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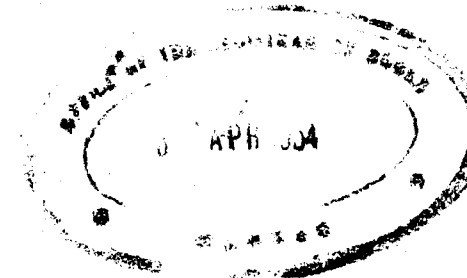
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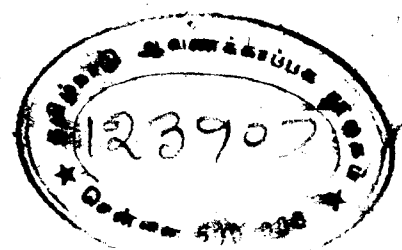
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THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

Vol. XXVII, No. 1]

[April, 1954

Being and Value

by

G. R. MALKANI

1. *The Problem of Being.*

Being is one thing, and value another. Being does not seem to imply value. Being is *in itself*, and that is the end of the matter. The ideal of being is fulfilled when something can be said to be *in itself*. What is repugnant to this ideal of being is something that exists *for another*. The whole problem of being is to differentiate being in itself from being for another. Non-being constitutes no problem for thought. In fact, it cannot be thought. We only try to think it, but do not actually think it. We cannot make a judgment about non-being. Judgment is a completed thought. It affirms or negates. Both affirmation and negation presuppose being. If the subject is indicated by "it", this it must stand for something which can be apprehended or known, at least in thought, and can therefore sustain a predicate. Non-being cannot sustain any predicate, and cannot therefore be judged at all. All judgment presupposes logical being. Thus, while we have no problem about non-being, we have necessarily a problem about appearance and reality. *That is the whole problem of being.* In Vedantic terminology, non-being is called *tūchha*. It poses no problem. The only real problem of being there is, is the problem of *vyavahārika sat* (appearance) and *paramārthika sat* (reality). The world is appearance, and Brahman is the reality.

2. *Being and Value seem to fall apart.*

The concept of being as something in itself seems to have no intelligible relation to value. In fact, value seems to be quite foreign to it. Value is always *for another*. It involves a relation.

While being is being only in so far as it is *in itself unrelated*, and only externally related to knowledge, value seems to be value only as it is related. It is related when it is appreciated. Take away this appreciation, and we seem to take away value itself. What is left is just being. This being may thus have value, either positive or negative, or it may be just neutral, and so without any value. Value seems to be super-imposed upon being from the outside. It is not part and parcel of it. It is not in the very nature of being. It is somehow extrinsic to being.

3. *Value, however, cannot do without being.*

Being may not demand value. But value certainly demands being. Value has a necessary relation to being. Being alone can have value. Value is not entirely in the air. Nor is it *in itself*. It rests on being. Only something that exists can enter into a relation, and can therefore have a value. It may be only imaginary value. But even this imaginary value has got to be attached to something that has at least apparent being. No being of any kind, no value. While therefore the idea of being does not imply the idea of value, the idea of value does imply the idea of being. Value is supported by being; but the converse is not true, and being need not have value.

4. *Can being do without value?*

This is however only a partial truth. It is pertinent to ask whether there can be being without value or value-less being. Certainly if there is any such thing, it cannot be a possible object of any knowledge *desired by us*. All our activities are concerned solely with the realization of a desired object or the realization of a value. This desired object is called *puruṣārtha* or the goal of human activity. Knowledge is a *puruṣārtha*. It is a value. It is a value, because it gives us power. It gives us control over things, which serve our purpose or which have a value for us. Therein lies its superiority to ignorance, and also its value. Truth is recognised as a value; and the value of truth is derived wholly and solely from the value of being that is known in it. Or what is the same thing, if truth is a value (which assuredly it is), then to that very extent being *must* be valuable. We are never concerned with any other kind of being, which is merely in itself and which has no value. We can write off such being as equivalent to non-being. Non-being cannot hinder or help us. Neither can being which has

no value for us, either positive or negative. The whole stand-point of knowledge, and therefore of philosophical knowledge which we seek, is fundamentally personal,—which here means realization of a value. Being without value can excite no interest in us, and its knowledge cannot be a desideratum.

5. *The possibility of valueless being.*

A question may be put here: But is being without value a *possibility*, even though we may not seek to know it? The answer is both yes and no. If *all* being were material being, value-less being would be a possibility. Such material being cannot be *for another*; for there is nothing outside of it *for* which it can be. The term 'for' implies here an intelligent relation; and by hypothesis, there is no intelligent being. At the same time, it is arguable that purely material being cannot be *any* being at all. It is neither for another, nor for itself. If it were for another, there would have to be an intelligent being outside of it. If it were for itself or in itself, it must be *so realizable* in some form of intuition. Purely material being, outside of which there is nothing, is not realizable as being at all, and is being in no *significant* sense of the term. Such being can be equated with non-being. This is the limiting case of the absence of *all value*. But the moment being emerges as distinct from non-being, knowledge of it must emerge too, and with knowledge 'value'.

6. *Why being must have value.*

That there is a problem of knowledge, in fact *any problem at all*, presupposes intelligent being. Once we admit intelligent being, we must also admit that all the activities of this being, including the activity that leads to knowledge, is controlled by a certain self-interest, and therefore by value. Our starting point in philosophy is an intelligent being, who seeks to know, and who would not seek to know if that knowledge did not realize for him a value. In this sense, all philosophy is value-philosophy, there is no other. We might even go so far as to say that if we are free emotionally, we are also free volitionally, and as a result we are also free intellectually,—we are completely free. Our intellectual effort is controlled by distant desire. The realization of value is thus in the fore-front of all our intellectual problems and the general desire to know. In so far as knowledge is the bearer of all value, and without knowledge no value,—that knowledge is the higher which realizes the greater value. It may be that scientific know-

ledge is the bearer of the greatest value. In that case, it alone should be our ideal. But if the reverse is the case, and there is another reality outside and beyond nature that has the greater value, namely the inquirer himself, then knowledge of that reality would be the higher knowledge. If there is such a thing as *philosophical knowledge* over and above the scientific knowledge, then the realization of the higher value alone can be its justification. In general, knowledge is of that of which we are ignorant; and the whole motive for the removal of this ignorance is the realization of a certain value which we associate with the object of our knowledge. All being that we *seek to know* must have a value. What we do not seek to know is no being in any significant sense to us. It is nothing to us. We are perfectly free in respect of it. It cannot bind us or limit us in any way. If it did, it would at once assume a value. In this sense, we can now reject the earlier thesis that being *need not* have a value. No value, no being in any significant sense.

7. *What is the reason for the existence of anything?*

The universality and the fundamental character of value also emerges in another way. Let us suppose that we are confronted by being without any value. What shall be our attitude towards it? It is bound, in the very nature of the case, to assume for us a *negative value*. It cannot leave us unaffected. We are bound to react towards it, and that negatively. It is something that *should not be*, and for the existence of which there is no reason. The only reason that we can conceive for the *existence of anything whatsoever* is that it should serve a purpose or realize a value. What does not do this has no reason for its existence. If it could be willed out of existence, or if it could somehow disappear, nothing would be lost. It is the *only* irrational kind of being. Even if it had negative value or was the source of pain, it would not be devoid of *all value*. Knowledge of it would give us a certain power in our own self-interest, namely the avoidance of pain. It can however be argued in this connection that all value must be positive value. In that case, it is also arguable that negative value is due to a maladjustment; and that when this maladjustment is removed, as all maladjustment is removable, negative value will be transformed into positive value. Or again, it is arguable that negative value is itself a means to the realization of a higher and positive value, and that therefore in the end all value is positive. Punishment may lead to virtuous conduct. All the ills of life are a sort

of punishment, reminding us of the error of our ways and the possibility of mending them. Nothing is wrong in the plan of things. Only we do not understand the plan. We want to turn everything to our own individual self-interest,—and that too on a short-sighted view of it. That interferes with the plan. It is the mother of all ills. However that be, evil can be made to serve the purposes of the good, *and that is its only rationale*. The only thing that appears most irrational is being without any value whatsoever, either positive or negative. We are bound to will it out of existence as what should not be; and if it opposes our will, it at once assumes a negative value. It is a dis-value. We can tackle this, and try to transform it into positive value. *Value alone justifies being; and that being alone is most justified that has the highest value*. That explains the essential goodness of all being. Only there might be some difficulty in understanding the nature of this goodness.

8. *No reason is sufficient reason, except complete and absolute value.*

The world as it is has been considered by some philosophers to be the best possible world. That may be a reason for its existence. But we should certainly like to know why it is so considered. What value does it realize? Why is it not possible that some other kind of world could improve upon it? That the world realizes a value is only a faith. Even as a faith, it lacks something. It lacks the support of reason, without which faith is bound to collapse. Why is it not possible to say that the world not only realizes a value, but the very highest value? Only a world that realizes this has *sufficient reason* for its existence. Any other world is only partly justified. We could always improve upon it, at least in imagination, or speculatively speaking. All that we could perhaps say in its favour is that it is better to have some value realized than no value at all; and therefore it is better to have some world that realizes a value than no world. But this faith (and it is no more than a faith) is circumscribed by a doubt whether the world realizes any positive value at all in the balance. And *what prevented* the creation of a world that could realize the very highest value? If any possible world *must be* an imperfect world, where evil must compete with the good, and value with dis-value, there is no *rationale* in creating such a world. We could wish that such a world had never been created. Or if it was uncreated but real, we could wish that it had never existed. *Imperfection anywhere is never desirable*; and any possible world is, by hypothesis, imperfect. The

only kind of reality that is fully justified, and that we always desire should exist, is reality that has the highest value. No world can be that, and no world therefore should exist. But if it nevertheless exists, an escape from this world, or a transformation of the dis-value in it into complete value, so that no imperfection is left, can be the only possible goal of human activity. That alone can justify human existence and the world in which man finds himself. If however that is not possible, and man is condemned to live an imperfect life in an imperfect world, human life and all it implies becomes wholly irrational. The best of all possible worlds is still an irrational world. *There is no half-way house for reason. Either complete value, or no world at all.* An imperfect world demands to be made perfect or just annulled. If any possible world must be imperfect, and house evil, which is a dis-value, let there be no world. That should be the fiat of the human will as against the fiat of God, "Let there be a world!" In brief, being must be perfect in value, or its existence is not justified. *Once we accept value as the reason for existence, there is no stopping in the middle. The highest value alone can be the sufficient reason for the existence of anything. That is why in Vedanta being is essentially valuable.* Being is bliss. Absolute being necessarily goes with absolute value. The world has only apparent being, not real being; and its value is only an imperfect expression of absolute value. There is relativity of both being and value.

9. The highest value and the historical process.

Real being may go with the highest value. But we still distinguish being from value. They are not the same for our understanding. Value is said to attach to being. Accordingly, we have one kind of problem about being and a different kind of problem about value. The problem about value is, what is the most valuable kind of being?, and the related problem of pain, or evil in general. It is evident that there can be degrees of value, and even negative value, as there cannot be degrees of being or negative being. Not only that. Negative value challenges being itself. Pain or suffering of being should not be. There is positive reason against it. It is better that there should be no being than that there should be painful being. Why should there be any existence at all, if it is going to be painful? But since the fact of it cannot be denied, the question naturally arises, can we accommodate pain, and so dis-value in general, within our concept of Absolute Value, which alone has justification for existence, and which alone *should be*?

Broadly speaking, two different attitudes are possible on this question. We may accept pain and deny absolute value. But if we accept absolute value, pain, and all the gradations of value right up to the absolute value, cannot really exist and must somehow be illusory.

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It is possible to argue that the highest value is not a present fact or an eternal fact, and that it is only progressively realized when the lower value finds its fulfilment in the next above it. In other words, there can be no such thing as an eternally accomplished value or the highest value *par excellence*. The historical process is real, and it progressively achieves greater and greater value, without ever reaching what may be called its *ultimate goal*. All value is thus relative. For once we start adding value to value, or improving both the quantity and the quality of value, there can be no end or limit to the process. All value realized in time is necessarily finite. It can only be a stepping-stone to the achievement of a greater value. The pain of existence too has a relative value in this scheme of things. We progressively seek to eliminate pain and replace it by positive value. We cannot question the rationale of pain, as we cannot question the rationale of existence as such. We must accept existence as we find it, with all its pain. It may be all very irrational. But we cannot escape this irrationality, since human life itself is in the very centre of this irrational and painful existence. We cannot ask *why*. The fact is there. There is no reason why all things should conform to our valuations, or that only valuable things should exist. What *should be* or *ought to be* is a human fiat which nature or reality has no reason to obey. All that we can say is that we can progressively realize a higher value, and this gives meaning to human life and to history.

