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THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

August

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THE EAST IN THE WEST*

C. F. Andrews

I

THE Greek mind, with one singular and hitherto unexplained exception, dwelt upon that which was perfect within limits rather than that which was beyond all limits.

The exception was Plato. He draws nearest of all among the Greeks to the mind of India. For he is never content merely with the earthly perfection which is visible and to be reached by human endeavour. He is ever seeking for that "heavenly city, which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The essential Greek mind came back with a rebound in Aristotle, so sane, so balanced, so scientific, but always falling short of that idealism, to which Plato gave the very name we still use today. We might, without any incongruity, imagine Plato taking his abode among the forest dwellers of ancient India; declaring with them: "Listen to me, ye children of the Immortal, I have seen Him, the Infinite Personality, that is beyond Time and Place." But we can scarcely dream of Aristotle, the realist, dwelling for long in that atmosphere. Some passages in the

* We are glad to publish this article which was found among the author's papers. His own life was a noble and heroic experiment in realising the unity of man's spiritual experience in East and West, which he traces so learnedly in the above article.—*Ed.*

Greek dramatic poets breathe the same air as Plato, but it is not so marked in them as it is in Plato himself.

The age of Pericles, which was the crown of the Greek Period in human history, owed much of its distinction to this sense of finite proportion in human affairs. The lines of the architecture of the Parthenon have this proportion always in view. There is no leading architectural line soaring upward to the skies, like those in some of the greatest Hindu temples and in the Gothic cathedral spires. To take another sphere of art, where the Greeks equally excelled, the beauty of the Greek sculpture is in the contour of the perfect physical form of man and woman, realised in white marble without a flaw in the technique. The restraint of the treatment is so severe that there is little place for idealistic flights of the imagination, as in Hindu sculpture.

The same is true in other subjects. Drama, for instance, where once more the Greeks were able to produce a perfect vehicle of art, was controlled by the dramatic unities that strictly limited the field of action. The Muse of History again, to give one last example out of many, when she finds her highest exponent in Thucydides, not only creates a form which can never be surpassed, but eschews fable and legend with an exactness that would have satisfied the standards of modern science. Indeed, as we shall see later, modern science itself, with its realistic outlook upon life, is in a very true sense the greatest after-product of the Greek mind.

These wonderful children of antiquity, whose intellect had reached a clarity concerning the visible world which has rarely, if ever, been surpassed, shrank back from the infinite and the unlimited as though afraid to venture forward into the darkness. It is a very strange limitation; and it surprises one in the Greeks, when one comes back to them after Indian studies.

Still stranger does it become, when one considers the character of Odysseus in the second great epic ascribed to Homer. He is the typical Greek, wise and many-thoughted, who has gone to the verge of the unknown. But here we find that even he

shrinks back. There are limits which in his daring adventure he may not cross. He stands at the head of the race, in the dawn of its history, both as an example of its astonishing temerity and its no less astonishing reticence, sanity and proportion.

Recent archæological researches have shown us against what a background of mad passion and insensate fear this sanity precariously stood forth in daily life. The art of Sophocles was created out of the raw material of the revels of the Dionysiac festival. It represented their sublimation rather than their repression. The *Bacchæ* of Euripides shows us for a moment that frenzy let loose. The object of the dramatist, as Aristotle finely described it in well-known words, was to cleanse the human mind through fear and pity. We can see the same restraint in the dramatic rule that the gruesome deed of murder should never be enacted on the stage.

This sane outlook of the Greeks saved them from gross superstitions. To the Greek mind at Athens, as the plays of Aristophanes show clearly, the older legends of the gods and goddesses had become objects of laughter and satire rather than belief. But there is a nemesis in human affairs, which always follows close upon the heels of finite perfection. The Greek genius was amazingly short-lived. It is true that its results persisted. But its achievements were crowded into one glorious century; and then the blossom faded. We have not been able again to reach that exquisite completeness which marked Athens at its prime; but in many other ways we have advanced far further and discovered things of which the Athenian intellect never even dreamt. Even our modern science in the hands of Eddington is going out far beyond the regions of the finite.

It would be true, perhaps, to suggest that Europe today, with its new world-problems of psychology, philosophy, and religion, which have to be dealt with one by one, has more to learn from ancient India than from ancient Greece. We may even venture to predict that the present century in Europe will draw its greatest sources of new knowledge from India and the East

in certain matters pertaining to the human mind. If this proves to be true, the reason will be, not that Greece is to be challenged afresh in her own sphere, but rather because, with the growth of the conception of human personality, and of the universe as pervaded by one divine spiritual life, we shall necessarily turn to other spheres.

If we look along the channels that flowed into the West and helped to form the reservoir of human thought in the ancient classical world of Europe, we shall find that this limited outlook of the Greeks was not confined to them alone. It is not necessary to dwell long upon the Roman mind, with its solidly practical, utilitarian account of the universe as a fit place to live in. That mind was obviously mundane, and the exceptions were very few indeed. A strange cross-fertilisation with the Stoicism of the Greeks produced some rare plants in this barren soil. Idealism in Marcus Aurelius is more pronounced than in any other ancient after the days of Plato. We note the exception, but it only proves the rule of the essential Roman limitation of spiritual vision and concentration on secular affairs.

We come to a more debatable area, when we consider the Jews, as they entered into the life of the Roman Empire. In spite of much in the Old Testament, which clearly passes into the unseen, we are learning afresh every day, as we examine more carefully the Jewish records, how limited, as in the case of Rome, their conceptions were. The great exceptions come here in the Prophets and the Psalms; and these have formed the spiritual nourishment of the Christian Church.

II

The strange volcanic upheaval caused by the Christian Revolution consisted in this, that it tore away from its foundations, with a shock of tremendous explosion, this "classical" life of man in the Mediterranean area. For the Christian Faith started out at once on its romantic career, uprooting, destroying and obliterating like an earthquake all boundaries which man had

reared up during the past ages in order to shut out the terrors of the unknown.

An emaciated form, writhing upon a gibbet, called a Cross, shocked the artistic sensibilities of the Greek world, just as the cry of unlimited forgiveness which came from His lips in death shattered all the legal ideas of righteousness among the Jews. "We preach Christ crucified," said St. Paul, "to the Jews, a stumbling-block; to the Greeks, foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man."

This was a Revolution indeed, in the midst of so much sane and settled life! Into the Roman world of law and orderly security: into the Greek world of limited artistic perfection: into the Jewish world of justice based on exact requital, this strange portent came, with its transvaluation of all values and its unswerving gaze upon the infinite. "The things that are seen," said St. Paul, explaining the message, "are temporal: but the things that are unseen are eternal." This cry from the East had reached the West in many forms before; but this time it came with the fulness of spiritual power. It is interesting to note that the only element in the classics of Greece and Rome which was to be entirely assimilated was Plato.

There can be little doubt as to where this new upheaval originated. It sprang from the East itself, where the unseen and the eternal had absorbed the souls of men for long ages past. Other Eastern cults had crossed the border and gained an entrance into the Mediterranean area. They had failed, but this succeeded. While it overleapt the classical limitations of the Greek, the Roman and the Jew, it soon proved itself to possess a higher wisdom of its own which was able to meet the needs of the age and win the acceptance in the end of its finest thinkers.

It had its roots in the Jewish religion and absorbed the teaching of the Psalms and Prophets. It was able, also, as I have suggested, to find in Plato's writings a *praeparatio evangelica*, and

it soon began to express its own ideas of the Infinite in Plato's language. Though the Roman Empire instinctively persecuted the new faith, fearing its rival strength, yet the Stoic outlook upon the universe which held the minds of the greatest Romans, was found to be singularly akin. It began, almost at once, to use the well-worn aphorisms of the Stoics just as it also used the sentences of Plato and the Hebrew Prophets.

At first, it hardly seemed likely that a new philosophy of religion would develop out of the experience of these early Christians. We have seen how profoundly un-Jewish that experience was, and also how un-Greek and un-Roman. The Christian doctrine of the Cross,—of suffering without limit and without retaliation,—was repugnant to classical antiquity. We have to go to the early Buddhist Scripture for such idealism of suffering and sacrifice, embodied in a whole society, and not merely in exceptional individuals. Therefore it had very little "atmosphere" at first in the West: it was a thing strange and outlandish. It seemed likely to follow the course of other Oriental mysteries, which had come westward.

But two remarkable writers at a very early date fulfilled this miracle of approximation,—St. Paul and St. John. They were able, through genius of the highest order, to link the primitive Christian thought, on the one hand to the passages in the Jewish scriptures which spoke of an infinite redeeming value in suffering itself, and on the other hand to the idealism of Plato and the Stoics. The crown of this new philosophy of life was reached in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel and in the conclusion of the same writer's Epistles, that "God is Love." Here is a point where religion and philosophy, ethics and metaphysics, meet.

If we go back for a brief moment to the spiritual thoughts of the East that were prevalent in religion outside the Mediterranean area before the birth of Christ, we shall find the conception of the Divine Nature, as ultimately "Love," developed slowly by human experience. It was faintly outlined in that

most precious age of religious thought, the Upanishad period, which had declared: *He manifests His immortal form as Joy*,—where the word "Joy" contains much of the higher conception of God's nature. But it is in the early Buddhist and in the Jain doctrine of Ahimsa, that the teaching is made fruitful in practical life. The phrase, "The crown of all religion is Ahimsa," is indeed a great landmark in the religious history of the human race. This doctrine of Ahimsa, to a remarkable degree, ran a parallel course to that conception of Love in Christianity, which "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, thinketh no evil." It has not yet reached its limits, as we can see in new religious movements in India today.

The sudden impact of the Christian Revolution on the West, which carried with it some of the atmosphere of Eastern mystical religion, resulted in a remarkable revival of Platonism under Porphyry and Plotinus at Alexandria. This Neo-Platonism, as it was called, was to affect profoundly the later history of human thought. It left a deep mark upon Christianity itself.

Before Neo-Platonism arose, the direct touch with India had been well-established by the Christian Church. Pantaenus and Origen, two of the Greek Fathers, had each of them obtained definite knowledge and experience about India. Pantaenus left the highest academic position in Alexandria to visit India in person. He brought back manuscripts and also records of Christians who had already settled there. This was before the end of the second century A. D. Therefore it is not unlikely that the Neo-Platonists, in their turn, were constantly in touch with the spiritual teaching of the East and drew largely from it in their mystical realigion.

A strangely pathetic and lonely figure, St. Augustine, closes this chapter of classical antiquity, as it yielded stubbornly but inevitably to the Christian Faith. Torn by repentance and doubt, exalted by hope and faith and love, himself one of the tenderest souls that ever breathed, standing out above the wreckage of the classical age, he gave to the West, more than any

other single man, those central terms of its new religious philosophy which still remain paramount in the modern age. In his search after God, he sought also to fathom the infinite depths of human personality and to find there a true reflection of the divine. In this ardent mystical quest, by a singularly different route, but all the while aiming to reach the same goal, he comes nearest of all to Plotinus.

This intuitive vision of the Infinite carries us on the one hand back to the profound thinkers of the East and, on the other, forward to much of the new psychology of our modern age. His ardent and passionate longing for the presence of God in the soul, which could never be satisfied with the perfection of this present world, shows us how far we have travelled from the antique classical finite aim of the Greeks and Romans. He stands at the portal of those realms of Christian romance, which were the dream of the Middle Ages—those “Ages of Faith” in Europe, wherein myth and legend made up the daily life and experience of vast masses of mankind, and the solid earth, with its attractions of the flesh, was abandoned by those who were in the search for the Holy Grail and the Divine Bliss.

III

Following out, very rapidly indeed, the course of these Ages of Faith, as they affect our present subject, we find how, in the midst of much that was formal and crude and literal and coarse in spiritual texture, there were in every generation tender and refined souls who sought to follow St. Augustine along the mystical way, and to sound the depths of the human spirit in its search for God, approaching with awe and wonder the infinite ideal. They climbed painfully but triumphantly the ascent which they learnt to call the *Scala Perfectionis*,—the steep pathway of the soul, which led to the Beatific Vision. The “purgation” with which it began led on to “illumination”, and lastly to “Union” in which it found its goal.

Their search for inward truth led them also, like St. Augus-

tine, to enter the inner depths of their own personality and to seek out the soul's direct relation to the universe and God. Benedict, Bernard, Abelard, Francis, Dante, Thomas a Kempis, each of these in varying degree and mode represents this passionate search for infinite truth. Not seldom they neglect and despise the intellectual light altogether and fail to realise its vital purpose as a true guide to the soul. But deep down in the consciousness of man a new range of human thought was being explored. We, in this modern age, are now seeking to gather in the treasure, which they have left behind. When we compare it with the mysticism of the East, we discover a new kinship. It is perhaps the age when the West most nearly approached the East in the realm of spiritual thought.

Amid all this that was pointing to higher regions of the Spirit yet unreached, there was another side in these Middle Ages of Europe which led to a reaction: for there was a flaw at the base of Christianity itself as conceived in the West. The romantic element in the Christian Faith, as we have seen, could not arrive at any compromise with the ancient classical world.

The artistic proportion of the Greeks, which had given an external unity to matter and spirit, soul and form, broke up before the new intensive moral idealism of the Christian Faith, that knew no limit to the powers of sacrifice and devotion and counted all the world as dross that it might win Christ. At the same time, this Christian ideal itself went to excess and extravagance. It raised more difficulties than it could by its own power resolve. Deep down, in its very inmost structure, as we see from St. Paul's Epistles, there was a perpetual conflict between matter and spirit, unresolved and seemingly unresolvable, a dualism that was profound. Throughout the Middle Ages, this war between the soul and the flesh was carried on with an unrelenting zeal. It gave rise to dogmas which made havoc of sane thinking, and led to abnormalities and excesses which rendered impossible the healthy intellectual growth of mankind.

IV

The thinking mind of Europe could, in the end, no longer bear the strain of this fantastic idealism ; this perpetual other-worldly outlook which never reached the truth. It swung back, on the full tide of the Classical Renaissance, to the frank acceptance of the mundane standard of values, and of the finite Classical conception of virtue, as engaged only with the present earthly existence. The romantic element was freely thrown aside. Men determined to obey priests and popes no longer. They prepared to live in the present, enjoy the present, and be pagan in their outlook once more. Even cardinals and popes themselves joined in the reaction, when it reached its highest flood-point, sweeping away all the great landmarks of the Middle Ages in Church and State alike.

In one sense, the Modern Age of Europe has meant a return to realism and a weakening of the idealist outlook upon life. The earlier discoveries of modern science have been made by the concentration of the human mind upon reason and experiment, and the abandonment of the pathway of direct intuition as a source of knowledge. Thus, in more sense than one, a revival of the classics has taken place. In all this process, the West has drifted further and further away from its spiritual basis in the unseen.

Yet even in the West, the romantic element had not been altogether left behind during the Age of Reason which followed the Classical Renaissance. In the Eighteenth Century, it gave birth to the enthusiastic movement known as the Evangelical Revival, which brought into the homes of the poorest a mystical faith, transforming and purifying in its effects. George Fox and the Society of Friends represented another range of mystical religious thought and life. In Germany, also, there dawned a new illumination, that eagerly availed itself of every ray of light from the East, and began once more to follow the pathway of intuition as a means to attain truth. Philosophy, with due reverence,

was set up boldly on its throne and renewed search into unexplored regions of the human mind brought fresh facts and experiences to light.

In the Nineteenth Century the Modern Age of Science began. The Christian Church, which had bound itself hard and fast with irrational dogmas and creeds, could not at first cut itself loose, and make the fearless appeal to every faculty of man to join in the search for truth. A fatal conflict went on, all through the Century, between intellect and faith. Science became more and more abstracted from religion, and philosophy took the same precipitous course. While great gains have been achieved in certain directions by such abstractions, great losses have also ensued. The wholeness of life has been lost sight of, and humanity itself has been divided into compartments.

In Europe, the conception of the universe governed by the postulates of science, has tended to become rather that of an infinite series and a never-ceasing flux, than that of a spiritual ideal being realised under conditions of space and time. The imagination of the modern man is taught by science to picture the crash of systems and the wreck of worlds in an endless sequence. The infinitely great and the infinitely small in nature have been revealed to man's gaze as never before, but the mind and the spirit find no rest in all these bewildering discoveries. Modern minds frequently retire from them, jaded and worn, to the limited ideal of ancient Greece, and say : "Let us leave the infinite alone ; it can never be fathomed. Let us perfect that which we know and beautify the world in which we live."

The new age still gropes for that spiritual vision of the Infinite which is satisfying, not terrifying and morbid ; that vision which alone can unify the world. But as yet there has not been fashioned in the West any philosophy comprehensive enough to meet the true demands of religion and science alike, and bring a new unity to mankind.

In the present turmoil and confusion in Europe after the Great War, which has shaken the confidence and pride of the

West, there are very many earnest souls who are looking more and more wistfully to the East. They seek to discover whether the harmony between religion and science on the one hand and science and philosophy on the other, may not be found by taking into account that eastern hemisphere which has hitherto been for the most part outside the field of European research.

One thing is practically certain. The old isolation of the different cultures and religions of the world, which was originally in a great measure geographical, is now rapidly vanishing. The different currents of thought and life among the races of mankind have to be made to flow into one another in the future. Channels of intercommunication must be cut. The romantic and idealistic element, which is still strong in the religions of the East, must be brought into closer contact with the classical and realistic element, which came back to modern Europe with the Renaissance and has dominated European thought ever since. Only thus can the spiritual conception of the Universe, which is innate in the consciousness of mankind, in East and West alike, find its true setting and its full expression.

THE IDEALISM OF SIR MOHAMMED IQBAL*

Dr. P. T. Raju, Ph.D., Sastri.

SIR Mohammed Iqbal is better known as a poet than as a philosopher. But still he has given us a philosophy in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, *The Secrets of the Self*, and in some articles, in all of which he has shown himself to be a forceful thinker. Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah calls him the most celebrated modern thinker of Islam. And though he addresses his thoughts only to the Muslims, they could as well have been addressed to all, including the Hindus and the Christians. He was for a long time popular with the Hindus as well, but later his religious enthusiasm became communal and he began preaching the *Jihad* or the holy war against the unbelievers. But for that fact his philosophy would have had a wider and better appeal, and he would have been a potent force for unifying the two major communities of India. However, whatever be his communal views, his philosophical ideas are not without interest.

