

# MOTHER INDIA

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FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

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## A CLUSTER OF CONFUSIONS

We are confronted with a host of important happenings both at home and abroad. Perhaps the most urgent of all problems for us is the persecution of Hindus in East Bengal. There is not the slightest doubt that atrocities were committed in Khulna on a pretty large scale and that the anti-Hindu virus is widespread and active almost everywhere. Not only Dacca, as the East Bengal Government admits, but also Chittagong, Feni, Brahmanbaria, Comila, Akhaura, Chandpur, Barisal, Agartala and Mymensingh have been the scene of recent disturbances. Our Government has done well in refusing to condone any retaliation by Hindus on Muslim residents in India, especially as many Muslims themselves have been loud in condemning the loot, arson, rape and murder their thoughtless co-religionists have been guilty of in Eastern Pakistan. But, while being as humane as possible, we should keep our minds alert and understand the forces at work: then only whatever steps we take on high governmental level will be the right and effective ones.

### OUR POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN

Always we should pierce to the heart of a situation. Pakistan is based on extreme communalism: that communalism is her origin and *raison d'être*. All her policy towards India is animated by it and every act in general forms part of a pattern of hostility. If this hostility were not there, there would be no Pakistan. So it is no use shutting our eyes to it. We should certainly not give up the idealism with which we desire to act and we should never indulge in the communalist mentality, but we must face two facts squarely: first, Pakistan wants to squeeze out all Hindus from her territories and confiscate their possessions—second, she wants to inconvenience India as much as possible and to reduce her by one means or another to a state of helplessness. The Government has realised by now that agreements are mere scraps of paper to Pakistan, but we do not yet see that this is no temporary aberrancy but the natural and inevitable mode of action of a State founded on what Pandit Nehru has called a "pernicious doctrine". We keep on hoping and hoping and our persistence in wearing pink glasses takes the edge off our minds and the strength out of our hands.

It is time we acted, however nobly, in the full consciousness of what we are up against. In Kashmir we have wilful and brazen invasion of territory that has rightfully acceded to India and in which the people's party dating from far British times is, in spite of being Muslim-led, all for India. Conditions have been created to make a fair plebiscite impossible. If India had not refrained from strafing the bases given by Pakistan in her territory to the trans-frontier marauders and if we had let our armies march straight on instead of curbing them and taking our case to the U.N.O., there would have been an end of the Kashmir affair and perhaps an end even of Pakistan. We thought Pakistan would listen to an international tribunal. The result was that not only did she encourage and equip the savage tribesmen but actually sent her own armies into Kashmir and organised the so-called Azad troops into a force of considerable dimensions functioning under her own command! There is an absolute deadlock in Kashmir today and Pakistan is hectically arming for a show-down which, contrary to her expectations, she could not bring to a successful close three years ago. In the realm of trade she has done her best to damage our interests and the Inter-dominion Agreement by which we set such store was flouted in every detail. Recently, she made a unilateral conciliatory gesture towards South Africa in contravention of all understanding for a joint front against Malan's racial policy. In the matter of evacuee property her conduct has been infamous. Since the value of property left in Pakistan by Hindu refugees is four times that of property left here by Muslim refugees, Pakistan has cared not a hoot to come to any equitable arrangement, but has gone on tightening more and more her evacuee property law. As a last stroke, she has removed the whole issue from the list of subjects to be dis-

cussed on governmental level! A list of 7,250 abducted women has been sent to her Government, with definite clues to the recovery of several hundreds of them. A deaf ear has been turned to our plea. In June and July, 1948, a list of about 800 Hindu and Sikh temples reported to have been desecrated was forwarded. Since March, 1949, a further list of 95 temples and Gurdwaras, 74 of which are situated in Karachi, has been sent. The Pakistan Government has not even deigned to give a reply! In the meantime a campaign of blackwashing is going on in the Security Council. And here it may be recalled that last year Pakistan voted vehemently against India's admission to membership of this Council, while all the remaining Muslim countries of the world voted in India's favour. An ineradicable animosity towards India and a resolution not to come to terms with her on any account and a flagrant violation of all pacts have been the distinguishing marks of Pakistan's behaviour ever since Partition.

And now comes the persecution in East Bengal. And what are we going to do about it? We shall protest and we shall hold conferences with the Pakistan Ministers. Perhaps there will be quiet again. But how shall we undo the crimes committed against us and how are we to prevent their repetition in the future? Are we to learn no lesson from the fact that every proposal for a reasonable solution has been bluntly rejected? Pakistan wants no joint fact-finding commission, refuses the suggestion of a joint tour by the Prime Ministers of both countries, spurns even the appeal of the Indian Red Cross for observation by international Red Cross representatives. Instead of helping us, she allows inflammatory falsehoods to be spread by her press so that more and more the lot of her minorities may be worsened, and her Ministers keep on fire-eating, and lately the preposterous claim was made that India should be further partitioned in order to provide a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims. We must take the right measures for our safety. They must, of course, be thought of by those in authority and it would be out of place for ordinary people to dictate them. But no right measures are possible unless we burn with the conviction that Pakistan is incorrigible and that every act of violence or injustice to Hindus by her nationals reflects the mind of the Government itself. This has been driven home to us again and again, and yet we go on cherishing illusions. There is also a fundamental weakness in our attitude and Pakistan is well aware of it. Suppose she had our resources and our military might. And suppose, again, there were 36 million Hindus within her borders who might serve as hostages—just as we have 36 million Muslims. Would we have dared to behave as high-handedly as she does? Would we have run the risk of drawing manifold retaliation for allowing Muslims to be robbed and tortured and killed? Something is unquestionably amiss with a frame of mind that can stand nonsense on so huge a scale.

We are at a critical moment of our history. While doing everything in our power to ensure safety to the Indian Muslims, we must strike as hard as we can at the communalist aggressiveness that is bent in Pakistan on making peace and security impossible for Hindus. There was some ray of hope in the warning by Pandit Nehru: "If the methods we have suggested are not agreed to, it may be that we shall have to adopt other methods." But has the welcome note of firmness been sustained? We have grown so accustomed to being weak and compromising that it will be a regular effort to be keyed up to the proper pitch. But the hour is ripe for grasping the nettle with virile hands. If we fail to do so, we shall ill-serve our country and its high principles.

### OUR ATTITUDE TO VIET NAM

The capacity for clear thought is at a pretty low ebb in responsible circles not only in this matter. Take our attitude to the Bao Dai regime in Viet Nam. Britain to her shame served her commercial interests in China

*Continued overleaf*

## A CLUSTER OF CONFUSIONS—Continued from previous page

and sacrificed the cause of civilisation which is bound up with "containing" Communism. But in Indo-China she has been quite clear-headed and has followed a policy in close concert with America. Both have recognised Bao Dai in spite of his representing only one section of the two in Viet Nam, the other being represented by Dr. Ho Chi-minh whose government is cored with Communists, who has a Communist as his Commander-in-Chief and who has been recognised as the legitimate ruler by Mao and Stalin and even promised help by the former. As France has been at war with Dr. Ho for over two years, rightly has she protested that Russia's recognition is a violation of their 1944 Treaty of Alliance which contains a clause forbidding either country to enter into alliance or coalition against the other. But Stalin, in his resolve to push Communism throughout Asia, has cared as little for France's protest as he did for Chiang Kai-shek's against the violation of the 1945 treaty by which he agreed to recognise no government except the Kuomintang. Our leaders seem to see nothing wrong here. All that they are obsessed with is the fact that France's presence in Indo-China prolongs those *bêtes noires* of theirs: imperialism and colonialism. They forget that France has granted autonomy to the Bao Dai regime within the French Union and that, though this autonomy is not all it should be, since freedom in foreign policy is not implied by it, it is an admirable beginning of the end of the imperialist and colonial tradition. Britain and America, two of the greatest imperialist and colonial powers in the past, have voluntarily relinquished vast areas and most other West-European powers are moving in the same direction. Imperialism and colonialism are dying forces and it is shortsighted on our part to make bogeys out of them, while shutting our eyes to the tremendous expansionism of Soviet Russia and the establishment of Cominform both in the East and in the West to work by any means for the overthrow of all non-Communist governments in the world.

Pandit Nehru has himself admitted that Moscow and Peking keep on referring offensively to him and his government as tools of western imperialists: by the same token he should know how much truth there can be in Moscow's and Peking's claim that only Dr. Ho and his regime can be regarded as nationalist. Nationalism, according to Moscow and Peking, means a Communism which takes orders ultimately from Stalin. This is well-known to our own leaders and, within India herself, they have denounced the Communist party not only because it carries out acts of violence and sabotage but also because in these acts as well as in every move it makes it owes allegiance to an extra-territorial power. Our leaders have refused to consider it a nationalist party. But if, as admitted, Russia pulls the strings of Communism in India, why do we forget that she does the same everywhere else outside Yugoslavia and that, no matter what the number of people supporting Dr. Ho, he can never be a genuine nationalist? Every available fact about him shows him up for what he is. It is now a long time since he became, in Paris, first a Socialist and then a Communist. In the early twenties he went to Moscow, attended the Lenin Institute there, was trained as a Soviet Agent and became a Soviet citizen. He was attached as an aide to Michael Borodin in China in 1927. In 1930 he organised an abortive Communist revolt in Indo-China. At one stage of his career he turned up in the Soviet Consulate at Boston in the U.S.A. Through the thirties he lived in Russia. In 1945 he was sent back to Indo-China. We should be simpletons to talk of Nationalism in connection with him. Even for the large support which is alleged to be given him by the Viet-Nameese there is sufficient explanation in the odium in which the French are held in their country. It is this odium that is responsible for whatever opposition there is to Bao Dai who is favoured by France, and it is strengthened by the colossal ignorance, among the majority of the Viet-Nameese, of the dreadful implications of Communism. As long as this ignorance and the wide-spread Francophobia are exploited by Communist agents, there can be no possibility of arriving at a true definition of Nationalism in Indo-China. And even were it found somehow that the majority plumps for Dr. Ho's Communism with open eyes we should still not have Nationalism in the real sense of the word, for a Communist of the non-Tito brand will always work for Russia and Stalin and be a traitor to his own country's interests and traditions. A Communist can only be a perverted nationalist at the best. How, then, can we who are aware of this fact when faced with it at home slur over it in the situation in Viet Nam? The sole explanation is that there is no British rule over India whereas the French are still present as a power in Indo-China and their presence, getting however attenuated to the merely nominal as time goes by, makes us see red and turn utterly blind to the real shadow of Red ruin that is creeping over South-East Asia. If not by anything else, we should be jolted into proper judgment by the broadcast from Dr. Ho's radio on February 21 that "Indo-China henceforth is an integral part of the Russian bloc." Nobody denies that Bao Dai, even though within the French Union, should be as authentically autonomous as Nehru is within the Commonwealth and we should do our utmost to urge on France a more liberal policy; but if under pressure of world-circumstances we have to choose between, on the one hand, the last remnants of imperialist colonialism by a country which has ever been in the van of the world's battle for intellectual liberty and the individual's right and, on the other hand, the incessantly extending tentacles of a totalitarian tyranny which destroys the finest cultural values of both Orient and Occident and against which French bayonets in Indo-China are