The difficulty of this view is that we can give no meaning to absolute value. It is not a present fact; and it is never realizable as a fact at any time. All value is relative. But relative to what? If something is relatively good, something else must be absolutely good. The relative good can only be a more or less inadequate expression of absolute goodness. Otherwise, how is it any good at all, and how shall we determine its relative goodness or *progressive approximation to the good* or to absolute value? All values thus imply the absolute value. They are only limitations or finite expressions of the latter. No absolute value, no relative value either. Absolute value however cannot be realized in time. Tem-

poral realization carries with it the stamp of finitude and limitation; for what is realized in time can always be improved upon both in quality and in quantity. The actual is the enemy of the ideal. Absolute value must be non-temporal and eternal, or nothing at all. It must somehow be outside the historical process, however we may suppose history to be related to it. In this sense, the historical process can add nothing to the sum-total of values, or realize a new or a greater value. What then is the justification of the historical process? Theoretically nil. It is a make-believe of progress and of the realization of higher values. The whole process is in essence illusory. Practically however, the lower leads to the higher; and to that extent, the process is justified. Change is the law of all life. If life becomes static, it deteriorates. A change brings back the progressive impulse. Even a good custom can corrupt the world, if it over-stays. Change and progress no doubt! But there is no such thing as continuous progress towards a fixed and absolute goal in time. If there were any such thing, we should not only know the goal beforehand, but we should also have the guarantee that it is progressively realized, and will one day be fully realized. This is not the case. In the historical sphere, we can only notice progress in isolated sections and for limited purposes. We do not notice an over-all progress in one definite direction, the far-off distant event to which all creation may be supposed to be moving. When we seem to do so, we have only an illusion of progress. We transfer progress in a particular section of human activity, such as science and technology, which only touch the surface of life, to life as a whole. We cannot prove that humanity is definitely and progressively moving towards the consummation of the highest spiritual values or to the absolute value. All that we can notice is periodic progress and periodic regress following each other in a sort of rhythm or cyclic movement. History in this sense may be said to repeat itself. There is no linear progress towards a definite goal. The heavenly kingdom must be always at hand and eternally so, if it is to have any meaning. It cannot be achieved through a historical process.

10. Nature of the Highest Value.

The next question is, what is the nature of the highest value or the Absolute Value. In order to be absolute, value cannot be externally related to being. It is externally related, when we say that being *has* value. Being can have value when it serves the purpose of another. Such value is bound to be relative and extrinsic

to being; it satisfies a need, and it enters into an appreciation which is both subjective and partial. Real absolute value must be intrinsic to being. Being itself must be valuable, without serving anybody's purpose. It must be an *end in itself*, even as it has being in itself. It can be an end in itself, when to be is to be blissful or when being itself is bliss. Such being cannot be said to have value or to possess value, but *to be* value. Possession, in any case, is a relation of subordination. This relation of subordination, exemplified in our own life, is simply transferred to things. When I say that I *have* something, I mean that the something is *for me*. It is subordinate to me, and serves a certain purpose of mine. I am therefore more valuable than the things that I possess, and that serve my ends. In the case of being, the latter does not even possess value for its own satisfaction, but for the satisfaction of another. This teleological conception of value as serving another's end must be given up, when we are talking of absolute value. Being that is value can serve neither another's end nor its own. Real value cannot fall outside being. It must coalesce with it; so that being itself is value. The relativity of value is here ended. Absolute being is at the same time absolute value. Or what is the same thing, value is simply the nature of being. There is no distinction. The distinction is the creation of a finite individual who can adopt different attitudes and different approaches to a reality that contains no divisions in it. In his theoretical attitude, the indivisible unity is being; and in his practical attitude, the same thing is value. The reality itself has no use, no purpose, no end outside of itself. It is itself the most complete value.

11. How our experience divides reality from value.

What does then account for the division in our experience, where being is one thing and value another? The reason can only be an original error of judgment about being itself. We *first* make a mistake about being, and *then* attach a certain value to this being in conformity with the mistake. We could not attach this mistaken value to *real being*; for to recognize real being would be at the same time to recognize its value which is indistinguishable from it. We can only attach a value, which is necessarily personal and finite, after we have had a perverted view of being. All *our values* are then mistaken values, implying a wrong perception of reality. Or in other words, if we knew the truth, the whole world of our values would collapse. There would be only one value, and that the absolute value. The many values of our experience

would disappear. They are as imaginary as the kinds of being to which they are attached. We imagine excellences where no real excellences exist. For instance, we take an individual that is not essentially a body to be a body, and then a woman, and then a beautiful woman. We do not look at the soul, we do not even look at the body which is made up of flesh, blood and bone. Instead we look at certain contours and movements with a sex-appeal, and we pronounce the individual as beautiful. It is a series of misjudgments about reality leading to a final misjudgment of value. Such value is bound to be dissipated, when the knowledge of truth arises. Value to be real must be securely based upon real being or the knowledge of the truth. All other value is unreal and illusory. Its attractiveness for us has scope only within our ignorance. Like a hypnotized person, we accept a mere suggestion, which is quite false, for the reality itself, and act accordingly. Real value must be embedded in truth. If it is divorced from truth, it will be ephemeral and imaginary. There is a very important sense in which we can say, truth is beauty, and beauty truth, where beauty stands for value in general.

12. *Value as a special case of subject-object unity.*

We can now see that the division of truth and value will make truth unimportant and valueless, and it will make value subjective and unreal. But can we not *justify* the division, so far as our common experience goes? Is there no logic of value as distinct from the logic of being? It is true that value *must rest* on being or attach to being, and in that sense, it must imply being. *But that is not the whole truth about it.* Value cannot be said simply to exist just like being. It has a necessary reference to a subject that can appreciate the value. Thus both object and subject combine to create a value. It is not enough that an object should have form, symmetry and a certain distribution of colour, in order to be beautiful. It is also necessary that this whole complex of colour and form should be appreciated or enjoyed as beautiful by a subject. A beautiful object is a joy for ever. This joy is no mere accident of beauty. It is the very essence of beauty. Take away the joy, and we take away the beauty itself. Similarly about other aesthetic values. They are not purely subjective, nor are they purely objective. They imply both a subject and an object. As we have seen the subjectivity of value in the element of joy, so we can also see the objectivity of value in the universality of value-judgments. The subject does not create a

value in a vacuum. Nor does it create a value on any indifferent kind of being. There must be something *in the object itself* that makes it capable of being appreciated or enjoyed. Not every object can be enjoyed, or have the same value attached to it as every other. The object itself must be beautiful in order that it should appear beautiful and be appreciated as such. Things are beautiful not by a freak judgment of one individual. They are beautiful by the common consent of those who are properly instructed in the perception of aesthetic qualities. All values are in this sense objective values. Thus both object and subject co-operate to make value possible. This is quite unlike being, where the object is everything, and must impose its form upon the subject and reveal itself to the subject. Accordingly, the distinction of being and value is inevitable. So far as being is concerned, the object must dictate to the subject, which has only a subordinate part to play. In value however, both object and subject co-operate and have an *equal* contribution to make. It is literally true then that being *has* value.

13. *An imperfect unity after all!*

If our analysis of value is correct, it is quite intelligible why some people emphasise the objective part, while others the subjective part of value. Both are right in their own way, and so only partially right. But we cannot stop here. *We must press the logic of value further.* The gulf between the subject and the object has been partly bridged. Value has achieved a unity of the two. But it is an *imperfect unity*. The subject has not lost its subjectivity, nor the object its objectivity. Both are conspicuously there, see-sawing. Sometimes it is the object that draws the value after it, and so we are mad after the object and forget the subject. We think that the object is everything, while in fact it is not. We are unduly *fanatical*. Sometimes it is just the other way, and the subject absorbs the object in it. We are then in love with our own enjoyment of beauty and do not seem to rate the object outside. We have become, as we say, *sentimental*. We see-saw between the object and the subject, sometimes drawing towards the one, sometimes towards the other, but never achieving a complete unity of the two. It is only when this unity is achieved that we can be said to have realized a value or realized a beauty that was not to be seen on earth or sea, and that was literally absolute.

How is this unity to be attained? It cannot be attained through any external appreciation of an object. In any external appreciation, the duality will remain, and with it the see-sawing. The value realized will be partial and finite. No mere object can have infinite value; and no subject can transcend its own capabilities of appreciation. Value tends to complete itself in a perfect unity, so that the see-sawing, with its partial realization of value, will cease to hold up the full and complete realization of it. This is only possible when the one merges into the other, and thus loses its separate identity. Either the subject must lose its separate identity in the object, or vice-versa. We cannot keep both of them together, with varying emphasis upon their respective contributions to the unity.

14. *Limitations of aesthetic enjoyment.*

No intelligent being can seek to lose his identity permanently in an unintelligent object, although he is bound temporarily to efface himself in the appreciation of an aesthetic object. This appreciation may take two different forms. There is the enjoyment of natural beauty. One is more or less unconsciously drawn towards it. It is also more definitely objective or realistic. Nature does not seem concerned to please us. It does not convey an idea, which is seeking to express itself through it. Nature seems pervaded by an unearthly spirit of peace and harmony, unconsciously expressing itself in variegated forms of beauty. The enjoyment of the beauty of nature increasingly leads to a sort of religion of nature. To a lover of nature, nature is alive. A transcendent spirit pervades nature in every nook and corner. It speaks to man and is the source of the highest joy to him. Nature is God, and man is the priest. It is a sort of nature-pantheism where man has everything to learn from nature, and nothing to give to it.

It is different with the objects of art. Here the enjoyment is more conscious. The object suggests an idea which is seeking expression through it. It is through this power of suggestibility that the object pleases. The object seems consciously designed to please. The pleasures of art are therefore more idealistic than those of nature. We consciously recognize the idealism inspiring art. Nature can be divine, but art can only be human. There is nothing divine about art. Naturally, when art depicts objects of religion, it loses much of its aesthetic value. Religion is not within the sphere of art. It supersedes art.

15. *Art merges into religion.*

The joys of art are limited. Art naturally seeks to fulfil itself in religion. In religion, the unity of the subject and the object is more or less complete. The object is no longer either natural or artistic. It is essentially spiritual in character. It is an over-soul or God. Such object alone can absorb the finite subject. God can tolerate no duality of allegiance. The individual must surrender himself whole-heartedly and completely to God. He must lose himself in order to find himself. God is his greater self or truer self. He gives the individual life immortal, not as a distinct individuality or in his own right. He gives him life immortal in union with Himself. The individual is united to God in love, and shares God's life. The consummation of love is found in the elimination of the separateness of the individual. The subject seeks to identify himself with the object, so that the object is everything for him and he himself nothing. The consummation of value is thus achieved through the object. It is the path of devotion or *bhakti*. This is one way in which the duality of the subject and the object can be eliminated for the realization of the highest value.

16. *Limitations of religion.*

The reverse process however is also possible, and we may say, more thorough-going. The union through love still lacks something. The duality is not wholly eliminated. One term of the duality, namely the subject, is merely subordinated to a transcendent object. I surrender myself to find life in God. But the surrender has limitations. I cannot annul myself or lose myself completely. I cannot be reduced to nought. I merely become a co-partner in the life of God. The individuality is not simply abolished. It is retained and transmuted. The individual can share God's life. He cannot become God. God is everything for him, so far as value is concerned, not so far as being is concerned. On the latter count, there is still duality, so that being and value fall apart. All value is in God, but not all being is in Him. Love is consummated in union, but it is a union of two; and the joys of this union do not annul the duality completely. In fact, they demand the duality. No lover of God, no devotee, no *bhakta* ever wants to become God, and thereby annul the objectivity of God. For, if the objectivity of God is abolished, love itself is abolished. The lover of God desires the joys of love; and to that extent, he desires to retain his individuality as well as the transcendence of God. He

is averse to losing himself in an indistinguishable unity or identity. He is averse to knowledge that may undermine the objectivity of God. No lover ever wants to become the beloved, but merely to love the beloved. What ignorance of ultimate truth may be involved in this relationship of love is quite welcome to him. Thus a complete unity of the subject and the object through the exaltation of the object is quite impossible. The subject cannot lose itself *in toto* in the object. He can perhaps do so through an act of surrender. But that is bound to be temporary. What is achieved through an act of the will cannot be lasting. What the will puts forth, it is bound to retract. Thus, feeling, the basis of the value-consciousness, can carry us no further beyond a union which is bound to be inadequate. It must retain the duality, however tenuous. Religion unmistakably points to a higher value-consciousness, where feeling gives place to a new unitary consciousness. Briefly, art merges into religion, and religion merges into philosophy.

17. *From religion to philosophy.*

An object may be great, but it cannot dispense with the subject. Even the great God is *thou* only to *me*. If *I*, then *God*. The central position in respect of being is necessarily occupied by the subject or the *I*. What is this *I*? If we can find in it the unrelated and absolute being, which is the ideal of knowledge, such knowledge alone can liquidate all duality for good. The *ātman* or the Self is no kind of object, and does not therefore require any being beyond it to give meaning to it. It alone can be *in-itself*. It is therefore essentially the object of truth-consciousness. If it is at the same time the object of unconditioned love, so that we love all things for its sake while we do not love the Self for the sake of anything else, we have here a union of truth-consciousness with value-consciousness, which is the ideal both of knowledge and of feeling. Truth and value here become one and indistinguishable. Being itself is bliss. Such is the nature of ultimate and absolute value. It is not open to any kind of modification, much less to cancellation; for it is achieved through knowledge of the truth. We thus find that it is the true subject that must in the end devour the object; for it is the locus of both being and value. We break up this unity for our human purposes, and speak of truth and value. In point of fact, the two are one indistinguishably and indivisibly, and the difference is only conceptual, imaginary and human. To know the Absolute is to realize at the same time the highest value. "He who knows the Self achieves the highest." (*Brahma-vit-āpnoti param*).

