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MANTHAN' Monthly

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Dear Reader :

Pranam !

Shri G.N. Dubey (41, Nashville Road, Dehra Dun) is not sure our 'Page from history' serves any useful purpose. "To raise aloft the brittle bones from the eroded graves of the past, does not help."

Shri Dubey is at once right—and wrong. One should not be obsessed with history; but one should not be oblivious of history either. For history is the story of man; it is the memory of the race. It has its lessons for all who would learn them. As Napoleon lay on his death-bed in jail, he said : "May my son study history, for it is the only true philosophy." History, properly understood, is the philosophy of nations.

This week we bring you a big page from history—an eye-witness account of India in the days of Mahmud Ghazni. We also bring you a scintillating account of how Justice Subba Rao served—and saved—our democratic constitution. And then there is a great piece on the value of poetry—by Prof. Sisir Kumar Ghosh of Shantiniketan.

There is also a small piece on 'Consumer Quality'. We all talk of big economic and political problems. But how many of us give any thought to what we eat, drink or wear? There are traders who mix *papaya* seeds with black paper! There are harvesters that cut off the users' arms. How one wishes there developed a regular consumer movement in the country!

Yours
'M'

How Justice Subba Rao Saved Our Democratic Constitution

In his recent 'C.K. Daphtary Memorial Lecture', Shri F.S. Nariman paid a glowing tribute to 'the pathfinders' of Indian judiciary. Justice Subba Rao and Justice Krishna Iyer, he said, were like the two pointer stars in the constellation known as 'Saptarishi'.

We carry below his appreciation of Justice Subba Rao. We will carry his appreciation of Justice Krishna Iyer next month —Ed.

THE INFLUENCE of Subba Rao began with his appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court in January 1958—though, paradoxically, as a Puisne Judge of the Court, he was its most frequent dissenter. The Subba Rao era began with his short but vigorous tenure as Chief Justice from June 29, 1966 till 11th April 1967 when he resigned to contest (unsuccessfully) for the office of the President of India. Presiding over the Constitution Bench in that brief period of ten months as Chief Justice, decisions in as many as sixty-two different cases were handed down, almost all important constitutional cases. Sixty of the sixty-two judgments delivered by the Constitutional Bench presided over by Subba Rao in that brief ten months' period were unanimous decisions, a rare example of exquisite judicial leadership.

Of the remaining two—in the first, Subba Rao presided over a Bench of nine, securing a majority (of 8-1) for his point of view; in the other, in the celebrated *Golaknath* case he presided over a Full Bench of eleven Judges; his judgment concurred in by Justice Hidayatullah (who also delivered a separate opinion) was the judgment of the Court; he had

secured a majority for his point of view, though a narrow one (6-5).

Those who sat with him have frankly confessed that they were not only impressed by his ability and intellect, they were also greatly moved by his innate courtesy and his keenness to persuade. The impetus for change after all depends on the personal persuasion of some one who is accepted as a respected colleague; that influence can never be lasting if it is obtrusive. Persuasion is the more successful when it creates a mental atmosphere receptive to change. Subba Rao created that atmosphere.

Chief Justice S.R. Das, on his retirement in September 1959, made an amusing farewell speech which is published in the Law Reports. About Brother Subba Rao he was particularly jocular. After referring to some of his other colleagues in lighter vein, he went on:

"then we have Brother Subba Rao who is extremely unhappy because all our fundamental rights are going to the dogs on account of some misconceived judgments of his colleagues which require reconsideration."

The serious bit in this piece of frivolity was that Brother Subba Rao did sincerely believe in what he was later to describe as the transcendental nature of fundamental rights. He genuinely believed that many decisions interpreting various provisions in Part III of the Constitution in the first decade of the Supreme Court were retrograde. In his seven years on the Bench, more than six of them as a puisne judge, he did his utmost to undo them.

In the early years he dissented. In later years he mustered majorities and affirmed his point of view. He became the law.

In all spheres of public life, in matters pertaining to the law, he was the voice of dissent. He was rarely in the majority. He often concurred with the majority in his view. The opinions were written for the law, not for the judgments in the present cases, dissenting. Contrast this with the opinions of those who never wrote another six, each a single judgment of his own quality of his own. He wrote to his great advantage. Justice Shelat (on his retirement) that the Shah were the Subba Rao. He had rights and his majorities led to controversial decisions. He had power—especially in the executive or when exercising process. He questioned the constituent power.

In *Kharak* case, which de-authorising do

In the early years where he couldn't, he dissented. In later years, when he could muster majority for his views, he gladly affirmed his previous dissents which then became the law of the land.

In all spheres of the law, particularly in matters pertaining to constitutional law, he was the one who was most articulate. He was rarely content with joining in the majority opinion. Even when he concurred with the majority he expressed his view. The number of his concurring opinions were well above the norm. He wrote the largest number of dissents—judgments in as many as forty-nine different cases, dissenting from the majority. Contrast this with six justices of his time who never wrote a single dissent and another six, each of whom only contributed a single dissent! The clarity and quality of his judgments bear testimony to his great impact on his colleagues. Justice Shelat once said to me (after his retirement) that both he and Justice J.C. Shah were tremendously influenced by Subba Rao. His concern for fundamental rights and his distrust of parliamentary majorities led to some of his most controversial decisions. He abhorred absolute power—especially the arrogance of absolute power—whether exercised by an executive or administrative agency, or when exercised through the legislative process. He did not stop short even at questioning the validity of the exercise of constituent power.

In *Kharak Singh* (AIR 1963 SC 1295) case, which dealt with a police regulation authorising domiciliary nocturnal visits

at the houses of alleged disreputable characters, he showed the way for the first time for a broader interpretation of Article 21 of the Constitution. "This petition," he said, "raises a question of far-reaching importance, the right of every citizen of India to lead a free life subject to social control imposed by valid law." He was not deflected (as was the majority) by the fact that the question had been raised at the instance of an alleged disreputable character (Mr. Kharak Singh had a long criminal history-sheet.) "If the police could do what they did to the petitioner", said Subba Rao, "they could also do the same to an honest and law-abiding citizen." He held that the expression "life" in Art. 21 could not be confined only to the prohibition against the taking away of life. "It inhibits against its deprivation," he said, "but it is also extended to all of those limbs and faculties by which life is enjoyed." Mark you—"faculties by which life is enjoyed", heralding and anticipating the later liberal sweep of Art. 21 as interpreted in the Krishna lyer era. So with the word "Liberty", also in Art. 21. The right to personal liberty is not only a right to be free from restrictions placed on a citizen's movements, he said, it encompasses also freedom from encroachment on his private life.