a help, should we hesitate for even a single second?

### OUR CALCULATIONS ABOUT RED CHINA

Have we not realised yet how wrong we were to grant recognition to Mao Tse-tung? We were under the impression that the Communist movement in China was mainly inspired by desire for internal reforms of an agrarian order. We even argued that by not recognising Mao we should be driving him inexorably into the Soviet bloc. Sheer wishful thinking led us to overlook the clear declaration made by Mao as far back as July 1, 1949, about his foreign policy. "It is impossible," he said, "to remain on the fence between the United States and the Soviet Union. One must either lean on the side of the Imperialists or on the side of Socialism," and he added a phrase that has been the motto of Red China ever since: "We lean on one side only." The recent Sino-Soviet treaty of both economic and military alliance for thirty years has thickly underlined this motto. Mao lies completely settled in the firm embrace of Stalin. The close *entente* is not diminished by any concessions the latter is said to have made to the former. In fact, the concessions are more apparent than real. The loan allotted by Russia of an equivalent of 300 million American dollars is too meagre to meet China's needs. The "sovereignty" she has secured of Outer Mongolia is entirely to her own benefit. The loosening of her grip on Manchuria is no more than nominal. Manchuria is strategically at the mercy of her arms and at any time can be occupied by her troops. Besides, the provisions for the withdrawal of her troops from the naval base of Port Arthur and the surrender to the Chinese of Dairen and the Manchurian Railways—provisions that have been tom-tommed as showing how little like a satellite has China been treated—are effective merely on paper until, as Stalin and Mao have agreed, a treaty with Japan is concluded to the full satisfaction of Russia. Such a treaty will never be concluded, what with non-cooperation on the part of Moscow and Peking about the procedure within which to discuss it, and with America's inability to renounce her advantageous position in Japan at a time when the whole Pacific area is in danger and especially Chiang-held Formosa the immediate target of Mao's military offensive. If the published clauses mean really no genuine independence for China and if even their coming into immediate effect would hardly disprove the tight ideological and practical alignment between the two countries against all non-Communist nations, including India, we are left to imagine how much more intimate a welding, full of menace to the world, must be implied by the secret clauses which are universally admitted to be there. We should scarcely be indulging in fantasy were we to assume that, as in all countries favoured by Soviet friendship, Red China must have agreed to give Soviet-nominated advisers key-positions in the Chinese army, secret police and Communist Party. The Indian Government's calculations—and these were shared by most of the major political groups generally opposing Congress—have completely ganged aghley, and it would be wisdom to admit the gigantic folly we have committed and not only set our course in a different direction but also advise Britain to cry a halt to her commercialism and reconsider the entire situation.

### OUR ROLE IN THE U.N.O.

Wiser counsel from us should be forthcoming too in the controversy about unseating Dr. Tsiang from the U.N.O. Our delegate seems to recommend a revision of the procedural rules so that Mr. Malik and his sympathisers from Eastern Europe may not turn their backs on that international assembly's meetings. But these rules have been taken advantage of by the Eastern bloc delegates to serve their own ends so far: it is illogical to favour change in them just when they help America to keep the Peking-suggested delegate Mr. Chang Wen-tien from gaining entry. Moreover, Dr. Tsiang is there by right: seven out of eleven members of the Security Council are against his ejection and as long as two permanent members—America and France—have not recognised Red China and are therefore pitted against the two—Russia and Britain—who have accorded recognition, it is but fair that Dr. Tsiang should retain his seat. What India should do is not to make the path as smooth as possible for Mr. Chang Wen-tien: she should either accept the legitimate objections of America or else offer some new way out of the deadlock. We submit that the new way consists in taking stock of the change in conditions since the U.N.O. was formed, and bringing the altered circumstances to bear upon the present problem, so that until unanimity be obtained on the world-status of Red China the seat now occupied by Dr. Tsiang might be given not to another Chinese delegate but to the delegate of some other power. When the war ended, India was not a sovereign independent republic: if her being so at the moment can be construed, in spite of her tie with the Commonwealth, to render her as eligible as any other independent nation, she should be chosen as a permanent member. An alternative is Turkey. Her absence from the war need be no argument against her election. Technically, such an argument would rule out Red China herself, since there was no such established and recognised entity at war. What is required is a unanimously recognised independent country and India or Turkey would very well fit the requirement—especially as the one has extreme importance in Asia and the other no negligible position in the Middle East. If we were less confused in mind over the Chinese puzzle we would play a more constructive role in the U.N.O.'s affairs.

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# CREATIVE CRITICISM BY ANDRE CHAMSON

Literary criticism is a form of literature whose purpose is to give judgment upon the works of creative artists. This at least is the idea that the words evoke in the mind. Personally, I prefer criticism to be on a cultural level, in the sphere of art and literature but considered apart from creative work, an autonomous activity following upon the creative act. For if the word be employed as an adjective, it immediately takes on a broader meaning, more profoundly linked with the realities of life. Be it a part of the doctor's vocabulary, or that of the politician or historian, "critical" becomes synonymous with decisive, and is inextricably involved in the mysterious forces of change.

This meaning is derived from the word's earliest origins, for it represented to peoples still living very close to nature the physical idea of separation, specifically the separation of the grain from the chaff, a fundamental act which has a significance in part aesthetic, since it is movement, but above all ethical, because it is the separation of what is worthless from that which sustains life.

The word takes on its original meaning in practically every instance when it is not applied to literary activity. Anything that is of a critical nature involves the idea of a separation which is in itself an achievement and, in this perspective, is comparable with fate. All creation, then, is consequent upon a choice or judgment. The simplest man understands this perfectly when, at the bedside of a sick friend or, during important events in the life of his country, he is told that the critical hour is at hand. He knows that this hour is one of judgment, of separation, of a decision which, followed up by action, will shape the future. From that moment, every event tends towards life or death, towards success or failure, towards salvation or perdition. Thus any critical movement would seem to be the meeting point of a decision and a creative act.

It is of this criticism, where action is combined with creative force, that I wish to speak. For it is a form of intellectual creation, although the conception of criticism as a branch of literature related to the consideration of literary works as objects on which to pass judgment often conceals the nature of this creative criticism which I shall try to define.

A glance at the great works of the past shows that the creations of the human mind, whether they be novels, poems or paintings, are always inspired by a critical situation in the historical or biological sense. Be it in the plastic arts or in the art of language, the evolution of a form or the discovery of a mode of expression always occurs in the relinquishing of certain realities or ideas which, from frequent use, have become commonplaces or mere symbols. Sometimes they may seem to retain a semblance of vitality by former or present associations with certain aspects of life. We create only by choice, even if this choice is as mysterious as our innermost instincts. Each generation of men in fact makes an impression upon this universe only in certain limited spheres which mark its passage. Like the mountain climber, it selects certain footholds among basic truths. Our contact with the world in which we live is made by a choice and, by an odd contradiction, on this choice depends our achievements. In this connection, nothing is more impressive than the apparent caprice in the evolution of cultural forms. He who sets out to attain the universal, or who strains towards the eternal, cannot fail. I should like to draw upon a great literary figure to illustrate this point.

About a century and a half ago, Goethe travelled to Italy. He stopped at Padua, and we know what

was his aim in that city. The greater part of his time was spent searching for a good edition of Palladio, a desire that any cultivated person today can understand. But he did not trouble to visit the famous frescoes of Giotto, which any cultivated man nowadays would certainly do. Yet we are not surprised by this neglect on the part of a man of such broad interests. We know very well the force that drove him. We know too what he sought in Italy and the use to which he put it. That journey was precisely one of the critical moments in his life, critical in this case meaning decisive, and all decisions involving a choice. How, then, can one distinguish the critic from the creator? The choice of one determines the material for the other to use. Goethe's choice was so deliberate that it was not until 30 years later that he paid homage to Giotto. This he did towards the end of his life, when writing of Dante, but as was his fashion, the whole work pursues different lines of thought, achieving fresh contacts with the world whilst pursuing other topics.

We, no more than Goethe, and indeed much less than he, cannot grasp the fulness of this Universe. The things he chose to see and to love decided for him his future works. Any creative artist is a man who passes by the frescoes of Giotto without looking at them, dreaming of ancient palaces. But if it is Giotto that he must see, he will be blind to other aspects of life. Every great work represents the fusion of this singleness of purpose and of this love. All creative work derives from a choice, even though the creator may not realise it, and I repeat this to emphasize again that all critical work is inextricably linked with creation.