Though much influenced by Rumi, Arabi and other Sufis, he does not believe that Islam ever preached the complete annihilation of self in God. The ego as a finite centre of experience is not false; it is the fundamental fact of the universe.¹ Iqbal's sympathies are more with McTaggart than with Bosanquet. Yet the universe is not a finished whole. It is not yet a complete truth. It is ever advancing. After Bergson Iqbal conceives reality as pure duration. "A critical interpretation of the sequence of time as revealed in ourselves has led us to a notion of the ultimate Reality as pure duration in which thought, life and purpose interpenetrate to form an organic unity. We cannot conceive this unity except as a unity of the self—an all-embracing concrete

* Extract from the author's *Idealistic Thought of India* (to be published).

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. XVII. Eng. Tr. by R. A. Nicholson.

self—the ultimate source of all our individual life and thought.”¹ Now time, Iqbal tells us, is an essential element in the ultimate Reality.² He therefore disagrees with McTaggart who maintains the unreality of time. “But the real time is not serial time to which the distinction of past, present and future is essential; it is pure duration, i.e., change without succession, which McTaggart’s argument does not touch.”³ So far Iqbal is at one with Bergson. But he does not accept Bergson’s strictures against thought. The latter conceived thought as a spatialising activity and as opposed to intuition, which only can reveal the true nature of reality. Iqbal maintains that though outwardly thought spatialises and makes use of only mechanical categories, it has a deeper moment also in which it synthesizes the elements of our experience and goes beyond mechanism. Iqbal criticises both Gazali and Kant also for failing “to see that thought, in every act of knowledge, passed beyond its own finitude.”⁴

Iqbal is anxious to prove that man should not abandon the world in order to realise the ultimate truth. If, as it is thought, thought is connected with the world, and if the world has to be renounced for the ultimate truth, it implies that thought has to be left back. And it is held that intuition alone and not thought can reveal to us the final truth. But Iqbal wants to show that neither the world nor thought should be left back. It was a mistake of Gazali, Kant, Bergson and a host of others that they have not noticed a deeper aspect of thought. “In its deeper movement, however, thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the variously finite concepts are merely moments. In its essential nature, then, thought is not static; it is dynamic and unfolds its internal infinitude in time like the seed which, from the very beginning, carries within the organic unity of the tree as a fact. Thought

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 75.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

is therefore the whole in its dynamic self-expression, appearing to the temporal vision as a series of definite specifications which cannot be understood except by reciprocal reference. This meaning lies not in their self-identity, but in the larger whole of which they are the specific aspects. The larger whole is, to use a Quranic metaphor, a kind of ‘Preserved Tablet,’ which holds up the entire undetermined possibilities of knowing as a present reality, revealing itself in serial time as a succession of finite concepts appearing to reach a unity which is already present in them.”¹

Iqbal tells us that our self has two aspects, the external and the internal, which he calls the efficient and the appreciative. In its first aspect it enters into relations with the things of space. It is what the psychologist generally studies and can be interpreted in terms of the laws of association. But it is in its internal aspect that we get the clue to an understanding of reality. “It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience. In this life process of the deeper ego the states of consciousness melt into each other. The unity of the appreciative ego is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality, but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole. There is no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the ego, the multiplicity of whose elements is, unlike that of the efficient self, wholly qualitative. There is change and movement, but this change and movement are indivisible; their elements interpenetrate and are wholly non-serial in character. It appears that the time of the appreciative self is a single ‘now’ which the efficient self, in its traffic with the world of space, pulverises into a series of ‘nows’ like the pearl beads in a thread. Here is, then, pure duration unadulterated by space.”²

To sum up the position so far reached. Reality is pure

1. *Op. Cit.*

2. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 65.

duration. In it time is an element ; but time as it is Reality is not serial time ; it is change without succession. The elements in it interpenetrate and fuse into each other, so that we cannot make the distinction between past, present and future. It is one eternal now. The consciousness that can reveal to us the nature of this reality, which Bergson calls intuition and which as creative is will also, and which Kant, Gazali and others regard as beyond thought, is not opposed to thought. It is thought itself in its deeper aspect. Iqbal is not unaware of the fact that thought which is used in our ordinary practical life is mechanistic and that as such it cannot reveal to us Reality in its purity. That is why he says at another place¹ that lying close to our normal consciousness there are potential types of consciousness which can "open up the possibilities of life-giving and knowledge-yielding experience." But this deeper consciousness is not opposed to thought ; it is thought in its synthetic activity by which the manifold fuses into one and serial time becomes pure duration and an eternal 'now'. This truth is given in religious experience. The pure duration does not exclude the manifold of thought and so religion does not require a negative attitude towards the world. Reality is our self in our deeper aspect and so our ego is not annihilated in Reality.

It is obvious that Iqbal ingeniously connects the idea of pure duration borrowed from Bergson with that of the eternal present of Royce and others. Speaking of the divine time he says that it is what the "Quran describes as the 'Mother of Books' in which the whole of history freed from the net of causal sequence, is gathered up in a super-eternal 'now'".² "Knowledge, in the sense of discursive knowledge, however infinite, cannot, therefore, be predicated of an ego who knows, and at the same time forms the ground of the object known. Unfortunately, language does not help us here. We possess no word to express the kind of knowledge which is also creative of its object.

1. "Is Religion Possible?" Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1932-3.
2. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 105.

(Evidently Iqbal somehow missed here Kant's conception of the intuitive understanding.) The alternative concept of divine knowledge is omniscience in the sense of a single indivisible act of perception which makes God immediately aware of the entire sweep of history, regarded as an order of specific events, in an eternal 'now'. This is how Jalaluddin Dawani, Iraqi and Professor Royce in our own time conceived God's knowledge. There is an element of truth in this conception. But it suggests a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined unalterable order of specific events which, like a superior fate, has once for all determined the direction of God's creative activity."¹ That is, even to call the divine time an eternal Now is misleading. For the idea suggests a closed universe in which past, present and future are once for all determined. But reality is pure duration and full of infinite possibilities. So the idea of creativity should be added to that of the eternal present.

This creativity is always a forward movement which never turns back. On this point Iqbal differs from Nietzsche, who advocates Eternal Recurrence. Iqbal maintains that this recurrence is one form of mechanism and determinism and is opposed to free creativity. Recurrence means that the events of one cycle recur in the succeeding ones and this means that the future is once for all determined. There can be creativity only when things are not previously determined. Nietzsche's view is "nothing more than Fatalism worse than the one summed up in the word 'Qismat'".²

The final reality therefore is an ego ; it has to be understood as an ego. "Only that is, strictly speaking, real which is directly conscious of its own reality."³ And "on the analogy of our conscious experience, then, the universe is a free creative movement."⁴ But then what are the things created by the ego ?

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 108.
2. *Ibid*, p. 160.
3. *Ibid*, p. 100.
4. *Ibid*, p. 69.

It is only egos that can proceed from an Ego. The Ultimate Ego functions as ego-unities or ego-centres. "The world in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call an atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the 'Great I am'. Every atom of Divine Energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of ego-hood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of ego-hood until it reaches its perfection in man".¹ Like Leibnitz and McTaggart, Iqbal believes that the world is through and through spiritual and consists of only selves. But we should note that these egos, according to Iqbal, proceed from God and had a beginning in time,² and therefore God is given a far higher status by him than what He could get from the hands of Leibnitz and McTaggart.

Evidently Iqbal believes in grades or degrees of reality. The true nature of reality is ego-hood. But we should not say that this ego-nature is as manifest in a particle of dust as in a worm, as manifest in a worm as in man, and we may add, as manifest in man as in God. The true ego, for Iqbal, is our deeper self and man cannot be always conscious of it but only in deep meditation. Probably even then we do not go deep enough. However, there are grades of obscurity and clarity of this ego-hood and, if consciousness is the distinguishing mark of reality, there are degrees of reality. Material nature must be a sort of appearance.

Iqbal writes: "Now a self is unthinkable without a character, i. e., a uniform mode of behaviour. Nature, as we have seen, is not a mass of pure materiality occupying a void. It is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self. In the picturesque phrase of

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 99.
2. *Ibid*, p. 162.

Quoran, it is the habit of Allah. From the human point of view it is an interpretation which, in our present situation, we put on the creative activity of the Absolute Ego. At a particular moment in its forward movement it is finite; but since the self to which it is organic is creative, it is liable to increase, and is consequently boundless in the sense that no limit to its expression is final. Its boundlessness is potential, not actual."¹ Reality is a creative forward movement and matter is the form of its activity. Because reality touches the serial time always only at one point, at that particular moment matter appears finite. But as matter is an aspect of the creative moment, it too is infinite like the latter and is ever increasing because advancing. But this does not mean that matter would become infinite in some future moment. Its infinity lies in its potentiality; its infinity can never be actual.

There is therefore no duality of mind and matter in Iqbal's philosophy. "What then is matter? A colony of egos of a low order out of which emerge finite life and consciousness of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of complexity."² And similarly is the relation between body and mind interpreted. Iqbal accepts neither parallelism nor interactionism. "The system of experiences we call soul or ego is also a system of acts. This does not obliterate the distinction of soul and body; it only brings them closer to each other. The characteristic of the ego is spontaneity; the acts composing the body repeat themselves."³ That is, the soul or ego is creativity itself; it is simply an onward movement. But this movement has a pattern or habit according to which the acts repeat themselves. And this is the body. So really there is no difference between soul and body, or mind and matter. Does not the Saiva Advaita maintain that the world is the energy of the Absolute? Do not many other Vedantic systems hold a

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 76-7.
2. *Ibid*, p. 147.
3. *Ibid*, p. 146.

similar view? So matter is not different from spirit; and, it could have been added, it should not be, and cannot be shunned. "The truth, however, is that matter is spirit in space-time reference. The unity called man is body when we look at it as acting in regard to what we call the external world; it is mind or soul when we look at it as acting in regard to the ultimate aim and ideal of such acting."¹

Though the whole world is composed of spirits and proceeds out of the Ultimate Spirit, Iqbal is opposed to pantheism. When reality is described as self-revealing and the metaphor of light is applied to God, Iqbal tells us that it should "be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God and not his omnipresence which easily lends itself to pantheistic interpretation."² God is not infinite in the sense of spatial infinity. His infinity consists of the "infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression."³ But at the same time Iqbal maintains that the universe is no other to God, and that God and the universe are "only intellectual modes of apprehending the life of God."⁴ But this means that the universe is part and parcel of God. And pantheism must mean, according to Iqbal, the theory for which God is absolutely immanent in the world and is exhausted in it. But even in Hindu philosophy there is not a single school which believes in such pantheism. Even the *Bhagavadgita* asserts that the world forms only a part of God,⁵ an idea which is borrowed from the Upanishads. And the infinity of God is not understood spatially, though his presence must be felt at every point of space. However, if there is really no difference between God and the world and the two are only two different modes of apprehending the same thing, is not God all-pervasive and so

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 216.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

5. X, 42. *Vishṭabhyaḥamidam kṛtsnam ekāmsena sthito jagat*. See the commentaries also.

omniscient? Besides, if God can hold everything in an eternal Now, can anything be beyond his knowledge? These ideas do not seem to have been reconciled by Iqbal. In his anxiety to avoid pantheism, he has overlooked their irreconcilability. It is not necessary to deprive God of his omniscience in order to avoid pantheism. Just as the eternal Now need not imply a block universe and absolute determinism, omniscience too need not imply them. Otherwise, for the same reason for which omniscience has to be given up the doctrine of the eternal present also has to be given up.

Iqbal believes in a sort of meliorism but with the certainty of the victory of man over evil.¹ The final victory cannot be achieved for man by somebody else; he has himself to work for it. But he may be sure of success for the obvious reason that everything proceeds from God and the world is only a mode of his behaviour. This meliorism evidently differs from that of James for whom there is continual struggle between the forces of good and evil and God is not omnipotent and infinite. He therefore really depends on our help for subduing the forces of evil. But the help which human beings render in Iqbal's philosophy is not to a finite God but to one who is infinite and omnipotent and therefore is not pitched against forces as eternal and powerful as himself. The so-called evil forces are not really a second to him, for the world consists of nothing but egos which proceed from him. There is nothing alien to him in the world, and evil therefore must be unreal or an appearance for Iqbal. Iqbal does not discuss the point in detail and it would not be fair to attribute to him views not actually held by him. But we may say that here is a problem not completely solved.

If God is the central reality and all the egos that constitute the world originate in him and therefore have to go back to him, where does meliorism come in? If success is sure, provided we try, why not be optimistic instead of being merely melioristic?

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 118.

Iqbal's idea may be that even this world of which evil is a necessary factor may be bettered if human egos strive for it. If this is his view some new problems crop up. There are many in Europe who hold such a view. Tennyson believed in a far off divine event, which would of course be an event in serial time. Of late Samuel Alexander believed that the world would evolve the Deity itself. Iqbal's view may not be exactly the same, because for him Deity comes first and not last. But it may be that he believes that the kingdom of God can be brought down to earth, and that the world can be made perfect if the human egos so will it. But the question here arises why, if the world issues from God, it does not issue perfect, and if God really wished that an imperfect world should issue forth from him, whether he would allow man to make it perfect. What are the grounds of our certainty that we shall succeed in making it perfect? Or are there any limits to the perfection which the world can attain? And what are they? These questions do not seem to have been raised by Iqbal and it is difficult to say how he would have answered them.

Iqbal's motive in advocating meliorism seems to be that man should not remain inactive in the belief that the world is incurably evil or that it is the business of God to make it better and so success is sure. Of the philosophers in India there is none who more emphasizes activity and condemns inactivity than Iqbal. Almost all contemporary Indian philosophers including Radhakrishnan, Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak, Svami Vivekananda, etc., condemn the negative attitude to the world; but in this condemnation and the exhortation to be active and to control the world of matter Iqbal is one of the few who have gone to the extreme. Aurobindo Ghose believes in everybody becoming a Superman, provided he works for it. This Superman is a ruler of the world, though he is a ruler of his own self also. He is the man nearest to God and who can make the Sakti or power of God work according to his will. Indeed, in order to attain this power he must cease to be selfish. Aurobindo

Ghose's yoga is therefore a yoga of the will. The Superman does not shun matter; he does not fly from nature. On the other hand, he conquers it and controls it. And there is really no shunning of matter because matter is the energy of God. A very similar idea is found in Iqbal's writings.

"It is sweet to be God's viceregent in the world
And exercise sway over the elements.
God's viceregent is as the soul of the universe,
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name.
He knows the mysteries of part and whole
He executes the command of Allah in the world."¹

This viceregent is really a sort of Superman who controls the entire nature, of course, in the name of God. And that he controls the world in the name of God shows that he is not egotistic and selfish. He is a ruler of the world just as much as he is a ruler of his own self. Iqbal writes:

"Thy soul cares only for itself, like the camel:
It is self-conceited, self-governed, and self-willed.
Be a man, get its halter into thine hand,
That thou mayst become a pearl albeit thou art a potter's
vessel."²

And further he says:

"If thou canst rule thy camel, thou wilt rule the world
And wear on thy head the crown of Solomon."³

But in order to become a Superman one must be of strong character and must act.

"The man of strong character who is master of himself
Will find fortune compliant.
If the world does not comply with his humour,
He will try the hazard of war with Heaven."⁴

But there need be no war with Heaven. The man's end is not

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 79.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

selfish ; he is master of himself, and by being a master of himself he has transcended himself. Only he has to act.

“The pith of life is contained in action,
To delight in creation is the law of life.”¹

But now how are we to cease to be selfish ? How are we to be rulers of our selves ? Is it by complete self-surrender to God ? Does love of God involve such self-surrender ? Iqbal is opposed to every idea of self-negation. It is not self-negation but self-affirmation and self-assertion that he preaches. “Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself.”² The self-affirmation is preached to such an extreme as to advocate the absorption of even God and not surrender to him. Life is an assimilative activity and it assimilates even God. And good and evil are to be interpreted in terms of this assimilative activity. Personality is the tension we experience in this activity and “that which fortifies personality is good, and that which weakens it is evil”.³ Thus while some preach that we should become one with God by complete surrender to him and by being absorbed by him, Iqbal preaches that we should become one with God rather by absorbing him, when our self-affirmation and self-assertion become complete. This is really a dangerous advice ; and it can be rightly followed by only a very few. It easily lends itself to the interpretation that selfishness and self-aggrandisement are the pathway to reality. Iqbal must not have meant them ; but it is very few that can see the truth underlying his words. Indeed he felt that Hindu intellectualism and Islamic pantheism tended to deprive people of their capacity for action and infused into them a spirit of resignation miscalled contentment, born of weak-

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 89.

2. *Ibid*, p. xix.

3. *Ibid*, p. xxii.

ness and self-abnegation. As an antidote to this spirit Iqbal preaches self-assertion and stresses it so much that it appears to be almost self-aggrandisement amounting to the subjugation of God himself for one's purpose. But Iqbal could not have meant it ; for he says :

“Gain knowledge of Life's mysteries !

Be a tyrant ! Ignore all except God !”¹

Our duty to God and therefore the primacy of God is often repeated.² Yet on the whole one cannot but say that there is an over-emphasis on self-assertion, though it may be to counteract the mischief wrought by the spirit of resignation and passivity.

In accordance with his doctrine of self-assertion, Iqbal preaches a doctrine of vigorous and aggressive love. We have to love God ; but thereby we do not surrender our selves to him but rather absorb him. Love is a unifying force ; but by it we do not enter God's unity but rather make God enter the unity of our selves. But if all absorb God's unity into the unity of their respective selves and thereby become identical with God, then all become identical ; and probably we have to interpret Iqbal's assertion that the human ego is not annihilated in God to mean that the ego continues to be the ego by becoming the Ego of God. This point is not clearly stated by Iqbal. In what sense the absorption of God by the human ego has to be taken may be a matter for controversy and we may leave it undecided.