Hegel's Philosophy of History

by

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An attempt will be made in this article to evaluate the elements of truth in Hegel's philosophy of history in the light of the empirical data provided by world-history and the metaphysical concepts of Hindu, Buddhistic and western philosophies.

I. *Nature and Methodology of History and Geschichtsphilosophie.*

Hegel distinguishes his philosophical approach to history from what he calls the "original historical" and the "reflective historical" methods.¹ Original history is a description of deeds, events and states of society by people who saw them and shared their spirit. The writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, Guicciardini, Xenophon come in this category. Caesar's *Commentaries*, the writings of medieval monks, the French "*Memoires*" also fall in this list.² The reflective historical approach has four forms. The first of these four-fold types is universal history. Here the writer takes recourse to his own spirit as distinct from that of the materials and elements he is to manipulate. Livy, Diodorus, Siculus are writers of this kind. Johannes Von Müller's *History of Switzerland* also is an example of this type. The second approach in reflective history is pragmatical. It contains moral reflections³ on the past and the idea of a "present" is found here produced by the activity of the mind. Johannes Von Müller's *History of Switzerland* and his *Universal History* contain moral reflections. The third species in reflective history is the critical one. It is a history of history. It contains a criticism of historical narratives and investigates into

1. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, (E. T., by J. Sibbe), New York, 1944, p. 1.

2. The Mahabharat, in its original form, and the inscriptions of Darius and Asoka may belong to this category.

3. For the views of Kant and Schelling on the pragmatic approach to history see *The Logic of Hegel* (E. T., by Wallace), p. 422; see also p. 256 for Hegel's views on the same.

their truth and credibility. It has full scope for bold subjective fancies, extorting something from the records which was not in the original records. The fourth and the last type of reflective history, because of its abstract and generalised nature, makes the transition to the philosophical approach which is the Hegelian one.

Recent philosophers of history like Windelband and Rickert point out that all historical writing is value-conditioned. This axiological element necessarily involves subjective selection of details, and hence both the "original" and the "reflective" types mentioned by Hegel must necessarily bear the stamp of personal judgment of historians; what Hegel means by "original" can be comprehended now by statistical journals and government reports. Thucydides makes reflections, and hence he cannot be put out of the list of reflective historians, as Hegel does.

Hegel's philosophical approach means a thoughtful consideration of history.⁴ Since Hegel's time this philosophical approach has divided itself into two directions. Hegel was concerned not with ratiocination upon any particular individual event, but wanted to disentangle the broad causation in history. Marx also had a similar task before him. Although Marx took a materialistic or a realistic approach to history as contrasted with the idealistic approach of Hegel, still both Hegel and Marx wanted to unravel the ubiquitous march of the process of history towards self-templative freedom in the one case and a classless communism in the other. Spengler and Toynbee differ from Hegel here. They are concerned with examining the patterns or structures of history. St. Augustine belongs to the Hegelian category and Comte to the Spengler-Toynbee category.

Hegel does not examine the morphology of history. He wants to construct a metaphysical theory of historical causation. Social and historical crises engender a desire to investigate the foundations of past history. The Agadir crisis of 1911 made Spengler examine the foundations of Western culture.⁵ The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led Sorokin to a similar task.⁶ The Mahābhārat war in India resulted in the production of the Bhagavadgita. Hegel

4. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 8, 162.

5. Oswald Spengler: *The Decline of the West*, 2 volumes, see Preface to the first edition.

6. P. A. Sorokin: *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, 4 vols.

was also faced with a crisis in German history. Being shocked at the national humiliation of Germany, he wanted to construct the spiritual-moral foundations of a very strong national state.

Hegel's philosophy of history is an integral part of his total world-outlook. In the *Logic* he is concerned with the deduction of non-temporalistic categories, finally reaching the absolute idea. In the *Weltgeschichte* he is concerned with demonstrating the progress of objective spirit towards freedom. Mr. Marcuse points out some other contrasts between the *Logic* and world-history.⁷ In the *Logic*, negativity determines the process of thought. In the world-history, negativity is the destructive power of time. The *Logic* is concerned with the structure of reason. The world-history provides the historical content of reason, not in the sense of an agglomeration of facts but as a system of laws and tendencies. In the *Logic*, Notion is the unity of the universal and the particular and is the realm of subjectivity and freedom. In the world-history, the final good is the state in which freedom of the subject is in conscious union with the universality of the ethical substance. Here the progress of conceptual thinking, the comprehension of the notion, is linked to the progress of freedom. Hence Notion and freedom are concretely united. In the *Logic* the free subject is intrinsically connected with the Notion. Hegel refers, in the *World-History*, to Socrates who tried to emancipate the individual in Hellenic history.⁸ But decades before Socrates, Buddha proclaimed the total emancipation of the individual not only from the bonds of socio-political trammels, but even from the control of physical nature.⁹

History according to Hegel requires understanding—*Verstand*—the power of looking at an object in an independent objective light, and comprehending it in its rational connection with other objects. Hence only those peoples are capable of history who have arrived at that period of development at which individuals comprehend their own existence as independent, i.e. possess self-consciousness. History is always of vital importance for a people, because it indicates to them the trend and extent of their advance in the realm of 'Laws, Manners, Customs and Deeds'. Laws, com-

7. H. Marcuse: *Reason and Revolution*.

8. *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 252, 259.

9. Edward Caird puts later Judaism, Buddhism and Stoicism as examples of ethical subjectivistic religions.

prising morals and judicial institutions, are by nature the permanent element in a people's existence. But history presents a people with their own image in a condition which thereby becomes objective to them. Without a history, the temporal existence of a people becomes the repetitive play of ungoverned, arbitrary and recalcitrant volitions in multitudinous forms. History fixes and imparts consistency to this fortuitous agglomeration by giving it the forms of universality, and hence points a directive and restrictive rule for it. History is a vital element in developing and determining the rational political condition of a people. History according to Hegel is the empirical method of producing the Universal, inasmuch as it sets up a permanent object for the conceptive powers.¹⁰ Hegel emphasised historical annals, or what is now called historiographical material, for the expansive growth into a veritable political condition.

That Hegel is perfectly right in emphasising the need of historical books and annals is obvious.¹¹ Croce also accepts the necessity of historical culture to the life of science as also to moral and political life, in which its absence or deficiency leads to an impoverishment, to an inclination to inactivity, to a cowed acceptance of the tyranny of transcendental imagery.¹²

Hegel was concerned with the demonstration of a necessity in history.¹³ The empirical scepticism of Hume had tried to break all universal rational connections by denying any logical or empirical necessity in the concept of causality and by reducing it to a psychological custom. Hegel wanted to construct a historical method which would demonstrate at once the historicity involved in the events of the world and would vest it with the appearance of being the manifestation of a moral divine imperative. The philosophy of history is to expound more clearly the necessity involved in the Idea itself. Hence, Hegel says, "To this end the conception of mind must be made fundamental, and it must now be shown that

10. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 162-63.

11. Other great German historians like Leopold V. Ranke, Eichhorn, Niebuhr, Savigny, Thibaut also emphasize this point.

12. Benedetto Croce: *History As the Story of Liberty*, p. 198.

13. ".....the latent abstract process of Spirit being regarded as *Necessity*, while that which exhibits itself in the conscious will of men, as their interest, belongs to the domain of freedom." *The Philosophy of History*, p. 26. For the metaphysical discussions of Necessity, see Hegel's *Logic*, (E. T., by Wallace), pp. 100, 267ff and *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 387-392.

history is the process of mind itself; the revelation of itself from its first superficial, enshrouded consciousness and the attainment of this standpoint of its free self-consciousness. The recognition of this necessity has been called the *a priori* construction of history, there is no good in denying it as inadmissible, and indeed as arrogant. The development of history may be represented as contingent, or if the providence and government of God are seriously accepted, these are represented as though Christianity were so to speak, ready-made in the mind of God; then when thrust into the world, it appears to be contingent. But the rationality and likewise the necessity of this decree of God's has now to be considered, and this may be called a theodicy, a justification of God i.e., a vindication of our Idea. It is a demonstration that - - - - things have happened rationally in the world and it implies the fact that the world-history represents the process of mind partially as the history of mind, which has to be reflected into itself in order to come to a consciousness of what it is. It is this which is shown forth in temporal history, and as history, indeed, just because mind is the living moment, proceeding from its immediate existence to beget revolutions, in the world, as well as in individuals."¹⁴

History according to Hegel is not the example of the complete conscious realisation of the Idea after its externalisation and self-alienation in nature. History demonstrates the awaking of the Idea, but not with the consciousness of the Idea. In history there is a clash on the one hand of the rational and moral divine principles trying to manifest themselves and on the other the particular wills, emotions and volitions of individual subjects. It is a tension of rational logos and temporal human events, facts, situations and circumstances. Hence spirit which has the history of the world as its theatre is at war with itself, because the realization of the Idea is mediated by consciousness and will. These faculties are at first sunk in their primary natural life, but once animated by the spirit they become possessed with vast power and moral richness. But Hegel finds the synthesis of this antagonism. Liberty is the resultant of this battle of the spirit and human passions. Because the Idea is the absolute power, hence all particularities and tran-

14. G. W. F. Hegel: *The History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, pp. 7-8. According to Soren Kierkegaard, Hegel 'historically annihilates the historical' emptying it of all significance as a distinct concrete reality. Kierkegaard: *Scientific Postscript*, p. 8.

sient ends become means for the rich, manifold and organic manifestation of the Idea.¹⁵

Hegel's historical teleology and the concept of the immanence of the spirit constantly reminds the reader that he is dealing with a philosophy of absolute idealism. The realization of freedom which Hegel calls the goal of history is not a concretization of democratic individual liberties. It is a philosophical cognition and inwardization of necessity. The whole process of history is to be demonstrated as a rational cosmodicy. Hegel wants to comprehend the entire history of humanity as the progressive dialectical march of the absolute in search of concrete freedom.¹⁶ Hence theodicy characterises the totalistic structure of the Hegelian philosophy of history.

Hegel thought that a proper arrangement of historical facts revealed a non-subjective immanent order of historical development. Hegel combines the romantic belief in an idealized future with the dialectical logic which shows the dynamic movement of reason, history, and nature. Hence Hegel's dialectic came to be associated with the concept of development, and this is called by Marx the rational side of the dialectic. This methodology, Hegel thought, made him create a view of historical development profounder than the ideas of progress of the 18th century. In a sense Hegel was speaking of progress not in the sense of the technological advance of industrial science, but he was thinking of perfection in a quasi-religious sense. In the ancient cultures we find the ideas of a collective liberation of mankind as in Hinduism and Mahāyānism, or the concrete realization of the celestial kingdom as in Christianity.

History in general is the development of the spirit in time, as Nature is the development of the Idea in Space.¹⁷ According to Hegel, the historical mutations represent an advance to something

15. According to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Section 4, mind is the basis of right and will is the precise place and origin of right. Right is equated with realized freedom.

16. Concrete freedom according to Hegel means the (i) completion of personal individuality and its interests; (ii) its transition into universal interests, and (iii) knowledge and will of the universal by the particular.

17. *The Philosophy of History*, p. 72. This Hegelian antithesis between Nature and History is made the supreme conceptual foundation of Spengler's *Philosophy of Culture and Civilization*, see *Decline of the West*, Vol. I, p. 8.

better, more perfect. Nature is the example of perpetually self-repetitive cyclic changes. But new developments take place in the realm of spirit and consequently also in history, because history is acted upon by the world of human mind. In nature one and the same stable character is found, but history represents the concretisation of the impulse of perfectibility.¹⁸ Hegel points out that this idea is looked upon with a hostile eye by Roman Catholicism and by conservative states. This principle of perfectibility and development involves the existence of a potential capacity to grow. Here we find ourselves in an Aristotelian terminology,—the actual is the concrete expansion of the potential.

But the Hegelian law of a necessitarian historical development is not an empirical generalisation, but is almost a synthetic *a priori* deduction from his views of a mobile and dynamic absolute spirit. According to the dialectic, there is in history not only a logical syllogistic explanation but also an actual causal relationship, and the whole scheme is invested with a grand moral energism¹⁹ on account of the belief in the eventual dawn of freedom.

Hegel's method in his *World-history* is a combination of the *a priori* and the empirical. Ordinarily speaking the conceptualistic analysis of philosophy is diametrically opposed to the static business of collection and presentation of historical material by the historiographers. But Hegel tries to suffuse and dynamise this static business of the historiographer by incorporating into it a hypothesis which he substantiates in his *Logic*,—the concept of Reason. The rationality of the historical process and the sovereignty of reason, Hegel does not prove in the world-history. He assumes them, and then tries to arrange and view historical events as if they revealed a historical-logical character. To this extent the Hegelian dialectic assumes a selective character. Hegel distinguishes between the rational which is the true and permanent core of reality

18. Contrast "idealistic Herbart and the caustic or pessimistic Schopenhauer arrived at this conclusion, that there is no history, in the sense of any actual processes, which is to say in common language, history is a tiresome song." (A. Labriola: *The Materialistic Conception of History*, p. 187).

19. Cf. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 807: "History is the process of becoming in terms of knowledge, a conscious self-mediating process—spirit externalized and emptied into Time. But this form of abandonment is, similarly, the emptying of itself by itself; the negative is negative of itself. This way of becoming presents a slow procession and succession of spiritual shape (*Geistern*), a gallery of pictures, each of which is endowed with the entire Wealth of Spirit,....."

and the mere ephemeral existent. The dialectic is concerned with the former. There has been a great controversy between the idealists and the realists upon historical investigation.