It was argued for the State that the fundamental right to freedom of movement meant only that a person could move physically from one point to another without any restraint. Justice Subbarao rejected this as unacceptable in a free society.

"If a man is shadowed, his movements are obviously constricted. He can move

*He wrote as many as
49 dissenting judgements*

Even England has given up the idea that "the king can do no wrong"

physically, but it can only be the movement of an automaton. How could a movement under the scrutinizing gaze of the policemen be described as a free movement? The whole country is his jail. The freedom of movement in cl. (d) of Article 19), therefore, must be movement in a free country, i.e., in a country where he can do whatever he likes, speak to whomsoever he wants, meet people of his own choice without any apprehension, subject of course to the law of social control. The petitioner under the shadow of surveillance is certainly deprived of this freedom."

Witness the contemptuous characterisation of the argument for the State in a few simple devastating words—"the whole country is his jail"! Years later, long after Subba Rao ceased to be on the Court, a Bench of three judges (Justice Mathew, Justice Krishna Iyer and Justice Goswami) inspired by this dissent, held (in *Gobind vs. State of Madhya Pradesh AIR 1975 sc 1378*) that there could be no doubt that the makers of our Constitution wanted to ensure its citizens the favourable pursuit of happiness and that they must have conferred upon the individual, as against the government, a sphere where the individual should be left alone. The dissent in *Kharak Singh* had pointed the way. The later decision in *Gobind* followed, affirming the constitutional right of the individual to be left alone, giving to the right of privacy a small but secure foothold in the Chapter on Fundamental Rights.

Till Subba Rao became Chief Justice, the English Rule in India was that the

State was not bound by a Statute unless the Statute so provided. This was based on the doctrine of Crown Immunity, "The King can do no wrong", from which it followed logically (it was thought) that the State could do no wrong. This was affirmed by a Bench of seven judges in 1960 (AIR 1960 SC 1355). Subba Rao, though on the Court at that time, was not a party to this decision. Shortly after he became Chief Justice, he set up a Bench of nine Judges to consider the correctness of the decision of the Court in *Director of Rationing Vs. Corporation of Calcutta*; AIR 1960 SC 1355. He persuaded eight of his colleagues on the Bench that English common law theory was subversive of the Rule of Law, and that it had been given up even in England after the enactment there of the Crown Proceeding Act 1947. It could not be permitted under the Constitution of India.

The facts of that case were simple. The State of West Bengal (in other words, the Government of West Bengal) was carrying on the business of running a market. Sec. 218 of the Calcutta Municipal Act required every person carrying on trade to hold a licence. The Government of West Bengal contended it was not bound by the provisions of the Act since the Act did not expressly include the State. The Supreme Court held that the State was as much bound as a private citizen to take out a licence. The earlier decision (of seven judges) was overruled. The thrust of the later Subba Rao decision in which eight of his colleagues concurred (AIR 1967 SC 997), was clear

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—“howsoever high you be, the law is above you” That message had a great influence on later judgments of the Supreme Court on administrative law, and on the supremacy of the judiciary in testing the validity of all executive and legislative action.

Soon after he joined as a member of the Court, a decision was handed down in September 1958, *Radheysyam Khare Vs. State of M.P.* (AIR 1959 SC 107). Justice Subba Rao dissented. In his forceful dissent he held that it was obligatory for every administrative body to comply with the rules of Natural Justice. In that case a local Municipal Committee was superseded on the ground that it was not competent to perform the duties imposed on it by the Municipal Act. The majority held that no opportunity need be given to the affected parties before action was taken, since the principles of natural justice only applied when there was a duty to act judicially. Subba Rao did not agree. It shocked his concept of fairplay. This is what he said :

“The finding of incompetency carries a stigma with it and what is more derogatory to the reputation of the members of the Committee than to be stigmatized as incompetent to discharge their statutory duties? Would it be reasonable to assume that public men in a democratic country are allowed to be condemned unheard?”

At that time it was a voice in the wilderness. But the powerful dissent influenced later judgements : in *A.K.*

Kraipak AIR 1970 SC 150 (where it was held that principles of natural justice were not excluded where purely administrative action was involved), as also in the much later decision (*S.L. Kapoor Vs. Jagnohar: AIR 1981 SC 136*) where it was held that the principle of *audi alteram partem* (hear the other side) applied to Municipal Committees ordered to be superseded on account of their alleged defaults.

A year before he became Chief Justice, Subba Rao presided over a Constitution Bench decision dealing with conditions of detention of those preventively detained. One Prabhakar Sansgiri had been detained under the Defence of India Rules 1962. He had written a book during the period of his enforced idleness. It was a book in Marathi called “Inside the Atom”. It was of scientific interest, intended to educate the uninitiated on the quantum theory. It had not even the remotest connection with the defence of India, nor was it a danger to public safety. Mr. Prabhakar wanted permission to send the book out for publication. It was refused. He had been detained in accordance with law and the right to move the Court under Article 21 of the Constitution had been suspended under Article 358 and 359. This was during the 1962 Emergency. On a Writ filed on behalf of Prabhakar, the Government of Maharashtra justified the order of refusal to permit the book to be published on the ground that when a person is detained, he loses his freedom, and can exercise only such privileges as are conferred on him by the order of detention. The Bombay Conditions for Detention Order 1951 regulated the terms of Prabhakar’s deten-

*When GOI banned a book on
quantum theory for ‘defence of India’*

He erred only once—in the Ghulam Sarwar Case

tion. It did not confer on him the privilege of writing a book and sending it out for publication. There was legal support for the State Government's submission to the Court—in A.K. Gopalan's case decided way back in 1950.

But Justice Subba Rao speaking for the Court brushed aside this objection. He held that there were different aspects of personal liberty. Having forfeited his right to move about freely by reason of the detention order, the detenu had not forfeited his other freedoms—the liberty to write and publish a book was one such freedom that had not been taken away under the Defence of India Rules 1962. The Bombay Conditions of Detention Order laid down conditions regulating the restrictions on the liberty of the detenu; this did not mean that he could not exercise his other rights. He turned the argument of the State on its head, revealing its absurdity. "If the argument (for the State) were to be accepted", said Subba Rao, "this would mean that the detenu could be starved to death if there was no condition for providing him with food". The Court held that the refusal of the authorities to send the manuscript of the book out of the jail for publication was contrary to law.

It was *Prabhakar's* case which inspired and showed the way, in the spate of cases on conditions of detention in the late seventies and the early eighties. *Hoskot* (1973 (1) SCR 192), the two *Sunil Batra's* cases (1979 (1) SCR 392 and 1980 (2) SCR 557) and the decision in *Francis Coralie* (AIR 1981 SC 746) were but

extensions of the principle first enunciated in *Prabhakar*.