Very often in the history of religious thought we find that the love preached towards God is that of the weaker to the stronger sex. It is therefore a surrender of the whole personality, including will, thought and action, to God. And we rarely come across this love preached in the opposite direction. It is only in Iqbal that we find something like it. Iqbal does not say that God is a woman and that our love for him must be what it would be towards a woman. But he preaches aggressive love, a love that forces the object loved into union. The lover is not

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 94.

2. *Ibid*, p. 73.

to say : I am yours, do what you like with me ; but, you are mine and attune your will to mine. Iqbal says :

“The fountain of Life is Love’s flashing sword.”¹

It is very doubtful whether a poet like Tagore would ever have associated love with a sword. Of course, love conquers ; it may conquer even the sword. But it is difficult to understand how it works with a sword. But after all Iqbal may be making an over-emphasis.

If we are to affirm ourselves, are we to abandon our desires, saying that they belong to the flesh and not to the soul ? Iqbal does not preach looking down upon our material nature.

“Life is latent in seeking,
Its origin is hidden in desire,
Keep desire alive in thy heart,
Lest thy little dust become a tomb.”²

“Desire is the noose for hunting ideals,
A binder of the book of deeds.
Negation of desire is death to the living.”³

“Life is the hunter and desire the snare,
Desire is Love’s message to beauty.”⁴

Iqbal cannot be here advocating the indulgence of any and every desire. For he preaches duty to God, and the desires naturally must conform to this duty. Only to counteract the teaching of otherworldliness and the escape from things material must he have been glorifying desire so much. Self-affirmation is possible only through our acting for the satisfaction of desires. And it is only for the satisfaction of desires that matter is appropriated and made part of self.

“Self-affirmation brings not-self to light.”

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 29.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Iqbal like Nietzsche inveighs against the doctrine of self-negation as invented by the subject races of mankind in order to tame down the strong ruling races. True, the doctrine of self-negation in some of its forms is false and has produced disastrous consequences. But the doctrine of self-affirmation too, if it means aggression and aggrandisement, will lead to equally disastrous consequences. Examples need not be given now when the world is passing through one of the most evil times. Had Iqbal been living now he would have toned down his utterances. Even if the weaker races with all their burden of poverty and misery are not able to assert themselves, in the division of the spoils of aggression the stronger races are sure to fall out, fight and perish. It is in principle impossible for them to come to an understanding in that division ; for aggression is the principle which will be applied by them to each other just as much as they applied it to the weaker races. And how that aggression can ever be love is beyond our comprehension. The sword of aggression produces always a double effect : it strikes both the striker and the struck. And though Iqbal’s language lends itself to this interpretation, he could not have meant it. He wanted to preach a doctrine which would counterbalance the evil effects of the doctrine of self-negation and so over-stressed certain points. For we should not forget that the Superman of Iqbal, like the one of Aurobindo Ghose, is a self-ruler and not an egotist. And unless he is an egotist he cannot really be a tyrant. The Superman is a tyrant only in the sense that he is ruthless in carrying out the word of God. He may rule the world but for its good and not for his own self-satisfaction. His self is already controlled, and whatever satisfaction it derives it derives from carrying out the word of God. Education of the self consists in obedience, self-control and divine vice-regency.¹ Our interpretation must reconcile Iqbal’s poetical utterances.

This emphasis on self-affirmation leaves on Iqbal’s thought

1. *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 72.

the stamp of individualism, though this individualism is tempered by the idea of obedience to God and absolute self-control. Iqbal adopts Rumi's idea of the evolution of man out of matter and maintains that immortality depends on man's own efforts. He says: "If he (man) does not take the initiative, if he does not evolve the richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward push of advancing life, then the spirit within him hardens into stone, and he is reduced to the level of dead matter."¹ As in the philosophy of Aurobindo Ghose, matter, according to Rumi, evolves into plant life, then into animal life and then into mind. But evolution should not stop with human beings. Man should rise higher, and through his own efforts may become one with God. Or he may fall and become dead matter again, and again pass through the higher stages. "Personal immortality, then, is not ours as of right, it is to be achieved by effort. Man is a candidate for it."² That is, the world is a vale of soul-making. But when the soul is made, it depends on the soul itself whether to become immortal or not.

Though Iqbal is first a poet and then a philosopher, the insight he showed into the problem of time, the nature of thought and of reality is profound. He has been able to develop a fairly systematic philosophy of self-affirmation which is really needed now by all the Asiatic peoples, though here and there his poetical expression is charged with over-emphasis. His idealism is personalistic and even absolutistic. And in spite of absolutism he has made a serious attempt to preserve the individuality of the human ego.

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

SAKUNTALA : ITS INNER MEANING*

Rabindranath Tagore

"Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its
 decline,
 And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted,
 fed,
 Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name
 combine ?
 I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all at once is said."

—Goethe.

GOETHE, the master-poet of Europe, has summed up his criticism of *Sakuntala* in a single quatrain ; he has not taken the poem to pieces. This quatrain seems to be a small thing like the flame of a candle, but it lights up the whole drama in an instant and reveals its inner nature. In Goethe's words, *Sakuntala* blends together the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its maturity ; it combines heaven and earth in one.

We are apt to pass over this eulogy lightly as a mere poetical outburst. We are apt to consider that it only means in effect that Goethe regarded *Sakuntala* as fine poetry. But it is not really so. His stanza breathes not the exaggeration of rapture, but the deliberate judgment of a true critic. There is a special point in his words. Goethe says expressly that *Sakuntala* contains the history of a development,—the development of flower into fruit, of earth into heaven, of matter into spirit.

In truth there are unions in *Sakuntala* ; and the motif of the play is the progress from the earlier union of the First Act,

* Translated from the original Bengali (*Prācīna Sāhitya*—1907.) The translation was found among Mr. C. F. Andrews' papers. Unfortunately we do not know to whom we are indebted for the translation, as the name of the Translator was nowhere to be traced.
—Ed.

with its earthly, unstable beauty and romance, to the higher union in the heavenly hermitage of eternal bliss described in the last Act. This drama was meant not for dealing with a particular passion, not for developing a particular character, but for translating the whole subject from one world to another,—to elevate love from the sphere of physical beauty to the eternal heaven of moral beauty.

With the greatest ease Kalidas has effected this junction of earth with heaven. His earth so naturally passes into heaven that we do not mark the boundary-line between the two. In the First Act the poet has not concealed the gross earthiness of the fall of Sakuntala : he has clearly shown, in the conduct of the hero and the heroine alike, how much desire contributed to that fall. He has fully painted all the blandishments, playfulness and flutterings of the intoxicating sense of youth, the struggle between deep bashfulness and strong self-expression. This is a proof of the simplicity of Sakuntala : she was not prepared beforehand for the outburst of passion which the occasion of Dushyanta's visit called forth ; she had not learned how to restrain herself, how to hide her feelings. Sakuntala had not known Cupid before ; hence her heart was bare of armour, and she could not distrust either the sentiment of love or the character of her lover. The daughter of the hermitage was off her guard, just as the deer there knew not fear.

Dushyanta's conquest of Sakuntala has been very naturally drawn. With equal ease has the poet shown the deeper purity of her character in spite of her fall,—her unimpaired, innate chastity. This is another proof of her simplicity.

The flower of the forest needs no servant to brush the dust off her petals. She stands bare ; dust settles on her ; but in spite of it she easily retains her own beautiful cleanliness. Dust did settle on Sakuntala, but she was not even conscious of it. Like the simple wild deer, like the mountain spring, she stood forth pure in spite of it.

Kalidas has let his hermitage-bred youthful heroine follow

the unsuspecting path of nature ; nowhere has he restrained her. And yet he has developed her into the model of a devoted wife, with her reserve, endurance of sorrow, and the life of rigid spiritual discipline. At the beginning we see her self-forgetful and obedient to Nature's impulses like the plants and flowers ; at the end we see the deeper feminine soul,—sober, patient under ill, intent on austerities, strictly regulated by the sacred laws of piety. With matchless art Kalidas has placed his heroine on the meeting-point of action and calmness, of Nature and Law, of river and ocean, as it were. Her father was a hermit, but her mother was an *apsara*, a nymph. Her birth was the outcome of interrupted austerities, but her nurture was in a hermitage, which is just the spot where nature and austerities, beauty and restraint, are harmonised. There is none of the conventional bonds of society there, yet we have the harder regulations of religion. Her Gandharva marriage, too, was of the same type ; it had the wildness of Nature joined to the social tie of wedlock. The drama stands alone and unrivalled in all literature, because it depicts how restraint can be harmonised with freedom. All its joys and sorrows, unions and partings, proceed from the conflict of these two forces.

Sakuntala's simplicity is natural, that of Miranda not truly so. The different circumstances under which the two were brought up, account for this difference. Sakuntala's simplicity was not girt round by ignorance, as was the case with Miranda. We see in the First Act that Sakuntala's two companions did not let her remain unaware of the fact that she was in the first bloom of youth. She had learnt to be bashful. She also knew something of the world, because the hermitage did not stand altogether outside society ; the rules of home life were observed here too. She was inexperienced, though not ignorant, of the outside world ; but trustfulness was firmly enthroned in her heart. The simplicity which springs from such trustfulness had for a moment caused her fall, but it also redeemed her for ever. The trustfulness kept her constant to patience, forgiveness and loving kindness, in

spite of the cruellest breach of her confidence. Miranda's simplicity was never subjected to such a fiery ordeal; it never clashed with knowledge of the world.

Our rebellious passions raise storms. In this drama Kalidasa has extinguished the volcanic fire of tumultuous passion by means of the tears of the penitent heart. But he has not dwelt too long on the disease; he has just given us a glimpse of it and then dropped the veil. The desertion of Sakuntala by the polygamous Dushyanta, which in real life would have happened as a natural consequence of his character, is here brought about by the curse of Durvasa. Otherwise, the desertion would have been extremely cruel and pathetic and would have destroyed the peace and harmony of the whole play. But the poet has left a small rent in the veil through which we can get an idea of the royal sin. It is in the Fifth Act. Just before Sakuntala arrives at court and is repudiated by her husband, the poet momentarily draws aside the curtain from the King's love-affairs. Queen Hansapadika is singing to herself in her music room:

"O honey-bee, having sucked the mango blossoms in your search for new honey, you have clean forgotten your recent loving welcome by the lotus."

This tear-stained song of a stricken heart in the royal harem gives us a rude shock, especially as our heart was hitherto filled with Dushyanta's love-passages with Sakuntala. Only in the preceding Act we saw Sakuntala setting out for her husband's home in a very holy, sweet, and tender mood, carrying with herself the blessings of the hoary sage Kanva and the good wishes of the whole forest world. And now a stain falls on the picture we had so hopefully formed of the home of love to which she was going.

When the Jester asked, "What means this song?" Dushyanta smiled and said, "We desert our lasses after a short spell of love-making, and therefore I have deserved this strong rebuke from Queen Hansapadika." This indication of the

fickleness of royal love is not purposeless at the beginning of the Fifth Act. With masterly skill the poet here shows that what Durvasa's curse had brought about had its seeds in human nature.

In passing from the Fourth Act to the Fifth we suddenly enter a new atmosphere; from the ideal world of the hermitage we go forth to the royal court with its hard hearts and crooked ways of love-making. The beautiful dream of the hermitage is about to be broken. The two young monks who are escorting Sakuntala, at once feel that they have entered an altogether different world, "a house encircled by fire." By such touches at the beginning of the Fifth Act, the poet prepares us for the repudiation of Sakuntala at its end.

Then comes the repudiation. Sakuntala feels as if she has been suddenly struck with a thunderbolt. Like a deer stricken by a trusted hand, this daughter of the forest looks on with blank surprise, terror, and anguish. At one blow she is hurled away from the hermitage, both literal and metaphorical, in which she has so long lived. She loses her connection with the loving friends, the birds, beasts and plants and the beauty, peace and purity of her former life. She now stands alone, shelterless. In one moment the music of the first four Acts is stilled.

O the deep silence and loneliness that then surround her. She whose tender heart had made the whole world of the hermitage her own folk, today stands absolutely alone. She fills this vast vacuity with her mighty sorrow. With rare poetic insight Kalidasa has declined to restore Sakuntala to Kanva's hermitage. After the renunciation by Dushyanta it was impossible for her to live in harmony with that hermitage in the way she had done before. She was no longer her former self; her relation with the universe had changed. Had she been placed again amidst her old surroundings, it would only have cruelly exhibited the utter inconsistency of the whole situation. A mighty silence was now needed, worthy of the mighty grief of the mourner. But the poet has not shown us the picture of Sakuntala in the new hermitage,—parted from the friends of her girlhood, and

nursing the grief of separation from her lover. The silence of the poet only deepens our sense of the silence and vacancy which here reigned round Sakuntala. Had the repudiated wife been taken back to Kanva's home, that hermitage would have spoken. To our imagination its trees and creepers would have wept, the two girl friends would have mourned for Sakuntala, even if the poet had not said a word about it. But in the unfamiliar hermitage of Maricha, all is still and silent to us; only we have before our mind's eye a picture of the world-abandoned Sakuntala's infinite sorrow, disciplined by penance, sedate and resigned,—seated like a recluse rapt in meditation.

Dushyanta is now consumed by remorse. This remorse is *tapasya*. So long as Sakuntala was not won by means of this repentance, there was no glory in winning her. One sudden gust of youthful impulse had in a moment given her up to Dushyanta, but that was not the true, the full winning of her. The best means of winning is by devotion, by *tapasya*. What is easily gained is as easily lost. Therefore, the poet has made the two lovers undergo a long and austere *tapasya* that they may gain each other truly, eternally. If Dushyanta had accepted Sakuntala when she was first brought to his court, she would have only added to the number of Hansapadikas, occupied a corner of the royal harem, and passed the rest of her life in neglect, gloom and uselessness.

It was a blessing in disguise for Sakuntala that Dushyanta abjured her with cruel sternness. When afterwards this cruelty reacted on himself, it prevented him from remaining indifferent to her. His unceasing and intense grief fused his heart and welded Sakuntala with it. Never before had the king met with such an experience. Never before had he had the occasion and means of loving truly. Kings are unlucky in this respect; their desires are so easily satisfied that they never get what is to be gained by devotion alone. Fate now plunged Dushyanta into deep grief and thus made him worthy of true love,—made him renounce the role of a rake.

Thus has Kalidas burnt away vice in the internal fire of the sinner's heart; he has not tried to conceal it from the outside. When the curtain drops on the last Act, we feel that all the evil has been destroyed as on a funeral pyre, and the peace born of a perfect and satisfactory fruition reigns in our hearts. He has made the physical union of Dushyanta and Sakuntala tread the path of sorrow, and thereby chastened and sublimated it into a moral union. Hence did Goethe rightly say that Sakuntala combines the blossoms of Spring with the fruits of Autumn; it combines Heaven and Earth. Truly in Sakuntala there is one Paradise lost and another regained.

The poet has shown how the union of Dushyanta and Sakuntala in the First Act as mere lovers is futile, while their union in the last Act as the parents of Bharat is a true union. The First Act is full of brilliancy and movement. We there have a hermit's daughter in the exuberance of youth, her two companions running over with playfulness, the newly flowering forest creeper, the bee intoxicated with perfume, the fascinated king peeping from behind the trees. From this Eden of bliss Sakuntala, the mere sweetheart of Dushyanta, is exiled in disgrace. But far different was the aspect of the other hermitage where Sakuntala,—the mother of Bharat and the incarnation of goodness,—took refuge. There no hermit girls water the trees, nor bedew the creepers with their loving sister-like looks, nor feed the young fawn with handfuls of paddy. There a single boy fills the loving bosom of the entire forest world; he absorbs all the loveliness of the trees, creepers, flowers and foliage. The matrons of the hermitage, in their loving anxiety, are fully taken up with the unruly boy. When Sakuntala appears, we see her clad in a dusty robe, face pale with austerities, doing the penance of a lorn wife, pure-souled. Her long penances have purged her of the evil of her first union with Dushyanta; she is now invested with a new dignity, she is the image of motherhood, gentle and exquisite. Who can repudiate her now?

The poet has shown here, as in *Kumarsambhava*, that the

Beauty that goes hand in hand with Moral Law is eternal, that the calm, controlled and beneficent form of Love is its best expression, that Beauty is truly charming under restraint and decays quickly when it gets wild and unfettered. This ancient poet of India refuses to recognise Love as its own highest glory ; he proclaims that Goodness is the final goal of Love. He teaches us that the love of man and woman is neither beautiful, nor lasting, so long as it remains self-centred, so long as it does not yield fruit, so long as it does not diffuse itself in society over son and daughter, guests and neighbours.

The two peculiar principles of India are the beneficent tie of home life on the one hand, and the liberty of the soul abstracted from the world on the other. In the world India is variously connected with many races and many creeds ; she cannot reject any of them. But on the altar of devotion (*tapasya*) India sits alone. Kalidas has shown, both in *Sakuntala* and *Kumarsambhava* that there is a harmony between these two principles, an easy transition from the one to the other. In his hermitage human boys play with lion cubs, and the hermit-spirit is reconciled with the spirit of the householder.

On the foundation of the hermitage of recluses Kalidas has built the home of the householder. He has rescued the relation of the sexes from the sway of lust and enthroned it in the holy and pure seat of asceticism. In the sacred books of the Hindus the ordered relation of the sexes has been defined by strict injunctions and laws. Kalidas has demonstrated that relation by means of the elements of Beauty. The Beauty that he adores is lit up by grace, modesty and goodness ; in its range it embraces the whole universe. It is fulfilled by renunciation, gratified by sorrow, and rendered eternal by religion. In the midst of this Beauty, the impetuous, unruly love of man and woman has restrained itself and attained to a profound peace, like a wild torrent merged in the ocean of Goodness. Therefore is such love higher and more wonderful than wild and unrestrained passion.

PERSIAN ETHICS

Prof. Hadi Hasan, M.A., Ph.D.

THE *Akblaq-i-Jalali*, i.e. the Ethics of Jalalu'd Din Dawani, composed between 1467 and 1477 A. D. is perhaps the most important work existing in the Persian language ; but stiff, very stiff, in style ; and it is for this reason and not for its sublimity of thought that portions of it are prescribed for examinations. Jalalu'd Din, however, deserves to be read *in toto* ; his book has few rivals and his character had fewer ; he practised what he preached.