"If the clear idea of Reason is not already developed in our minds, in beginning the study of Universal History, we should at least have the firm, unconquerable faith that Reason does exist there, and that the world of intelligence and conscious volition is not abandoned to chance, but must show itself in the light of the self-cognisant Idea. Yet I am not obliged to make any such preliminary demand upon your faith. What I have said thus provisionally, and what I shall have further to say, is, even in reference to our branch of science, not to be regarded as hypothetical but as a summary view of the whole; the result of the investigation we are about to pursue; a result which happens to be known to me, because I have traversed the entire field. It is only an inference from the history of the world, that its development has been a rational process; that the history in question had constituted the rational necessary course of the World-Spirit. This must, as before stated, present itself as the ultimate result of history. But we have to take the latter as it is. We must proceed historically—empirically."²⁰ The significance of the last sentence is partly vitiated because the Hegelian approach does not remain historical-empirical inasmuch as these details of world-history indicate only the processes of the absolute idea. Hegel thinks that to the historian who rationally looks at the world, it presents a rational process. But as we shall see, in the Hegelian system rationality is linked up with a particular kind of idealistic metaphysics. It is not the discursive particular rationality of the empirical human reason, but is the way of logical manifestation of the world-spirit. Hegel accepts that the most impartial historian brings with him his own categories whereby he looks at the world and history, and as we shall see there is an abundance of the use of the categories of his metaphysics in his philosophy of history.

II. Freedom, State and History

Hegel wants to begin his history with the development of the state among nations. Before the state arose, there was pre-history but not history.²¹ It seems Hegel reserves world history to the

20. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, p. 10.

21. This idea also occurs in Spengler's famous distinction between primitives, culture-peoples and fellaheen, Spengler: *Decline*, op. cit., II, 159-186, 362.

developed political events of nations. In modern times we speak loosely of history to signify the concept of historicity, and in this sense the total cosmos comes to have a historical character. But to Hegel the existence of the spirit in the inorganic world is not a subject of history. Hegel lived when the theory of evolution was not extended to biology and geology. Hegel even excludes the family from that process of development in which history takes its rise, because members of the family do not behave toward each other as individuals. Before the establishment of the state there is the ante-historical period of humanity. The formal records of a state which form the objective data of history only appear when there is a regular political organization. Probably social and cultural anthropologists would not accept this narrowing of the connotation of history. History, I think, begins when group life begins. Recent advances in anthropology have also led to the extension of the term culture.

Although it seems very difficult to get agreement on the meta-physical hypothesis of Hegel that universal history is a rational process whereby the immanent absolute idea is trying to realize itself in a vivid concreteness, still Hegel's view of freedom seems to be fairly clear. The essence of matter is gravity and the essence or the substance of spirit is freedom. Freedom is the fundamental quality of the spirit and other qualities are but the accessories for this freedom. Freedom is the self-contained existence (*Bei-sich-selbst-seyn*) of the spirit. Freedom means independence of existence. The self-contained existence of the spirit is self-consciousness.²² Universal history is the concrete theatre of energetic actualisation of the potentialities of the spirit. Just as the whole tree is contained in the seed, so also the first traces of spirit virtually contain the whole of history. This Hegelian view of history has a marvellous parallel in the Hindu Puranic scriptures, according to which the Creator emanates the whole creation from out of his body and then reabsorbs them all into himself.

22. According to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* sections 36 and 128, freedom is to be found only in the reflection of mind into itself, in mind's distinction from nature, and in the reflex of mind in nature. He thinks that will without freedom is an empty word, while freedom is actual only as will, as subject.

I think that Hegel takes recourse to a confused terminology. Spirit, when total self-contained existence is spoken of,²³ seems to connote the absolute spirit; but sometimes Hegel means by spirit man, and it will be absurd to think of any man being fully independent in the sense of being fully self-contained. Interpreted thus it can lead to the advocacy of a dictatorial Caesarism, Neroism or Hitlerism. When this freedom in the sense of independent self-contained existence will be attributed to a nation or a group, it can be interpreted to mean a fascistic autarchy and exaggerated emphasis on the group-ego. Freedom in the sense of self-contained existence can only apply to the spirit in the philosophy of a concrete or absolute spiritual monism, or it can be applied to the emancipated individual in the Vedantic sense.

Applied to actual history, the Hegelian view of freedom is a perfect misrepresentation. He says, "The Orientals have not attained the knowledge that spirit, man as such, is free, and because they do not know this they are not free. They only know that one is free. But on this very account, the freedom of that one is only caprice." In refutation of this view it can be said that in many parts of India republicanism was practised before Cleisthenes and Pericles introduced democracy in Greece. Gautama Buddha was the first spiritual leader in the world to practise a remarkable degree of social equality in his ecclesiastical fraternity. The Indian republican states of the Panjab whose existence is testified to by the Greek historians had a much longer life than the Greek democratic states.

After the Oriental world Hegel passes to the Graeco-Roman world. The consciousness of freedom according to Hegel first arose amongst the Greeks and hence they were free. But both to the Greeks and the Romans the concept of Universal Freedom could not be present. They knew only the freedom of some and hence they had the slave system. The slave economy was a slur on human nature and it made the Graeco-Roman liberty an accidental, limited and ephemeral growth. Hegel's statements here also have

23. Cf. "The passage from necessity to freedom, or from actuality into the notion, is the very hardest, because it proposed that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality in the passing over and identity with the other independent actuality. . . . For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one's self.—It means a liberation, As existing in an individual form, this liberation is called I: as developed in its totality, it is free spirit;" pp. 284-285, Hegel's *Logic*, E.T., by W. Wallace.

to be taken with caution. His statements about Rome are correct only for a limited period, because since Sulla and Pompey, Rome clung to a worse militarism.²⁴

The German nations under the influence of Christianity were the first to attain the consciousness that man as man is free, that it is the freedom of the spirit which constitutes its essence. This conception of freedom arose in the Christian principle of self-consciousness. From religion it was applied to state organization. According to Hegel the history of the world is a progressive march towards this consciousness and objectification of concrete human freedom. Hegel somehow imagines that the German governments under the confederation established in 1815 represented the climax of human freedom. This is a graphic commentary on the dogmatic perversion of a man attached to a certain set of abstract principles.²⁵

History in its empirical content is a tale of horrible tragedies. Periods of happiness are to be found rarely because harmony exists in the world only when the dialectical antagonism and antithesis is inoperative. The destruction of the ancient seats of culture,—Pataliputra, Harappa, Carthage, Palmyra, Persepolis, Rome—fill one with despair at the ravages of time, but reflective thought is enough to console one according to Hegel. These are the necessary sacrifices which have to be made for the progressive development of the spirit towards freedom. "Spirit—consuming the envelope of its existence—does not merely pass into another, nor rise rejuvenescent from the ashes of its previous form, it comes forth exalted, glorified, a purer spirit. It certainly makes war upon itself,—consumes its own existence,—but in this very destruction it works up that existence into a new form, and each successive phase becomes in its turn a material, working on which it exalts itself to a new grade."²⁶ This view appears rather cynical. If Hegel

24. Dante's opinions about the Romans are to a certain extent in the Hegelian line. "Putting aside all greed, which is always contrary to the public interest, and choosing universal peace with liberty, this holy people, pious and renowned, is seen to have neglected its own advantage to care for the public safety of the human race." (*De Monarchia*, Bk. II, Ch. 5).

25. W. Wallace, "Relations of Fichte and Hegel to Socialism", *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics*, pp. 427-447 and B. Bosanquet, *A Philosophical Theory of the State* (2nd ed.), pp. 248-250 try to defend Hegel from the charge of Prussian partisanship.

26. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, p. 73.

thinks that the destruction of Buddhistic, Hellenic and Roman cultures was necessary to attain to the brilliance of the Teutonic culture under the Metternich system, few sober historians would agree with him. One great advantage which the empirical historian has over the idealistic philosopher of history is that he is not constrained like the latter to work out a rational justification of what has happened. If the ancient cultures have been destroyed, I think, the destruction was due either to human folly or to the structural weakness of those cultures in face of the challenge of nature and other overwhelming socio-economic-political forces. The Marxian view of the decline of cultures due to the failure of the socio-economic relationships to adjust themselves with advances in forces of production also leans to an empirical analysis.^{26a} Hegel says that the principle of freedom is the sole efficient principle pervading the ceaseless mutation of events. "This final aim is God's purpose with the world, but God is the absolutely perfect Being, and can therefore will nothing other than Himself—His own will. The nature of His will—that is, His Nature itself—is what we here call the Idea of freedom." (*The Philosophy of History* p. 20). These statements of Hegel sound too idealistic and theological. I think that idealistic spiritualism perhaps works very well so long as it is confined to metaphysics as in Vedantism, but the moment it tries to explain history it breaks down utterly. Sometimes a subterfuge is attempted as by some Hindu metaphysicians when they say that God's ways in the world are inscrutable, and from a narrow ego-centric standpoint man cannot comment upon divine gnosis and wisdom in history. This kind of argument can help Hegel for some time. But if the whole of history is a rational process, he has to justify somehow the irrational waste, tragedy and murder in history.

Hegel's dialectics helps him to reconcile the vision of history as the "slaughter-bench" of human happiness with the divine reason.²⁷ Nothing great is achieved in the world without passion. The potential existence of the general and abstract principle, aim, destiny, or nature and idea of spirit and the complex of human passions which is one of the factors responsible for the universal taint of corruption and decay, are the two elements

26a. K. Marx: Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*, *The Communist Manifesto*.

27. *The Philosophy of History*, p. 21.

which enter into the historical investigations of Hegel.²⁸ The concrete meaning and union of the two is liberty under the conditions of morality in a state.²⁹

Hegel makes his method and analysis more empirical than it would have been under the overwhelming supremacy of the spirit, by introducing the human factor. By passion Hegel means human activity in pursuit of self-seeking designs. Passion is subjective—formal side of will, energy and activity.³⁰ But Hegel is ever conscious never to make the vast congeries of human volitions, interests and activities the determining factors in history. These always remain the instruments and means of the world-spirit for attaining its object, i.e. the concrete realization of freedom.^{30a} Hence we see that the Hegelian view of human activity is far too narrow than the functional view of human activity either in a Marxian or in a pragmatic-instrumental sense.

The Hegelian view of history becomes pessimistic in the sense that it belittles human activity. Hegel thinks that although in relation to the categories of morality, ethics and religion, there is something eternal and divine in man, still in regard to the effectuation of the will of the Idea, individuals are only means. The Marxian view of history also denies the role of the individual in any fundamental and independent sense, because the forces and relations of production are the strongest and the ultimate determinants of history. But still the revolutionary gospel of Marxism puts an emphasis on human activity. The ultimate panacea for mankind according to Marx and Lenin depends on the organisation of the armed proletariat inspired by the mobilising and directing force of ideas. But in the Hegelian view no such dramatic importance is ascribed to individuals or peoples. Although wars have a great place in the transformation of the destiny of peoples,³¹ when Hegel wrote, he thought the teleology of the world-history was realized, and hence no need was felt to insist on human activity or knowledge for bringing about any great action. In this sense I

28. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

29. *Ibid.* According to Hegel the concept of freedom as formulated by Stoicism, Kant and Fries is subjective-formal and does not emphasize the specific and concrete embodiment of freedom in socio-ethical collectivities. Cf. Edward Caird, *Hegel*, p. 38.

30. *The Philosophy of History*, p. 24.

30a. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

31. For the discussion of the ideality and the ethical moment in war see Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (Oxford ed.), pp. 209-11, 214-15, 218-19, 276.

feel all philosophies of history which deny human causation and ascribe undue importance to any absolute being or absolute idea in the historical process are highly abstract and inadequate. The Hindu view of history as formulated in the Bhagavadgita and the Ramayana which makes individuals and peoples mere automatons and mechanical means in the cosmic process of manifestation leads to a rigid determinism bordering at times on fatalism.

The individual is powerless in the Hegelian view. Hegel speaks of the gradual attainment of universal freedom by spirit after its advance from immersion in nature to a gradual consciousness of freedom. But he is not clear whether this self-conscious freedom can be attained by any individual. Philosophically he does not distinguish between the human and the cosmic mind, because there cannot be a spatial separation and differentiation in the realm of spirit. But in the realm of history, the abject weakness of the greatest individual is apparent. Hegel does not speak much of the spiritual heroes and giants, although he refers to Socrates. He is concerned with political heroes, since the whole orientation of the events of history, although revealing the Idea, is political.

Caesar was being impelled by violently powerful self-seeking motives. But his dictatorship was an independently necessary feature in the history of Rome and the world. The heroes in history are being goaded and actuated by powerful motives of their own but through them they seek to effectuate some necessary design of the world-spirit. Besides being practical and political these persons have a speculative grasp of the deeper forces of the time. This remains their contribution to world. Their deeds are the best of the times. "For that spirit which had taken this fresh step in history is the inmost soul of all individuals, but in a state of unconsciousness which the great men in question aroused. Their fellows, therefore, follow these soul-leaders, for they feel the irresistible power of their own inner spirit there embodied."³²

We have referred to some of the weaknesses of the Hegelian view of world-historical individuals. Others can be mentioned. In a history of humanity it is difficult to estimate whether the political heroes have contributed most to history. Who contributed more—Aristotle or Alexander, Rousseau or Napoleon? In an idealistic view of history, it could be expected Hegel would name the great creators of scientific and religious—philosophical ideas.

32. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 30-31.

Moreover, Hegel's view is equated with a worship of success. If Pompey and Sulla failed they were not heroes, but if due to a number of chance accidents Caesar succeeded he becomes a hero. Summarizing the Hegelian view of world-historical individuals Mr. Sidney Hook makes the following observations.³³

Firstly, the individual, however unique his gifts, is limited by his times and culture—what Hegel calls "objective mind" and what modern anthropologists call culture. The great man has no option in his choice of actions but can act only in the fashion which the objective mind would indicate.

Secondly, there is a vital difference between the subjective interpretation put upon their action by the heroes and the inner significance of their actions in the light of objective history.

Thirdly, the hero can succeed only when the social-material forces are ready to receive the impact of his actions. Unless the environment is ready, mere colossal will cannot succeed. As Hegel says "the laurels of mere willing are dry leaves which have never been green." (*Rechts-philosophie*: Lasson edition p. 317).

Fourthly, a great man is the symbol or the instrument of historical and social forces. Hook says "Knowledge and mastery of these historical forces, the aim of scientific history and social theory, give man social control and human freedom."

So far as the last observation of Hook is concerned it is utterly wrong. He is trying to put a pseudo-Marxian construction upon the Hegelian theory. The view of human freedom outlined in the above remark of Hook is also un-Hegelian.

We have to consider now the entity which is the perfect embodiment of the spirit—the state. The state is the moral whole, the union of the subjective and the rational will and it is that form of reality where the individual enjoys freedom but on the condition of agreed participation in a common life.³⁴ To Hegel an unrestrained exercise of unregulated subjective volitions is a low kind of freedom. True freedom can be enjoyed only in acting in conformity with Law, Morality and Government. Everything of spiri-

33. Sidney Hook: "Social Determinism: Hegel and Spencer, *The Hero in History*."

34. For a criticism of the social contract theory, see *The Logic of Hegel* (E. T., by Wallace) pp. 182-183; *Philosophy of Right* (Oxford ed.), pp. 59, 71, 157, 186.

tual worth in the individual is possessed by him through the state.³⁵ In the legal arrangements of a state, which represent the objectivity of the spirit, is to be found the Universal will. The state is the divine idea on earth. It is the embodiment of rational freedom realising and recognizing itself in an objective form.³⁶ It is the Idea of spirit in the external manifestation of human will and its freedom. Hence historical changes are indissolubly linked up with the state and successive phases of the Idea manifest themselves in it as distinct political principles. May be, the early studies of Hegel in classical Greek history have given him this unusual faith in the necessity of the state.

Examined analytically, Hegel's assertions regarding the realization of the synthesis of the universal and the individual in the state mean only an emphasis on the collective life of a nation or group. He did not believe in a primitive paradisaical condition. To him man is not free in the state of nature which is predominantly a state of injustice and violence. State and society provide the very conditions for freedom. Hegel made a distinction between the civil society and the state, and to the former he relegated all the usual elements of social structure, economics and general administration.³⁷ He made a romantic apotheosis of the state by conceiving it to be the spiritual element in the progressive march of the spirit to culture and freedom. The political constitution of a people makes one substance—one spirit—with its religion, its art and philosophy, or at least, with its conceptions and thoughts—'its culture generally,' and hence the form of government of a particular state is the form adapted to the spirit of a people and must present itself in that form.

The Hegelian view of the state was engendered by a number of conditions. His strong desire for Germanic unity is already

35. Cf. "Intelligent, veritable (*Wesentlich*) well-doing is, however, in its richest and most important form the intelligent universal action of the state"—p.444, Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

36. "The state is the actuality of the ethical Idea. It is ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself, accomplishing what it knows and in so far as it knows it." Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, section, p. 257.

37. Hegel uses the German *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* and hence Bosanquet prefers "Bourgeois Society" to civil society. Certainly the English rendering "Civil Society" obscures the industrial-economic character of the *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*. For the detailed analysis of the nature and functions of the civil society, see Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, sections 182-256.

apparent in the "*constitution of Germany*" written in 1801. His hatred of Roman Catholicism and Pietism and aggrandizement of Lutheranism had political motives because the latter was a helpful element in the formation of a strong state. Prof. Sabine says that although Hegel refers to the *Volksgeist* and to the supremacy of the state in the growth and march of culture still he does not refer to the modern concept of the national state. But this is not correct. Hegel may not refer to the national bourgeoisie democratic state of the mid-19th century, but he was aware of the national ideas inspiring the French Revolution,³⁸ and his doctrines contain the seeds of a militant nationalism as was later shown in Germany.

The Marxian approach to the origin and nature of the state is a direct antithesis of the Hegelian mystical exaggeration of the personality of the state. The Hegelian approach brings forward two clear-cut issues. If the freedom of the individual is an inalienable sacred right according to the Lockean terminology, the Hegelian view cannot be accepted. If the group or the nation has a mystic super-personality of its own superior to the arithmetical collectivity of which it is composed, the Hegelian view may work plausibly.³⁹ When today prophets of world peace and culture look to a collectivity bigger than the national state, the Hegelian idea of the state may be considered to be a thing of the past.

We are not concerned here with an objective analysis of Hegel's philosophy of the state, because it belongs to the subject-matter of Hegel's social philosophy. We have to see whether the goal of the historical process—rational universal freedom—can materialise through the state. Although the fascistic aggrandizement of the state has met with disrepute and failure, still the cult of national state sovereignty is being exalted. According to the Marxian dialectics as interpreted by Lenin a tremendous concentration of state power is the necessary stage before the dialectical transition into a stateless millennium of freedom. In the renaissance East, nationalism has still to play a vigorous role, and the concentration of power into the hands of the state for realizing the legitimate dreams of freedom and justice of those lands might provide a theatre where the Hege-

38. For Hegel's ideas concerning the French Revolution, "Absolute Freedom and Terror", pp. 599-1610 of Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind* and pp. 33, 157, 175, 185-6, 286 of *The Philosophy of Right* (Oxford ed.).

39. A justification and reconstruction of the Hegelian theory of the state occurs in F. H. Bradley's "My Station and Its Duties" (Ch. V of *Ethical Studies*), and Bosanquet, *A Philosophical Theory of the State*.

lian philosophy of the absolutism of the state may possibly have a fresh lease of life. But in general, the growth of internationalism, cosmopolitanism and human unity is making the Hegelian concept of the state anachronistic.

We have referred to the teleological nature of Hegel's historical analysis. In spite of considerable periods of retrogression and frustration (cf: "The Unhappy Consciousness", pp. 261-267, *The Phenomenology of Mind*) universal history exhibits the gradation in the development of that principle whose substantial purport is the consciousness of freedom. Hegel repudiates the formalism and the scepticism about human progress, because of the alleged monistic basis of the Chinese philosophy which in some respects foreshadowed the Eleatic and Spinozistic systems and in its abstract numerical analysis forestalled also Pythagoreanism.⁴⁰ The belief in the ultimate victory of rational freedom may belong to the tradition of the Jewish apocalyptic view. [Cf. the Hindu view of the world being set right after the incarnation of the "Kalki"]. Science substantiates the faith of Hegel and Marx at least in the forward march of technological industrial civilization. Spengler opined that culture was dead in the west and the reign of civilization had begun. Nicolas Berdyaev lamented the Bolshevik industrialization of Russia because the importation of western technology and science would kill the Russian Orthodox culture. Hence the answer about progress remains hypothetical and problematic. But we can hope, at least, for the realization of the external conditions of human freedom in view of the tremendous opportunities opened to man by science.

We have referred to the dialectical transitions of the *Weltgeist* in the progressive advance to freedom until, as the critic will say, the attainment of consciousness in the Prussian state.⁴¹ Bertrand

40. The basic theme in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* is to indicate the historical emergence (and hence progress) of the free concrete modern mind from the undeveloped consciousness of the ancient world. Hegel did not deny progress, he only claimed that his dialectical approach, accepting the principles of identity through differentiation, was richer than the rectilinear theories of progress.

41. Referring to the revelations of Christ, Hegel says: "This history is the Notion, the Idea of Spirit itself, and the world-history has in it found its end, which is in this immediate way to know the truth. It is therefore the spirit which so comprehends that history." Hegel's *History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, p. 16.

Russell criticises Hegel on this point—"I come now to a singular feature of Hegel's philosophy, which distinguishes it from the philosophy of Plato or Plotinus or Spinoza. Although ultimate reality is timeless, and time is merely an illusion generated by our inability to see the whole, yet the time-process has an intimate relation to the purely logical process of the dialectic..... I cannot see any justification on the basis of his own metaphysic, for the view that world-history repeats the transitions of the dialectic."⁴² I feel Russell is confusing the issues. When Hegel is speaking of the temporal development in history, he is speaking on a different level from that when he is speaking about the ultimate resolution of all logical categories in the absolute idea. The same confusion which Russell is making here has been made by critics of Hegel's philosophy of nature who think Hegel is deducing things of nature from thoughts of logic. There are plenty of difficulties in Hegel's metaphysics and his philosophy of history. What I want to make clear is this that the dialectical process in the logic and the dialectical-temporal process in history are not irreconcilable.⁴³

III. Critique of Hegelian Philosophy of History.

Recent researches in history have brought to light the brilliant remains and legacies of the Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, Minoan-Cretan, ancient Palestinian, Mohenjodaro-Harappan (cities of ancient India), Mexican, Peruvian, Austro-Asian and other antique cultures. Some of these cultures were highly developed but they have no significant place in Hegel's history.⁴⁴ To this extent his philosophy of history needs supplementation in empirical detail. According to Hegel "oriental" history and culture represent the first and immediate revelation of the substantial mind in which individuality is absorbed in its essence. In Asia arose the Light of spirit and therefore the history of the world. The history of the world travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end

42. Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 735.

43. Cf. "Like the soul-conductor Mercury, the Idea is in the truth, the leader of peoples and of the world; and spirit, the rational and necessitated will of that conductor, is and has been the director of the events of the world's history. To become acquainted with spirits in this its office of guidance, is the object of our present undertaking." [*Philosophy of History*, p. 8.]

44. Hegel devotes five pages in his *The Philosophy of History* to "The Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians". Syria and the Semitic Western Asia, Judaea, and Egypt are treated only as constituent parts of the Persian Empire.

of History, Asia the beginning. In Asia rises the outward physical Sun, and in the West it sinks down; here consequently rises the Sun of self-consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance.⁴⁵

Hegel has been proved wrong in this glorification of Europe as the final and ultimate seat of culture. Europe is no longer the seat of world culture and civilization. North America, Soviet Russia and possibly the renascent East may be the fountain-springs of world culture. An empirical analysis also reveals the inadequacy of the Hegelian biological analogy. Oriental history represents the childhood of history because here there is no advance to subjective freedom.⁴⁶ The Greek world represents the adolescence of history.⁴⁷ The Roman State represents the manhood of history⁴⁸ because manhood acts neither in accordance with the caprice of a despot as in the Orient, nor in obedience to a graceful caprice of its own as in Greece, but works for a general aim. The German world represents the old age of human history.⁴⁹ Old age of nature is weakness, but that of spirit is its perfect maturity and strength in which it returns to unity with itself, but in its fully developed character as spirit. This phase in human history begins with the reconciliation presented in Christianity.

We shall not engage in the criticism of this biological analogy of Hegel. It is highly selective and inspired by national patriotism in the glorification of Germany. It is very hazardous to take long periods of human history and then make loose generalisations. Buddhist philosophy is not a product of the childhood of humanity nor are Platonism and Aristotelianism products of mere adolescence.

In the picture which Hegel gives of the Oriental and African nations he reveals at times not only inadequate grasp of details which is pardonable for the times in which he wrote, but he also displays wild outbursts of racial prejudice and superiority.⁵⁰ It is difficult to decide whether he was giving vent to his own perverted feelings or those were the pictures he had formed of the Orient from the books of those times. Hegel seems to be contemptuous,

45. *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 103-104.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

48. *The Philosophy of History* by Hegel, p. 107.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

50. For Hegel's fulminations against the Negro peoples, *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 93-96.

in his treatment, of every nation and country except Germany. He even refers to the psychical and physical powerlessness of America.

Hegel's analysis of the empirical data of world-history becomes at times an arid excursion into empty metaphysics without any substantial validation and documentation. But for this not Hegel, but his method which required fitting in of all details into a rigid nomenclature, is at fault. It is difficult to take Hegel seriously on such occasions. About China he says "the contrast between objective existence and subjective freedom of movement in it, is still wanting."⁵¹ About Chinese people he says, "Its distinguishing feature is, that everything which belongs to Spirit—unconstrained morality, in practice and theory, Heart, inward Religion, Science and Arts properly so-called—is alien to it."⁵²

Hegel is not so critical of the Greek world as he is of the Oriental. He refers to the sophists as the preachers of subjective reflection. Socrates according to him gave expression to inner morality among the Greeks. The perfect bloom of the Greek life lasted from about 492 B.C. to 431 B.C. He is more inclined towards Athens than towards Sparta. He says "among the Spartans the principle of subjectivity develops itself in vulgar greed and issues in vulgar ruin."⁵³

Hegel showers his praises on German history.⁵⁴ The first period in German history is up to Charlemagne, the Kingdom of the Father; the second period lasts from Charlemagne to the Reformation, the kingdom of the son. The Reformation according to Hegel introduced the principle of inmost subjectivity in the midst of changing social and political relations. The third period of German history extends from the Reformation onwards, the kingdom of the Spirit.⁵⁵ Hegel's philosophy of Germanic history is an exaltation of German heroes like the Hohenstaven Emperor Bar-

51. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, p. 116.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

54. "This is the absolute turning point; mind rises out of this situation and grasps the infinite positivity of this its inward character, i.e., it grasps the principle of the unity of the divine nature and the human, the reconciliation of objective truth and freedom as the truth and freedom appearing within self-consciousness and subjectivity, a reconciliation with the fulfilment of which the principle of the north, the principle of the Germanic peoples has been entrusted." *Philosophy of Right*, section 358.

55. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 343-45.

barossa and Frederick the Great.⁵⁶ In a remarkable passage he distinguishes between the French and the German conceptions of freedom:—"...the truth underlying the Kantian philosophy is the recognition of freedom. Even Rousseau represented the absolute to be found in freedom. Kant has the same principle but taken rather from the theoretic side. The French regard it from the side of will.... France possesses the sense of actuality, of promptitude, because in that country conception passes more immediately into action, men have there applied themselves more practically to the affairs of actuality. But however much freedom may in itself be concrete it was as undeveloped and in its abstraction that it was there applied to actuality, and to make abstraction hold good in actuality means to destroy actuality. The fanaticism which characterized the freedom which was put into the hands of the people was frightful. In Germany the same principle asserted the rights of consciousness on its own account, but it has been worked out in a merely theoretic way. We have commotions of every kind within us and around us, but through them all the German head quietly keeps its nightcap on, and silently carries on its operations beneath it."⁵⁷ Hegel did not favour the cataclysmic terror and violence associated with the French Revolution. Although Hegel regarded war as the instrument through which the *Weltgeist* progressed, still he could not tolerate a revolution. He appreciated Rousseau's distinction between the general will and the will of all and considered the German monarch to be the embodiment of the general will. Hegel imagined that the German people enjoyed that subjective freedom which was the gospel of the Reformation, under the German Emperor, and he could not believe in a violent upsurge of democratic republicanism in Germany because such a feeling was alien to his personal and philosophic temper.⁵⁸

56. *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 387-88, 437-38. Hegel says that Frederick was a philosophical king who "had the consciousness of Universality, which is the profoundest depth to which Spirit can attain, and is Thought conscious of its own inherent power."

57. Hegel: *The History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, pp. 424-425.

58. According to Hegel the division of constitutions into monarchy, aristocracy and democracy represents an undeveloped political consciousness—a stage of substantial unity when the richness of self-determination and differentiation has not yet appeared and will as an immanently organic moment in the state has not been explicit. Hegel was opposed to the conception of a "sovereignty of people" if conceived as something opposed to the sovereignty of the state.

Hegel thinks that the constitution of a state introduces a rational principle for organizing the state and the self-related processes of its organic life.

IV. Conclusion.

We shall try to see what elements in the Hegelian philosophy of history contain valuable pieces of truth which can help us in a better understanding of world-history. Connexion with external nature which according to Hegel plays an important part in the production of the *Volksgeist* is an essential and necessary factor insofar as it is the ground whereon the spirit plays its part. Natural factors as causal forces in history can neither be overrated nor underrated. The mild Ionic Sky contributed much to the charm of Homeric poems, but this alone can produce no Homers. Nor in fact does it continue to do so always, because under Turkish government Ionia did not produce great singers.⁵⁹ As contrasted with spirit, nature is an unconscious quantitative mass and its influence cannot be interpreted in a singular monistic way. In the extreme zones people are subject to torments of nature, and hence according to Hegel the true theatre of history is the temperate zone, or rather its northern half, because the earth there presents itself in a continental form.⁶⁰

Hegel is fundamentally correct in the moderate role he assigns to geographical factors.⁶¹ Vico, Montesquieu and Buckle have referred to the influence of the external world on human affairs. According to certain critics the emphasis on physical factors was confined by Buckle to ancient history, and with the growth of civilization influences of psychological factors increased. Metchnikoff refers to the influence of great rivers on human progress. Wilhelm points out that the development of patriarchal and matriarchal civilizations is conditioned by continental and riparian regions respectively.

According to the Hegelian view geographical factors set the conditions within which a certain type of historical change takes place. But he never ascribes to them any original independent role

Hence he says: "The development of the state to constitutional monarchy is the achievement of the modern world, a world in which the substantial Idea has won the infinite form. The history of this inner deepening of the world mind....the history of this genuine formation of ethical life is the content of the whole course of the world-history." (*Philosophy of Right* by Hegel, Oxford edition, p. 176).

59. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, p. 80.

60. *Ibid.*

61. For a general discussion of this problem, see Ratzel's *History of Mankind*, 3 Vols., London, 1896.

in the generation of a historical process. He never can subscribe to the extreme view of Huntington about history being determined by cyclic climatic changes (*civilization and climate*). A limited importance to geographical factors is also ascribed by Marx. But at times Hegel makes certain remarks which are highly problematical geologically, e.g. he says—"the archipelago between South America and Asia shows a physical immaturity. The greater part of the islands are so constituted, that they are, as it were, only a superficial deposit of earth over rocks."⁶² But while it is possible to accept the limited role of geographical factors,⁶³ it is certainly without doubt that Hegel's view about the temperate zone being the true theatre of history⁶⁴ is a hyperbole. Roughly till about the 13th century A.D. from the 4th millenium B.C. the centre of world history and culture was in the east and in the Mediterranean.

Another view of Hegel which also contains some amount of truth is his statement about the role of classes in world-history. Referring to North American state organisation Hegel says: "As to the political condition of North America, the general object of the existence of the state is not yet fixed and determined, and the necessity for a firm combination does not yet exist; for a *real state* and a *real government* arise only after a distinction of classes has arisen, when wealth and poverty become extreme, and when such a condition of things presents itself that a large portion of the people can no longer satisfy its necessities in the way in which it has been accustomed so to do."⁶⁵ A perusal of world history indicates that up to the present, class factors certainly have influenced the organisation of the government and the state to a limited extent.

Hegel's references to the *Volksgeist* also contain some elements of truth. The *Volksgeist* according to Hegel is the subject of national history and the *Weltgeist* is the subject of universal history. Hegel says "...every step in the process, as differing from any other, has its determinate peculiar principle. In history this principle is idiosyncrasy of Spirit—peculiar national genius. It is within the limitations of this idiosyncrasy that the spirit of the nation, concretely manifested, expresses every aspect of its consciousness

62. Hegel "The Philosophy of History," p. 81.

63. Hegel: "Geographical Basis of History," The Philosophy of History, pp. 79-102.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

65. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 87-88. Italics ours.

and will—the whole cycle of its realization. Its religion, its polity, its ethics, its legislation, even its sciences, art and mechanical skill, all bear its stamp."⁶⁶ Hegel is aware that the charge of being *a priori* and of attempting to insinuate ideas into the empirical data of history can be made against him. There can be no doubt that powerful events in history do not keep their influences confined to a single field. But it is probably too much to say that there is a unique spirit of the time and of the nation which casts its ubiquitous spell in an all-comprehensive fashion. Sometimes the spirit of the time (*Zeitgeist*) and the *Volksgeist* are themselves the creations of big movements in history. The French Revolution of 1789, the Bolshevick Revolution of 1917, and the Indian national movements from 1920 to 1942 have been primarily political events but they have partly created the *Volksgeist* of these respective countries.

Hegel is right in maintaining the influence of the *Volksgeist* in history.⁶⁷ It can be accepted as one of the causal factors although it can never be raised to the position of a monistic determinant in history. It is easy to transgress moderate limits and to interpret the *Volksgeist* in a narrow nationalistic way. Hegel's formulation of the *Volksgeist* was influenced by his early passion to become the Machiavelli of Germany.

There seems to be some similarity between the Hegelian view and the Spenglerian conception of culture. Spengler says:—"But the prime symbol does not actualize itself, it is operative through the form-sense of every man, every community, age and epoch and dictates the style of every life-expression. It is inherent in the form of the state, the religious myths and cults, the ethical ideals, the forms of painting and music and poetry, the fundamental notions of each science—but it is not presented by these."⁶⁸ "Thus the Destiny-idea manifests itself in every line of a life. With it alone do we become members of a particular culture, whose members are connected by a common world-feeling and a common world-form derived from it. A deep identity unites the awakening of the soul,

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

67. Cf. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 467: "It is spirit which is for itself since it maintains itself by being reflected in the minds of the component individuals; and which is in itself or substance, since it preserves them within itself. *Qua* actual substance, that spirit is a Nation (*Volk*); *Qua* concrete consciousness, it is the citizens of the nation.

68. Oswald Spengler: *The Decline of the West*, Vol. I, p. 175.

its birth into a clear existence in the name of a culture, with the sudden realization of distance and time, the birth of its outer world through the symbol of extension; and thenceforth this is and remains the prime symbol of that life, imparting to it its specific style and the historical form in which it progressively actualizes its inward possibilities."⁶⁹ The importance which the prime symbol enjoys in the Spenglerian scheme is held by religion or sometimes by the "Idiosyncrasy of the spirit" in the Hegelian conception of culture. Hegel says:—"The general principle which manifests itself and becomes an object of consciousness in the state—the form under which all that the state includes is brought—is the whole of that cycle of phenomena which constitutes the culture of a nation . . . The conception of God, therefore, constitutes the general basis of a peoples' character. . . The form of Religion, therefore, decides that of the state and the constitution."⁷⁰ This Hegelian-Spenglerian theory of cultures as organically-interlinked totalities stresses the immanent and not the merely external factors of social and historical change and dynamics.

We shall point out some of the false elements in the Hegelian conception of history. Hegel's worship of the state as the vehicle through which universal rational freedom can be obtained was an open apotheosis of the German monarchy and has no justification now. Croce says, "The adoration of the state or of might (*Macht*), born in Germany and introduced among other peoples, is nothing more in a final analysis than a base affection, not of citizens, but of liveried servants and courtiers for might as such which is vainly adorned with sacred and moral emblems. The opposite judgment of a few noble German spirits of a better age—Herder, Humboldt, and Goethe—even if it is somewhat unilaterally or exaggeratedly formulated is valid: that culture and civilization are always superior to the state. It is, in fact, stupid to exalt the state, which can only provide the necessary conditions of stability for the developing of the highest spiritual achievements as if it were the supreme end of these, it is as though one were to say that the end of thought and art and morality was to assure a good digestion to the human organism."⁷¹

69. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

70. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 50-51

71. Benedetto Croce: *History As the Story of Liberty*, (New York. 1941), p. 167.

Furthermore, it is difficult to accept the total rationality of human history. The countless irrational deeds of oppression, terror, slavery, exploitation, violence, stupidity and foolishness cannot be examined by the formula of the "cunning of reason." It is an inconsistency to speak at one time of the entire governance and determination of history by the absolute rational spirit and another time to speak of the "cunning of reason—that it sets the passions to work for itself, while that which develops in existence through such impulsion pays the penalty, and suffers loss. For it is *phenomenal* being that is so treated, and of this, part is of no value, part is positive and real. The particular is for the most part of too trifling value as compared with the general: individuals are sacrificed and abandoned. The Idea pays the penalty of determinate existence and of corruptibility, not from itself, but from the passions of individuals."⁷² The irrational cannot be eliminated from history. Nicholas Berdyaev says that all revolutions are irrational in their nature. Karl Marx pointed out that an idealistic philosophy of history speculatively distorts the facts in such a way that their history is made the goal of earlier history while the destiny or goal or idea of earlier history is, in reality, nothing more than an abstraction from later history, from the active influence which earlier history exercises upon later history.⁷³ It is difficult to reconcile Hegel's insistence on human passions and will as a factor in the generation of liberty with the rationalistic texture of the historical process.

History is full of anti-ethical and non-ethical deeds of nations and individuals. At times highly ethical civilization had to perish at the hands of fanatical beastly barbarians. What should be the proper attitude then? A blind worship of power or a moral existence? Hegel's answers seem blunt. "What the absolute aim of spirit requires and accomplishes—what Providence does—transcends the obligations, and the liability to imputation and the ascription of good or bad motives, which attach to individuality in virtue of its social relations. . . . The Litany of private virtues—modesty, humility, philanthropy and forbearance—must not be raised against them (i.e. world-historical deeds). The history of the world might, on principle, entirely ignore the circle within which morality and the so much talked of distinction between the moral and the politic lies."⁷⁴ The answers of Buddhist ethical

72. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, p. 33.

73. Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology*, p. 38.

74. Hegel: *The Philosophy of History*, p. 67.

philosophers Kant, Tolstoy and Gandhi, are totally in the opposite direction. I think a harmonious reconciliation of power and ethics is desired and such a philosophy of history we find formulated by Plato in the *Republic*. In Croce, I find a similar theory of reconciliation. Croce says "Vitality is not civilization or morality but without it civilization and morality would lack the necessary premiss, the vital material needed to give moral and civil form and direction, without it ethico-political history would come to lack its proper object."⁷⁵

On Avidya or Ignorance

by

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1. The philosophy of advaita is a system of extreme monism which eschews all plurality and distinction. According to it, the Absolute which is identical with the self of everything is the only reality that there is and it is to be conceived as an eternal and utterly immutable spirit. The question naturally suggests itself, "If reality be altogether simple and unchanging, and just identical with myself, how is it that I find around me a world of multiform objects, persons and animals with changing states and various qualities, and why should I myself feel like undergoing such a variety of moods and feelings and being subject to pain, decay and death?" To this advaitism answers by saying that the world of change and multiplicity—the not-self—is not real and that its appearance to consciousness is due to our avidya or ignorance about the true nature of reality. The concept of avidya is thus employed for explaining the fact that although the self is identical with the absolute, still this absoluteness of the self is not evident to us.