There has always been at the heart of all great literary schools or, to take the highest example, of all great movements which have given birth to a new conception of the universe, a small group, similar to that of the leading architects, which

selects certain broad ideas, neither purely critical nor purely creative but a combination of both, which direct the artists' work. Whether it be to give Sentiment a place it may seem to have lost, or to reinstate an Order, the elements of which seem to have been forgotten; or whether it be a return to the essential laws of Nature or to the re-establishment of authorities that have become dimmed with time, there have always been, in the past, a few elementary principles to guide the creative urge in men, even before they produce a creative work. As Rousseau says in *Emile*: "The critical age, when the mind is opened to certainty, when feeling is deepened and character formed, and all one's future life is decided." This truth applies to generations as well as to individuals. It is clear that it is trends of this sort that have formed the basis of all art forms and of our modes of expression. Certainly, such movements as la Pléiade, the Classical and the Romantic were not formed out of a vacuum, nor were they based on some elaborate doctrine or ready-made theory, but on a few easily-defined ideas, which served as indicators or signposts. There is, as the origin of all forms of art, what may be termed a decision to see life from a certain angle, a desire to study it in certain aspects whilst ignoring others. It is like the constant separation of the things which mean life from those which lead only to death. For the human tragedy is perhaps the perpetual loss of contact with reality, with the feeling of the grandeur of human existence, and these successive decisions are probably no more than attempts to return to these fundamental truths. They express the biological force, the pulsation of life, the springing of the green shoot from the bare branch.

If I insist, in this exposé, on emphasizing the relationship between the critical and the creative act, it is because I believe that today, more than ever before, our creative will is withheld for lack of the decisions that are the outcome of criticism. It is not merely today that I feel this so strongly, nor is it by chance that I have chosen such a theme. For four years now my thoughts have been turning in this direction, during the solitude in which I have lived and which has been the common destiny of so many millions of men like myself, a solitude which not even the fraternity of war can

dispel, since it springs from an instinct deep within us, a feeling of secret horror at the collapse of all civilised and cultural values. Not even hope can liberate us from this feeling if we have the courage to face it. How can I make myself understood to those who have not experienced this anguish? I feel I shall have the sympathy, however, of those who have crossed this desert, even though it were in the enemy camp. Then, all things seemed to conspire in separating us from that which gives meaning to life and if, as I was saying just now, the human tragedy is the loss of contact with the realities of our world, who has suffered this more deeply than the men of our time? In this solitude—this silence which it seems to me is imposed upon us—I have often thought that our need is to discover a reality that will give us new hope, and I can conceive of this renewed contact with life only as a brotherly act, full of humility and grandeur, taking place around a table on which would be placed a piece of bread. I feel that if we are to regain confidence in our world, it must be by means of the simplest things, as the result of a choice in which we weigh the value of the objects, thoughts and feelings which make up our present-day universe. When I chose bread as a symbol, it is not so much because it is the simplest of our human needs as because, neglected as it has been in our wretchedness, we could not fail to see clearly once it is given its proper significance. For me it is not doctrines or theories that count but a critical effort, constantly renewed, a selection and a choice that I cannot visualise as separate from creative activity but connected closely with it. What I would hope for would be a definition of the spiritual values of our existence.

Who could say today that we have discovered them, or that we have already passed the critical hour? I may pursue this subject deeper and say what no man, perhaps, can express without a feeling of shame. As a creative artist, or at least as a man who tries to express his view of life, each day I run against the difficulty of attempting to create in a world that cannot distinguish between the things which sustain life and those which will bring about its destruction. Anything can sway our emotions of love and hate; anything can affect or colour our work or our entire day. The certainty of the morning is thrown into confusion in the evening. Nothing gives meaning to the objects that surround us; there is no standard by which to judge the thoughts that arise in our minds, or the feelings that stir our hearts. What artist can boast that he is not beset by uncertainty? Yet we do not lack philosophies or theories. They are constantly being thrust upon us, when all that we need is a little spiritual guidance, a simple assurance such as that suggested by the piece of bread, of which I dreamed in days of hunger and servitude.

It is because I feel that the creative forces of our time are held in suspense that I wish to call upon this critical power which can release those forces. For criticism is the capacity to distinguish between the things that must not be confused. It can show us the things that are in harmony with our lives; things which perhaps tomorrow, for those who come after us, will be but myths or symbols but which, during our lifetime, may well be the essence of our dignity, and our joy.

(An "Exclusive" from UNESCO)

## Finish The Play...

Kill me, but clean me, O my God;

What is the use of your hard rod,

If it must only push my fears

Back, back into the years?

Break me, but take me, once for all,

What is the use of knock and fall,

If it be not in love complete

The last fall at your feet?

O God, my God, cleanse me and take

My soul to you, for your sweet sake;

What is the use of all my sin,

If you be not the gin?

Trap me, but wrap me in your love,

Illumine all my wrong, and prove

Each vague desire against your will

Was your will in me still.

Finish the play, I'm tired, tired,

If I once did what you desired,

'Tis time you heard and set me free,

Came and became poor me.

TEHMI.



# SRI CHAITANYA

## A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

Act One of this deep and moving play in many-toned blank verse was published in our last issue—the Special Anniversary Number of February 21. In that Act, which is entitled “Aspiration”, Sri Chaitanya is shown in dialogue with his mother Sachi, whose sanction he desires for his resolve to renounce the worldly life and devote himself, as a homeless mendicant, to the seeking of Sri Krishna, Lord of the Universe, who has entranced his whole heart. Sachi, an exceptional woman, who knew from a vision before her son’s birth that he is an Avatar, puts aside her own human attachments and, understanding the Supreme Call that has come to him, gives her sanction.

### ACT TWO: CONFLICT

Next morning. A bathing ghat in the river Ganga of Navadwip. Two pundits, Keshav and Murari, are seen bathing close together, and a young woman, Romasundari, a few feet from them. Keshav who owns a *tol* (Sanskrit school) is reputed for his scholarship. He has a very high opinion of himself and is of imposing appearance, with a long flowing beard of a man in the early sixties. Murari, who owns a similar *tol*, is gifted with a sense of humour. He is in the late forties. Roma, about five and twenty, is a Brahmin widow who worships Sri Chaitanya, is of comely appearance, a cultured girl but very poor who ekes out a bare living by spinning and fears equally the Divine and the Devil.

KESHAV

(with the Ganges water in his hands formally intoning a hymn)

O thou, red like the hibiscus, born of the Sage  
Kashyapa, O vast Glory, who tirelessly  
Dost with dark Night thy mystic battle wage  
Redeeming all our sins!—I bow to thee.\*

MURARI

But have you not, sir, mispronounced a word?

KESHAV

(nettled)

What?

MURARI

I only mean sir—

KESHAV

You need not, I say.

For nothing that you mean has any meaning.

MURARI

(ironically)

But you behave like a judge who has gone deaf  
And hangs the witness taking him for the robber!

KESHAV

(furiously)

You dare—

MURARI

But sir, in daring who can beat you?

For if I have affronted a sombre human  
You insulted the whitest God in Heaven,  
Although the wicked sceptic may indeed  
Ask if the Gods live not too far to notice  
Your grievous accent you now flaunt so boldly!

ROMA

(scared)

O Lord, my Lord Gouranga! Were you here  
The river would ripple again with happiness.

KESHAV

Stop mumbling, woman! nor invoke a human  
When nothing less than the Lord of thunder and lightning  
Can blast the irreverent, as the Gita says;

(turning to Murari)

When you’ll be taken to hell with your foul tongue  
Reduced to silent ash. So shudder, fool!

MURARI

There I’ll obey you willingly, for once,  
If only to swell the choir of Gods aghast  
And shuddering, sir, at your pronunciation.  
For ’tis for priests like you the Chandi wrote:

(he starts reciting in mock solemnity)

Smile thou on me, O Goddess of Gods,  
If my breath, unwittingly,  
Has missed a vowel while I sang  
Of thy Divinity.

Or if my tongue has mispronounced

A consonant in between,

In thy deep Grace, O merciful

Mother, absolve my sin.\*

KESHAV

(contemptuously)

Yes, such implorings suit the philistines  
Like you and those you teach, the lispings infants,  
Who will stay lispings infants all their lives  
Even as there are some others—

(smiling proudly)

’tis not boasting,

But truth is truth—although the blind, alas,  
Never can see and so shall never know  
That a few there are who stand out like to peaks  
Whose greatness is thus hymned by the greatest Poet:

He who is master of himself

Will laugh to scorn his chains:

The thunder’s boom and lightning’s flare

His high-born soul disdains.\*\*

MURARI

(bowing in mock humility)

Your high humility does, sir, overwhelm.  
But even the high peak is laid low by earthquakes,  
And that is why you stumbled over a word;  
Let Nimai Pundit, the great, adjudicate.

KESHAV

(sneering)

A mighty authority, indeed, this green  
Infant of yesterday! And pundit! Tut!  
Who knows not even the rudiments of grammar!

ROMA

(shocked)

But what are you saying, sir? Our Lord Gouranga  
Was reputed as a prodigy of learning  
At the age of twelve when he had read through all  
There was to read on earth. They say once came  
A fearful scholar whose voice was like a gong;  
And this blood-curdling giant interpreted  
A holy couplet faultily which he,  
Our Lord Vishwambhar, pointed out to him  
In a great consistory of priests and poets:  
And he was only seventeen at the time!

KESHAV

Oh, hold your wagging tongue, wench! How I loathe  
This purblind hero-worship, bred by gossip!  
At seventeen to be reckoned a great scholar!  
Pooh! Have I not been poring over the great  
Panini from the day I learned to lisp†  
As everyone knows, and still—behold me, woman!  
I have but just won through to the initial status  
Of a fool!