According to this Persian thinker, the human soul has three distinct powers : the discerning, the repelling, and the acquisitive. When the discerning power—the source of thought and judgment—is in equipoise, Wisdom is obtained ; when the repelling power—the source of anger and bravery—is in equipoise, Courage is obtained ; when the acquisitive power—the source of lust and hunger—is in equipoise, Temperance is obtained ; and from a mixture of the three—Wisdom, Courage, Temperance—is derived Equity on which rests the entire super-structure of Islamic ethics : “We have sent down the Book and the Balance along with it that men may conduct themselves with Equity.”

God is one, but His unity embraces opposites ; He is the first and the last ; the manifest and the hidden. Consequently even as Divine perfection is equipoise, *any* nature, the more excellent it is, the better will it be poised. This principle, if prevailing in the particles of elements, is equipoise of temperament ; in music is harmony ; in gestures, grace ; in language, eloquence ; in body, beauty ; in mind, equity. Plato and Cicero have both enunciated this doctrine ; but “in all the ancients,” says Thompson, “Greek or Roman, we shall look in vain for any passage in which it is so movingly and comprehensively put as in the *Akblaq-i-Jalali*.”

To proceed to the practice of ethics : in opposition to wisdom is ignorance ; and ignorance is either simple or compound : simple, when a person knows that he does not know ; and compound, when he does not know that he does not know. Simple ignorance is cured by reflecting on the state of animals, for man's superiority to animals lies in knowledge, and the ignorant man makes human nature brutish or even infra-brutish, for brutes being incapable of deliberation cannot be deformed by vice. The best of men are those who think for themselves ; the passable are those who are thought for ; but he that neither governs himself nor is governed is a worthless fellow : when best, a little worse than a man, and when worst, a little better than a beast. Consequently, compound ignorance is almost incurable : "the blind and the leprous I can cure, but I cannot cure the foolish." Let the patient study geometry, for geometry is a positive science : it separates the true and the false by the dearest interval, and it may succeed in reducing compound ignorance to simple, when a cure may be effected. In other words, Jalalu'd Din's tip is this : send mathematicians to lunatic asylums—I mean as teachers, not as patients.

Next is the eradication of a bad habit. Thought, not habit, should direct action, for habit is changeable : if after having willed to accomplish any act we repeat and practise the same, then a time comes when the act is performed with ease in the absence of reflection and in short becomes a disposition.

"Refrain tonight ;
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence : the next more easy ;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And master the devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency."

Proceeding now to the treatment of anger : like sulphur, oil, wood, anger is combustible ; the best is he who is slow to anger and quick to recover, who

"Carries anger as the flint bears fire

Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again."

And the worst is he who is quick to anger and slow to recover, like a fiery deluge, fed with ever-burning sulphur unconsumed. The cure of the effect lies in the removal of the cause : if the cause of anger be beauty, birth, or wealth, remember, firstly that

"Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power
How with this rage shall Beauty hold a plea
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?"

Secondly, that the distinction of birth belongs to your ancestor, and should that ancestor say :

"This distinction is mine, what have you, in your
own nature, to be proud of?"

what answer could you give ?

And thirdly, that wealth is fugitive : "there be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves—I mean pirates—and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks."

If the cause of anger be arrogance, how does arrogance befit one who is made of dust, returneth into dust, and is eaten of worms ? "That skull had a tongue in it : where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks ? He might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his fines, his recoveries : is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries to have his fine pate full of fine dirt ?" The truth is that none is entitled to arrogance save God. Imagine us humbled and exposed, trembling under the hand of God, crying for mercy—imagine such a creature talking of satisfaction and revenge, refusing to be entreated, disdaining to forgive.

There remains the treatment for the fear of death. Now fear of death does not proceed from fear of cessation of existence (for the soul is immortal, being a ray of the Eternal Omnipotence) ; nor does it proceed from fear of bodily pain (for death which destroys the junction of body and soul must automatically

destroy pain); nor does it proceed from fear of privation (for the body *per se* has no sense; it is the soul's continuance in the body which gives the body sense; and how can the soul lose sense by separation from a body which has none?) As for fear of death arising from fear of punishment, retribution is a consequence of crime; therefore, refrain from wrong-doing. It is from acts of sin that this fear in reality proceeds. The first and greatest punishment of sinners is that they have sinned; the second, that they are always in terror, doubt and apprehension:

"And in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven."

The great moralist and satirist, Mirza Ali Akbar Khan Dihkhuda, however, has grave doubts of the terror of "the inner voice." A wet dog happened to brush by a preacher who was on his way to say his prayers, whereupon the preacher promptly closed his eyes and said: "God willing, it is only a cat." "This proverb," says Dihkhuda, "is the basis of my story."

The censor of religious morals of the city of Shaft, who specialized in high living and plain thinking, found himself still in bed when the cry to prayer was raised. Jealous of maintaining his reputation, he put on speed, bathed, changed, and was beating the road remarkably well for his weight, when a dog emerged from the runnel wherein it had fallen and shook itself dry against the spurting censor. The inner voice seized the opportunity and immediately pressed the claims of religious purity; but the censor, already late for the prayer, was not to be deterred. "A dog in a runnel of water," said he, "this is impossible. If it is not a fish, it is a duck; but why no scales, no feathers? Ah, it is a dolphin which, they say, frequents seas and pools and cisterns. I had read about him in ad-Damiri's *al-Haywan*¹ and in the *Shifa* of Avicenna; but how can a hundred vague reports equal the proof positive of a pair of eyes?" And so zoologically overcoming his scruples, the censor raised the hood over his eyes and

1. *Life of Animals*, by Muhammad ad-Damiri (died Cairo 1405 A.D.).

flashed past like a meteor of the sky. And he rushed to the house of prayer, and a cry went up to the tinkling stars: "the censor, the censor; the pure, the undefiled."

What thou callest conscience, O Shaykh, what is it save a bag inflated with wind? When the lion hath fastened his teeth on the goat, dost thou know what conscience telleth him? It says: "O king, live long and feed well and be happy, for this silly goat knoweth not that a simple process of digestion will presently transform him into a lion." Similarly, when the lazy labourer lets his wife die of starvation, conscience says: "This charming sweetheart in this dilapidated hut, had neither bread nor blanket; thy manly neglect has ended a double pain—the pain that was hers; the pangs that were thine." This conscience is a past master in producing from the same vat shades of pale, yellow, red, purple, black, even darker than black; and in interpreting elephant for ant, ant for elephant, so much so that the Kurdish villain coolly said: "If I had'nt killed this fellow, would he then have lived for ever?"

If fear of death arises from fear of separation from family, friends, children and relatives, then we are to remember

Firstly, that parental supervision is no guarantee of filial eminence: Thucydides, Aristides, Themistocles, Pericles—all had sons whom they endeavoured in vain to make distinguished.

Secondly,—and this is an improvement upon Cicero's favourite argument against sorrow—that sorrow is not an inevitable matter but a state into which volition largely enters, for *whatever* object eludes the pursuit of *whatever* person, undoubtedly there is a class of people who, being debarred from that same object, are nevertheless contented and happy—which shows sorrow to be no necessary concomitant of its loss.

Thirdly, that the things of the world are meant to go round, otherwise, our turn for possession would never have come. Similarly this turn must pass on to others, for property and retainers are nothing but deposits, and the time must come when deposits are to be restored.

Fourthly and finally, that apart from the fact that Immortality is the perpetuation of old age, if there were births and no deaths, then a single person (doubling once in twenty years) would produce at the end of four hundred years, one million forty eight thousand five hundred and seventy six human beings, and at the end of eight hundred years, proceeding like squares in a chess-board, the number would be one thousand and ninety nine billion five hundred and eleven million six hundred and twenty seven thousand seven hundred and seventy six, which barely gives each individual standing room upon the planet. Thus the desire for perpetual life is a fancy of those who deal in impossibilities.

DĀRĀ SHIKUH*

Bikrama Jit Hasrat

IV

SAINTS OF THE KĀDIRĪ ORDER

THE *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*⁷⁰ is Dārā Shikuh's second biographical work on saints. Unlike its predecessor, the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya* which included saints of diverse religious orders, it is exclusively devoted to the saints of the Kādirī order in India, with whom he was associated during his life. It was completed in the twenty-eighth year of the author in 1052 A.H. (1642 A.D.), only three years after the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya*. During his viceroyalty of Lahore in the year 1049 A.H. he met Miān Mir,⁷¹ the saintly disciple of Shaikh Abdul Kādir Jīlānī, and later in the year 1052 A.H. he came to know Mullāh Shāh Badakhshānī, another erudite Kādirī saint and a poet-philosopher of great spiritual influence at Kashmir.⁷² Dārā Shikuh admits that both exercised an enormous influence on his mind and it cannot for a moment be denied, that whatever spiritual illumination he gained at this stage was chiefly due to their spiritual instructions. The inspiration obtained through his association with them inflamed his imagination. Their piety gave a decidedly spiritual turn to his

* For the first three sections see the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol V, Parts III & IV; Vol. VI, Part I.

70. The work is still unpublished except in an Urdu translation lithographed at Lahore.

71. The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* (Urdu lithograph, Lahore) p. 5, wherein he says, "Till at last I met a God-knowing man on 29th of Dhī-ul-Hijja, 1049 A.H., at the age of twenty-five. He became very kind towards me . . . I had become disgusted with this materialistic world and longed for spiritual illumination and now the doors of enlightenment and revelation were thrown open to me. I obtained what I sought."

72. *Sirr-i-Akbar*: Introduction: Ms. No. 52, in the Asfiya Library, Hyderabad Deccan. fol. 2a.

mind and even after the death of Mīān Mir, for six years he received a healthy stimulus to his spiritual life from Mullāh Shāh and devoted himself to the study of the lives and miracles of the saints. It was in the former year, as we know, that he selected the path of the Kādīrī Order for his spiritual enlightenment and salvation and became formally initiated into the fold of its fraternity. "God be praised," he writes to Shāh Dilruba, "due to my association with this glorious order, exoteric Islam has ceased to influence the mind of this fakir and the real esoteric 'infidelity' has shown its face".⁷³ At another place he hopes that "through the blessings of this hierarchy of the saints of the (Kādīrī) order, I would acquire God's grace in this world and the hereafter." "O Lord," he continues in a verse, "my sole reliance is on thy mercy ; for I hope not to attain my goal through my actions."⁷⁴

Thus his association with the religious order of the Kādīrites gave a new turn to his mystic ideals and the eclectic pantheism of its crude discipline provided for him a field for their further development. Even at this early stage he felt : "Now my speech is identical with their speech. Nothing attracts me more than this sect which has fulfilled my spiritual aspirations. My heart is full of their mystic allusions and interpretations. I am completely captivated."⁷⁵ Elsewhere he remarks "The superiority and the stations of this glorious order have been revealed to me and all doubts and illusions with regard to its greatness have vanished from my mind. In my heart I know that its service constitutes my salvation in both the worlds."⁷⁶

The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* not only contains a comprehensive account of the lives of the contemporary Indian saints of this order but it also records his impressions of their devotional exercises which he had acquired after an intimate association with

73. *Ruka'āt-i-Ālamgīr*, Vol I p. 322.

74. *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, opt. cit. (fol. 6. b.).

75. *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* : Introduction.

76. *Ibid*, p. 9.

them. "I desired to record the mystic symbolism, religious practice and ascetic discipline of the sect in the form of a book," he writes, "but as every one knows that these secrets are better concealed than revealed and as I cannot express the delight and pleasure which I feel, I thought it advisable to narrate briefly the lives and miracles of this glorious hierarchy of saints." A short Introduction to the work is followed by a shorter Prologue. In the former he reiterates his veneration for the saints in general and classifies them into twelve different groups (*twāif*) who profess God, viz., the *Muwvābids* who are by far the best, the 'Arifs, the 'Ashiks, the Ṣābiks, the *Mubibs*, the *Muwvākīns*, the *Makāshifs*, the *Mashābids*, the *Sāliks*, the *Ṣādīks*, the *Rāḍs* and the *Murīds*. Corresponding to each of these groups are twelve attributes and fountain-heads, "from the eternal wine of which they receive inspiration." These are unity of God, devotion, sincerity, truth, humility, resignation, contentment, generosity, faith, wisdom, love and seclusion respectively. In the Prologue the superiority of the Kādīrī Order is emphasised over and over again. It is held to be a composite of all these virtues. Besides various spiritual doctrines, viz., the importance of the spiritual guide for Divine Communion, the method to find and approach such guide, the desirability or otherwise of the esoteric songs, the method of contemplation and meditation, etc. are briefly discussed. The expository character of the work is apparent from the fact that the aphorisms of the saints have been discussed in the light of his personal experiences and the practices of the various religious orders, in relation to their views on different mystic problems, have been mentioned in a comparative sense. While upholding the superiority of the filiation of the Kādīrī sect, to which his personal attachment and regard was undoubtedly unwavering, he has referred to many other religious sects :—the *Junaidī* of Shaikh Junaid, the *Zaidīya* or *Wābiddīya* of Khwāja Abdul Wāhid Zaid, the *Nuriya* of Shaikh Abul Hasan Nūrī, the *Tāifuriya* of Bāyazīd Bistāmī, the *Adhamīya* of Ibrahim Adham, the *Mubāshībīya* of Hārith bin Asad, the *Subailīya* of

Suhail bin Abdullāh Ṭustarī, the *Kharāzīya* of Shaikh Abu Sa'īd Kharāz, the *Khafīfiya* of Shaikh Abu Abdullāh Khafīf and the four most prominent rival sects of the Kādiriya Order, viz., the *Chīstīya* of Khwāja Mu'in-ud-Din Chīstī, the *Nakashbandīya* of Shaikh Bahā-ud-Din, the *Subarawardīya* of Shaikh Shahāb-ud-Din and the *Kubrawīya* of Shaikh Najm-ud-Din.

The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the life, miracles and supernatural gifts of Miān Mir under six sub-headings : pedigree, title and place of birth ; his relations with Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān ; his contentment ; general appearance ; dress and description of the places where he used to sit in meditation. The second section deals with the life and miracles of his sister Bibī Jamāl Khātun. The third section contains notices on the lives of Miān Mir's disciples in two *firkās*, viz., those who died before the completion of the work (1052 A. H.) and contemporary Indian saints of the order. It is in the latter portion that he has noticed the life of Mullāh Shāh, his spiritual guide and preceptor.

Unlike the *Safīnat-ul-Awliya* which is mainly based on the standard works on the subject, like the *Nafhāt-ul-Uns* of Jami, the *Tadhkrāt-ul-Awliya* and others, the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* marks a further advance in his religious quest. It is the outcome of mature thought and experience. Not being a compilation of the orthodox oriental literature, it forms the fruit of his intimate knowledge of the actualities of belief and practice among the Kādirites and the distinct individual characteristics in their religious thought. The religious fabric of the Kādirites, as we will find presently, is unduly diminished by an overestimated importance attached to the supernatural powers of performing miracles. The system, it must be admitted, is intricately interwoven with the psychical phenomena viz., prognostications, miracles, spiritual visions, mystic interpretations of dreams and a wide range of hybrid superstitions. "It must be noted," remarks E. G. Browne,⁷⁷ "that certain aspects of Muslim saints as recorded

77. *Literary History of Persia* : Vol. IV, p. 40-41.

by their disciples and admirers, are to the Western mind somewhat repellent ; their curses are no less effective than their blessings and their indulgence no less remarkable than their abstention, while grim jests on the part of such as have incurred their displeasure are not uncommon." Notwithstanding this aspect of the miracles of the saints, it cannot for a moment be denied, that they form, to a very great extent, the basis of popular belief in Islamic thought. According to Al-Hujwīrī, these may be safely vouchsafed to a saint as long as he does not infringe the obligations of religious law.⁷⁸ Opinion as to their affirmation is widely controversial, but even the most orthodox Muslims admit that they are not intellectually impossible and their manifestation as a fact preordained by God does not in any way come into clash with the fundamental principles of Islam ; but to carry them beyond the borders of all intellectual phenomena and their conception as a genus is absolutely repugnant to the modern mind.

Dārā Shikuh's implicit faith in the miraculous power of the saints is quite untenable as he has nowhere tried to establish it on a sound and reasonable basis or on the evidence borne out by the *Kurān* and the Traditions. His appreciation of the fantastic charm of the supernatural often takes the shape of absurd sentimental incongruities mingled with an unsophisticated intellectualism, and though we cannot for a moment doubt his sincerity of purpose, we feel that his not too lukewarm belief in fatalism made him blind towards hard facts and stern actualities of life. This naturally became his greatest weakness and was, to a great extent, responsible for his failures in life. It also developed in him a defeatist mentality which he consciously or unconsciously shrouded under the veil of spiritual superiority. He often sought consolation under its shadow. At one time, when after a series of miserable failures in the expedition of Kandhār, in the year 1051 A. H., he led his army against Šafī Mirza, the ruler of Iran, whose attitude towards that Mughal province was threatening,

78. *Kashf-al-Mahjub*. Gibb. Memorial Edition p. 218.

he appealed to his spiritual guide Mullāh Shāh to come to his rescue. "When I proceeded to Kandhār to give a battle to Šafī Mirza, I appealed to Mullāh Shāh for help," he writes, "who wrote to me: 'when you shot the arrow it was not shot by you but by God Himself.' Shortly afterwards the king of Iran fell so prostrate as never to rise again. He was poisoned by his own men and died."⁷⁹ But apart from this aspect of his superstitious convictions, however whimsical and eccentric they may appear, it can never be doubted, that the advancement of his religious belief, which gradually drifted him towards the dangerous waters of pantheism, was due to his association with the saints and a thorough knowledge of their religious experiences. The mystic allegories helped him to clarify and properly comprehend the practical aspects of Divine knowledge, the nature of various stages of the Path and the doctrines connected with them; its immediate effect was the growth of a strong faith in his convictions and a rigour and assiduity in his devotion, the latter fact gradually tending to draw him towards a life of mystic contemplation.