The attempt of the Supreme Court in the dark days of the 1975 Emergency (the 'phoney' emergency, as Daphtary had described it)—the attempt then of the Court to distinguish *Prabhakar's* case on the ground that Article 21 was the sole repository of the right of personal liberty and that since the suspension order of the President during that Emergency was unconditional, there was no remedy, that the detenu could "virtually be starved to death" (in Subba Rao's graphic phrase), was an aberration of Chief Justice Ray. Liberty, said Ray, was the gift of the law, and could by law be taken away. It was because some of Chief Justice Ray's colleagues concurred in this view that this became the law of the land, though some of them publicly admitted later on that they were wrong.

It is said that geniuses can misfire—though never without intent, so with Subba Rao.

His almost obsessive concern with the sanctity of fundamental rights and judicial review led to a judicial *faux pas* in *Ghulam Sarwar's* case (AIR 1967 SC 1335). Chief Justice Subba Rao held that a Presidential Order suspending a fundamental right under Art. 359 was not immune from judicial scrutiny; if the order made an unjustified discrimination in suspending the right to move the Court under Art. 14, it would be void in its inception. It would be a stillborn order. He held (and persuaded four other colleagues on the Bench to concur in so hold-

ing) that the validity of a Presidential Order under Art. 359(1) could be tested under the same Article! It was a binding decision, but an illogical one. Subba Rao was willing to be illogical and wrong in the face of non-reviewable absolute power, howsoever constitutional. The genius had misfired—in all probability intentionally! Soon after Subba Rao retired, his successor, Chief Justice Wanchoo had no difficulty in persuading his colleagues in a larger Bench of seven Judges (in *Mohammed Yakub vs. State of J & K*: AIR 1968 SC 765) that *Ghulam Sarwar* was wrongly decided and had to be over-ruled. An order under Art. 359(1) could not be tested under the very fundamental right the enforcement of which it had suspended.

No reference to Subba Rao—or his influence—could be complete without mention of *Golaknath*. *Golaknath* was the culmination of the long battle between Parliament and Judiciary. It all started over differing interpretations of Art. 31 of the Constitution. Subba Rao took on Parliament singlehanded, backed by judges who shared his views. On 5th October 1964, he handed down two judgements—both, unanimous Constitution Bench judgements—in Land Acquisition cases from Bombay and Madras.

Justice Subba Rao spoke for the Court in each of them. Both *Jeejeebhoy Vs. Asst. Collector of Thane*: (AIR 1965 SC 1096) and *Vajravelu Vs. Special Dy. Collector, Madras*: (AIR 1965) declared the enactments in question—one a pre-Constitution Act and the other a post-

Constitution Act—void, and not saved by Art.31(A) of the Constitution.

It was by an odd quirk of circumstance that Subba Rao came to decide *Jeejeebhoy* and *Vajravelu*. And here again Daphtary was to play a part. Both cases had come up before Chief Justice Gajendragadkar who was proceeding to hear them. An objection was raised on behalf of intervenors from Bombay that Chief Justice Gajendragadkar should not hear the matter, he being a member of a co-operative housing society for which the land belonging to the intervenors had been acquired in 1963 under the impugned Bombay Act. No counsel was willing to raise this objection before Chief Justice Gajendragadkar, who could be quite a tiger in Court. But then there was a tiger at the Bar, Mr. Purshottam Tricumdas: he agreed to appear for the intervenors and raise the objection. When first mentioned by Purshottam, Chief Justice Gajendragadkar brushed aside the objection; when Purshottam forcefully persisted, Gajendragadkar said that he would hear the Madras case, delinking the case from Bombay where he himself had an indirect interest. It was then that Attorney General C.K. Daphtary, appearing for Government, stood up, and said to the Court that in his opinion the Chief Justice ought not to hear the matter. The Bench was reconstituted next day with Subba Rao presiding. No one was in doubt at that time (certainly not Daphtary) no one is in doubt today, that had Chief Justice Gajendragadkar presided, *Jeejeebhoy* and *Vajravelu* would have been differently decided. His pronounced views on the

*When Gajendragadkar was made
to re-constitute the Bench*

The great Golaknath & Keshavanand Bharati cases which made history

subject were too well known). Daphtary's client, the Government, would have won, but it was not to be. Daphtary lost, largely because he supported (in the best traditions of the Bar) the application made by Purshottam Tricumdas.

Meanwhile, Parliament had placed all land reform laws in the Ninth Schedule, protected from all constitutional challenges including violation of Arts. 14, 19, and 31. This was done by the Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act.

With Subba Rao's decisions in *Jeejeebhoy* and *Vajravelu* and with his later decision in the *Metal Corporation Case* (in *September 1966-1967 1 SCR 255*), Government had failed to convince the Court in its interpretation of Art. 31; as amended by the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act and in the applicability of Art. 31A to pre-Constitution laws. The battle-ground now shifted to the Ninth Schedule—and the scope and ambit of the protection under Art. 31B. This necessarily involved the validity of the Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Act. It was in *Golaknath* that this question fell to be decided. And it was in *Golaknath* that Chief Justice Subba Rao's qualities of leadership were stretched to the farthest extent. He was able to persuade a majority of the colleagues (6-5) to place a judicial check on unlimited constitutional power of amendment.

I remember the late Mr. Nambiar telling me that when he moved the petition in the Supreme Court of India challenging the Constitution (Seventeenth

Amendment), which placed the Mysore Land Reforms Act 1953 in the Ninth Schedule, he was not at all hopeful ever of an admission. The law as declared by the Supreme Court was against him. In *Shankari Prasad: AIR 1951 SC 458* a Constitution Bench of five Justices presided over by the first Chief Justice of India had upheld the power of Parliament to amend the Constitution. This constituent power, they said, was beyond the scope of judicial review. This was accepted, not unanimously, but by a majority led by Chief Justice Gajendragadkar in the later decision in *Sajjan Singh's case: AIR 1965 SC 845*.