MURARI

(clapping his hands)

And how I applaud your judgment, sir!

For the first time in my life—with all my heart.

KESHAV

(frowning)

What do you insinuate sir, may I ask?

\*From a well-known Sanskrit hymn to the Sungod:  
Javākusumasamkāsham Kāshyapeyam mahādyutim  
Dhwāntarim sarvapāpāghnam pranatosmi divākaram.

\*\*From “Chandipathaparadha-kshamapana-stotra”:  
Yadatra pāthe jagadambike mayā visarga-vindwaksharahnāmiritam  
Tadastu sampurnatām prasādātaḥ samkalpasiddhischa sadaiva jāyatām.

†Panini—a great grammarian of Sanskrit.

## SRI CHAITANYA—Continued from page 4

ROMA

O sirs! I feel so scared and do implore you:  
Let not the little light of peace there is,  
The little friendliness that still survives  
Be blurred for nothing, as says Lord Vishwambhar—

KESHAV

You say this is nothing—when this idiot  
Impugns my reputation as a pundit,  
Saying I mispronounce—I who am swimming  
In the oceaned wisdom of Panini!

ROMA

But sir,  
I am a simple woman: yet I wonder—

KESHAV

You may—and gape, too—since your starless soul  
Will genuflect to dismal humans knowing  
Naught of Panini's godhood.

ROMA  
(diffidently)

But I, sir,  
Was given to understand that your Panini  
Was the author of a grammar, was he not?  
How then could you, a mighty scholar, worship  
A mere grammarian as a Sage of wisdom?

KESHAV  
(scandalized)

A grammarian? Woman! utter a blasphemy  
At your own peril, I warn you! For the great  
Panini was a Sage of sages who delved  
Into the mysteries of the three worlds.  
Only the morons fail to appraise his greatness.  
His masterpiece is, even as the Vedas,  
A compendium of all our human knowledge,  
An apocalypse of life and destiny.  
So prattler, beware!—I warn you once again.

ROMA  
(nervously)

I meant no harm, sir. I...I only wanted  
To plead that our great Lord Gouranga is  
Not a common man, but a grand Avatar,  
A God incarnate in the human mould.  
And may I humbly add: he too can lecture  
On the three worlds and the mysteries divine.

KESHAV  
(infuriated)

O hush, I tell you! I have come to worship  
The Sungod in this holy river, Ganga,  
And not to hark to dire obscenities.  
What! Shall a human walking on two legs  
Ever assume the status of Godhood? Oh, fie!

ROMA

Oh be not angry, good sir, I implore you.  
But what do we know of God's ways after all?  
We may indeed be versed in human things:  
But the things divine, because they are divine,  
Can hardly be—I mean—within our reach.  
So how can you presume, sir, to assert  
That our high Almighty could not for His own  
*Lila* accept a human mould on earth?  
The other day, while singing in ecstasy,  
Our Lord Gouranga danced as though on air  
And as he cried: "O Krishna, art thou come?"  
His body did become self-luminous  
As countless witnesses will testify.

(Her voice trembles)

And then... Oh, how can I with human words  
Portray the superhuman miracle?  
For as he went on singing, we saw a halo  
Girdle his shining brow and all fell down  
Prostrate at his twin feet acclaiming him  
As an incarnation, in one human frame,  
Of Radha and Krishna in mystic union!

KESHAV

(touching his sacred thread in rage)  
O horrible blasphemer! You are doomed  
For ever: you shall be roasted in black hell  
On a frying pan in the stinking oil of sharks  
And the dread demons will belabour you  
With red-hot tridents burning all your hair  
Till you'll be bald as—as this fool Murari  
Who will insult me and yet genuflect  
To a callow youth and call him my superior.  
Yes, he too shall be haled to Hades with you.

ROMA

(scared)

I will crave your pardon, sir. I will not say  
A word more, nor even venture to ventilate  
My poor opinions against the learned wisdom  
Of a great pundit who has touched the bottom  
With the plummet of reason lent him by the mighty  
Grammarian oracle.

KESHAV

(propitiated)

I can forgive  
If you will eat your words.

MURARI

(interjecting)

But that's unfair.  
If you would have her abjure what she still  
Believes as true, then sir, you must not thus  
Intimidate her with God's own fear of hell  
Thrust into her feeble head. And what a terror!  
For shame! A blusterer might sometimes behave  
Like a gentleman for a change.

KESHAV

(stammering in rage)

You...you infamous....

MURARI

(smiling blandly)

Sir, tremble not in wrath. For say, how could you  
Have the heart to freeze her timid, feminine soul  
By the horrific prospect of deep baldness?  
Fancy, a woman whose long flowing hair  
Rippling even as a sable waterfall,  
Is envied of the Apsaras\* in Heaven—

ROMA

(blushing)

Pray laugh not at a girl. For 'tis, I tell you,  
No laughing matter—but a dread nightmare  
For a woman to be bald in hell or heaven.

KESHAV

(chuckling)

I like that, Roma, and so I will forgive you  
This once: nor baldness nor hell need you fear.

(He looks upward and recites a Sanskrit couplet invoking  
absolution)

O Goddess, whose unfailling Grace  
Redeems all sinners who cry in pain!  
We bow to thee, we bow to thee,  
We bow to thee—again and again.\*\*

ROMA

(with folded hands)

And I too bow, sir, in relief. But then, sir,  
May I just tell you one thing—but...I mean....

KESHAV

(encouragingly)

Oh come, speak out—now that I have forgiven you.

ROMA

(undecided)

I'd rather not sir. For I dread offending  
The pitiless agents you just conjured up.  
I hope and pray they may not visit me  
In my dreams tonight—a poor and helpless wench  
With not a friend in the world save mother Sachi,  
The one and only neighbour who enquires  
With her kind smile if I am alive or dead.

MURARI

(in mock solemnity again)

Sir, I can tell you what she wished to say  
But dared not, scared by your prognostications:  
She wanted to return the compliment  
To you, my pundit, when you recommended  
Her soul to hell and her pate to perfect baldness.

KESHAV

You dare again crack such foul frivolous jokes  
With me, your elder both in years and wisdom!  
To hell you shall be consigned for this grave sin.

MURARI

God bless your tongue, for there I'll meet the youthful  
Like Roma and not the senile erudite.

\*Mythologically, the dancing girls of surpassing beauty who are supposed to be the courtesans of the lesser gods of Paradise and endowed with unfading youth.

\*\*From a celebrated hymn to Goddess Durga in "Markandeya Purana":

Yā Devi Sarvabhuteshu kshāntirupena samasthitā  
Namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah.

## SRI CHAITANYA—Continued from page 5

For 'tis not age gives wisdom. Look at Nimai  
Who can defeat you in an argument  
On anything—from Panini to Vishnu,  
And he has lived but five and twenty years  
While you are ancient as the barren hills.

(He chuckles mischievously)

Ah, that reminds me, sir, of something priceless.  
The other day he gave a merry twinkle,  
And said: "Age is a visitant strange like pain  
Whose contact makes the wise into oracles  
But the fools it matures into imbeciles."

KESHAV

(foaming at the mouth)

I—I—curse you... be doomed to deep perdition  
And, solemnly, I challenge you and him  
To a public debate where I'll expose you both:  
And show you up as a witless ass and him  
For a circus clown, a mountebank, impostor.

ROMA

(stopping her ears)

Oh, utter such words no more, sir, I implore you:  
For hell or not—I will not bear such base  
Slander against my heart's one Lord and Guru.

MURARI AND KESHAV

(almost simultaneously)

Your Guru!

ROMA

(tossing her head up defiantly)

Yes—and my life's one peak and plinth

And none shall ever supplant him till my death.  
Yes, that was what I wanted now to tell you:  
That my heart and soul had bowed to him, first and last,  
As a being divine to whom the revealing light  
Is native as is warbling to the cuckoo,  
Depth to the ocean and wideness to the spaces,  
Rustling to leaves and irised hues to rainbows,  
Bloom to wild flowers and innocence to children.

(She warms up)

No wonder he is hailed by those to whom he comes:  
Lone men and women robbed of joy by Fate;  
For 'tis with such souls he consorts, our great  
Lord of divine compassion, who will not wend  
To royalties inebriate with pride.  
And so he shunned not me, my King of Grace,  
Nor ever withheld from me his angel smile,  
The unfailing friend of every pauper in this  
Our land of empty claims and clamours where  
Booklore has banished the One the books have sought  
And resonant slogans have enslaved the mind;  
Where the pedant priest talks glibly of things that slake  
No thirst of soul till we faint from pain and drouth,  
Or else but mumble, half-deliriously,  
Faint airborne rumours of the Ultimate  
Ocean of nectar, taking these, alas,  
For the deep of Krishna sung of by the wise.  
But we strive to fill the heart's void with vacuum,  
Wooing the flitting shadows for the Form  
And echoes for the Song... Yes 'twas my Guru  
Gouranga who has taught me this and all  
I know, although 'tis very little I have learned.  
But what can a woman like me ever imbibe  
Through her uneducated understanding?  
I only know of one thing, my good sirs,  
And that's enough for a girl born ill-equipped,  
Who never was by fortune favoured, nor  
Marked from her infancy by any gift  
Or intellect, who lived through her lonely life,  
A childless widow spinning from dawn to dusk  
To eke out a bare living. O tell me what  
Could such an ignorant and feckless creature  
Hope to achieve? And yet, sirs, 'twas to me,  
A pointless flotsam drifting aimlessly  
On crests of time, a puppet of puzzling moods,  
That Lord Vishwambhar, the Avatar of Grace  
And Light and Bliss and Knowledge and Glory came  
Unasked to give me a swift and everlasting  
Asylum at his dawnrose feet I kiss.  
Everyday, in my waking hours, and nightly  
In sleep or in my dreams I am cradled now  
In an abiding peace I never knew.  
And so a hope was born that even I  
Might reach the Haven beyond my wildest hope.  
This you may not believe, sirs, yet 'tis true.