The *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, though a biographical work on the Kādīrī saints, does not contain a systematic and lucid exposition of their doctrines. On the other hand, it narrates many personal religious experiences of the saints which give an idea of their mysterious ways of life. The doctrines of the Kādīrites are not fundamentally different from other religious orders; and as enunciated by Dārā Shikuh, they govern the conduct, rules and exercises, though not in a very rigid manner, according to the principles of Islam. Much emphasis is laid on peculiar religious ceremonies called the *Zikr*. They have strict rules for silent devotional exercises and prefer a solitary contemplative life. In the *Risālā Hak Numa*, he has dealt fully with the religious practices of "his own order" and it would not be out of place to give a brief synopsis of his impressions here.

Zikr, which literally means "remembering", in the mystic terminology signifies the religious devotion practised by the

79. *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*, p. 144.

Kādīrites. It is two-fold: *zikr-i-jali* and *zikr-i-khāfi*; the former is recited in public with loud voice while the latter is performed in silence or mentally. It consists of the recitation of a number of God's names and attributes and their influence on the initiated with the object of conveying its inner meaning and affecting thus "the union of heart and tongue" in invoking the name of God. With *Zikr* always accompanies the second stage of devotion—*Marākba* or silent meditation upon some prescribed verses of the *Kurān*.

The system of religious exercises of the Kādīrites involve rigid disciplines of body and mind, but Dārā Shikuh had no faith in them. He considered that penances and self-mortifications, though of incalculable advantage to the regular ascetic, are in fact a hindrance in the way of the neophyte. Soon after his initiation into the fold he wrote: "It was at this time that God opened for me the gates of unity and wisdom . . . and my entry into the School of the Perfect was effected; the discipline of the order to which the author owes his allegiance, contrary to the religious exercises of other sects, involves no pain and difficulty.

"There being no asceticism involved, all is gracious and felicitous; All is love, affection, pleasure and ease."⁸⁰

A brief analysis of Dārā Shikuh's exposition of the form of Kādīrī meditation as given in the *Risālā Hak Numa* is necessary here. First of all man's troubled soul in search for Truth, comes into the Physical Plane (*'Ālam-i-Nāsūt*) or the World of Waking Consciousness. In this world of sensation and perception, the attainment of the acme of existence is perfect, through the unbounden joy acquired therefrom, but his spiritual quest makes him restless. The first step which he should take is "to find out some quiet, solitary place for meditation." The method of meditation is simple: the novice must then concentrate all his attention on his heart for visualising the Beloved. There

80. *Risālā Hak Numa*, p. 4-5.

are three centres of meditation in the heart, viz. the cedar-heart (*dīl-i-šanowbarī*) conical in shape, possessed by all men as well as animals, by which physical heart is not meant, as he adds, "it has a mystic significance known only to the selected few." Obviously the centre of astral body of man is implied here. The second is the spherical-heart (*dīl-i-muddawarī*) located in the centre of brain, which is colourless and corresponds with the Mental Plane; and from this centre of meditation no danger of distraction is conceivable. The third is the lily-heart (*dīl-i-nīlofirī*) located in the rectal centre of the lower part of body.

The meditation on the three centres of heart, usher the neophyte into the Plane of Counterparts (*'Ālam-i-Mitbāl*) which form a gate-way to the Astro-mental Plane (*'Ālam-i-Malkūt*). The latter is also called the World of Subtlety and the World of Dreams. In sharp contrast to the Physical Plane, the visions which he beholds in this world are not transitory and here the consciousness of the body gives way to an extremely refined thought-form (*jasd-i-latīf*), "an exact counterpart of the former, having eyes, ears, tongue and all other sense organs and also the internal functional organs, without however the external physical organs of flesh and blood."

The method of meditation in this world, "which would remove rust from the heart and from which the mirror of soul would become luminous", includes briefly *zīkr-i-khāfi* or the recitation of God's name mentally and slowly without the movement of tongue. This is followed by the practice of *habs-i-dam* or the regulation of breath. Both are combined with perfect concentration on the heart. In the latter case the freedom of heart from all superfluities is essential, for unless complete attention is devoted to purge all dubious and distracting elements, the "internal sounds" would not be heard by the neophyte.

The internal sound, known in the mystic phraseology as the Voice of Silence, is sharply differentiated from the physical sound, which is compound and ephemeral and proceeds when two objects strike against each other; and also from the physio-

logical sound which is boundless, infinite and self-existent, as it is produced without the contact of two dense bodies. This primeval sound is only heard by men of illumination. This form of meditation is termed as *Sultān-ul-Aẓkār* or the king of meditations. "O friend!" Dārā Shikuh explains,⁸¹ "when you want to commence the practice of meditation called *Sultān-ul-Aẓkār*, proceed to a lonely spot, free from the haunts of men or to a cloister, where no sound can reach and sitting there direct your attention to your ears with a perfect concentration of mind; then you would hear a subtle sound, which would gradually become so powerful and overwhelming that it would draw your mind aside from its environments and would submerge it into its own self. Once they asked the Prophet, in what manner the inspiration came to him. He replied that he heard a sound sometimes like the sound of a boiling cauldron and sometimes like the sound made by bees and sometimes he saw an angel in the form of a man who talked to him and sometimes he heard a sound like silvery bells or the beating of a drum. It is to this sound that an allusion is made in the following verse:

'No one knows about the abode of my sweet-heart,
Of this much I am conscious that I hear the constant twinkling
of the bells.' (*Hafiz*)

And in this verse:

"To the caravan of my beloved I cannot reach,
It is enough that the sound of bells is constantly ringing in my
ears.' (*Jami*)"

When the sufi disciple acquires perfection in this form of meditation, then the world of subtle and casual planes as well as the plane of absolute unity would become a blessing to him. "This practice would make you refined and homogeneous," he writes,⁸² "and this ocean of subtle causes and absoluteness would efface your multi-colouredness and would make you uniform;

81. *Risālah Hak Numa*, p. 17.

82. *Ibid.* p. 20.

the ocean of Truth, the fountain-head of your existence, would heave up in your heart and you would feel that every sound that exists in the universe emanates from the voice of unlimited immensity."

The third stage of meditation is in the Plane of Bliss (*'Ālam-i-Jabrūt*) where a trance-like wonder overpowers and where "waves of bliss after bliss, of joy after joy, of contentment after contentment, and of peace and rest after peace and rest submerge the soul under their folds. The man enters the *Jabrūt* unconsciously and pain and sorrow cannot come to him and no forms of either physical or astro-mental plane can have an access to his mind." The method of meditation in this plane is in this manner: all limbs of body should be at perfect rest and kept away from every kind of motion; both the eyes must be closed and the right palm should be placed on the left and the heart should be emptied of all forms of physical and super-physical planes. . . .

And finally the Plane of Absolute Truth (*'Ālam-i-Lābut*) which is the origin of the three lower planes of *Nāsūt*, *Malkūt* and *Jabrūt*. It envelops them all and remains itself uniform in its essential nature and no modification or alteration is conceivable in it: "That is the first, that is the last, that is the manifest, that is the hidden and that with all objects is cognisant."

Kādirī Symbolism. There is no evidence in the works of Dārā Shikuh to show that after joining the Kādirī fold, he adopted the outward formalities of dress and costume enjoined upon the neophyte. The symbolism of the Kādirites, as we know from his circumstantial remarks in the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya* and other works, is apparent in their costume. They wear a long *kbirka* or mantle, made of coarse woolen material with upturned collar, wide sleeves reaching just below their knees. It is considered a symbol of piety and its origin is attributed to the holy mantle of the Prophet, which was entrusted to Uwais. The *kulab* or cap, made of a number of gores, each signifying a sin abandoned, is also held to be of Divine origin. Its long triangular

shape is adopted in consideration for the shape of the "vase of light" wherein God has deposited the soul of the holy Prophet. To this cap is attached a rose which is also a mystic symbol:

The rose on the head honours the wearer,
It points to the path of Kādirī discipline.⁸⁸

It has three circles and numerous rings; the former signify respectively the law of God as revealed by the holy Prophet, the path of the Kādirī order and Divine Knowledge—all signifying jointly that their acquisition is essential for the neophyte.

.. .. .
The Life and Miracles of Miān Mir. We now proceed to discuss his relations with his spiritual guide Miān Mir in the light of the notice on his life in the *Sakīnat-ul-Awliya*. The famous saint Miān Mir or Miān Jiv was a descendant of Caliph 'Umar and his ancestors were natives of Sīstān which lies between Bhakkar and Thitha. Dārā Shikuh's account of his life is very meagre in the details of his early life. He was born in Sīstān in 957 A. H. (1550 A. D.) and at the age of twelve he used to attend the discourses of Shaikh Khīḍar, a staunch adherent of the Kādirī order, who was renowned for his piety and learning. It was at the age of twenty-five that he arrived at Lahore and settled in Muhalla Bāghbānpura known as *Khāfīpura*. He stayed here for sixty-five years. In the year 1045 A. H. he breathed his last in the cell in which he resided in Muhalla *Khāfīpura*; "his pure soul having taken leave of his bodily cage has passed into the regions of highest heavens—its real home, and thus the drop has become ocean." He was buried in the village called Gīathpur in the vicinity of 'Ālamganj near Lahore. The following chronogram, composed by Fatehullāh Shāh and recorded by Dārā Shikuh, is still inscribed on his tomb at Miān Mir near Lahore:

Miān Mir the chief of the gnostics,

88. Brown: *The Dervishes*, p. 121.

The dust of whose portals is envied by the stone of the
alchemist,

Made his way to the city of eternity,
Being disgusted with the world of woe.
Reason wrote the year of his death :
"Miān Mīr has gone to the highest heaven."⁸⁴

As we already know, Dārā Shikuh met Miān Mīr at Lahore in the company of his father and it seems that at that time he was much influenced by his piety and spiritual gifts. He gives a very vivid account of his first meeting with the saint. "His Majesty used to say," he writes, "that in his whole life he had come across two saints having the Knowledge of God—one was Miān Mīr the other Shaikh Muhammad Faḍalullah of Burhānpur. He felt great reverence for the former and visited him twice in the year 1049 A. H. I accompanied him during these visits and afterwards he used to say that Miān Mīr surpassed all saints in detachment and renunciation. . . . It so happened that at that time I was suffering from a chronic disease and for four months the physicians had not been able to cure me. The king took me by the hand and with great humility and reverence entreated the saint to pray to God for my health. The saint took my hand into his own and gave me a cup of water to drink. The result was immediate and within a week I recovered completely from the serious malady. At the termination of his conversation with the saint, the king presented him with a turban and a rosary and received his benedictions."⁸⁵

The second visit produced still greater effect on the mind of the prince. "On this occasion I went bare-footed to his house and he gave me a rosary ; and while he was talking to the king, he threw out of his mouth chewed clove which I gathered and ate and when the king left I lingered behind. I went up to him and placing my head on his foot remained in that position for some time." The same year on the 27th of Ramdhan he visited

84. The original line in Persian gives this date of his death as 1045 A. H.

85. Vide Lahore lithograph edition, p. 142.

him again and received instructions in *Mushābida* (contemplation) and beheld the *Lailat-ul-Kadr*.⁸⁶ "One night I saw Miān Mīr," he continues, "and he said to me, 'Come I would teach you the method of contemplation.' Having himself sat in meditation, he asked me to sit in the like manner and then he initiated me into its secrets. . . . At another occasion on Monday the night of 7th of Dhi-ul-Hajj, I found him reposing outside his house. I went near and paid my respects. He took me by the hand and drew me near ; then he drew my shirt aside and also removed his cloak thus exposing his chest. He then drew me close to him and placing his right nipple upon my own remaked, 'It had been entrusted to me, take it away.' Thereafter such exuberating lights emanating from his heart entered mine that eventually I begged, 'It is enough, Sir, if you give me more my heart would burst.' From that moment I find my heart full of enlightenment and ecstasy."⁸⁷

The account of his beholding the *Lailat-ul-Kadr* is more vivid. "In the early hours of a Monday morning, by the Grace of God and kindness of Miān Mīr, I witnessed the 'night of power'. I was sitting with my face turned towards the K'aba when a sudden restlessness of mind overtook me. I stood up and paced steadily on the ground, but my mind was awake and perturbed. At dawn I saw a palace of grand structure which was surrounded on all sides by gardens. As I thought, it was Miān Mīr's mausoleum. He came out of the tomb and sat on a chair and when he saw me he called me by his side and showed me every kindness. Afterwards he took me by the hand and said, 'Come I would teach you something'. He then uncovered my face and placed his two index fingers in my ears, with the result that the *Sultān-ul-Aḥkār* overpowered me, and the sound affected

86. The *Lailat-ul-Kadr* or "the night of power" is a mysterious night in the month of Ramdhan, the precise date of which is said to have been known only to the Prophet and a few of his Companions. . . . The excellences of this night are said to be innumerable and it is believed that during its solemn hours the whole animal and vegetable creation bow down in humble adoration to the Almighty (Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 284).

87. *Ibid* p. 142—144.

me so much that after enveloping me within itself, it threw me off the ground. I then lost my consciousness and such a 'state' overtook me as it is not possible for me either to describe or write. It can neither be comprehended in interpretations or allusions. I obtained what I sought. My pleasure increased and to me distance and nearness became alike. *God be praised. That is the bounty of God. He gives it to any one He wishes. His bounty is great.*"

Another story⁸⁸ is told about Jahangir and Miān Mīr. Speaking of the accomplishments of the latter, he records that Jahangir had little faith in saints and *derveshes* and he used to torture them; but on the other hand he entertained great esteem for Miān Mīr. Once he invited him to Agra and treated him with great veneration. The Shaikh had a very long conversation with His Majesty in which he dwelt mainly on the instability of the world; his advice had such an effect on the mind of the Emperor that he expressed a desire to become a disciple of the saint and abandon the world. The latter, however, admonished him to continue his worldly pursuits, observing that kings had been made for the protection of God's people and that in ruling over them he was discharging an important duty entrusted to him by the Creator.

The Emperor was much pleased to hear this and he asked, "O Shaikh, do you want anything?"

"I shall ask you for one thing;" replied the Shaikh, "do you promise to give it to me?"

"Most certainly I will grant it," said Jahangir

The holy Shaikh said, "My only wish is that Your Majesty would not give me the trouble of coming to you again."

With the assurance of the Emperor to this effect, the Shaikh withdrew; but the former continued to send him autograph letters.⁸⁹

(*To be Continued.*)

88. *Ibid.* Also in Latif's: *History of Lahore*, where this incident is told in a slightly different manner.

89. Two such letters are recorded by Dārā Shikuh in the *Sakinat-ul-Awliya* (p. 88.).

MY BOYHOOD DAYS*

Rabindranath Tagore

THE Calcutta where I was born was an altogether old-world place. Hackney carriages lumbered about the city raising clouds of dust, and the whips fell on the backs of skinny horses whose bones showed plainly below their hide. There were no trams then, no buses, no motors. Business was not the breathless rush that it is now, and the days went by in leisurely fashion. Clerks would take a good pull at the hookah before starting for office, and chew their betel as they went along. Some rode in palanquins, others joined in groups of four or five to hire a carriage in common, which was known as a "share-carriage." Wealthy men had monograms painted on their carriages, and a leather hood over the rear portion, like a half-drawn veil. The coachman sat on the box with his turban stylishly tilted to one side, and two grooms rode behind, girdles of yaks' tails round their waists, startling the pedestrians from their path with their shouts of "Hey-yo!"

Women used to go about in the stifling darkness of closed palanquins; they shrank from the idea of riding in carriages, and even to use an umbrella in sun or rain was considered unwomanly. Any woman who was so bold as to wear the new-fangled bodice, or shoes on her feet, was scornfully nicknamed "memsahib", that is to say, one who had cast off all sense of propriety or shame. If any woman unexpectedly encountered a strange man, one outside her family circle, her veil would promptly descend to the very tip of her nose, and she would at once turn her back on him. The palanquins in which women

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went out were shut as closely as their apartments in the house. An additional covering, a kind of thick tilt, completely enveloped the palanquin of a rich man's daughters and daughters-in-law, so that it looked like a moving tomb. By its side went the durwan. His work was to sit in the entrance and watch the house, to tend his beard, safely to conduct the money to the bank and the women to their relatives' houses, and on festival days to dip the lady of the house into the Ganges, closed palanquin and all. Hawkers who came to the door with their array of wares would grease Shivnandan's palm to gain admission, and the drivers of hired carriages were also a source of profit to him. Sometimes a man who was unwilling to fall in with this idea of going shares would create a great scene in front of the porch.

Our "jamadar" Sobha Ram who was a wrestler, used to spend a good deal of time in practising his preparatory feints and approaches, and in brandishing his heavy clubs. Sometimes he would sit and grind hemp for drink, and sometimes he would be quietly eating his raw radishes, leaves and all, when we boys would creep upon him and yell "Radhakrishna!" in his ear. The more he waved his arms and protested the more we delighted in teasing him. And perhaps—who knows?—his protests were merely a cunning device for hearing repeated the name of his favourite god.

There was no gas then in the city, and no electric light. When the kerosine lamp was introduced, its brilliance amazed us. In the evening the house-servant lit castor-oil lamps in every room. The one in our study-room had two wicks in a glass bowl.

By this dim light my master taught me from Peary Sarkar's first book. First I would begin to yawn, and then, growing more and more sleepy, rub my heavy eyes. At such times I heard over and over again of the virtues of my master's other pupil Satin, a paragon of a boy with a wonderful head for study, who would rub snuff in his eyes to keep himself awake, so earnest was he. But as for me—the less said about that the better!

Even the awful thought that I should probably remain the only dunce in the family could not keep me awake. When nine o'clock struck I was released, my eyes dazed and my mind drugged with sleep.

There was a narrow passage, enclosed by latticed walls, leading from the outer apartments to the interior of the house. A dimly burning lantern swung from the ceiling. As I went along this passage, my mind would be haunted by the idea that something was creeping upon me from behind. Little shivers ran up and down my back. In those days devils and spirits lurked in the recesses of every man's mind, and the air was full of ghost stories. One day it would be some servant girl falling in a dead faint because she had heard the nasal whine of Shakchunni. The female demon of that name was the most bad-tempered devil of all, and was said to be very greedy of fish. Another story was connected with a thick-leaved *badam* tree at the western corner of the house. A mysterious Shape was said to stand with one foot in its branches and the other on the third storey cornice of the house. Plenty of people declared that they had seen it, and there were not a few who believed them. A friend of my elder brother's laughingly made light of the story, and the servants looked upon him as lacking in all piety and said that his neck would surely be wrung one day and his pretensions exposed. The very atmosphere was so enmeshed in ghostly terrors that I could not put my feet into the darkness under the table without them getting the creeps.