Chief Justice Subba Rao held strong views on the subject. The incorporation of patently void and illegal Acts into the Constitution by the Constitutional device of Art. 31(B) was, in his view, striking proof of the failure of the Indian Parliament to conform to the Constitution under which it was elected (a view forcefully and eloquently reiterated in later years by chief Justice P.B.M. Mukherjee). Mr. Nambiar's writ petition was not only admitted but straightaway referred to a Full Court, then consisting of eleven Justices. The arguments were long, when compared to the arguments that the Court was used to in those days; the case book twenty-two working days: but much shorter than the arguments in the later Full Bench constituted to consider the validity of Art. 31 (C) and the correctness of the decision in *Golaknath*. (The hearing of *Keshavanand Bharti*, which comprised a Full Court of thirteen Justices, took well over three

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months). Chief Justice Subba Rao refus-
ed to accept that Parliament even in its
constituent function could impair or
adversely affect the fundamental rights in
Part III of the Constitution, but this would
involve invalidating all previous constitu-
tional amendments which had declared
valid a series of land reform acts as also
the entire range of anti-zamindar legis-
lation. So he looked around and engrafted
an American doctrine (accepted by
Courts in the U.S.A.), the doctrine of
"Prospective Overruling". He validated
the Constitution (Seventeenth Amend-
ment) Act, but denied power to Parliam-
ent to place any more enactments in the
Ninth Schedule.

Golaknath had, and still has, many
critics. But it was a rare exhibition of
co-operative judicial craftsmanship. In
Golaknath, Subba Rao conceptualized his
vision of Fundamental Rights as trans-
cendental. He always believed—and he
said so constantly during the hearing in
Golaknath—that the enabling provisions
permitting reasonable restrictions to be
imposed by law in sub-articles (2) to (6)
of Art. 19 conferred sufficient flexibility
on Courts to pronounce upon, and up-
hold as valid, legislative measures design-
ed for the greater social good. Soon after
his retirement, he delivered a series of
lectures in which he made this point more
precisely; in one of them he said :

*"Constitutional democracy which rests
upon diffusion of power introduced the
necessary check in the shape of judicial
scrutiny. If the State places all the neces-
sary material before the Court to support*

*its assertion and if its case is good, the
Court, as it starts with a presumption in its
favour (in favour of the State), ordinarily
sustains the law. All reasonable laws of
social control will be permitted by the
Courts. The real grievance of the person
in power is against this judicial check; in-
deed the complaint is against constitutional
democracy itself. All the agrarian laws
with suitable modifications might have re-
ceived the approval of the Court. The
Supreme Court was not given a real chance
or time to evolve appropriate doctrines to
reconcile the individual rights to property
with social control."*

That was his explanation. There are
many who do not agree with this extenu-
ating apology: But he generally believ-
ed in it.

The doctrine of Prospective Overrul-
ing did not last beyond *Golaknath*. The
reasoning in *Golaknath* was not accepted
even by the majority in *Keshavanand
Bharti*, the narrow majority (7-6) in the
latter case accepted the alternative argu-
ment advanced in *Golaknath* and men-
tioned in the judgement of Chief Jus-
tice Subba Rao as having considerable
force (*AIR 1967 SC at p. 1664 para 40*)—
it was not found necessary for the deci-
sion in *Golaknath*—this alternative argu-
ment which was accepted by the majority
in *Keshavanand Bharati* was that the power
to amend does not include the power to
change the structure, the basic or funda-
mental structure of Constitution.

To critics of *Golaknath I* would only
say that if there was no *Golaknath*, there

*The Keshavanand Bharati case
made even more history*

would have been no *Keshavanand Bharti*, and unbridled powers of amendment being conceded, we would have gone the way of some of our neighbours. Since the ruling party always had a massive majority, we would almost definitely have institutionalised a dictatorship through a constitutional amendment: by amending the Constitution to provide for a "presidential form of Government" an euphemism used in this part of the world for autocratic rule. And with a dictatorship we would have lost the freedom of the Press and the independence of the judi-

ary, two concepts which both Subba Rao and C.K. Daphtary greatly cherished.

I remember Daphtary saying to me during the 1975 Emergency after the spate of punitive transfers of High Court Judges, "Fali, what we need now is a Subba Rao." It was not out of spite or venom but out of despair that he lamented the 1974 supersession of Judges—Shelat, Hegde and Grover—and bitterly commented on the performance of the man who superseded them, Mr.A.N. Ray.

Daphtary's role in Prabhakar's case

DAPHTARY was too old to argue the ADM Jabalpur case but he made his little contribution which we all then thought was an immense one. When it was learnt in the week before the hearing of that case was to commence that the Constitution Bench would consist of certain Justices selected by Chief Justice Ray & not of the five seniormost judges in Court, Daphtary as President of the Bar Association of India, went to the chambers of the Chief Justice and protested. Chief Justice Ray was amazed, perhaps rightly so; after all he alone as Chief Justice had the right and authority to decidewhich of the Judges should be with him on the Constitution Bench. But those were difficult times and reversal of the decision of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh (and of eight other High Courts) by the Supreme Court would have spelt doom to the freedom of citizens all over the country. When Daphtary persisted that only the seniormost judges should hear a case of this magnitude—a case affecting personal liberty—Chief Justice Ray queried: "Has this ever been suggested before?" Quick as a flash came Daphtary's response: "Well, My Lord, when I once made a similar request to Chief Justice S.R. Das, His Lordship did not take it ill!" On hearing this, Chief Justice Ray relented. The Bench which heard ADM Jabalpur was reconstituted with five seniormost Justices in the Court. Incidentally, I have often wondered whether Daphtary had ever suggested any such thing to S.R. Das. When I once mentioned my doubts to him, a year before he died, he merely smiled and said nothing. Chief Justice Ray's admiration and respect for S.R. Das was well-known to the Bar—and to Daphtary. A brilliant piece of advocacy was used to good effect though, alas, in the result, it didn't make a difference. The judgements of nine High Courts in the country upholding the freedom of its citizens to question in Courts the validity of orders of detention, were all reversed by the Supreme Court. The only good thing about Daphtary's unusual and brave intervention was that because of it, the seniormost judge of the Supreme Court sat as part of the Constitution Bench of five to hear the Emergency Case; it was that judge's celebrated dissent that made H.R. Khanna a household word for judicial courage. (F.S.N.)

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POETRY AND LIBERATION

By : Sisirkumar Ghose

EVERY INDIVIDUAL or culture has a root metaphor, some credo or insight, angle of vision, which defines his or its behaviour and purpose. Is it too arbitrary to look upon freedom, *mukti, nirvana*, as one of these credos, insights or metaphors expressive of the human condition? "We must be free or die" is more than a slogan. Here is a Declaration of Independence that may outlast every other. In the dialogue of the mind with itself freedom is and must be man's first and last preoccupation. This is my first point. The second is, the kind of poetry you care and hope for, tells me the kind of person you are. Third, the self in poetry is the poetry of self. As Whitman said: "But where is what I started for long ago?"