MURARI

(moved)

He may not, mother, but I do believe you.  
For something upheaves in my breast and whispers:  
Such miracles may happen even in this  
Dark age of little living you described  
As one inspired. I feel within my heart  
A nameless beat of hope... an exaltation...  
A wing-waft of a Bird of Fire in ash...  
A momentary glimpse of a mystic Truth  
Through some chance opening... rending of the curtain...  
An adventitious vision through a fissure  
In our granite wall of jealous Ignorance.  
I fail to account for what I see or why.  
But this I know 'tis something rich and living  
Which is at war with its antipodes:  
The phantom falsehood which yet seems more real  
Than the great Reality while it holds out.  
And so I too have lived a citizen,  
Even though sick of its airless make-believes,  
Of words, words, words—of soulless pedantry  
Till it has grown now into a deafening blare.  
No wonder we hear nought else but words today  
In this our age of din. No wonder we  
But grasp at shadows letting slip the Form.  
No wonder Krishna has to be born on earth  
Again and again and wounded by our arrows  
That He may heal our wounds with his own blood:  
To simulate our blindness that He may  
Wean us from our deep blindness grown so dear.  
Who knows—our Nimai might be He Himself!  
How can they who have not once glimpsed the King  
Depose He has not come incognito?  
So have no fear of hell nor listen awe-struck  
To our arrogant friend, but follow your heart's own leading.

KESHAV

(taunting)

The Sage never made a profounder observation  
Than when he said: "A fool shines at his best  
Until he breaks out into speech."\* And here  
A mad fool, harnessed to a dotting gossip,  
Will be driven to doom, goaded by blasphemy,  
Condemning the words of wisdom of the Scriptures  
With ravings bred by suicide lunacy,  
Little suspecting, while they wag their tongues,  
That learning is only mocked at one's own peril.  
But, as the Gita says: dark ignorance  
Must babble true to its own inspiration.  
No wonder night holds up to ridicule  
The sunbeams when they hymn the bliss of light.

(His mounting wrath now gets the better of his sarcasm,

I pity you both who fail to reverence  
The greatness of one who deigns to talk to you  
Of sober sense to save you from yourselves.

(Grandiloquently)

I am the son of Ramgopal the great  
Philosopher who taught me from my cradle  
To lisp in Sanskrit, made me read Panini  
From cover to cover when I was barely twelve,  
At twenty I lectured on God's ways to mighty  
Assemblies of the elect and erudite.  
And you dare flaunt before me a simple swindler  
Who has mastered only one art in his life:  
How to impose on credulous men and women  
And be adored of them as an Avatar  
Of Vishnu Narayan—a modern Krishna!

(Contemptuously)

An Avatar indeed!—a lachrymose  
Daydreamer who, with sentimental tears  
Has won the hearts, I wager, of a few  
Gullible housewives!.. Oh, what idiocy  
Is this, I ask you: to hoist an earthly creature  
On the altar of God Himself! No wonder we,  
Blind Hindus, are now in full decadence.  
No wonder aliens hold us in subjection.  
It serves us right: you cannot perpetrate  
Criminal heresies and yet be moral!  
I wish I could but once meet this Pretender  
Who dare stand on the pedestal of Vishnu.

ROMA

(stopping her ears)

O sir, please—I implore you—or I must  
Come here no more to bathe—ah, there he is!  
Oh hail, my Lord! Deliver me from this..

\*From Sanskrit: "Tavachcha shobhate murkhah yavat kinchin-nabhashate."

## SRI CHAITANYA—Continued from page 6

(Sri Chaitanya's voice is heard . . . Presently he comes into view. He descends the steps of the ghat singing)

SRI CHAITANYA

Why will men say they know thee not  
When thou still callst them so?  
How can the tree its roots ignore,  
Or the river its seaward flow?  
The eye wails: "Light's a myth, alas!"  
The night weeps: "There's no dawn"  
Wherever I look—in diverse forms  
I only see the One.

We win no peace because we love  
The eddies of desire;  
We cleave to darkness and then sigh:  
"Why must the sun retire?"

No bud outpetals but opes her heart  
To the blue's imperial call;  
No bliss that visits but leaves a trail  
Of thy joy's carnival.

We hear not for we will not hark,  
We would outlaw thy light  
And then sob, exiles from thy Gleam:  
"Why reigns on earth the night?"

(Roma ascends a few steps of the ghat weeping and falls down at Sri Chaitanya's feet. He blesses her. Murari makes him an obeisance. Even Keshav—moved in spite of himself—gives him an involuntary smile of greeting)

MURARI

Oh, why do you pause? Sing on.

KESHAV

Yes, do my boy!

SRI CHAITANYA

(bowing to him deferentially)

But, sir, my songs are simple.

KESHAV

(somewhat off his guard)

True. But this

I will concede: your voice has a pleasing timbre.  
Can you sing a Sanskrit song—or even a couplet?

SRI CHAITANYA

Just a hymn or two. But I would rather not  
Venture to sing before Your Eminence:  
I may mispronounce some word. Before a pundit  
Of your great altitude who will not quail?

KESHAV

(titillated)

But I'll correct you. Ignorance is no crime,  
Unless, like mist, it clings to its native blur.  
It's never too late to mend, my boy! And I  
Am ready to give you lessons in Panini  
And, through his medium, knowledge of Heaven and earth.

SRI CHAITANYA

I am grateful. But, sir, I want only one  
Knowledge—of Krishna, the One who is the home  
And country of all knowledge divine or earthly.

KESHAV

(sententiously)

But that is wrong. You cannot, says Panini,  
Attain the skies save on the wings of learning.

SRI CHAITANYA

But I love my Mother Earth more than the skies:  
It's here my Krishna lived and not in the clouds.  
I will now wend to Brindavan whose dust  
Is hallowed by the touch of his divine feet.

KESHAV

(smiling superiorly)

But that is feminine, sentimental gush.  
For Krishna could at will defy the skies  
Which He did with His Godly stature fill,  
As was revealed to Arjun to enthrall him.

SRI CHAITANYA

I know that, sir, or rather, shall I say:  
He has made me know that I know naught of His  
Deep ways. I only know that Him I crave  
To know and love and worship and adore.  
And even Arjun felt dismayed, remember,  
By what he saw. How then could I, sir, hope  
To succeed where Arjun failed. I am not made  
Of the heroic stuff like him or you.  
To each his Eden, sir, nor would I venture  
Beyond my depth.

KESHAV

But what then do you want?

A man must be a man and act like one.  
Suppose your Krishna came to you, what would you  
Ask of your Lord, my boy?

SRI CHAITANYA

(tears leap to his eyes instantly)

What would I ask

If He, my Krishna, came to me, His slave?  
Could there be any asking then? But no,  
I would ask something. Shall I say it, sir,  
In a Sanskrit song—since you invite me kindly?

(He breaks out ecstatically into song)

Renown nor wealth nor a paragon  
Of beauty, Lord, I crave  
Nor even the Muses I'll implore:  
I long to stay thy slave.  
Through countless births this boon unique  
I sought, may thou approve:  
My heart be surrendered at thy feet  
In an unbargaining love.\*

KESHAV

(once more moved in spite of himself)

This is—not bad. But who was the composer?

SRI CHAITANYA

Why ask the human author's name when all  
That thrill our souls derive from Him alone?

KESHAV

(with asperity)

If a son is born one wants to know the father's  
Name and the mother answers if she's chaste.  
A straight and simple question calls for a straight  
And simple answer.

SRI CHAITANYA

(smiles sadly with a tinge of irony)

Sir, you walk in light

And I do envy you and yet . . . I wonder . . .  
For a question may seem straight to a simple child  
But not to an adult. The one infers the gold  
From the outer glitter: not, alas, the other  
Who has been disillusioned. And yet how oft  
Have I not vainly searched for an answer—when  
The Lord of Life has put the question straight:  
"If thou hast loved me more than all the world,  
Why dost thou still hark back to siren life  
When my Flute calls to thee to leave thy all?"

MURARI

Oh, do not say: you are called to leave us all:  
Our only light in this dark Navadwip,  
The only minstrel in this mart of hagglers,  
And the only poet in this hive of pedants.  
None but yourself in this benighted town  
Could ever compose the lovely song you sang.

ROMA

(enthusiastically)

You guessed aright, sir. Who else but our Bard  
Could make such a song divine?

KESHAV

(curling his lip)

Impossible!

The song's in flawless Sanskrit. Tell me, Gora—

ROMA

(hotly)

But I am telling you: 'tis he himself,  
And he has composed many more as flawless.  
Oh, listen, sir! Some seven years ago  
A famous poet came with a bunch of poems.  
But when he read the poems of our Lord  
He sighed and said: "Oh, who will read my stuff  
After such lyrics as these?" And then our Bard  
Just laughed and flung away his sheaf of songs  
Into the Ganga that the other might win  
The fame he coveted.

KESHAV

But that was wrong.

As said our learned poet, Kalidas:  
"Pearls never woo men but will be wooed by them."\*\*  
And the pearl of pearls, the laurel of laurels, is learning.  
(reproachfully)

\*From a Sanskrit song composed by Sri Chaitanya himself:

Na dhanam na janam na sundarim  
Kavitam va Jagadisha kamaye:  
Mama janma-janmanishware  
Bhavatad-bhakti-rahaituki twayi.

\*\*From Kalidas: "Na ratnam anwisyate mrigyate hi tat."

# SRI CHAITANYA—Continued from page 7

Mother Saraswati† is fastidious  
Nor visits all and sundry but demands  
Those she favours set store by her boons.  
Woe betide the philistines who will not  
Welcome her smile of Grace.