There were no water-pipes laid on in those days. In the spring months of *Magh* and *Falgun* when the Ganges water was clear, our bearers would bring it up in brimming pots carried in a yoke across their shoulders. In the dark rooms of the ground floor stood rows of huge water jars filled with the whole year's supply of drinking water. All those musty, dingy, twilight rooms were the home of furtive "Things"—which of us did not know all about those "Things"? Great gaping mouths they had, eyes in their breasts, and ears like winnowing fans; and

their feet turned backwards. Small wonder that my heart would pound in my breast and my knees tremble when I went into the inner garden, with the vision of these devilish shapes before me.

At high tide the water of the Ganges would flow along a masonry channel at the side of the road. Since my grandfather's time an allowance of this water had been discharged into our tank. When the sluices were opened the water rushed in, gurgling and foaming like a waterfall. I used to watch it fascinated, holding on by the railings of the south verandah. But the days of our tank were numbered, and finally there came a day when cartload after cartload of rubbish was tipped into it. When the tank no longer reflected the garden, the last lingering illusion of rural life left it. That *badam* tree is still standing near the third storey cornice, but though his footholds remain, the ghostly shape that once bestrode them has disappeared for ever.

The palanquin belonged to the days of my grandmother. It was of ample proportions and lordly appearance. It was big enough to have needed eight bearers for each pole. But when the former wealth and glory of the family had faded like the glowing clouds of sunset, the party of bearers, with their gold bracelets, their thick earrings, and their sleeveless red tunics, had disappeared along with it. The body of the palanquin had been decorated with coloured line drawings, some of which were now defaced. Its surface was stained and discoloured, and the coir stuffing was coming out of the upholstery. It lay in a corner of the counting-house verandah as though it were a piece of mere modern lumber. I was seven or eight years old at that time.

I was not yet, therefore, of an age to put my hand to any serious work in the world, and the old palanquin on its part had been dismissed from all useful service. Perhaps it was this fellow-feeling that so much attracted me towards it. It was to me an island in the midst of the ocean, and I on my holidays became

Robinson Crusoe. There I sat within its closed doors, completely lost to view, delightfully safe from prying eyes.

Outside my retreat, our house was full of people, innumerable relatives and other folk. From all parts of the house I could hear the shouts of the various servants at their work—Pari the maid is returning from the bazaar through the front courtyard with her vegetables in a basket on her hip. Dukhon the bearer is carrying in Ganges water in a yoke across his shoulder. The weaver woman has gone into the inner apartments to trade the newest style of saris. Dinu the goldsmith, who receives a monthly wage, usually sits in the room next to the lane, blowing his bellows and carrying out the orders of the family; now he is coming to the counting house to present his bill to Kailash Mukherjee, who has a quill pen stuck over his ear. The carder sits in the courtyard cleaning the cotton mattress stuffing on his twanging bow. Mukundalal the durwan is rolling on the ground outside with the one-eyed wrestler, trying out a new wrestling fall. He slaps his thighs loudly, and repeats his "physical jerks" twenty or thirty times, dropping on all fours. There is a crowd of beggars sitting waiting for their regular dole.

The day wears on, the heat grows intense, the clock in the gate-house strikes the hour. But inside the palanquin the day does not acknowledge the authority of clocks. Our midday is that of former days, when the drum at the great door of the king's palace would be beaten for the breaking-up of the court, and the king would go to bathe in sandal-scented water. At midday on holidays those in charge of me have their meal and go to sleep. I sit on alone. My palanquin, outwardly at rest, travels on its imaginary journeys. My bearers, sprung from "airy nothing" at my bidding, eating the salt of my imagination, carry me wherever my fancy leads. We pass through far, strange lands, and I give each country a name from the books I have read. Sometimes our road lies through a deep forest. Tigers' eyes blaze from the thickets, my flesh creeps and tingles. With me is Biswanath the hunter; his gun speaks—Crack! Crack! and

there, all is still. Sometimes my palanquin becomes a peacock-boat, floating far out on the ocean till the shore is out of sight. The oars fall into the water with a gentle splash, the waves swing and swell around us. The sailors cry to us to beware, a storm is coming. By the tiller stands Abdul the sailor, with his pointed beard, shaven moustache and close-cropped head. I know him, he brings hilsa fish and turtle eggs from the Padma for my elder brother.

Abdul has a story for me. One day at the end of *Chaitra** he had gone out in a dinghy to catch fish when suddenly there arose a great *Baisakh*† gale. It was a tremendous typhoon and the boat sank lower and lower. Abdul seized the tow-rope in his teeth, and jumping into the water swam to the shore, where he pulled his dinghy up after him by the rope. But the story comes to an end far too quickly for my taste, and besides, the boat is not lost, everything is saved—that isn't what I call a story! Again and again I demand, "What next?" "Well," says Abdul at last, "after that there were great doings. What should I see next but a panther with enormous whiskers. During the storm he had climbed up a *pakur* tree on the village ghat on the other side of the river. In the violent wind the tree broke and fell into the Padma. Brother Panther came floating down on the current, rolled over and over in the water and coming nearer and nearer to my bank. As soon as I saw him I made a noose in my tow rope. The wild beast drew near, his big eyes glaring. He had grown very hungry with swimming, and when he saw me saliva dribbled from his jaws. But though he had met many other men, he did not know Abdul. I shouted to him, "Come on, old boy", and as soon as he planted his fore feet on the shore I dropped my noose round his neck. The more he struggled to get free the tighter grew the noose, until his tongue began to loll out. . . ." I am tremendously excited.

* March-April.

† Nor'-wester, a very common phenomenon in Bengal in the beginning of the hot weather.

"He died, didn't he Abdul?" I ask. "Died?" says Abdul, "He couldn't die for the life of him! Well, the river was in spate, and I had to get back to Bahadurganj. I yoked my young panther to the dinghy and made him tow me fully forty miles. Oh, he might roar and snarl, but I goaded him on with my oar, and he carried me a ten or fifteen hours' journey in an hour and a half! Now, my little fellow, don't ask me what happened next, for you won't get an answer."

"All right," say I, "so much for the panther; now for the crocodile?" Says Abdul, "I have often seen the tip of his nose above the water. And how craftily he smiles as he lies basking in the sun, stretched at full length on the shelving sandbanks of the river. If I'd had a gun I should have made his acquaintance. But my license has expired. . . ."

"Still, I can tell you one good yarn. One day Kanhi the gypsy woman was sitting on the bank of the river trimming bamboo with a bill-hook, with her young goat tethered near by. All at once a crocodile appeared on the surface, seized the billy-goat by the leg and dragged it into the water. With one jump the gypsy woman landed astride on its back, and began sawing with her sickle at the throat of the "demon-lizard", over and over again. The beast let go of the goat and plunged into the water. . . ."

"And then? And then?" comes my excited question. "Why," says Abdul, "the rest of the story went down to the bottom of the river with the crocodile. It will take some time to get it up again. Before I see you again I will send somebody to find out about it, and let you know." Abdul has never come again; perhaps he is still looking for news.

So much, then, for my travels in the palanquin. Outside the palanquin there were days when I assumed the role of teacher, and the railings of the verandah were my pupils. They were all afraid of me, and would cower before me in silence. Some of them were very naughty, and cared absolutely nothing for their books. I told them with dire threats that when they grew up

they would be fit for nothing but casual labour. They bore the marks of my beatings from head to foot, yet they did not stop being naughty. For it would not have done for them to stop, it would have made an end of my game.

There was another game too, with my wooden lion. I heard stories of poojah sacrifices and decided it would be a fine thing to sacrifice the lion. I rained blows on his back—with a frail little stick. There had to be a “mantra”, of course, otherwise it would not have been a proper poojah :—

“Liony, liony, off with your head,

Liony, liony, now you are dead.

Woofle the walnut goes clappety clap,

Snip, snop, SNAP !”

I had borrowed almost every word in this from other sources ; only the word walnut was my own. I was very fond of walnuts. From the word “clappety clap” you can see that my sacrificial knife was made of wood. And the word “snap” shows that it was not a strong one.

The clouds have had no rest since yesterday evening. The rain is pouring incessantly. The trees stand huddled together in a seemingly foolish manner ; the birds are silent. I call to mind the evenings of my boyhood.

We used then to spend our evenings in the servants' quarters. At that time English spellings and meanings did not yet lie like a nightmare on my shoulders. My third brother used to say that I ought first to get a good foundation of Bengali and only afterwards to go on to the English superstructure. Consequently while other schoolboys of my age were glibly reciting “I am up,” “He is down,” I hadnot even started on B, A, D, bad and M, A, D, mad.

In the speech of the nabobs the servants' quarters were then called “toshakhana.” Even though our house had fallen

far below its former aristocratic state, these old high-sounding names still clung to it.

On the southern side of this “toshakhana” a castor oil lamp burned dimly on a glass stand in a big room ; on the wall was a picture of Ganesh and a crude country painting of the goddess Kali, round which the wall lizards hunted their insect prey. There was no furniture in the room, merely a soiled mat spread on the floor.

You must understand that we lived like poor people, and were consequently saved the trouble of keeping a good stable. Away in a corner outside, in a thatched shed under a tamarind tree, was a shabby carriage and an old horse. We wore the very simplest and plainest clothes, and it was a long time before we even began to wear socks. We adapted ourselves easily to our poverty-stricken condition, the wrecks of our former glory.

The name of the servant who presided over our mat seat was Brajeswar. His hair and beard were grizzled, the skin of his face dry and tight-drawn ; he was a man of serious disposition, harsh voice, and deliberately mouthed speech. His former master had been a prosperous and well-known man, yet necessity had degraded him from that service to the work of looking after neglected children like us. I have heard that he used to be a master in a village school. To the end of his life he kept this school-masterly language and prim manner. Instead of saying “The gentlemen are waiting”, he would say “They await you”, and his masters smiled when they heard him. He was as finicky about caste matters as he was conceited. When bathing he would go down into the tank and push back the oily surface water five or six times with his hands before immersing himself. When he came out of the tank after his bath Brajeswar would edge his way through the garden in so gingerly a way that one would think he could only keep caste by avoiding all contact with this unclean world that God has made. He would talk very emphatically about what was right and what was wrong in manners and behaviour. And besides, he held his head a little on one side, which made his words all the more impressive.

But with all this there was one flaw in his character as *guru*. He cherished secretly a suppressed greed for food. It was not his method to place a portion of food properly on our plates before the meal. Instead, when we sat down to eat he would take one *luchi* at a time, and dangling it at a little distance ask, "Do you want any more?" We knew by the tone of his voice what answer he desired, and I usually said that I didn't want any. After that he never gave us an opportunity to change our minds. The milk bowls also had an irresistible attraction for him—an attraction which I never felt at all. In his room was a small wired food-safe with shelves in it. In it was a big brass bowl of milk, and *luchis* and vegetables on a wooden platter. Outside the wire-netting the cat prowled longingly to and fro sniffing the air.

From my childhood upwards these short commons suited me very well. Small rations cannot be said to have made me weak. I was, if anything, stronger, certainly not weaker, than boys who had unlimited food. My constitution was so abominably sound that even when the most urgent need arose for avoiding school, I could never make myself ill by fair means or foul. I would get wet through, shoes, stockings and all, but I could not catch cold. I would lie on the open roof in the heavy autumn dew; my hair and clothes would be soaked, but I never had the slightest suspicion of a cough. And as for that sign of bad digestion known as stomachache, my stomach was a complete stranger to it, though my tongue made use of its name with mother in time of need. Mother would smile to herself and not feel the least anxiety, she would merely call the servant and tell him to go and tell my master that he should not teach me that evening. Our old-fashioned mothers used to think it no harm if the boys occasionally took a holiday from study. If we had fallen into the hands of these present-day mothers, we should certainly have been sent to the master, and had our ears tweaked into the bargain. Perhaps with a knowing smile they would have dosed us with castor oil, and our pains would have been

permanently cured. If by chance I got fever, no one ever called it fever, but "body heat". I had never set eyes on a thermometer in those days. Dr. Neelmadhab would come and place his hand on my body, and then prescribe as the first day's treatment castor oil and fasting. I was allowed very little water to drink, and what I had was hot, with two or three cardamoms for flavouring. After this fast, the "mourala" fish soup and soft-boiled rice which I got on the third day seemed a veritable food of the gods. Serious fever I do not remember, and I never heard the name of malaria. I do not remember quinine—that castor oil was my most distasteful medicine. I never knew the slightest scratch of a surgeon's knife; and to this very day I do not know what measles and chicken-pox are. In short, my body remained obstinately healthy. If mothers want their children to be so healthy that they will be unable to escape from the school master, I recommend them to find a servant like Brajeswar. He would save not only food bills but doctor's bills also, especially in these days of mill flour and adulterated ghee.

You must remember that in those days chocolate was still unknown in the bazaar. There was a kind of rose lollipop to be had for a farthing. I do not know whether modern boys' pockets are still made sticky by this sesamum-covered sugar-lump, with its faint scent of roses. Certainly it is ashamed to enter the houses of respectable people nowadays. Where too are those cone-shaped packets of fried spices? And those cheap sesamum sweetmeats? Do they still exist? If not, it is of no use to try to bring them back.

Day after day, in the evenings, I listened to Brajeswar reciting the seven cantos of Krittibas' *Ramayana*. Kishori Chatterjee used to drop in sometimes while the reading was going on. He had by heart doggerel versions of the whole *Ramayana*, tune and all. He took possession at once of the seat of authority, and superseding Krittibas, would begin to recite his doggerel stanzas in great style:

Lakshman O hear me

Greatly I fear me
Dangers are near me.

There was a smile on his lips, his bald head gleamed, the song poured from his throat in a torrent of sound, the rhymes jingled and rang verse after verse, like the music of pebbles in a brook. At the same time he would be using his hands and feet in acting out the thought. It was Kishori Chatterjee's greatest grief that Dadabhai, as he called me, could not join a troupe of strolling players and turn his splendid voice to account. If I did that, he said, I should certainly make my name.

By and by it would grow late and the assembly on the mat would break up. We would go into the house, to mother's room, haunted and oppressed on our way by the terror of devils. Mother would be playing cards with her aunt, the inlaid parquet floor gleamed like ivory, a coverlet was spread on the big divan. We would make such a disturbance that mother would soon throw down her hand and say, "If they are going to be such a nuisance, auntie, you'd better go and tell them stories." We would wash our feet with water from the pot on the verandah outside, and climb on to the bed, pulling "Didima" with us. Then it would begin—stories of the princess from the demon city and her magical awakening. The Princess might wake, but it soon became impossible to awaken me. . . . In the early part of the night the jackals would begin to howl. In those days their long-drawn wail still filled the night round some of the old houses of Calcutta.

.. .. .

When I was a little boy Calcutta city was not so wakeful at night as it is now. Nowadays, as soon as the day of sunlight is over, the day of electric light begins. There is not much work done in it, but there is no rest. The fire of activity continues to smoulder in the charcoal after the blazing wood has burnt itself out. The oil mills are still, the steamer sirens are silent, the labourers have left the factories, the buffaloes which pull the drays of jute bales are stabled in the tin-roofed sheds. But the nerves

of the city are throbbing still with the fever of thought which has burned all day in her brain. Buying and selling go on as by day in the shops that line the streets, though the fire is a little choked with ash. Motors continue to run in all directions, emitting all kinds of raucous grunts and groans, though they no longer run with the zest of the morning. But in those old times which we knew, when the day was over whatever business remained undone wrapped itself up in the black blanket of the night and went to sleep in the darkened ground-floor premises of the city. Outside the house the evening sky rose dim and mysterious. It was so still that we could hear, even in our own street, the shouts of the grooms from the carriages of those people of fashion who were returning from taking the air in Eden Gardens by the side of the Ganges.

In the hot season of *Chaitra* and *Baishakh* the hawkers would go about the streets shouting "I-i-i-ce". In a big pot full of lumps of ice and salt water were little tin containers of what we called "kulpi" ice—nowadays ousted by the more fashionable "icecream". No one but myself knows how my mind thrilled to that cry as I stood on the verandah facing the street. Then there was another cry, "Bel-flowers". Nowadays for some reason I hear little of the gardener's baskets of spring flowers—I do not know why. But in those days the air was full of the scent of the *bel* flowers which the women and girls wore in their hairknots. Before they went to bathe the women would sit outside their rooms with a mirror set up before them, and dress their hair. The knot would be skilfully bound with the black hair braid into all sorts of different styles. They wore black-bordered Chandernagore saris, pleating them at the waist with a practised twist of the fingers. The barber's wife would come to massage their feet with pumice and paint them with red lac. She and her like were the gossip-mongers of the women's courts.

The crowds returning from office or from college did not then, as they do now, rush to the football fields, clinging in swarms to the footboards of the trams. Nor did they crowd in

front of cinema halls as they returned. There was some interest shown in drama, but we were only children at the time, so I can say little about it. Children of those times got no share in the pleasures of the grown-ups, even from a distance. If we were bold enough to go near, we should be told, "Off with you, go and play." But if we boys made the amount of noise appropriate for proper play, it would then be, "Be quiet, do." Not that the grown-ups themselves conducted their pleasures and conversation in silence, by any means; and now and again we would stand on the fringe of their far-flung jubulations, as though sprinkled by the spray of a waterfall. We would hang over the verandah on our side of the courtyard, staring across at the brilliantly lit ballroom on the other side. Big coaches would roll up to the portico one after another. Some of our elder brothers conducted the guests upstairs from the front door, sprinkling them with rose-water from the sprinkler, and giving each one a small buttonhole or nosegay of flowers. As the dramatic entertainment proceeded, we could hear the sobs of the "highcaste girl" heroine, but we could make out nothing of their meaning, and our longing to know grew intense. We discovered later that though the sobber was certainly highcaste, "she" was merely our own brother-in-law. But in those days grown-ups and children were kept apart as strictly as men and women with their separate apartments. The singing and dancing would go on in the blaze of the drawing-room chandeliers, the men would pull at the hookah, the women of the family would take their betel boxes and sit in the subdued light behind their screen, the visiting ladies would gather in these retired nooks, and there would be much whispering of intimate domestic gossip. But we children had to be in bed by this time, and we lay listening as Piyari or Sankari told us stories—"The moonlight, expanding like an opening flower . . ."