Here we shall deal with some of its modalities, as spelt by the ancient Indian poets and critics, but not without some telling modern evidence. Works of art are, in the end, images of self-transcendence. This is the continuing theme of consciousness when consciousness becomes self-conscious and thereby gains a new lever. We are condemned to be free, the enigma bears more than one exegesis:

*Adventure most into itself
The Soul condemned to be—
Attended by a single Hound
Its own identity.*

As Abhinavagupta put it long back: Liberation is nothing but an awareness of one's true nature, *mokso he nama naivanyah svarupaprasthanam hi tata*. The contrast with the contemporary situation and a society of slaves could not be put more sharply. Rejecting transcendentals,

the secular city finds the sacred an obstacle to self-realization. Some at least of modern poetry's shrillness is due to its sense of dereliction and unwantedness. The poet today is either a waif or an exile, or, worse, self-exile. Pressed between industrial inhumanity and spiritual decay we get the kind of poetry, or non-poetry, we deserve.

To think poorly of poetry is now the norm. The roots of the denigration are in the past no less than in the present. Once the attack had come from the philosophers (Plato, Hume), now it is science that gives the *coup de grace*. "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?" the cry has been heard before. Now that the *shastras* speak through the philosophies of science the situation hasn't improved. The Muses and the modern temper have been at odds from the start. As Stephen Spender lamented, the walls of our scientific world have no ears for the songs of Orpheus. Had not the Royal Society predicted poetry's demise and offered to act as the hangman? The proponent of pseudo-statement, I.A. Richards, was deeply sceptical of the referential value of poetry. The point had been made earlier, maybe a little differently, by Peacock: "As civilization advances, poetry declines." What a charming definition of civilization! Not that it went unchallenged. It provoked Shelley's spirited Defence of Poetry.

Long before, in the early Indian view of the matter, we come across a firm and subtly grounded defence of poetry as one with Being and Existence. As a celebration of experience, and the grammar of a living civilization, the values of the Vedic Age were products of poetic insight and inspiration. The poet as Founding Father

Four seminal affirmations of the Upanishadic poets

was the acknowledged legislator of the community. The values depended on an inwardization to which something in man cannot but respond. As when we find Wordsworth writing :

*"How exquisitely the individual Mind
to the external world
Is fitted : and how exquisitely too—
Theme this but little heard among
men—
The external world is fitted to the
Mind".*

This fitting of the external world to the mind and vice versa is part of a doctrine of being and destiny that is older than Wordsworth. The implications are extraordinary and point to where the wasteland ends. In the words of Elizabeth Sewall (*The Orphic Voice*), "an immense theme lies here : the relation of creation, and of poetry, to the Logos". Standing before the creative principle of the universe, we have all to choose.

The older poets, *risayo divyah*, had dared to decide; to choose and leap; they had made discoveries that still tease us. To mention four seminal affirmations from the Upanishads : *nityo'anityam, cetanasacetanam, So'ham and Aham Brahmasmi* the One Eternal in many transients, the one Consciousness in many consciousnesses, He am I and I am Brahman—these were essentially poetic realizations, what we would today call self-actualization or Existence-clarification. A transformed or sacramental reality was their common burden. In fact, whatever the medium, art was a giver of freedom, *mukti-*

pradayi, for the most part anonymous. Of course the poem had not only to mean but also be. Mantra took care of that. Also the icon, be it Shiva or the Buddha, referred to a reality beyond surface realism, not type but archetype.

Man liberates the spirit by realising it. To realise is to embody. In a not unworthy sense the poet is the messenger of meaning, of purpose without purposiveness. As Sherrington, the noted physiologist, had pointed out, our psychical lives are tissues of purpose. Not that other kinds of poetry do not or have no right to exist; but this is the poetry of poetry just as it is the life of life. The Orphic tradition attests to a wisdom at once pre-logical and post-logical, pre-historic and post-historic. The tradition is not dead history, *passé*. Listen to Robert Penn Warren :

*...And the lesson is that the only
Thing in life is glory. That's the hard
Thing to learn and a hard fact to face,
For it knocks society's values to a
cocked hat,
Or seems to, for the one thing that man
sees
Is the terror of salvation and the face
Of glory.*

This lesson of poetry we find in the works of masters as apart from each other in time and space as Vamadeva, Thyagaraja, Tagore, Nanak, Kabir, Rumi, Rilke, Wordsworth, Whitman, Milarepa and others. In *Hyperion* where his idea of the poet was fast changing, we hear Keats say : "Against his proper

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glory has my own soul conspired." Unfortunately, both in man and society, there can be a fear of freedom, the "terror of salvation". If we want freedom, in terms of self-discovery, we must be prepared to pay the price. This means that we have to go back to the source. Return to the Root and you will find the meaning. Is Imagination that root and source, or is there something higher than that?

Modern cultural conditioning is allergic to the notion of something higher than the reason and the imagination. In *Poetry and Scepticism* D.G. James has argued that it is impossible to claim that the imagination can give us what is known as truth, that is knowledge. Keats, whose reflections James considers to be seminal, was careful not to make that claim. Admitting the Jamesean thesis, we can make a few points to put the matter straight. First, for all their visionary gleams, the romantics did not know enough. Tailored to their temperament, the level of intuition was available only in fugitive moments, something marvelous and momentary. "There man can visit but there he cannot live," to quote Sri Aurobindo. Secondly, reacting, against science and the spirit of the Age, the romantics were unable to posit a fully validated science of the self. By then the idea and the experience had receded from the western horizon. Else it came to be looked upon as odd and unreliable. Blake, perhaps the oddest of the lot, seemed to locate unerringly the doors of perception. He made his Ezekiel say: "The philosophy of the east taught the first principles

of human perception." For Blake 'human' is also poetic. Thirdly, inheritor of the Semitic tradition, in the western context an identification with the Logos would be nothing short of heresy. Think of Mansur al-Hallaj, who had to pay with his life for announcing the supreme identity, *An-al Haqq*.

But India, indeed the entire East, the mystical tradition, is free from that self-denying ordinance. *Amsa sanatana*, a portion of the Eternal, an expansion of awareness, a knowledge-by-identity (*ekamabodh*) has been held to be man's Final End. Understandably, the seer or Rishi did not speak in terms of the Imagination, which St Teresa called "the fool in the house". I have known the solar self beyond the darkness, *vedahametam*, the basis for that timeless announcement went beyond the imagination. Obviously we are treading upon regions where many of us would face breathing difficulties. There are levels of poetry as there are levels of liberation and levels of language. Between our 'words, words, words' and 'the Word that was with God, was God', there must be a scale, semantic and ontological. Leaving intricacies behind, here we shall confine ourselves to two or three manageable and less disputable marks of mature poetry: first, the discovery of man's essential self as apart from the contingent and the conditioned, this man so-and-so; secondly, among the attributes of this wider self, are existence, consciousness and delight; thirdly, here may be a possible release from the chain of causality. Each of these marks is important; together they define the nature and dig-

*This human journey
within the soul of man*

Communism must become Communion, if it is to fulfil itself

nity of man as nothing else.