SRI CHAITANYA

(with a smile of sad irony)

You are her favoured  
Beneficiary and therefore know, sir,  
What is right action and what is the reverse,  
Being virile of conscience and enthroned in science  
Of the eurdite. Only, I never have sought  
What you, the pillars of society, crave.  
I wrote my poems nor for fame nor lucre:  
I wrote them, sir, because I felt like giving  
Voice to an urge that clamoured to be born.  
Furthermore, as I sang even now: from childhood  
I have but longed for one boon and no other  
Whose name is Krishna. Him alone I have loved.  
I own I have loved other things as well.  
(Not for nothing I feel now too bewildered  
To answer a straight and simple question simply,  
Nor can I claim my nature is consistent.)  
But as time passed, a nameless melancholy  
Deepened in me and with it my one yearning  
For Him who plays His haunting Flutelet hiding  
Behind a veil . . . . and with my years there grew  
In me a strange averseness to our earth  
Of shadow and fire and evanescent gleams . . . .  
I felt I was being weaned from all I once  
Hailed as the most desirable of God's gifts.  
I was dismayed and strove to temporize . . . .  
To dally with what they called life's greatest boons.  
(He shakes his head sadly)  
But alas, when one is seized with a mystic passion  
One cannot help but let oneself be taken,  
Even as a ship caught in a violent cyclone,  
When naught avails—helm, rudder, stars nor compass,  
And I must now wend—whither His gale will lead.

KESHAV

Oh, come, my boy, all this will never do.  
You must not throw away the tangible  
For something which no real prudence can  
Ever approve. For 'tis but a mood of folly  
To hanker after the moon—as say the poets.  
The Flute of Krishna is a myth, a legend,  
An ignis fatuus no wise man would chase.  
Come, I now offer voluntarily  
(A thing I seldom do—but one must strive  
To save one's fellows from dire suicide):  
You come to me: I will take you in hand  
To cure you of this perilous fantasy.  
I confess I judged you harshly from reports.  
For I see in you potentialities  
Rare as diamond. If a trifle wayward  
You are lovable and gifted and endowed  
With humility: I was unfair to you.

SRI CHAITANYA

(with a bow, smiling)

O utter not, sir, such a monstrous thing:  
For surely you and unfairness could never  
Hive together. Can error and erudition  
Live locked in love—the sun and morning mist?

KESHAV

(taken in)

You are ripe in judgment. But, sometimes, the greatest  
Mountaineers may stumble on level land.  
However warily one marks one's steps,  
Our human mind, like flesh, must come to grief  
On occasion, though the wise grow taller in wisdom  
Even through pain. And it's in this true wisdom  
I offer to initiate you, my son!

SRI CHAITANYA

Your Grace is overwhelming sir, I own.  
But I regret 'tis too late now—tonight  
I leave my home and all for Brindavan,  
A mendicant in His name.

ROMA

(stiffing a cry)

What! You, my Lord!

MURARI

It is incredible, Gora! For you are  
The only pledge of sun in our deep night,  
The only thrill of song in our wrangling din,  
The beloved of all, the hope of Navadvip,  
Whatever may your few detractors say  
Who do not count.

SRI CHAITANYA

(heaving a sigh)

No more than do the others  
Who will acclaim me or extol my gifts.  
For only one thing counts on our dismal earth:  
The loving approbation of Sri Krishna,  
Beside whose one sun-smile of welcome pales  
The whole world's prohibition or approval.

KESHAV

(impatiently)

But what in the name of sanity are we here  
Debating now? What is this approbation  
Of Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma or Indra?  
And how can a human consciousness be sure  
Of the God's approving smile or deep or pale?  
All this to me seems stark midsummer madness!

(Fixing his eyes on Sri Chaitanya's)

You do not claim, I hope, that Krishna plays  
His Flute for you alone in this big world?  
So I infer you are joking.

SRI CHAITANYA

Never have I

Been more in earnest, sir. Last night my mother  
Gave me her sanction that henceforth I may  
Put on the ochre garb of a wandering beggar  
Living for Krishna on the alms of others.

MURARI

You mean: you will forswear the obligations  
You owe to her and to your—

SRI CHAITANYA

(nodding)

—wife and friends

And what men in common parlance dub the world.  
For I heard Him calling: "Stake your all for me."

(Turning to Keshav)

You may, sir, deem this too midsummer madness;  
But he who has heard even once that haunting call  
Can to another nevermore hark back.

(He shakes his head ruefully)

But no, 'tis futile striving to explain  
What happens to one's psyche when one hears  
His mystic Flute so soft and yet imperious.  
One might as well endeavour to explain  
What love's eye sees in the beloved's face.  
And so, sir, I suggest: you put away  
My madness, as you call it, from your mind.

KESHAV

(insistently)

But this is serious, since your mind, my son,  
Is a trifle unhinged; for when you claim that Krishna  
Is weaning you from this our world of karma,  
You indulge your fancies. For no God-note ever  
Calls one away from the world of fact to loll  
As a lotus-eater in a hanging garden,  
Nor sanity desires to drift away  
From its cherished moorings toward a meaningless  
Life of the parasite—the mendicant's.  
Come, come, my lad! You are a green youth still  
Who cannot tell the right move from the wrong.  
And men of wisdom will unanimously  
Tell you: this giving up the world for God  
Springs from a wrong escapist urge—an impulse  
Calamitous because it makes one end  
In the stagnant bog of a purposeless existence.

SRI CHAITANYA

(animatedly)

But what use is this existence we eke out  
From day to day, sir—drifting, drifting, drifting  
On the crest of circumstance? You talk of the world  
Of fact: but what is this world as we see it?  
Is it not an aimless round of pointless squandering  
Of our most precious energies on—what?  
Building on the plinth of hopes a house of dreams  
Our dismal wakefulness makes tumble in ruins:  
A legacy of tears and questioning sighs,  
Composing raptures' overtures that end  
In threnodies of desolate frustration.

†Saraswati—the Goddess of learning, art, music etc.



## SRI CHAITANYA—Continued from page 8

KESHAV

Come, come, you are no country innocent  
Who fails to understand that two and two  
Make four. It is too mad by half, it's senseless,  
This ideal, long outmoded, of leaving all  
That one is given by God Himself! My boy,  
I adjure you not to barter away the real  
For mere moonshine. Besides, where would you go?  
To Brindavan? For what? To meet Sri Krishna?  
But as a God He must pervade all space:  
How could He live a prisoner king in one  
Small hamlet? Come, a householder must keep  
His own dear house in order first and last.  
Frustration? Can one stave it off by being  
A lone escapist, a recreant? Furthermore,  
How can a son his duty shirk to his own  
Parents who ushered him into this world?  
How can a man desert a faithful wife  
And, once a father, cease to love his children  
And rear them till they grow to their full stature  
As worthy citizens? Each has his own dharma  
Assigned to him which he can never disclaim.  
In the Gita did not your own heart's Lord say:  
"Even death accept to fulfil your native dharma?"

SRI CHAITANYA

He did, sir. Only who will tell me now:  
What is my native dharma in this world?

KESHAV

(with a superior smile)

Oh, I can answer that. Yours is to be loyal  
To your worldly duties which, as a man of the world,  
You owe to the world. Had you been born an orphan  
Reared by homeless vagrant mendicants,  
You might perhaps have roamed the woods and scaled  
The hills and gone on begging from day to day,  
Knowing no better—living an otiose life.  
One could forgive these. But when one has been  
Born to a family of birth and breeding,  
One cannot even plead one's ignorant;  
And so, my son, I'd solemnly remind you  
You cannot shirk your obligations chasing  
A phantasmagoria, a skyborn bloom,  
Nor turn your back upon a useful life  
To accept a parasite's whose only claim  
To our compassion is that God made him

SRI CHAITANYA

You are a seer and prophet, whereas I  
Am born unarmoured for this alien world  
Of splendid responsibilities.  
The Gita says: one cannot flout one's nature;  
The wise see from their wisdom's aerial towers:  
The fool from his abyss of folly and madness.  
One cannot achieve a stature not one's own.  
We are born we know not why, and ask in vain:  
Why we comport ourselves like helpless puppets,  
Driven by unseen forces, lured by strange  
Urges—like foams on tides of chance and fate.  
We hark at every turn to invisible prompters,  
Swayed against our will this way and that.  
We voyage on but rarely come to port,  
And what we coveted but yesterday,  
Find, when we grasp it, but a thing of shadow.  
We zoom like rockets to return to earth mere ash.  
We are haled by life but our souls stay baulked of peace.  
This is the ancient tale of human fate.  
It seems a riddle to the outer eye,  
A chimera calling more as it recedes.  
The householder reads great sermons on life's march,  
Hugging his chains that cause his feet to bleed,  
With no destination set, far less a goal!  
He cites sonorous phrases from the books  
To prove that our hearts' Everliving Beloved  
Is regnant allwhere when, alas, his own  
Heart stays unsated—ignoring the simple truth,  
Life's stark experience, that until one loses,  
Through loving Him, the last trace of one's ego  
One hunts in vain for a trace of His Omnipresence.  
But one who has not loved Him never can know  
How the pilgrim soul yearns to the faintest echo  
Of the past and through its self-lost concentration  
Can work the miracle and resurrect  
A frozen cadence into a living Presence.  
How shall he know that love can, like a wizard,  
Through symbols touch the One they symbolize?

How can stone feel with the heart-beat of the bud,  
Or mind see with the eyes of lovelit soul?

(He looks straight into Keshav's eyes and smiles)

But undivining what it has not glimpsed  
Nor doubting its own reason's sanity,  
It trudges on like the camel which only knows  
The load of sandal-wood but not its scent!  
The multitude accept this blindly—hoping  
The bale he weds travails to bring forth bliss.  
But does it, sir? Does life fulfil its pledges?  
I hope 'tis a question straight and simple as well?