A little before our day it was the fashion among wealthy householders to run troupes of actors. There was a great demand for boys with good voices to join these troupes. One of my uncles was patron of such a company. He had a gift for writing

plays, and was very enthusiastic about training the boys. All over Bengal professional companies were the rage, just as the fancy companies were in aristocratic circles. Troupes of players sprang up like mushrooms on all sides, under the leadership of some well-known actor or other. Not that either patron or manager was necessarily of high family or good education. Their fame rested on their own merits. Dramatic and musical performances used to take place in our house from time to time. But we children had no part in them, and I managed to see only the beginning of the preparations. The verandah would be full of members of the company, the air full of tobacco smoke. There were the boys, long-haired, with dark rings of weariness under their eyes, and, young as they were, with the faces of grown men. Their lips were stained black with constant betel chewing. Their costumes and other paraphernalia were in painted tin boxes. The entrance door was open, people swarmed like ants into the court-yard, which, filled to the brim with the seething, buzzing mass, spilled over into the Chitpore Road. Then nine o'clock would strike, and Shyam would swoop down on me like a hawk on a dove, grip my elbow with his rough, gnarled hand, and tell me that Mother was calling me to go to bed. I would hang my head in confusion at being thus publicly dragged away, but would bow to superior force and go to my bedroom. Outside all was tumult and shouting, outside flared the lighted chandeliers, but in my room the echoes were faint and muffled, and a brass lamp burned low on its bracket. Even in sleep I was dimly conscious of the steady rhythm of the cymbals beating in the intervals of the dance.

The grown-ups usually forbade everything on principle, but on one occasion for some reason or other they decided to be indulgent, and the order went forth that the children also might come to the play. It was a drama about Nala and Damayanti. Before it began we were sent to bed till halfpast eleven. We were assured again and again that when the time came we should be roused, but from repeated experience we had no faith

at all in these promises—*they* were grown-ups, and *we* were children!

That night, however, I did drag my unwilling body to bed. For one thing, Mother promised that she herself would come and wake me. For another thing, I always had to pinch myself to keep myself awake after nine o' clock. When the time came, I was awakened and brought outside, rubbing my eyes in the dazzling glare. Light streamed brightly from coloured lanterns on the first and second floors, and the white sheets spread in the courtyard made it seem much bigger than usual. On one side were seated the people of importance, members of the family, their invited guests. The remaining space was filled with a motley crowd of all who cared to come. The performing company was led by a famous actor wearing a gold chain round his waist, and old and young crowded together in the audience. The majority of the audience were what the respectable would call "riff-raff". The play itself had been written by men whose hands were accustomed only to the villager's reed pen, and who had never traced out the letters of an English copy book. Tunes, dances, and story had all sprung from the very heart of rural Bengal and no pundit had polished their style.

We went and sat by our older brothers in the audience, and they tied up small sums of money in kerchiefs and gave them to us. It was the custom to throw this money on to the stage at the points where applause was most deserved. By this means the actors gained some extra profit and the family a good reputation.

The night came to an end, but the play was endless. I never knew whose arms gathered up my unconscious body and carried me off. I was far too much ashamed to try to find out. I, a fellow who had been sitting like an equal among the grown-ups and doling out *baksheesh*, to be disgraced in this way before a whole courtyard full of people! When I woke up I was lying on the divan in my mother's room, it was very late, and already blazing hot. The sun had risen, but I had not risen!—Such a thing had never happened before.

GANDHIJI ON THE STATE

Nirmal Kumar Bose

IN many respects, Gandhiji's *Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, which was published in 1908, still remains a remarkable book. Even a few months ago, he wrote that in order to understand his ideas correctly, it was necessary to read that small book "with his eyes."

In that book, there is a chapter in which a comparison has been made between Italy and India (Ch. XV); and there we find the fundamentals of his conception of Swaraj or independence:

"If you believe that, because Italians rule Italy, the Italian nation is happy, you are groping in darkness. Mazzini has shown conclusively that Italy did not become free. Victor Emanuel gave one meaning to the expression; Mazzini gave another. According to Emanuel, Cavour and even Garibaldi, Italy meant the King of Italy and his henchmen. According to Mazzini, it meant the whole of the Italian people, that is, its agriculturists. Emanuel was only its servant. The Italy of Mazzini still remains in a state of slavery. The working classes in that land are still unhappy. They therefore indulge in assassination; rise in revolt, and rebellion on their part is always expected. What substantial gain did Italy obtain after the withdrawal of the Austrian troops? The gain was only nominal. The condition of the people in general still remains the same. I am sure you do not wish to reproduce such a condition in India. I believe that you want the millions of India to be happy, not that you want the reins of Government in your hands. If that be so, we have to consider only one thing: how can the millions obtain self-rule? You will admit that people under several Indian princes are being ground down. The latter mercilessly crush them. Their tyranny is greater than that of the English and, if you want such tyranny

in India, then we shall never agree. My patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the heel of Indian princes, if only the English retire. If I have the power, I should resist the tyranny of Indian princes just as much as that of the English. By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people, and if I could secure it at the hands of the English, I should bow down my head to them. If any Englishman dedicated his life to securing the freedom of India, resisting tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishman as an Indian."

In trying to define the ideal of Swaraj, Gandhiji wrote in Ch. XIV of the same book, "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. Such Swaraj has to be experienced by each one for himself."

It is clear from the above passages that Gandhiji wants a condition when all labouring people will feel that they are their own masters; such a state alone is worthy of being called Swaraj. During the Non-co-operation Movement, Gandhiji objected to the use of violence, for he felt that even if India succeeded in driving out the English by violence, the condition of the masses would remain substantially unaltered. But if freedom came through non-violence, power would automatically come to the masses instead of to the classes. He wrote: "If it is steel that is to decide the issue, it must be not Sikh or Gurkha steel, it must be an all-India steel. If it is brute force that is to rule, then the millions of India must learn the art of war, or must for ever remain prostrate at the feet of him who wields the sword, whether he is *paradeshi* or *swadeshi*. The millions must remain 'dumb driven cattle'. Non-co-operation is an attempt to awaken the masses to a sense of their dignity and power. This can only be by enabling them to realise that they need not fear brute force." (*Young India*, 1.12.20.)

Emphasising the fact that Swaraj was to be won both by and for the masses, he said, "The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinction. Nor is it to be the monopoly of

the latter persons nor yet of monied men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving toiling millions." (*Young India*, date ?)

"It is the masses who have to attain Swaraj. It is neither the sole concern of the monied men nor that of the educated classes. Both must *subserve* their interest in any scheme of Swaraj."* (*Young India*, 20.4.21.)

In the year 1925, there were several occasions when Gandhiji further elucidated his ideas regarding Swaraj, and in each of them, we find a development of the root-ideas contained in his *Hind Swaraj* of 1908. With reference to the violent revolutionary method, he wrote: "I contend that the revolutionary method cannot succeed in India. If an open warfare were a possibility, I may concede that we may tread the path of violence that the other countries have and at least evolve the qualities that bravery on the battlefield brings forth. But the attainment of Swaraj through warfare I hold an impossibility for any time that we can foresee. Warfare may give us another rule for the English rule, but not self-rule in terms of the masses. The pilgrimage to Swaraj is a painful climb. It requires attention to details. It means vast organising ability, it means penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words, it means national education, i. e. education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician's mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banyan tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick." (*Young India*, 21.5.25.)

In the opinion of Gandhiji, the condition of the masses in India as well as in Europe was substantially the same: "I feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country, the people enjoy political self-government. No mere transference of political power in India will satisfy my ambition, even though I

* Italics ours.

hold such transference to be a vital necessity of Indian national life. The people of Europe have no doubt political power but no Swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India." (*Young India*, 3. 9. 25.)

In trying to clarify his concept of political independence, he wrote once more : "By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by *manual labour** to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. I hope to demonstrate that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." (*Young India*, 29. 1. 25.) This did not however mean that Gandhiji had dropped his original ideal of anarchism. On one occasion during the same year, he maintained that, "Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life." (*Young India*, 6. 8. 25.)

Summarising the views of 1925, it might be said that Gandhiji still believed that in the Swaraj of his ideal, people would rule themselves in such a way that there would be no need of any State. But as that was far away, he worked for the establishment of a State in which the working classes would feel that they were masters of themselves ; at least, through their chosen representatives. The real power was to lie with the

* Italics ours.



A pencil sketch of Mahatma Gandhi

By Ju Péon

former. In short, the chief concern of the State was to be the interest of the toiling millions.

In the year 1924, Gandhiji had already tried to convert the Congress into a voluntary labourers' association by suggesting that those who spun and paid their subscription in yarn, could alone be its members. But the proposal had been summarily turned down in the Congress. Commenting upon this, he had written, "Had it been workmen who had been the most influential people and not capitalists or educated men and a property or an education test had been proposed, the powerful workmen would have ridiculed the suggestion and might even have called it immoral." (*Young India*, 27.11.24.)

Some amount of further development must have taken place in Gandhiji's mind between the years 1924 and 1928 with regard to the economic functions of the State ; for we find him stating now that the control of the means of production should lie with the State, rather than with profiteering individuals. Evidently, this was due to the influence of socialistic thought. In answer to a question regarding machinery and its limitation, he had told an interviewer that he wanted the unavoidable heavy machinery to be either owned or controlled by the State. "Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalised, or State controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive." (*Young India*, 13. 11. 24.) *

Later on, in enunciating his economic ideal, he wrote : "According to me the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realised only if the means of production of elementary

* See *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Nov. 1989, p. 245.

necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others." (*Young India*, 15.11.28.)

The year 1931, that is the year of the Salt Satyagraha, as well as the succeeding period, seems to have been an active one so far as the development of Gandhiji's political ideas are concerned. Once more, he asserted his ultimate anarchistic ideal in the following terms. "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state therefore there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realised in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least." (*Young India*, 2.7.31.)

If we leave aside this anarchistic ideal and come down to practical issues, we find Gandhiji, as before, envisaging a State in which the interest of the masses would occupy the supreme position. The State was not to serve the interests of both the classes as well as the masses, but of the masses alone. The interests of the former were to exist to the extent they were compatible with the interests of the latter: "I may tell you that the Congress does not belong to any particular group of men; it belongs to all, but the protection of the poor peasantry, which forms the bulk of the population, must be its primary interest. The Congress must, therefore, truly represent the poor. But that does not mean that all other classes—the middle classes, the capitalist or zamindar—must go under. All that it aims at is that all other classes must subserve the interest of the

poor." (*Young India*, 16.4.31.) Again, he said: "I will therefore state the purpose. It is complete freedom from the alien yoke in every sense of the term, and this for the sake of the dumb millions. Every interest therefore, that is hostile to their interest, must be revised, or must subside if it is not capable of revision." (*Young India*, 17.9.31.)

When logically pursued, this was obviously going to mean that in a free India, confiscation of property would have to be ordered to a large extent. Gandhiji did not hesitate to say so at the Round Table Conference in London, with the result that both European and Indian rich men looked upon him as a veiled Bolshevik and the reaction against the Congress and its ideals hardened to a considerable extent.

He said: "I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the down-trodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the National Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And, if the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are today enjoying privileges—I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians—if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathise with them, but I will not be able to help them, even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire...."

"From whose pockets are those grants to come? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the State. They will naturally come from the monied classes, including the Europeans.

"It will be, therefore, a battle between the haves and

have-nots : and if that is what is feared, I am afraid the National Government will not be able to come into being if all the classes hold the pistol at the head of the dumb millions and say : you shall not have a government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights." (*The Nation's Voice*, p. 71.)

In an interview given in 1934, Gandhiji practically repeated the same view with regard to the State, namely, that it should confiscate property if and when it is established that it is not being used by the rich for the welfare of the masses. He said that State-ownership was better than private ownership ; but at the same time he emphasised the fact that the voluntary method of equalization was better than the process of equalization brought about by the arm of the State. The power of the State should be decentralized to the utmost possible extent ; of course, consistent with the welfare of the masses.*

On another occasion in the following year, while speaking about machinery, Gandhiji repeated how he wished that the unavoidable heavy machinery needed by a nation, should be held in common for the sake of the masses. This was to be done by the State, but preferably, by small village communities, which would function largely like autonomous units within the State. This would be nearer his ideal of Anarchism.

"Q. But what about the great inventions ? You would have nothing to do with electricity ?

"A. Who said so ? If we could have electricity in every village house, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures

"I would prize every invention science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphixiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of

public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour, has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people." (*Harijan*, 22. 6. 35.)

Summarising Gandhiji's views on the State, we thus find that as a philosophical anarchist, he would have as little to do with it in human affairs as possible. He envisages an ideal condition when enlightened men would not need State-made laws to keep them on the right path. But as such a condition is humanly impossible of attainment at any point of time, we shall have to put up with a State to a more or less extent.

In that State, Gandhiji would wish to see the interest of the toiling millions as being its supreme concern. In fact, he would wish all men—except, of course, children and the aged and sick—to turn themselves voluntarily into manual labourers.* Others may exist on sufferance ; but only so long as their interest does not clash with the interest of the masses.

Such a State would confiscate property if necessary, as well as hold or be in control of the means of production on behalf of the masses. Gandhiji would prefer this control or ownership to lie with smaller, decentralized units. Where it is unavoidable, it should lie with the State. But whether the possession lies with the State or its decentralized, more or less autonomous units, it must always be run for the common benefit of labouring humanity, never for the sake of private gain, nor for that of one particular section of humanity, marked off from the rest by racial or religious considerations.

Gandhiji believes that such a State can only be established by awakening the labouring classes into a sense of their power and dignity. This can only be achieved through non-violent non-co-operation and its corollary activities. Any other method may bring political power within the grasp of some party, but the

* Cf. His letters from jail to the members of the Sabarmati Ashram in 1930, published under the title *From Yervada Mandir*, 2nd ed. 1935. Specially the chapters entitled Bread-Labour, Non-possession and Non-stealing.

* *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, May-June, 1940, pp. 30-33.

masses will remain under the thumb of that party. Such a condition is not Swaraj for the masses. For if the party be wrong, and the masses are in a state of fear of violence, then who will check and guide the former?

Thus Gandhiji's conception of the State is neither completely like that of the Anarchists, nor of the Communists. It approaches the former with regard to the aim on political and economic decentralization, and the latter in that the interest of the toiling millions will have a dictatorial position within the State.

The originality of Gandhiji's ideas is further enhanced by the fact that he suggests a means of non-violent non-co-operation, through which power to control the State will come, not to any party working on their behalf, but to the toiling millions directly. Non-violent non-co-operation can be successful only when the soldiers of non-violence learn to take the initiative into their own hands even when they find themselves alone and if they are prepared to lay down their lives without bitterness for an order in which there is no exploitation and no inequality, i. e. in a state where the idea of the essential unity of human interest prevails.

How far Gandhiji's plans and ideas are capable of practical realization, only the future can say.

SURENDRANATH TAGORE*

Rathindranath Tagore

WE are incapable of cold dispassionate judgment where our feelings are concerned; and I find it therefore difficult to write about my cousin Surendranath, who was dearer to me than an elder brother of my own could have been. The wound caused by his death is still too fresh. Moreover, the difficult is rendered more so by the nature of Surendada's personality which was of that rare and sensitive kind which, though richly endowed, delights in obscurity. Only those who came very near to him felt the indefinable charm of a highly cultivated mind and realized the inimitable simplicity of a truly noble soul. His virtues were never concentrated in a full blaze so as to catch the public eye, but only shed their mellow radiance on those who happened to come within its radius. Of such a personality it is difficult to sketch an impression for those who never felt its direct impress. But I shall try.

Surendranath was the only son of his parents, a son much petted and guarded by a jealous mother, and should by all calculations have turned out a genuinely spoilt child. On the contrary, from his early youth he developed a remarkable feeling of consideration for others, which made him very popular amongst his kith and kin and later on won for him universal regard and respect. I cannot claim any knowledge of his boyhood days as the difference in age made me regard him more as an uncle than a brother—but in my earliest recollections I find him already enthroned as the favourite and the most popular

* We of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* have reason to be grateful to the memory of Surendranath Tagore, to whom more than to any other individual, the journal owes its continued existence and whatever worth it has gathered during its career. He edited the first Series, and his close cooperation and guidance alone made the new Series possible. His loss to us is irreparable.—*Ed.*

amongst the younger generation in our very large family of first cousins. There is only one story of his schooldays which I happen to remember. It was told by Surendada himself and shows the characteristics of the boy as he was, when he was sent to the St. Xaviers School for his education. The Jesuit fathers were sometimes at a loss how to control the lively and quick-witted boy under their charge and in despair would sentence a few stripes when a particularly mischievous prank was detected. The boy would stand always with a smiling face, the palm of the right hand extended and the left hand in the pocket of his trousers to receive the punishment. After one or two stripes the right hand would be withdrawn into the pocket and the left hand take its place surreptitiously. He never minded this form of punishment because his pockets were liberally supplied with the rosen powder which applied to the palm would make the leather strap or cane rebound without hurting much !

I was still too young to appreciate the part taken by Surendada in the social life that centred around my uncle Satyendranath after he had retired and settled down in Calcutta, at first in Park Street and afterwards in various parts of Ballygunge. What used to be known and referred to, with perhaps a note of derision, as "Inga-Banga Samaj" (Anglo-Bengali Society) certainly had its headquarters at my uncle's house presided over with great brilliance by my aunt. Some of the sparkling conversations held at her salon have been preserved for all times in *Panchabhut*.* One of the few cherished possessions of my father in those days was a decrepit fourwheeler "palki" carriage and an ancient horse of a horrible piebald colour. Not an afternoon passed when our family would not squeeze into this conveyance and lumber along the bumpy road to uncle's house. Macadam roads had not come into fashion then, nor electric lights. On the return journey at night weird thoughts used to pass through the mind of the

* By Rabindranath Tagore. An English translation by Surendranath Tagore, entitled "A Diary of the Five Elements", was published serially in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II, Parts 2, 3, 4 ; Vol. III, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4.