Basically, the hypothesis is that in the end all poetry is but the poetry of Self: "there is nothing on earth which does not happen in your own hearts." The quest eternal is a quest within. One of the earliest prayers of awakened man has been: Lead me from the unreal to the Real, *asato ma sadgamaya*. This human journey within the soul of man is at once far and near, *taddure tadvantike* (Isha Up., 5). This obliges us to assume a still centre, what Shelley called a being within being, a beautiful and accurate description.

It is part of the paradox of Being and the human situation that the Light is born out of the Night, *per tenebrae ad lucem*. The soul's debate with death and nothingness is as old as the Katha Upanishad, indeed older. In the Vedas the poet of the Nasadiya Suktas tells us in words that bring the shock of recognition: "There was no air then, neither the worlds nor the sky beyond. Of neither night nor day was there any semblance. Non-Being then was not, nor Being. Death was not, nor Immortality." If out of this blank of negations there emerges a positive status, an Aryan clarity, that too is no doubt primarily the work of the poets. So it is that we arrive at the experience of Aditi, the Mother of the Gods, *mata devanam aditer anikam*. In a sense all poets are Mother-worshippers, in the deep and profound sense in which Eric Neumann, for instance, spoke of the Archetypal Feminine who is and contains all things. *Regina Coel* is also *Regina Mundi*. The Mother of the Gods is the

Master of our souls, wrote Meister Eckhart, the mediaeval mystic. The Tantriks would have understood. In his *The White Goddess*, Robert Graves has argued for a Creatrix for poetry, a tradition coeval with man, a tradition of Women's Lib that might be the salvation of our times.

The becoming of Being, a realistic Advaita, is a realised act or fact. In the beginning was the Deed, and the deed was a sacrament (*yajna*): with sacrifice the gods sacrificed. So did Jesus, the greatest poet in the West, greater than Dante. Universal Being, says the Veda, is the supreme sacrifice of the Person (*atmada*), or self-manifestation, is then not an alienation from reality. The apparently other is also you. Here is the death knell of duality.

As the Persian sufi Jami says so emphatically: Here dualism is impossible, impossible. What Jami says is but the peak experience of a poet.

To become what we are, brings life and liberation close. According to Teilhard de Chardin, evolution's latest prophet: "We are evolution. Evolution is holy". Since that which we are seeking or evolving into is already within us, the feeling that "all things are complete within us" is also likely to be part of growing knowledge, the truth or knowledge that saves. It is when the eye turns inward that, out of the Voice of the Silence, can be heard the news ("NEWS THAT STAYS") of that "oneness which can most powerfully illumine our human existence and utterance": *Tat tvam asi*, thou art That. To
(Continued on page 29)

Consumer Quality & Consumer Expectations

On May 22, Prof. Manubhai Shah, Managing Trustee, Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, addressed the Punjab-Haryana-Delhi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Delhi, on 'Consumer Expectations'.

Shri M.M. Sabharwal, Chairman of the PHD CCI Task Force on Quality Management, presided.

He briefly detailed the activity of the PHD Chamber which is the largest regional Chamber in the country with over 1000 direct members.

Continuing, Shri Sabharwal said, that the Chamber was sensitive to the aspect of quality, more particularly as 1987 was being observed as the "Year of Quality". The Chamber's efforts are directed at making the members increasingly conscious about quality. In a shortage economy, quality got a lower priority. In the fast-changing environment of economic liberalisation and competition, quality has assumed added importance. In this context, Shri Sabharwal briefly mentioned the steps taken by the Chamber to generate greater quality consciousness among the members: the adoption of a motto "Quality—a Way of Life", publication of a monthly "Quality Communique" during 1987, increasing interaction with consumer forums and with manufacturers/trading associations.

Briefly introducing Prof. Shah, Shri Sabharwal referred to his useful work as Managing Trustee of Consumer Education and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, in promoting consumer interests.

Responding to the invitation, Prof. Shah briefly detailed the work of CERC which was set up in 1978 with a corpus of just Rs. 250. Today its annual budget is over Rs. 12 lakhs, excluding the honorary work/services rendered by many professionals and others.


Turning to "Consumer Expectations", Prof. Shah said the first concern of a consumer is that the goods/services are safe. Between safety and quality, safety has to be given priority and there can be no compromise in this respect.

Prof. Shah further made the following points :

- Safety of services is as important as that of goods.
- The business community must act in a manner which is fair to the consumer.
- The earlier situation of shortages is now changing and competition is becoming keen. Business has to gear itself to meet the pressures of competition to which it was not exposed earlier.
- While competition is generally welcome, it may also lead to certain undesirable business practices not benefiting the consumer.
- It is not only small traders but also reputed manufacturers who are sometimes found to indulge in questionable practices.
- Manufacturers' warranties/guarantees must be genuine, and obligations there under fulfilled scrupulously.

(Continued on page 27)

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DRI's Samaj Shilpi Training Camp

Every year DRI invites youth for training, who volunteer to dedicate three years of their life as honorary workers in the constructive projects undertaken by the Institute. This year, the training camp was arranged from July 1 to 15. The participants included 16 workers from Distt. Gonda, U.P., 8 from Distt. Beed, Maharashtra, and 2 from Nagpur City.

At the camp, a happy atmosphere of community life prevailed. Participants discussed ideology and the methodology of the various projects for integrated rural development. Shri Nanaji Deshmukh, Chairman of the Institute, was present in the camp throughout. He was assisted by the Gen. Secy., Sumati Tai Suklikar, DRI Secretary Mahesh Sharma, Organising Secretary Yadav Rao Deshmukh, Gonda Project Director Rama Shankar Upadhyaya, Singbbhum Project Organiser Satish Jha, Beed Distt. Organiser Sanjay Shroff and Shri K.D. Joshi, consultant. They all were present throughout the training period.

Campers got up at 4.45 A.M. They had their tea, prayer and meditation at 5.30. The prayer included Kirtan, verses from Kabir and Rahim, Sanskrit Shlokas sung in chorus. Meditation comprised of chanting 'Om' thrice and fixing attention on the rising sun. Six to eight A.M. was the period for Shram-Sadhana at the neighbouring Bal Jagat compound. This was supplemented by Shram-Sadhana from 6 to 7.30 in the evening.

Shram-Sadhana effected the digging of 65 pits, 2×2×3 feet, plantation of saplings in them, and filling them up with a mixture of manure and earth. A short-term Shram-Sadhana programme like this one requires expert planning, to

make it purposeful, and the involvement of one and all in the exercise. Manual labour of this kind is very essential for inculcating discipline and cooperation and of course for inspiring the spirit of national reconstruction.