KESHAV

(embarrassed)

I know not what—

SRI CHAITANYA

If you will pardon me,  
I'll make it simpler still: Have you, sir, ever  
Stood before a mirror and scanned your face?

KESHAV

(awkwardly)

A mirror? . . . What a question? . . . I decline—

SRI CHAITANYA

I beg you'd answer. Have you ever looked?

KESHAV

(at bay)

Well, yes, I mean—but—this is preposterous—

SRI CHAITANYA

But why sir?—since Panini never enjoined  
On his devotees to shun the mirror like hell?

KESHAV

(dignifiedly)

I—er—resent deliberate levity—

SRI CHAITANYA

(smiling)

I apologise. But suffer me to explain:  
When I confronted you with my simple question,  
'Twas nor irreverence nor levity  
That prompted me. I only meant to hint  
That if you scanned your own eyes in the glass  
You would agree they were not radiant  
With bliss or light that came from self-fulfilment  
Or even the certitude that one was treading  
The right path and no other.

(He pauses and holds the other's eyes)

And I'll hazard

Even so rayless are the eyes of all  
But a tiny handful. Listen: by chance last evening  
I saw a mendicant with a begging bowl  
Come to my door. I gave him a plate of rice.  
He blest me and then fastened his eyes upon me.  
I stood like one bewitched. Then something strange . . .  
Oh, it was wonderful! . . . For as I gazed  
Into his eyes effulgent like twin stars,  
I felt they sprayed deep bliss into my own . . .  
And a rapture I experienced never before . . .  
And a peace of which there is not even a hint  
In your great eyes irradiate with learning.  
Why must I then, sir, for this famished learning  
Come to your door a-begging? What can you give me  
Who are at heart a pauper for all your wisdom?  
And what is the worth of this your worldly knowledge  
Which, for all its opulence, cannot even compete  
With a beggar's fortune? A tree, sir, shall be judged  
By its last fruit. The tree of human achievement  
May be dense with the greenest leaves and rarest flowers,  
But never till now has it been known to bear  
The fruits of peace and bliss and harmony  
Which we must hunger for and never could rest  
Until we found them. Something deep within us  
Must goad us sleeplessly and make us lose  
Our sleep till the dream of sleep be realised,  
And the worldly wisdom is not this last dream  
Of our restless aspiration which, as a seed,  
Must sprout and grow till it attain its zenith  
Fulfilment which is Krishna—as the eyes  
Of this strange mendicant reminded me  
Stinging me last night with the peace they shed.  
Oh do not glower at me in indignation,  
For I came here not to argue but to bathe:  
'Twas your own harangue on my worldly duties,  
Your castigation of the beggar's bowl,  
Evoked my comment. I would only beg  
To submit—no art nor science nor worldly wisdom

# SRI CHAITANYA

—Continued from page 9

Ever gave groping life the clue to life's  
Inscrutable purpose, the clue we seek in vain.

(He smiles quizzically)

You did, sir, take my measure when you said:  
I was not the fool I looked. I know the Vedas  
And the philosophies with all their commentaries.  
You will forgive me if I claim I am  
Versed in Panini and the Vedic lore,  
And can declaim on entire Brahmasutras,  
Lecture on metaphysics and improvise  
On these like pundits till the insomniacs  
Shall doze off into sleep in weariness.  
But I confess—such wordy feats have never  
Led me to the Home my homesick, orphaned heart  
Pined for in vain—till, last night, in a flash,  
The veil was rent and, overwhelmed, I saw  
That for that beggar's simple happy heart  
Throned in the love and bliss of the King of kings  
I could barter all my learning away for good  
And the fame I have won as a great scholar and poet  
And the envied self-complacency that accrues  
To a burgher of respectability.

(He warms up and rushes on animatedly)

And this is no mere fancy of a fool,  
A sentimental dreamer. For I have drunk  
Deep at the fount of worldly bliss as well:  
I have known how precious is the mother's love,  
How sweet the embrace of a loving wife,  
How beautiful a pupil's loyalty,  
How delectable the sympathy of true friends.  
But still our life, as I feel more and more,  
Is a quest ever deepening, through all that attend us,  
For something that, starting as a nameless ache,  
Grows even as a tree until its very rustle  
Dissolves in a dirge, a questioning: "Whither, Oh whither  
Shall wend my Radha-heart to find her Krishna  
Who plays at hide and seek, I know not why!"

(Lowering his voice somewhat abashed)

I came here not to be theatrical,  
Far less to read you a tedious sermon, sir!  
How could I, an ignorant, who only knows  
That he knows not even what he once believed  
He knew infallibly. I speak not of the great,  
The elec<sup>s</sup> who commune with the heart of Krishna:  
I cannot even claim I saw my way  
Clearly through the maze of wrestling forces  
Till 'twas relentlessly borne home to me  
That so long as one probes with human eyes  
One cannot even tell an avenue  
From a blind alley and that, when in one's groping,  
One takes a forward step—one seldom can  
Be sure one will not land in a fatal pitfall.

KESHAV

Take it, you are highly strung, my boy,  
And so imagine ghouls in every bush.  
For I wonder if you grasp the implications  
Of what you now contend in deep depression.  
'Tis true that to be wise is to be wary;  
I'll even concede that sometimes one may find  
It hard, at life's cross-roads, to know which path  
Will lead to the heights and which to the deep abyss.

But even when one owns one's apt to err  
Through ignorance or inexperience,

Surely it would be folly to assert  
One never could move a step avoiding pitfalls.

Ah no, my alarmist, sentimental pedant!  
Only the blind can say: they see no light  
In their hearts' caves to guide them to the Goal.

SRI CHAITANYA

But what's the Goal? For unless this were known,  
How would the guiding light reveal the Way?  
With no sun how would you tell east from west?

KESHAV

(pouncing on him)

Ah, there, my boy, I have got you at long last.  
For the sun is there on high and even so  
There is a sun in every heart that breathes  
Assuring our nights that daybreak's not a myth.

SRI CHAITANYA

(with an ironic melancholy smile)

I am defeated, sir. I knew I would be.  
Could it be otherwise? Could a humble spark  
Prevail against an avalanche of wisdom?  
But I too knew the sun must still exist  
Even when the ruthless logic of night disproved it.

(with a deep sigh)

Only, my soul now traverses the night  
Whose shadows make light dim as a dream-glimpsed face.

KESHAV

(triumphantly)

I know, my lad. Man's life can never be  
Like to a child's who has no knowledge of death.  
To err is human and none can win wisdom  
Except through tribulations. Even the highest  
Knowledge accrues but through a painful travail.  
But that is why to the learned you must turn  
And hark to the oracle of experience.  
The wise you must consult and they, our saviours,  
Said with one voice: 'tis folly not to want  
To be circumspect—marking one's every step.  
None can be reckless with impunity,  
Part never, my son, on an impulse of the moment  
From the harbour men have built against the fates  
With infinite pains and courage and vigilance,  
Nor give your ears to Voices of the Night  
Which lead men to the abyss with the pledge of Heaven.

(Patting him on the shoulder)

Wake up, sleep-walker; 'tis high time; remember:  
You have a loving mother, a doting wife,  
Loyal disciples and admiring friends.  
God's all very well: I know the mystic longing.  
But He is not ensconced in the skies alone,  
A rootless Presence: all, say the Vedas, is He,\*  
The Brahman. And the sage of Katha said:  
Vibrantly: "What is here is there as well,  
And what is there must here on earth be traced."†  
So deny Him here at your own peril, son!  
For never then shall you find Him anywhere.  
But find Him here and then you'll sing with the saints:  
"Krishna is on land and water and mountain peaks."\*\*

SRI CHAITANYA

Ah you are caught now by your own words' snare.  
For words are faithless, sir, and will betray us,  
Alas, too often, conjuring up a world  
Of utter unreality and hoist us  
On a phantom throne with no sign of a kingdom;  
And, constantly invoked, they will induce us  
To take chimeras for the flickerless beacons,  
The shadow for form and make us home in voids  
Of perfidious fantasies and make-believes  
Which are worlds away from soul-experience.

(He shakes his head sadly)

And so the great Acharya Shankara said  
In his own peerless vein of irony:

"You may discuss the boon of a medicine,  
But no cure's for you unless you take it, friend!  
Even so through great discourses none shall win  
What's only by experience attained."††

And so be not offended if I tell you  
That all you say is true and yet 'tis false,  
Like love or death enacted on the stage,  
Whose aim is to consolidate the maya,  
The great Illusion which is cosmic life  
Espousing compromise to breed perversion.  
Forgive me if, when I applaud your thesis,  
I flout it still as null—as when you quote:  
"Who finds Him here must find Him everywhere."  
But what if you miss Him here for all your seeking?

(He heaves a deep sigh)

I too once mouthed these words of hollow wisdom  
Of the Sun in the soul, the Guiding Voice in the heart.  
But they speak to me no more as once they did  
When I, like you, sailed on them as on boats  
And went on drifting, coming never to harbour.  
I blame you not, sir. How can I find fault  
Who am still unsure of everything but this  
That I must burn my boats and may not tarry  
A moment more!... My die is cast. I know not  
Why this great yearning has possessed me so  
That I cannot choose but yield to it—surrender  
All all my cherished lights and preconceptions  
To its imperious call and take the plunge.

(A cryptic smile edges his lips)

Not that I love life less, sir, I assure you,  
Nor even that I am grown too blind to see:  
I have a lovely wife who may, I know,

\*From Mandukya Upanishad: "Sarvam hyetad Brahma."

†From Katha Upanishad:

"Yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanwiha."

\*\*From old Sanskrit:

"Jale Krishnah, sthale Krishnah, Krishnah parvatamastake".

††From Shankara's Viveka-Chudamani.