So the reason why advaitists have recourse to the concept of ignorance is that according to them the world of objects, both outer and inner, is false and there is only a single reality, namely the pure self. In forming a true notion of avidya, we should bear this fact in mind. This will enable us to see that ignorance cannot be considered to be a real entity either standing outside or lying within the absolute. For such a supposition would defeat the very purpose for which the concept has been introduced—the purpose, namely, of indicating that the nature of the absolute is utterly monistic and can brook no multiplicity. If anything other than this distinctionless and non-dual absolute be real, avidya would lose its very *raison d'être*. Hence the ignorance of which advaitists speak must itself be illusory.

2. In the writings of advaitists, this ignorance is usually described as a (i) something which has no beginning in time, (ii) which is positive in nature, (iii) which possesses two powers namely

(a) of veiling reality and (b) of being transformed into particular illusions and their false contents and (iv) which itself is false and so capable of being terminated by the right knowledge of reality. But before giving an exposition and justification of this account of ignorance, we would consider a slightly different view of it which has been maintained by certain modern supporters of advaita.

We have just observed that ignorance should not be supposed to be a real entity. It must not have any sort of reality higher than that of the world. One obvious way, therefore, of conceiving the advaitistic ignorance would be to think that it is just a significant name for the world-appearance itself—a name which is intended to signify that this appearance is a false show, that the apprehension of reality as a manifold of distinct objects different from one another and from the self is a misapprehension. Avidya is nothing but the false ascription of the character of the self to the not-self and *vice versa*. It should not be regarded as something which differs from and accounts for the misapprehension of the manifold world. Certainly we are not aware of any such entity which precedes and causes the illusion of the world. What we are aware of is the self's limitation or embodiment, and the world-appearance. When it is realized that this awareness is a misapprehension, it is called avidya or nescience. For if there be vidya or right knowledge, there can be no illusion; and ignorance means what is opposed to and is dissipated by knowledge.

We may, if we like, make a distinction between illusory knowledge and its illusory object, and name the former as ignorance; still it would not be proper to say that this ignorance exists prior to the world and then brings it about. For the being of an illusion and the being of its illusory content are implied by each other and should therefore be regarded as totally contemporaneous. To say that an illusion is the cause of an illusory object is no more significant than the statement that dream-objects are caused by dreaming.

What is to be appreciated is the fact that the misperceived object does not exist. It is no real thing at all. Hence no real thing can be said to cause it. All that we can say about an illusory object is that although it does not exist, still it appears to exist in erroneous apprehension and that when right knowledge occurs, the error is cancelled and the false object too vanishes from our consciousness.

Nothing else but the absolute or the pure self exists. The self's individuality and limitation, therefore, are illusory and due to the

false ascription of an illusory character to the self. But the false ascription cannot be regarded as prior to the illusory character. On the contrary, the two would seem to constitute only the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin, as it were. This false attribution of a wrong character, namely, the character of limitation, to the self which, in truth, is identical with the absolute—this coupling of the real and the illusory—is what has been variously named as ignorance, false knowledge, delusion, etc. It is called by such names because it is cancelled by right knowledge. Shankaracharya himself, the founder of advaitism, has said: "This superimposition (of the not-self upon the self), thus defined, learned men consider to be ignorance." (Br. Sut. S. B. Introduction). The mind, the physical body and the external world are merely the implications of this primary false superimposition, and ultimately identical with it. This is the only avidya about which we can talk in terms of actual experience.

Against this, one may raise the following objection. The act of imputing false character to a thing is not possible except for an individual self possessing a mind. But who is to ascribe individuality, activity, suffering, enjoyment and such other psychical states and properties to the pure self? Not the individual himself. For he is the product of a false ascription. If it be said that the individuality of the self is not due to any false ascription, it would amount to admitting that the self is *really* an individual; and this would go against the advaitistic tenet that the self is pure and free from individuality. It would also be unreasonable to maintain that the individuality of the self is caused by the pure self; for this latter is free from all activity. How, then, can this primordial illusion of the self's individuality be possible at all? It would thus seem to be absolutely necessary to postulate some such principle as avidya as the precondition of the illusion of individuality.

The above objection would appear to be meaningless, if it be clearly grasped that this ascription of individuality is not a real entity, that it, too, is a false appearance. Let us see what precisely may be the motive of the objector. Probably he wants to say that if we accept the present view about avidya there would be no rational ground for the attribution of individuality to the self. If this be the case, he would only be stating what must be admitted by all advaitists alike. For a follower of Shankara must maintain that every form of limitation to the self (including its individuality) is irrational. If it could be explained by reason and supported by

some valid means of knowledge, it could not but be real, and all effort to get rid of it by right knowledge would be a mere fatuity. No doubt, if we grant that there is a false act of imputation, we must also grant that which imputes or that to which the act of imputation belongs. But it is not difficult to point out from within actual experience what this something is, provided we do not raise the further question of the rationale of this something which imputes, nor of the act of imputation itself. The something to which the wrong act belongs is, it is then easy to see, the empirical ego—the self which believes itself to be limited, embodied and possessed of a mind with a distinctive character of its own. That the present interpretation of avidya fails to indicate any proper cause of the empirical ego is what should be expected from the nature of causality itself, and therefore is not a defect of the interpretation. For the notion of causality already presupposes the limited individual ego, since there is no room for causality in the distinctionless absolute self. To seek, therefore, for the cause of the ascription of individuality to the self is quite illegitimate.

If, however, the objector thinks that the limitation of the self can be explained by postulating a primordial ignorance which precedes the ascription of this limitation, then, he is wrong. For the desire of knowing the cause of this illusion of the self's finitude would not be satisfied even by such a postulate. For we may very well ask: What is the cause of this nescience? To answer that it has no beginning and is not, therefore, caused is to invite insoluble difficulties. For the notion of beginning-lessness presupposes time, so that the avidya which would presuppose time could not be the cause of this time, and then, time would be real; and this would affect the purity and freedom of the self. Really speaking, it is absurd for time to have any cause; for the notion of causality, as has been brought out by many an eminent advaitist, is irrational and misleading, when it is employed for understanding the true nature of reality. It is, no doubt, a commonly accepted tenet of advaitism that Brahman is the cause of everything. But neither is this doctrine the ultimate position of advaitism, nor does it intend to support the view that causality enables us to get the right knowledge of reality. By saying that Brahman is the cause of the world, it is only intended to reject the notion that concepts such as those of primordial matter, pure non-being, etc., could explain the origin of the world, and not that Brahman does really originate the world. At any rate, the doctrine that Brahman is the cause of the world is no argument for the hypothesis that there is an uncaused avidya

distinct from the erroneous knowledge of the self's individuality and of the world.

To sum up. A wrong ascription cannot possibly have any rational ground. We may, at best, say that the cause of the ascription of an illusory not-self to the self is unreason or lack of discrimination or absence of right knowledge. But this is not to trace it to any positive entity which precedes it, but merely to state, in different words, that the said superimposition is wrong. The 'absence of right knowledge', if it be conceived as what differs from, and exists prior to, false knowledge and its illusory content, cannot be said to be an actual fact of experience. What appears to us is only the wrong apprehension with its illusory object. This very thing assumes the character of "the absence of right knowledge" by contrast with the subsequently occurring right knowledge which cancels it. To say that the absence of proper knowledge is the cause of illusion is similar to saying that the absence of wakefulness is the cause of dream. Such modes of explanation are purely verbal. What has been said just now about 'the absence of right knowledge' would apply with much greater force to the theory that the ascription of finitude to the self is due to a positive and beginningless avidya which is different both from the pure self and from the false ascription. For advaitism demands that in order to attain truth we must reject the individuality and limitation of the self, although these are actual appearances. How then can advaitism tolerate the acceptance of a purely hypothetical entity like positive ignorance which does not appear in experience? Moreover, by accepting it we do not in any way improve our understanding of the illusory finitude of the self. For the question, "Why should it be there at all?" is as legitimate in the case of this prior avidya as in the case of the wrong act of attributing finitude to the self. Hence no useful purpose would be served by distinguishing avidya or ignorance from adhyasa or false attribution. It would be more in consonance with reason and actual experience to hold that ignorance is just identical with erroneous knowledge.

3. The above view is recommended by its great simplicity. But we are not aware of any explicit and comprehensive account of it in any of the classical works on advaitism in Sanskrit, although it must be admitted that the Upanishads and the works, especially, of Shankara and Sureśvara contain passages which may perhaps be used to support it. The only systematic work, in Sanskrit, in support of this view which identifies avidya with erroneous knowledge is, so far as we know, a modern work entitled "Mulavidya

Nirasa or Shri Shankara Hridaya" by Subrahmanya Sharma. A good account of this view, in English, developed in an independent way, can be had in Prof. Malkani's contribution to the book "Ajnana", published by the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. Of course, the fact that a certain doctrine has not been upheld by classical writers of repute is no disproof of its truth. Still this should be a sufficient ground for our carefully examining such a view before we finally accept it, especially when it concerns the interpretation of a concept which has been considered, discussed, formulated and explained, in great detail, by a long line of able writers beginning from ancient times.

It need hardly be mentioned that a good deal of what is maintained by this particular view about avidya must be accepted by every follower of Shankara. Thus no advaitist would think avidya is a real entity. Nor would he take objection to the statement that every occurrent illusion and its illusory content are avidya in the sense that they are modes of avidya. The description of erroneous knowledge and its illusory content as 'mere ignorance' is to be met with quite frequently in the literature of advaitism. It is also incumbent upon every advaitist to uphold that avidya, too, like the world and the self's individuality, is an appearance and therefore not real, in any ultimate sense. In none of these respects, can one, advaitist differ from another. Still it would not be proper to forget that the followers of Shankara do, in general, distinguish between avidya and adhyasa, i.e., between what is called a beginningless ignorance and its particular modes such as the wrong notion of the self's individuality and finitude. The question is, Can advaitism do without such a beginningless avidya? Is it anything more than a mere postulate? Or is there any experiential evidence in favour of such a positive entity which is distinct from the false appearance of the world and the individual empirical self? Having admitted an avidya of this description, can these false appearances themselves be regarded as mere modes of avidya? We now intend to answer these questions as best as we can.

Although an illusion is sometimes referred to as 'mere ignorance', yet the two concepts do not seem to be synonymous. When we are ignorant about anything, we need not necessarily have illusion about it; for we may, notwithstanding our ignorance, refrain from forming any judgment about it. And in such instances, ignorance would not mean just the same thing as an illusion. Of course, to misperceive the rope as a snake is at the same time to be ignorant about it. Nonetheless, this does not prove that

ignorance is just a different expression for illusion. To steal is to be selfish. Yet stealth and selfishness do not have the same connotation.

The illusion of a snake in regard to a rope may vanish or be cancelled, and still the ignorance about the rope may persist. The illusion is an occurrent psychical event of limited duration, and hence it is bound to disappear either with the cessation of mental activity, as, for instance in dreamless sleep, or with the rise of another psychical event. This latter need not even be a state of cognition at all. It may be a desire or a feeling of pain, for instance. If so, there would be no reason why the ignorance about the rope should cease to exist. Even supposing that it is cognitive, it is possible that it does not cancel or contradict the illusion of a snake. In all these cases, the illusion would vanish without being contradicted by a later judgment; but the ignorance about the rope would continue.

It may be contended that as long as an illusion is not actually cancelled, it cannot properly be said to vanish from our mind completely—on the contrary, it must be considered to remain in the mind in a latent form as an implicit belief. But this, too, is not sufficient to do away with the distinction between ignorance and such an occurrent illusion. For even if the illusion be removed by a subsequent piece of knowledge which directly contradicts it, such as "This is not a snake," yet this may take place without our having attained the knowledge of the rope as a rope. The judgment "This is not a snake" may be based on certain indirect evidences, which, in spite of their being valid, do not amount to the positive knowledge, "This is a rope." And in the absence of such positive knowledge, we may have further illusions about the rope such, for instance, as would be expressed by the proposition, "This is the twig of bamboo." It is only by positively and definitely knowing a thing just as it really is that we can finally remove the possibility of illusions in regard to it. And such a general possibility is not to be identified with actual illusions of a particular kind. This shows that although a particular illusion in regard to a thing may be rejected as false, still our ignorance about that thing may persist. It is no doubt true that when we reject the false judgment "This is a snake" by the negative judgment "This is not a snake," we may be said in a sense to have removed our ignorance about the fact that the 'this' is *different* from a snake. Nevertheless, the ignorance about what 'this' is in itself must be said to con-

tinue, till we attain the knowledge "This is a rope." It would appear, therefore, that ignorance cannot be identified with actually occurring illusions as such.