Every evening from 4.30 to 5.30, Shri Nanaji Deshmukh addressed the campers. In his ten lectures, he analysed in detail the concept of Samaj Shilpi, the development of model personality, the concept of Dharma-Rajya, Freedom of the Individual, Humanity-based Spiritualism, Integrated development of the child, the importance of 'Artha' (money) in life, the project-plans of Gram Swavalamban Kendra, Rachna Prakalpa, the need for self-confidence and self-introspection. These subjects were treated in such a way that they were easily understood and appreciated by workers at every level.

In the same way, every morning, from 10.45 to 11.45, one of the senior workers addressed the trainees and elucidated various aspects of our thinking and programme planning, e.g.

1. The vision and aims of DRI
2. The Concept of Swavalamban Kendras
3. Expectations from Samaj Shilpi workers
4. National Problems—and how to handle them
5. The Concept of Rachna Prakalpa
6. DRI and Sangha-Parivar

7. The Karya Paddhati (Methodology) of DRI
8. Human Sensitivity and Social Service

In the afternoon, from 2.45 to 3.45, there were three discussion sections. The camp was also addressed by Shri Bala-Saheb Deoras, Sarsanghachalak of R.S.S., and Shri H.V. Sheshadri, Sar-karyavaha. Shri K.R. Malkani, Vice-Chairman of DRI, visited the camp for two days, when he addressed the campers on the necessity of translating high ideals into daily life and the importance of self-study.

All programmes, including entertainment programmes at night, were carefully planned, so that the community life may foster socially congenial habits in the participants by example and precept.

At the valedictory function on the morning of July 15, Shri Nanaji and Taiji gave a hearty send-off to the participants. Many important social workers and honoured citizens of Nagpur were present.

Shri Dada Joshi of Nagpur was the Shivir-Adhikari and Shri Basant Rao, the Karyavah of the camp.

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(Continued from page 23)

In this connection, Prof Shah said, an ordinary Indian invests his life time's savings when he buys consumer durables and he needs to be protected.

Referring specifically to the role the Chamber can play, he commended the model of Better Business Bureau of US and Canada which plays the following role :

- give information to consumer :
- mediation between business and consumers; and
- compulsory arbitration where mediation fails.

Under this system, once a complaint goes before the Bureau, it has got to be finally settled. A number of Chambers can come together to set up such a bureau in India, he added.

Alternatively the Chamber can do one of the following:

- set up its own Grievances Cell. But this may mean some members sitting in judgement over others, which the Chamber may like to avoid;
- suggest to members the setting up of in-house Grievances Cell under the Chief Executive/a top executive;
- whatever was done must be a genuine effort;
- there is no substitute for self-discipline by business. In its absence, there will be more and harsher laws which can

lead to harassment of business while not benefiting consumers; and

- while not ruling out the possibility of some consumer forums exploiting the situation, he felt business was better equipped to counter such threats from small groups. In this connection he added that even consumer groups like CERC are not immune from such threats.

During the ensuing discussion the following points emerged :

- While action to settle consumer grievances is a long process, it is better to do something rather than keep quiet.
- While direct action may bring ad hoc solutions, it does not bring lasting results. The best thing to do is to help change the system. As such, efforts must be directed at changing the system. For this reason, CEKC refrains from direct action.
- Some Indian companies also respond to, and act quickly on, consumer complaints.

Summing up the discussion, Shri Sabharwal stressed self-discipline as the only way in the emerging situation and as a means of avoiding situation of confrontation.

Proposing a vote of thanks, Shri R.N. Bhargava, Co-Chairman, Internal Trade Committee, said the aim of business should be consumers' satisfaction and responding to their needs suitably. □

(From page 20)

this they all come, each according to his capacity. The sufis call it *ma'rifa*, in which there is neither mine nor thine. According to the *Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, the realization of the One Mind—remember Wordsworth—constitutes All-Deliverance. In *The Elder Statesman* Eliot tells us: "I have been freed from the self that pretends to be someone and in becoming no one, I begin to live." In the authoritative words of St Paul: We are members of the one body. When communism learns that lesson it will be no longer communism but what it was meant to be, communion.

As Heidegger hinted, what the true poet points to is the establishment of Being. On the ladder of Being God is the best poet, *kavinamusana kavih*, says the Gita. "The universe is a metonymy for God." Creation is but the poem of God, *pasya devasya kavya*. This was Hopkins' theme too, if far more tortured. The world is charged with the grandeur of God. Not merely grandeur, but also utter freedom. As Brother Antoninus had put it: "God wrote the mark of liberation everywhere on the wondering human face."

As the ancients knew, you must create as well as enjoy in freedom, through detachment, *tena tyaktena bhunjithah*. They strongly believed that the Being not only IS, but that it is also supremely conscious. And, in this view, or experience, consciousness is but consciousness-force, *chit* is *chit-shakti*, a truth or realisation likely to dawn upon science one day. That will be the day of our deliverance. All energy is

psychic. The psyche is at once the witness and relisher of experience: "the mind is to himself witness and judge."

The Upanishad speaks of two birds, *dva suparna*. Together they achieve the passage from determinism to self-determination, not a small achievement. As a relisher of world experience the soul or self is awake on all three levels of the being: waking, sleeping, dreaming, may be even beyond. Or are the links missing? Were we to harmonize the levels, it would mean poetry of a kind—an absolute Advaita—the world has rarely seen and the tongue of man cannot utter. The poetry of transcendence and transformation is also the transcendence and transformation of poetry. In the end is poetry anything but prayer and meditation, "through a silence quivering with the word of Light, on an endless ocean of discovery"?

The doctrine of levels, "an endless ocean", creates problems. But it is also a solution of sorts. In any case the Self or Atman, established by experience, is a self-luminous awareness, or wholesome, unabridged and original Delight. This third power or Being, Ananda, is one the Indian thought, yoga, aesthetics and metaphysics, has never disowned. The free self is the delight self, that too is a Discovery of India, to which, finally, poet and poetry cannot but arrive: "the secret bliss of existence which is the ether of our being and without which none could breathe or live". Ananda, however, is not pleasure—that is a modern error or parody—nor does it imply any retreat from the world of action, *samsara*, a

*The Dance of Shiva is at once
Poetry, Philosophy, Science*

Indian Ethics & Aesthetics combine Santa rasa with Vira

charge sometime brought against Indian culture and imagination. Creation, a free activity, is an objectless, self-existent bliss. Ecstasy is the choice of freedom. The dance of Shiva, at once poetry, philosophy and science, the science of salvation, bears this out. If poetry can help us to share that "joy of dancing" what other rationale does it need?