# SRI CHAITANYA—Continued from page 10

Die of heart-break. I saw my mother crying  
 And sobbing till I felt her heart would split.  
 But still I may not linger here although  
 I long to cling to the painted shore of life  
 With all its magic gleams! But something stronger  
 Than the pull of the siren world of tears and laughter;  
 Of voices that ring like sweet familiar bells;  
 Of eyes that shed caressing love-warm light;  
 Of dear old footfalls that bring shivers of joy;  
 Of chequered plains I have explored in rapture;  
 Of the very dust hallowed by memories  
 Of ancestral feet; of temple-carillons  
 That wake me athrill at morn; of chirping birds  
 That greet me day by day; of loyal cows  
 That yield me milk so sweet; of faithful dogs  
 That jump at me in a frenzy of delight;  
 Of purring cats that woo me for caress;  
 And not the least, this rippling, purling Ganga  
 Whom I hear even in my dream reproaching me  
 For leaving her for a nameless far-off phantom....

(His voice grows thick)

All all have grown into a part of me,  
 My being's core, the marrow of my bones.  
 And yet I cannot stay... I know not why,  
 Or whither I am going. I only know:  
 Find Him I must who, for His mystic Purpose  
 First tethering me Himself to alien roots

Will now uproot me thence once more for some  
 New rhythm of His deep dance to manifest,  
 Wrenching me from this magic world of beauty  
 He made me love so dearly. So bid I must  
 Farewell to you and all: I have no choice.

(He smiles again cryptically)

But I assure you I am sane and normal,  
 For the hearts of all I still feel with my heart-beat.  
 I have lived intensely, loved with all my passion  
 And fire and burned my candle at both ends.  
 And so I still can feel for all I have loved  
 Whom I must now bid adieu—although I know not  
 What anguish is in store for them—which makes,  
 Alas, my own heart's anguish a million-fold  
 Harder to bear.

(He stifles a sigh and smiles)

And yet my all I must  
 Stake for my All-in-all whose haunting Flutelet  
 Calls to me in my wakefulness and dream:  
 "Oh come to me, my Radha-heart, delivered  
 From thy last anchorage: put out to sea,  
 The shoreless Deep accept, cutting away  
 From thy dear moorings set thy bark adrift  
 To founder, if it must, in my borneless Bliss."

(Sri Chaitanya falls into a sudden trance and points his hands toward the sky. Murari and Roma fall at his feet. Keshav folds his hands in awe.)

Act Three in Next Issue

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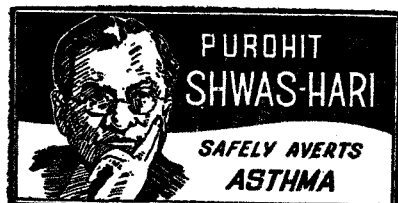
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 January 7, 1950.



# of MICE AND MEN

By "Cynic"

## VIRTUE IS NOT ITS OWN REWARD

Soon we shall have "prohibition;" then we shall all become virtuous. Being virtuous is in vogue today. The Government officials all over India have become virtuous, with the result that nowadays there is no scope for ordinary people like us in this crowded field. Virtue used to be its own reward in the time of Socrates; now it pays dividends also.

## THE GREAT MAN OF THE HALF CENTURY

Nominating the great man of the half century has become a craze. Everywhere people are trying to make out a case for their hero. Churchill, Einstein, Gandhi, Shaw, all have their champions. Some have even voted for Stalin and Charlie Chaplin.

I would like to give my humble opinion also. I vote for Mao. After his recent visit to Moscow, it cannot be denied that if not the greatest man he is at least the greatest Chinaman of the half century. Nehru comes a close second. I don't very much care for the others.

## GENERAL READING

One should make it a point of buying newspapers regularly..... they are always very useful for wrapping shoes when going on a vacation.

## THE SEEKER OF TRUTH

The following announcement appeared in the *Times of India* a fortnight back:

New Delhi, February 14.

The Government of India, it is understood, have not so far received any reply from the Pakistan Government to their proposal for a "no war" declaration.

It was Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, who announced last week at Lake Success that his Government had already sent a reply to India concerning their proposals for a "no war" declaration between the two countries.

After reading this the U.N.O. has decided not to buy a television set as they had originally intended to do; instead they will install a "lie-detector".

## THE FEET AND THE SHOES

I have heard this story from a friend of mine who has been to Tiruvanamallai.

Someone informed Sri Raman Maharishi that Jaiprakash Narain had declared that he and Sri Aurobindo should now come out and take the place of Gandhiji. The Maharishi, with his characteristic wit, replied: "Then who will take our place?"

I am sure this rejoinder will puzzle the Wordlywise Man who sees no difference between taking a nap and going into a Samadhi.

## A METAPHYSICAL GENIUS

Another great metaphysician has arisen from the East. It is none other than Zafrullah Khan. The fact that he has been known up to now as only a clever political propagandist should not stop us from recognising his metaphysical genius. He suddenly came into prominence when he lectured in America on February 17, on Hindu and Muslim cultures. He said, "Although the people of the two nations are of the same racial stock, Muslim society is based upon the widest equality and brotherhood of man." I suppose he

was thinking of Noakhali when he was speaking. Then he remarked, "The Hindu belief in the reincarnation of the soul which leads directly to the caste system makes true co-operation virtually impossible."

Such wisdom! And that too in one so young! What will he not do when he grows up? For the first time we are shown great philosophers in their true colours. Now we know that those hypocrites Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Cicero, Virgil, Bruno, Schopenhauer, Leibnitz, Fichte, Goethe, Emerson and Thoreau were secretly advocating the caste system, for they all believed in the reincarnation of the soul.

I have heard many a man talking through his hat, but this is the first time I have heard one talking metaphysics through his hat.

## TERTIUM ORGANUM

Just as "the Hindu belief in the reincarnation of the soul leads directly to the caste system," the Muslim disbelief in reincarnation leads directly to the purdah system and polygamy, and makes murder, rape and arson possible.

This is not my logic. It is Pakistani logic.

# A CLUSTER OF CONFUSIONS —Continued from page 2

## OUR REACTION TO THE HYDROGEN BOMB

Mental confusion is also evident in the way we hold up our hands in horror at Mr. Truman's "Go Ahead" to research in the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb. No doubt, this bomb, which will be perhaps a thousand times more powerful than the one which exploded over Hiroshima and killed 100,000 persons and injured another 50,000, is such as could bring civilisation to an end in a blazing inferno. But to condemn the American President's decision, without understanding the motives behind it and the situation demanding it, is to act merely with one's nerves and not with one's brain. Still worse is it to read in that decision a diabolical impetus to war in order to gratify American ambition. Let us get one fact straight: America is not making the hydrogen bomb because she wants to use it for world-domination by herself—she is doing so because she wants to prevent Soviet Russia from threatening to use it and keeping the world under her thumb. If America were really ambitious she could have exploited the lead she had for a few years in the atom bomb. Everybody knew that the secret of chain-reaction would be found in a short while by Russia; so an ambitious America would have lost no time in bringing Russia to her knees by an atom-war ultimatum, subtly and indirectly conveyed if not openly blared out. No such ultimatum was sent, but on the contrary the Baruch Plan for atomic control was put forward, a plan which for all its defects is yet in its fundamentals the best and most reliable up to date. This plan, in any shape, has been rejected by Russia lest it should interfere with the lead she dreams of establishing in atomic weapons. In its place she has broached a scheme of her own which has been exposed as being at heart a sham. She is against unrestricted inspection, which is the essence of control, and she insists on the power of the veto which could nullify any penalties proposed against a nation found guilty of illegal output of bombs. In short, she does not mean business. And now that she has the secret of the atom bomb she will go all out to develop something which may make her tower above America and enable her to dictate terms. America must at least keep pace with, if not outdistance, her. Then alone can there be a curb on Russia's indubitable designs for world-domination. As long as these designs are in existence and efforts are being made to develop weapons for putting them into practice, not only the hydrogen bomb but even

explosives far deadlier are a necessity, if not a virtue, that America can never neglect. The armament race, leading to more and more monstrous inventions, is not to be deplored until such conditions take shape as would permit a peaceful co-existence of countries with a preponderating though not unrestrained individualist economy and countries with an economy of State-control. There is nothing inherently impossible here. In addition, the two kinds of countries can actually have friendly relations and come together in an assembly like the U.N.O. to build up a variously functioning yet internally co-operative World Union. But the dogmatism of a materialistic theory of economics, putting fetters upon the intellect and preaching violent class-conflict for the establishment of a world-proletariat, must drop out of the socialist countries. State-control is a mechanism of sociology—it has nothing essentially to do with the Marxist view of history or Marxist dialectics. Art, science, philosophy—all the creative forms of the human mind's activity—must be left unshackled, and the right of other countries to have political and economic patterns of their own must be recognised. Unless this happens there will never grow the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect by which different ideologies can live side by side in peace. In other words, Stalinism must disappear before progressive Socialism and progressive Capitalism can be compatible. Till then, terrors like the hydrogen bomb have a vital significance and use.

Far from being hostile to spiritual ideals they can be, by instituting a balance of power, direct accessories to them and potent aids to the preservation of peace. Peace to afford opportunity to the U.N.O. for developing, with necessary adjustments, more and more the promising concept of a World Federation and creating conditions that might induce a natural though perhaps slow disappearance of the Stalinist mentality as well as of such modified versions of Hitlerite race-animosities as are fostered by countries like South Africa and Pakistan. Peace also to provide time enough for a concentrated experiment in evolution of consciousness by some discipline of mysticism which does not shirk life and body but seeks to transfigure them not only in a few individuals but in the collectivity, so that no longer would we be driven by egoistic desires or be subject to confusions of thought but command a truth-vision and a luminous will that shall cope successfully with the very danger caused by that fruit of excessive development in technology: the super-bomb.