SURENDRANATH TAGORE

From a
Painting by Atul Bose

writer who as a kid would watch the mysterious trees and houses on both sides, and the succession of lengthening shadows between each gas-lit lamp, until fitful slumber would transform the scene into tales of sanguinary battles in which giants and demons had the principal parts.

Those who have read the reminiscences of father's early life will remember the ardent enthusiasm with which the cause of swadeshi business enterprises was taken up in the family long before the political movement gave it a fillip. Surendada fell an easy victim to this at an early age. Father had opened a factory at Kushtia for jute baling and sugarcane crushing mills. He took both Balendranath and Surendranath as co-partners to assist him in this business, which did not take many years to be wound up, leaving a heavy loss to be accounted for. We were at that time at Shelida, where Surendada used to visit quite often in connection with the Kushtia business. Father had asked him to prepare a concise edition of the *Mahabharata* in Bengali, keeping the main story portion intact. He used to be engaged day and night on this stupendous work but very often we would pester him to read from the copy and listen to it with enraptured attention. The book was subsequently published and has recently been further abridged under the title of *Kurupandava*.

One of the chapters in the history of our province which in all probability will remain unwritten and in which Surendada played an important part is the association of Sister Nivedita, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, Bipin Chandra Pal, Hem Chandra Mallick, father and a few others with Kakuzo Okakura.* Much has been written and we all know the result of the impact of the British occupation on the development of the life of Bengal but very few realize the deep influence that the contact with the wonderful personality of this Japanese sage had on the recent history of this province. He came at a critical period, when the

* Readers may be interested to read the reminiscences of Kakuzo Okakura by Surendranath Tagore himself in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. II, Part, 2.—Ed.

reaction against Westernization had barely started. Through his conversations and through such books as *The Ideals of the East* he inspired the people to regain confidence in their own civilization and to believe in the great contribution that Asia had still to make to world culture. This brought about a silent revolution and oriented the minds of the intellectuals in Bengal towards a healthy nationalism which gradually penetrated the whole of India. Surendada got himself attached to Okakura and this gentleman developed such an admiration for his 'chela' that at the time of his departure he mentioned to his close friends that if ever India gained freedom Surendranath should be her first emperor.

After the hectic days of the Swadeshi movement, when the repressive steps taken by the government against the political agitation led the people to turn more attention to constructive work, Surendada, in conjunction with the late Ambika Ukil, an enthusiast in co-operatives, started the Hindusthan Co-operative Insurance Company. Father lent his newly built house, Lalbari, for the purpose and the company was inaugurated and the office established on the ground-floor of the Jorasanko house. Amongst the young men recruited for the staff was S. Naliniranjan Sarkar. I think it is needless for me to recount the development of this premier Indian insurance business and the future brilliant career of the young man whom Surendada took under his wing. The story has been made public by S. Naliniranjan himself and the tribute that he has paid to his guru is in the highest terms.

The co-operative principle introduced in the Hindusthan Insurance Company at its inception involved the company at a later stage in difficulties. Surendada was deputed to England to consult actuaries how to get over the commitments made under the co-operative scheme to shareholders with the least financial loss. This was in 1913 and we were still in London when he arrived. For many years father had been suffering from an acute ailment the only remedy for which lay in the hands of a surgeon. At this time he was in an extremely run-down condi-

tion and my wife and myself were at our wit's end how to persuade him to undertake the operation, because till then his faith in homoeopathy was unshaken and he would turn a deaf ear to the suggestion of any other treatment. Our appeal for help to Surendada at this critical stage immediately had effect, his wonderful persuasive power won, the operation was performed and father obtained a new lease of life.

Surendada used to give ungrudging help to many persons who came to him for drafting difficult letters, company reports and even legal documents. But until 1914 his literary abilities had remained unnoticed and even afterwards when he had translated, one after another, many of father's books, only a few amongst an intimate circle could pay the tribute due to him for his mastery over the difficult art of rendering literature from one language to another not his own, because he did not care to label the translations with his own name. Those who have come closely in touch with him and seen him work can testify to the wonderful ease and facility he had with his pen. I believe the first serious work he had undertaken was the translation of *Jibansmriti*.* This piece of fine literary work probably still remains the best among his many translations.

Surendada led a busy life but I know even when worldly worries became unbearable he would still find leisure to devote some little time to literary work because that was the chief solace to a much harassed soul. For this reason he resolutely kept on editing *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* journal for many years although he could ill spare the time.

It is not for me to enumerate the many princely qualities of my cousin—it will suffice to mention that what attracted people towards him and won their respect and loyalty was his unassuming generosity of heart, genuine democratic feeling and friendly behaviour with everybody, and a wonderful toleration and consideration for others in spite of a keen logical mind. No

* The original Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore's *Reminiscences*.

words, however, could sum up the innate nobility of his character better than the following touching testimony by father who knew him so well and loved him so much.

"One of the noblest traits of Suren's nature was his remarkable gift of forbearance even in the face of the most aggressive type of stupidity with which he often had to come into contact in the course of his business or in the daily traffic of his social relationship. He never for once lost his equanimity of mind in the presence of pretentious superciliousness of men who were far inferior to him in culture. Often we have seen him trying to find out some points of agreement with those who were fighting him even going to the length of putting their case in a rational mould which was his own. The mind which is unusually keen in intelligence is apt to produce acrid cynicism when the environment is unfavourable but Suren had an inexhaustible store of intellectual generosity which hated to take advantage of others' weak points and offered them truce when it was easy to run them down.

"He had great opportunities before him when young but saw them wither one by one by a succession of misfortunes, which he endured but could not control. He was subjected to trials which would have turned a lesser man bitter and misanthropic, but Suren never lost the serenity of his mind and never in his life he complained against the unfairness of his destiny and its guides. This uncomplaining spirit of patience he carried all through the darkest days of adversity.

"Those of us who knew Suren knew that he was truly great but that which grieved us sorely is the unfortunate fact that he was content to allow his greatness to remain concealed in obscurity, helping others into eminence who he was sure would help his country and many others who were ungratefully merciless in their claims."

REVIEWS*

THE LIFE DIVINE: by Sri Aurobindo—Published by the Arya Publishing House, Calcutta.

THE ancient dictum, "Ekamevadwitiyam," One without a second, relates to the Omnipresent Reality, the All-pervading Spirit, the Truth that underlies all life and existence. It is this Truth that is Brahman, besides whom nothing really exists. Everything in this universe, living or lifeless, embodied or body-less, whatever its state of existence, is but a manifestation of this eternal Spirit. *Om, Tat Sat.* This Spirit is not definable, for man can get no measure of it by means of any conception or experience known to him. The individual in trying to determine its connotation has perforce to stop at "Neti, neti"—not this, not that. So far, Sri Aurobindo is at one with the true Vedantin.

But what is the goal, the destiny, of the Individual? Is he to remain for ever knocking at the door of infinity and never comprehending it? Sri Aurobindo gives us the assurance,

"To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its activities, but a divine existence is his objective."
—Page 56.

This is to be achieved by an ever-growing comprehension. How far this progress is conscious is discussed later on. But, warns the Master, "however high we may climb, even though it be to the Non-Being itself, we climb ill if we forget the base." This is the crux of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, and differentiates it from extreme Monism. The world of matter is, to him, real and not illusory. The individual's connection with it can never cease. As man rises higher, the true divinity of his nature reveals itself in the way he transfigures the world around him by the light which illuminates himself. When ultimately he attains the nature of Brahman, he becomes, like Brahman itself, integral and all-embracing.

It would be interesting to cite here by analogy the spiritual evolution of Sant Tukaram. This great saint of Maharashtra was a Vaishnav to the core. His divinity was Sri Vithal, a manifestation of Vishnu. Tukaram starts life with the worship of a stone image of this deity. After years of tearful prayer and rigid asceticism, silent meditation and earnest exhortation, he succeeds in breathing life into his image and stands face to face with the bright effulgent form of his deity. But he cannot pause at this. The mere sight of his divinity does not satisfy him. He continues his austerities and prayers as earnestly as before. At times he weeps, anon he sulks and

* Continued from the previous Issue.

upbraids. The barrier between his Devata and himself is to him unbearable. At last Vithoba relents. One day Tuka perceives in his heart his own image blended with that of his beloved God. Vithal and Tuka are at last one. But even here the devotee cannot pause. He persists in his Sadhana till through his cherished deity he becomes one with the whole creation and attains beatitude.

Sri Aurobindo says, "Its (the liberated soul's) unity with the transcendent one is incomplete without its unity with the Cosmic Many."—Page 62.

Very aptly does the legend describe how Buddha paused at the doorway of Nirvana and looking back took the vow never to cross the threshold as long as there was a single soul on earth unredeemed.

The Srimad-Bhagwat tells us a very similar tale. When the fourth incarnation Narasinha after the destruction of the demon Hiranyakashipu offered salvation, Moksha, to the devoted Pralhad, the latter declined the offer saying that he had no desire to be liberated as long as there were so many miserable ones left undelivered in the world.

This, then, is the destiny of the individual. By the Ignorance, Avidya, he crosses beyond Death, and by the knowledge, Vidya, he enjoys Immortality. Ignorance is the sense of Multiplicity while Knowledge is the realisation of One-ness. It is only by a comprehension of both that we can enter the life of eternal bliss.

But this life of everlasting Ananda that Sri Aurobindo holds up before man is not one of extinction in any sense of the word. On the contrary, it is a life, as the great Chaitanya promised to his devotees, of love for the Lord and of service to His world. It should never be lost sight of that the great Yogi of Pondicherry, however much of his technique he may have derived from Sankaracharya, is no believer in Maya or illusion, but takes a firm stand on the reality of the material universe and characterises it as the Leela or manifestation of Brahman. In so far as the Master is a Leela-vadi he is rather at one with the great Vaishnava sages of the past and with Sri Ramakrishna of our own days. But still Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is not really incompatible with that of the ancient Monist. For the latter recognised two distinct kinds of Moksha or liberation of the soul. One he called Nirvana Moksha, which implied complete absorption in the Brahman and the cessation of all relationship with a creation which was illusory in its nature and which, for him, ceased to exist. But the other Moksha designated Nirmana was quite a different state. The liberated soul having bathed in the light of the Supreme acquired a new outlook and resumed his work in the universe on a higher plane. It was this Nirmana idea which we see highly developed later on in the Vaishnav literature of Bengal. The condition of the soul thus liberated can be considered analogous to the theo-

phanous state of ancient Greek philosophy. The individual, it must never be forgotten, is a necessary unit. His ultimate destiny is not extinction but illumination. For the manifestation of the Transcendent in the universe, the illumination of the individual is a necessity.

It has already been stated more than once that according to Sri Aurobindo everything in the universe is a manifestation of the Brahman and, as such, is real and not illusory in its nature. Diverse are the forms in which Nature appears to the individual, but when comprehension comes to him he realizes that it is all but one and that his relationship with it can never cease.

In the sixth chapter the Master thus reiterates man's real mission and his destiny in the universe:

"The ascent to the divine life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence."

It is for this purpose that out of the insignificant one-celled organism of the primeval earth has evolved the rational cultured human unit of to-day. Yet, how is the ascent to the divine Life to be achieved? We are assured that there is no real obstacle. On the contrary, the all-pervading Spirit itself wills it. The general course of evolution helps the individual along the first part of his journey without even his knowing it. But the last steps are climbed by man's conscious effort, by a "progressive awakening and self-enlargement." This effort constitutes the motive of all spiritual Sadhana. In chapter VI we have a remarkable presentation of this progress of the individual, which every reader should peruse carefully for himself. We give below an extract thereof which in a way summarises Sri Aurobindo's view of man's progressive enlightenment.

"The animal life emerging out of Matter is only the inferior term of his existence. The life of thought, feeling, will, conscious impulsion, that which we name in its totality Mind, that which strives to seize upon Matter and its vital energies and subject them to the law of its own progressive transformation, is the middle term in which he takes his effectual station. But there is equally a supreme term which Mind in man searches after so that having found he may affirm it in his mental and bodily existence. This practical affirmation of something essentially superior to his present self is the basis of the divine life in the human being."—Page 71.

But, one may ask, how is such a transmutation conceivable? By what magic can the individual of clay, subject to pain, sorrow and death, pass into the condition of deathless beatitude? Such transformation is possible because the individual is not different in essence from the Spirit

pervading the universe. In substance they are identical, being but manifestations of the one Reality. To understand this fully one has to realise not only the ascent of the individual but the descent of the Supreme. From the Vaishnavic point of view one has to comprehend both Krishna and Radha, the impatient call of the Divine flute as well as the maddening effect thereof on the Maid of Brindaban.

Sorrow and death, says Sri Aurobindo, "can only be the creation, positive in practical effect, negative in essence, of a distorting consciousness which has fallen from the total and unifying knowledge of itself into some error of division and partial experience." Redemption comes by the realisation of the universal in the individual. When this happens, apparent contradictions between joy and sorrow, good and evil, death and deathlessness, vanish in the light of a higher knowledge. Opposites are transmuted into something surpassing them. Says the Master, "Evolution has enabled man to appear in Matter and it is this evolution which will enable him progressively to manifest God in the body,—the universal Incarnation."

Man's rationalism, his imagination and his intuition have given him the power of conceiving a state of existence higher than his own and has planted in him the ambition of passing into that state. For thousands of years he has been trying to devise ways and means by which he can evade pain, sorrow and death, and attain to a condition of unending Bliss. He has had his successes and his failures, but the time is getting ripe for a general uplift of the race to a plane which has so far been visualised by but a fortunate few. This is Sri Aurobindo's conception of the law of evolution in its entirety.

C. C. Dutt.

*A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LOWER
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THIS valuable book of research in the geography of Sind, originally appeared as articles in the *Journal of the Sind Historical Society* (Vol. II, Part I), *Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore* (Vol. IV, No. 4, Vol. VI, No. 1), and in the *Journal of the University of Bombay* (Vol. V, Part 4). The University of Bombay, in appreciation of the

original research work done by Prof. Pithawala, has recently conferred the degree of Doctor of Science on the learned author.

The geography of Sind was a much neglected subject before Prof. Pithawala took up the subject, and now, thanks to him, the geography of Sind becomes such an interesting and instructive matter to read. The vast amount of data, published, we believe, for the first time, and the numerous plates of maps and graphs bespeak not only years of patient study but also the zest and interest of a pioneer. We feel certain that Prof. Pithawala's geographical researches will prove of very great assistance to the Sind Government. The learned author has done a distinct service to the "Unhappy Valley of the Indus", in bringing out this rare book, the first of its kind, in historico-geographical research.

We look forward with great interest to the other publications of Prof. Pithawala on similar subjects.

A. B. Advani.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SELF or A System of Idealism based
upon *Advaita Vedanta*—by G. R. Malkani, M. A. (Director,
Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner)—Published by
the Institute, 1939.

THIS book, consisting of thirteen chapters, embodies the lectures that the author delivered at the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, from time to time during the year 1938-39. He states in the Preface his own philosophical standpoint as that of the *Advaita Vedanta*, and he has endeavoured to present in an expository manner the position of the system regarding the ultimate nature of Reality as the *Self*. Hence the name of the work given as the *Philosophy of the Self*. The method of exposition and defence adopted is mainly that of the Idealistic system of thought in the West, although he has been careful to point out the differences and difficulties in the ultimate findings of the latter schools. The discussions undertaken are no doubt preeminently rationalistic. But the learned author has not hesitated to point out where reason fails to yield ultimate truth about the nature of reality. Reason, he appears to assert, renders but negative help in our pursuit of knowledge of this truth, the apprehension of which is possible positively only by higher intuition which Acharya Sankara calls *Aparoksa*. This is all right from the standpoint of the Advaita School of Vedanta. But it was expected in a work of the kind, and particularly from the method of exposition adopted, that the author would throw some light on the nature of this Intuition and its *modus operandi* in yielding the particular knowledge for which it is held to

be the only possible source. The author does not appear to have handled this question properly anywhere in the course of his lectures embodied in the work. The want of this explanation leaves one to wonder whether the conclusion he comes to, or the position he advocates, is not after all a dogmatic assertion of his personal *faith*. He has no doubt expressed this attitude of his mind in the last sentence with which he concludes the Preface: "A little credulity, which I like to call a spirit of faith and of humility, has sometimes a greater truth-value than carping criticism." That is all right. But why then the elaborate discussions he has undertaken in the book on various subjects considered to be directly or indirectly connected with the fundamental problem he has ultimately to settle? The only possible reply from a staunch follower of the dialectic of Sankara like himself, would, no doubt, be that all these argumentations on rationalistic lines are simply meant for the removal of *ajñāna* (ignorance) regarding the ultimate nature of reality. But can this negative attitude alone satisfy a seeker of truth? The author knows that better than a mere reader could possibly do. What would strike a reader, like the present reviewer, is the free indulgence into subtleties in the mode of argumentation adopted in several places in the course of the writing, particularly in the Introduction and the earlier chapters, in which he appears to surpass a Bradleian of the West, and a follower of Sriharsa or of Madhusudana of the Advaita School of the East. I wish the author could have avoided these 'inconclusive' subtleties in the presentation of the main issues. It is admitted, that would not have been quite 'philosophical.' But has he not stated himself by implication that an approach to ultimate reality lies beyond the usual path of philosophical discussions? The author has no doubt taken honest pains to assert and justify what his own convictions are. But then the work in which he embodies his views should have been undertaken more intelligently to make the writing intelligible to the readers of the work. In making this general remark I do not, however, mean to say that the book is unintelligible throughout. There are chapters which are written clearly, and the subjects treated therein are handled admirably. It is only at knotty places that the argumentation is found to be rather too subtle, and, I am afraid, not quite free from inconsistencies. On the whole, however, the book appears to be, in its methods of presentation, a new approach to a most difficult problem and a new way of its solution. The exposition attempted covers an extensive ground, bringing in subjects, which are, more or less, directly or indirectly, connected with the main problem.

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