responded with all her heart, but some fortuitous circumstances caused a misunderstanding, she became cold, there was a violent reaction in him. And a grim tragedy smothered Renu's heart: for he commits suicide. Chance reveals that Nirmal, a cousin of the ill-fated Bimal, is on board the ship, and Renu looks on him with affectionate eyes. Supriya also finds in him, by and by, a psychic companion; in fact, something in him rouses her slumbering soul—it reveals itself from beneath the stratum of an imposed idealism.

All his ways are not pleasing to her. There is a hitch. But he too feels her imperceptible influence and, unknown to Renu for the time being, soul-fascination develops. His attraction for a European girl, Dorothy, wears off, and the light-hearted love-making with her gets a quietus. The party thus get down at Marseilles, and are met by Anupam. They go to Paris, where in a garden Nirmal gets an unkind cut from Supriya, and slips out to London where he lives unknown to others, sore at heart, given up in reaction to flippancy, and doing some work in painting for which he had originally sailed for England.

Renu goes away to Ireland much to the surprise of Anupam. Anupam and Supriya join Colleges in Cambridge, and once more she tries to reconcile herself inwardly and outwardly to her betrothed. She joins Anupam in his various patriotic activities and becomes very popular among Indian students. Chance again brings her face to face with Nirmal, and at the sight of her he bolts away, to the utter surprise of the party. Renu had come back in the meanwhile. Nirmal is thoroughly upset and wants to take away Dorothy to some far-off lonely place in southern France or Italy. Dorothy knew him intimately during this period and feels that he loves her not at heart. She avoids him and writes him a touching letter.

To begin life anew in quest of the beautiful, Nirmal retires to Stratford-on-Avon and devotes himself to art. He is happy, but he is again in touch with his friends by a chance meeting with them. He is determined to keep away, but Renu reveals her identity and he cannot leave her as she is developing tuberculosis. At her request he goes with them for a trip to the Lake Districts. Here the old fire is kindled up, and Supriya feels herself more and more drawn into it, and Anupam has come to know of the state of her mind. He too feels the pang, and all his lofty idealism fails to keep his spirit high. He unkindly accuses Renu: the shock proves too much, and she dies. She had a stroke of paralysis shortly before and was recouping. Her last days were sweetened by the love of Prafulla, one of their group.

The tragedy is complete. Nirmal wants to go away; and, strangely, Supriya now gives up all reserve and throws herself entirely into his hands. But Nirmal is not willing; he has learnt real love; his outlook has widened; he would now lead his weary way alone in quest of his deeper self.

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The conclusion reminds one of the sublime self-abnegation of Anne in Dilip Kumar's "Dola"; but the present writer, being a woman, has gone perhaps deeper into the women-characters' souls. Renu is really a fine creation and one is touched by her life. Lovable is also Nirmal, and the writer reveals his true being amidst the confusion of the surface waves of life. That is why Supriya is subtly attracted to him, for at heart she was in quest of a personality which does not impose itself on another but illumines the soul like a gentle light. Anupam, worldly wise, was an ideal husband, and she knew him from early years. But his planned idealism with a life tuned to a set purpose is repellant to her inmost soul.

The writer has experience of life in England, and this has been thoroughly made use of as the background. This is a novelty in a Bengali novel, introduced first by Dilip Kumar. But the reader never feels ill at ease therefore. For one is attracted not by the background but by the figures in the foreground, nay, their souls at play through varied experiences, in quest of what is beauteous, joyous and free.

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