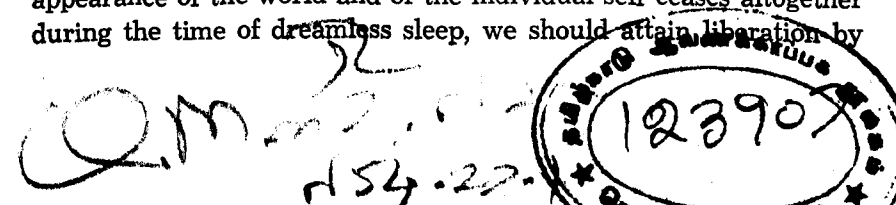
4. The point which we are trying to make out here is often expressed by the statement that avidya possesses two different powers, called avarana and vikshepa, and so functions in two distinct ways: First, it hides from me the real nature of my self, namely, its infinitude and freedom; and secondly, it produces the appearance of the self's finitude and of an inner and outer world which sets limit to it. The necessity of postulating these two functions of ignorance can be made clear by reference to the genesis of even an ordinary illusion such as the misperception of a shell for a piece of silver. There is no mistake or illusion about a thing when the latter is known in its proper character. If I know the shell as shell, I cannot possibly mistake it for silver. Hence for the possibility of such a mistake, we must suppose that there is something which, as it were, conceals the shell from my view, thus preventing it from being revealed to me. This is indispensable for an illusion, since a knowledge of the true character of the shell would not only put an end to the illusion, but would also make it impossible from the very outset. This is what is called avarana or the power of concealment which belongs to ignorance. But the mere concealment of the shell is not enough for the genesis of the illusion in question—it would only explain the fact of my not seeing the shell and may, at the worst, give rise to the mistaken judgment "There is no shell at this place." It is doubtful whether it could by itself give rise even to such a mistaken judgment. At any rate, this concealment could not further lead to the appearance of silver, there, and to the consequent positive judgment "This is silver." In order that this latter may be possible, we have to postulate that ignorance possesses, over and above its power of concealment, also another power, namely, of producing an actual objective appearance, such as silver—an object which is really absent from the place where it appears to be. This is what gives a content to an illusion and thus makes it definite or determinate as the illusion of silver. That power of avidya which is responsible for such an objective appearance in a place where it really is not is called vikshepa, i.e., the power of making a thing appear different from what it is. What is necessary for illusion is not only the lack of knowledge of the real thing, but also the wrong attribution of a false character to it. To fulfil the first condition, we postulate avarana or the power of concealment. To fulfil the second, we pos-

tulate vikshepa or the power of creating an actual objective appearance which is false.

The two powers should not however be supposed to be strictly co-ordinate. The second is, in a sense, subordinate to the first, since it functions only when the first has already begun to function. In order that the illusion of silver in regard to a shell is to take place at all, the shell must already be veiled. But the converse is not true. The concealment of the shell is not necessarily accompanied by the illusion of silver or of any other determinate object whatsoever. I may feel ignorant of what the object in front is. But this need not imply that I am positively taking it to be silver. Not to know is one thing. To know wrongly is another.

This distinction between avarana and vikshepa is no mere theory, but is supported by the ways in which nescience actually presents itself to immediate consciousness. Thus one way in which nescience appears is a concealment or obscuration of reality and is capable of being immediately recognized in the form "I do not know" or "I am ignorant." It also appears in a different way when we are subject to an illusion with a definite content of its own. But in this form, nescience does not present itself, to immediate consciousness, in its form as a nescience or concealment, but rather as a revelation of reality. That an erroneous cognition and its content conceal reality and are, therefore, only a mode of nescience is not recognized before the illusoriness of the act is detected. So this is not recognized directly, but only as an implication of the knowledge that the said cognition is illusory. The perception of a shell as silver certainly hides the real nature of the shell and is therefore a mode of avidya. Yet this erroneous perception does not appear to consciousness to be a mode of ignorance before it is rejected as false. Till that time, it, on the contrary, appears as a revelation of the real thing. Thus if we bear in mind the ways in which avidya actually appears to immediate consciousness, we shall find that it is quite legitimate to say that avidya functions in two different ways, namely, as (i) merely concealing the true nature of reality and as (ii) creating particular illusions in regard to it.

Hence it would not be proper to identify my fundamental ignorance about the self with what is only a particular mode of it namely the illusion of the manifold world and of the self's individuality. If ignorance were just identical with this illusion, then, since the appearance of the world and of the individual self ceases altogether during the time of dreamless sleep, we should attain liberation by



simply falling into a state of dreamless slumber. But the fact that after enjoying such a state I wake up again and am once more subject to the illusion of the manifold world implies that ignorance in some form continues to exist even during dreamless sleep.

As a matter of fact, the presence of ignorance, during dreamless sleep, as a concealment of reality, is, as we shall presently show, revealed immediately to a transcendental consciousness. The mere disappearance of the erroneous knowledge of the world and of the self's finitude does not amount to the dissolution of avidya—this is only a temporary cessation of the functioning of avidya in its aspect of vikshepa.

Hence neither by falling into dreamless sleep, nor by voluntarily withdrawing the mind from the world by putting a stop to all mental activities, can ignorance be rooted out, once for all. Nor is the total destruction of avidya possible, if we simply reject, as illusory, the appearance of the world and of the self's individuality, by ratiocinative arguments such as those which have been employed in the literature of advaita. For even after knowing that the world is illusory we may still be in doubt as to what the true nature of reality is. Kant's philosophy, for instance, recognizes the world to be an appearance, and still admits ignorance about the nature of ultimate reality. To cancel the illusion of the world in the sense of feeling that it cannot be ultimately true is not, therefore, to cancel avidya; hence the two must not be identical. Since, however, our attention would not be directed to the true nature of reality, as long as the belief in the reality of the world is very strong, ratiocinative arguments proving the illusoriness of the world should be of use in preparing the ground for the rise of that immediate and true knowledge of reality, which is to destroy ignorance at its root. But they, by themselves, cannot be considered to annihilate ignorance in its primary aspect of avarana, i.e. of hiding reality, although they may lead us toward that goal. All this indicates that ignorance, as such, is not to be identified with the appearance of the world and of limited ego-hood.

Of course, advaitism holds that ignorance, itself, is a false appearance. Nevertheless, we have to admit a distinction between the appearance of avidya as a bare concealment of reality and its appearance as the positive illusion of limited self-hood and of the manifold world. As will soon be brought out, the former appearance has to be regarded as having no beginning. But the illusion of an individual self and of a multiform universe ceases whenever

the mind ceases to function, and crops up once more when the mind becomes active again. Hence even if ignorance itself be illusory, we shall have to differentiate that illusion which is called ignorance from such other illusions as those of the world and of the self's individuality.

To sum up. The ignorance of reality must not be identified wholly with particular illusions about reality, because of the following reasons. Even after assuring ourselves by indirect evidence that a certain cognition of ours is false, there is still the possibility of further illusions in regard to it, and also our desire to know the true nature of reality remains unfulfilled, showing thereby that our ignorance about it is not yet liquidated. Secondly, as long as an illusion persists, we feel like "knowing" and not like "being ignorant"; but as long as we do not attain the positive knowledge of the true character of a thing, we feel like being ignorant about it.

(To be continued)

Review

TIME AND THE TIMELESS, by T. M. P. Mahadevan: Principal Miller Lectures, 1953 (Madras, Upanishad Vihar, 1953), viii, 84 pp., Rs. 2.

The most radical difference between Indian and Western thought, it is often said, lies in the theory of time. From the Western point of view, while there may be occasional recessions or cycles, the development of the world throughout time has a constant direction. Whether considered as the decline from golden to iron age of Greek mythology, the drama of sin and salvation of Christian theology, biological and social evolution of modern science, or the epistemogenic catastrophe of contemporary pessimism, history has a significance which makes the study of history the real study of man. In this story the individual, after this short life either ceasing to exist or allotted a permanent place in the kingdom of God or the devil, plays an insignificant role. From the Indian point of view, while there may be limited periods of development lasting many years, time as a whole is cyclical, so that the world long ago was and again will be just as it is now. World history has no significance—and this is why Sanskrit literature, which equals or surpasses other literatures in every other type of composition, has few historical writings. The individual, however, may change indefinitely for better or worse, so that individual biography is significant, may extend over many lives (as in the Buddhist birth stories), and may culminate in the attainment of freedom.

Professor Mahadevan, in the Miller lectures delivered at Madras in March, 1953, refutes this popular notion of Indian thought, at least so far as Advaita Vedanta is concerned. He maintains that release from bondage is not individual but cosmic and that consequently world history is not insignificant but purposive.

Moksha, he points out, is essentially freedom from individuality. Consequently no individual can find himself free. *Moksha*, release from illusory individuality to the "more abundant life" of spiritual freedom, is the goal for society, "the common goal of all beings," involving not the destruction but the fulfilment of the world. The individual cannot attain freedom, for it is the essence of the individual to be bound, but the world can attain freedom,

for the world need not (and really does not) exist in the form of individuals.

History, the story of the world's progress toward cosmic *moksha*, is significant because it has a goal. *Satya-yuga* is "the age of truth, peace, and harmony" toward which the entire creation is moving. The purpose of history is "the cosmic realization of the eternal perfection." Its meaning is "our progressive realization of the eternal Self." Time, consequently, is not cyclical but like a spiral, in which the cycles are subordinate features of a fundamentally one-way movement.

Time, to be sure, is unreal. This Vedanta thesis is only confirmed by the obscure accounts of time given by Western physicists, psychologists, and philosophers. But it does not follow that time is unimportant. Real eternity and its unreal image are the two forms of the Absolute. As the Maitri Upanishad says, "There are two forms of Brahman: time and the timeless." We do not attain eternity by rejecting time but by passing through and beyond it to the timeless reality. The purpose of time is to serve as the gateway to reality. It is the channel through which all orders of creation return to their source, the timeless Brahman. We cannot know the nature of time, but we can know its purpose.

That history has a purpose is a Christian doctrine, to expound which the Miller lectures were endowed. If Professor Mahadevan's interpretation is correct, it is also a Vedanta doctrine. There are important differences between the Vedanta and Christian teachings concerning this purpose, but they agree in having to face the same paradox. Theoretically salvation (whether attained by *moksha* or by the incarnation) is cosmic, but practically (whether attained by *jñāna* or by grace) it is individual. How some can remain bound even after *moksha* is attained, or how some can remain damned even after the redemption of man, is the great problem of evil. If the purpose of history is inevitably and eternally attained, it seems equally true that it is inevitably and eternally frustrated.

GEORGE BOSWORTH BURCH

Books Received

1. *Christianity and Existentialism* by J. M. Spier, published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, Price \$3.00.
2. *Teach Yourself Ethics* by Dr. A. C. Ewing, published by The English Universities Press, Price 6 sh. net.
3. *Related Multiplicity* by B. K. Mallik, published by Hall the Publisher, Ltd., Oxford, Price 30 sh.
4. *The New Perspective* by Rudolf Jordan, published by The University of Chicago Press, Price \$5.00.
5. *Genesis—Mother of Sciences* by Pincas Dov, published by the author at Chicago.
6. *Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy* by Robert K. Presson, published by The University of Wisconsin Press, Price \$2.50.
7. *Popular Essays in Indian Philosophy* by Prof. M. Hiriyanna, published by Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore, Price Rs. 5 or 7 sh. 6 d.
8. *The Quest after Perfection* by Prof. M. Hiriyanna, Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore, Price Rs. 5 or 7 sh. 6 d.
9. *Mystics and Mysticism* by P. N. Srinivasachari, published by Sri Krishna Library, Madras, Price Rs. 8.
10. *The Bhagavad Gita and The Changing World* by Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., Price Rs. 5.
11. *The Fundamentals of Hinduism* by S. C. Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D., Price Rs. 3-8-0.
12. *Viveka-Chudamani of Sankaracharya* by Swami Madhavananda, Mayavati, Price Rs. 3.
13. *Vedanta-Paribhāṣā* by Swami Mādhavānanda, Belur Math, Price Rs. 3.
14. *Mystic Approach to The Veda and the Upanishad* by M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Library, Madras, Price Rs. 3.

15. *The Philosophy of Union by Devotion* by Srimat Swami Nityapadananda Abadhuta, Price Rs. 2-8-0.

16. *Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy* by Kalidas Bhattacharyya, published by the author at Das Gupta & Co., Calcutta, Price Rs. 10-8-0.

17. *Inquiries into the Nature of Law and Morals* by Axel Hägerström and translated by C. D. Broad, published by Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm, Price Sw. Cr. 25.00.

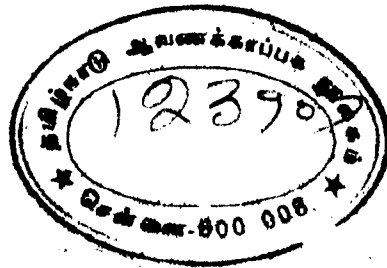
18. *Guadapāda: A study in Early Advaita*, by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, published by the University of Madras, Price Rs. 9.

19. *Object Content and Relation* by Kalidas Bhattacharyya, M.A., Ph.D., published by the author at Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., Calcutta.

20. *Proceedings of the Poona Philosophy Union*, Price Rs. 2.

21. *The Ethical Philosophy of AL. Ghazzali* by M. Umaruddin, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Muslim University, Aligarh, Price Rs. 5.

22. *Human Rights* by Swami Madhavgirirtha, Vedant Ashram, Valad, Price Rs. 3.



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