The alignment of poetry with liberation, the establishment of the triadic self, Sat-Chit-Ananda, was the work of our earliest poets as it must be the task of the poet for ever. Part of the structure of the Self, a greater consciousness means a greater life, greater because free, *svatantra*, self-dependent. This is an affirmation, not negation. A heroic, unified affirmation is not easy. But how self-assured is—rather was—the classical Indian tradition. Act in the world, with thy being beyond it, such seems to be the heart of the Gita's message. Indian ethics, aesthetics no less, has not hesitated to combine *santa rasa*, tranquillity, with *vira*, the heroic mode. A difficult combination, but not impossible, certainly not undesirable. The crisis today is largely because we have lost the secret of contemplative action, what the Gita calls *muktaya karma*, the action of the free.

Though poetry cannot be equated, glibly, with an ethical primer or a science of salvation (*moksa shastra*), it greatly alters the human prospect. Creative activity, a "drowner of dykes", frees the person from the bondage of the ego. In Chinese the "great death" (*ta-ssu*) is also the "great awakening" (*Ta-wu*). The

poet's negative capability is a distinctly positive virtue.

And this brings us to poetry's final gift: freedom from causality, the compulsion of created things, a secret of subduing matter that no one else knows. Creation is free, *niyat-krīta-niyama-rahita*. Unconditioned, because it is poetry. Even a scientist like Claude Bernard had noted the fact: *La condition de la vie libre est la constance du milieu interieur*. As Herbert Read once wrote: "There is a chain of cause and effect in our practical life, in our intercourse with the external world, but deep within man's subjectivity there is an effect which has no discernible cause, which is a process of discovery, of self-realisation, a rending of the numinous veil of consciousness. "Rending the numinous veil—one thinks of *hiranmayena patrena* of Isha Upanishad—must be the inner sense of culture and poetry alike, a free man's worship. *Chit svatantra visvasiddhithetuh*, consciousness creates the universe out of Her own free will, says, *Pratyavinahridayam*. In poetry, the creativity of the spirit is free creativity, writes Maritain in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. Here is a true manifesto of the person.

This brings us to the starting point: the final, the enduring value of poetry is, we repeat, its ability to actualise and establish Being, the More that we must be. Poetry as we have seen it is the power of conscious self-determination and the delight nature of the free self as both maker and enjoyer. This gives a pure sense to not only the dialect of the tribe

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but also the consciousness of the tribe. Simply, it is the discovery of the real man behind the apparent, the heart of the aesthetic education or the spiritual quest of man. If you are not a poet you are not a person. That is why Blake had said: The Poetic Genius is the true Person. (Coomaraswamy held that a man without artistic ability should not be allowed to vote.) The point is, man individualises both the universal and the transcendent, Nothing and Everything, beyond opposites. Harmony, said Rabindranath Tagore, is the soul's mother tongue. And not only harmony, but may be, also victory, an intimation of immortality almost. The ascent of poetry is the Second Coming of the Son of Man, a drama enacted on Calvary, the Mound of the Dead over which death shall have no dominion. Who knows how many encounters with the heart of darkness this will entail. Orpheus is at home in this and the other world. Our "sweating selves", we are at home nowhere, neither in life nor in death. For us Gluck's aria: *J'ai perdu mon Eurydice*, 'I have lost my Eurydice,' records the loss and the longing, eternal passion, eternal pain.

Ultimately, "the great infinite thing, liberty" is a state of being. To accept this view, which forces itself on one, is not to plead for reaction, or the *ancien régime*, but for the ignored categories, what David Holbrook has called the lost horizon. Since the Galilean-Newtonian-Cartesian revolution, man in the western hemisphere has to live in a dead world in which man has abdicated and where inevitably, the subjective, the immaterial and

the intentional aspects of human awareness have been suppressed in favour of a partial and profane point of view. To resist desecration, and the death of poetry, we must achieve a whole vision of our true nature and destiny. This means going beyond the limitations of the European Enlightenment. This is not to deny the utility of science, within limits. But our one and only duty must be loyalty to oneself rather than the abolition of man. When we recognise that loyalty, "mysteries more than Orphic and Eleusinian revive."

Hope for man is hope for poetry. As the former Outsider, Colin Wilson, now says: "Civilization cannot evolve further until the 'occult' is taken for granted on the same level as atomic energy." 'Occult' not in the sense of abracadabra or a supernatural machinery but a profounder reading of reality, an adjustment to altered states of awareness. The defence of poetry has become part of saving a culture alienated in fact and on principle, a "struggle to liberate the visionary power from the lesser reality in which they have been confined by urban-industrial necessity" (Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, xxvii). The struggle will continue till we are able to achieve other ways of seeing and being, till, in the poetic words of Edwin Muir, the

*One glory of the everlasting world
Perpetually at work, though never seen
Since Eden locked the gate that's
everywhere*

And nowhere

*Civilization must assume the
'occult' if it is to progress further*

Not to know Brahma in life is as good as living death

returns and Mind the killer becomes the Mind of Light, the Magus, the healer.

Reality is poetry, such has been the burden of poets and mystics. This is our own assumption too, even if it is foreign to a good deal of what passes for modern poetry, which is not modern enough, and will live for a while rather than for ever. In a story by Camus, *La Femme Adultère*, the heroine realises that "she was going to die without being set free." This is the fate of all who have sold themselves to the World, the Devil and the Flesh. The only remedy for an adulterated consciousness is a pure consciousness. Not voodoo, but vision, a little clearing in the thickets of unreality, so that "between our birth and death we may touch understanding". That is why, in India, not to have known, while alive, Brahman, has been compared to a living death. The thought has its echo in Kabir: "If He is found now, He is found then; if not, we but go to hell in the City of Death." History may be bondage, history may be freedom.

What I am saying is perhaps not that poetry is liberation but liberation is poetry, what Whitman meant by "the origin of all poems". And this because liberation is the most intense, inclusive ordering of experience, a freedom beyond the circumstances, the source of that fulfillment and harmony which Plato, St. John and Sri Aurobindo were seeking, "subsisting of itself and by itself. . . the same inviolable whole". It is not a literary problem as such. Whitehead was right in saying that the literary expositions

of freedom deal only with the frills. There are further refinements, richer entanglements. Root and blossom of a totally committed life, a total response to the Nature of Things, it is another name for the human and the heroic, "the inward man". The truth is great and it shall make you free. Was Francis Thompson hinting at this when he said: "Sanctity is essential song"?

A biology of the spirit, poetry is our ransom of the night, in the sense in which a modern poet has spoken of the Christ of Poetry, of Revolution, as "a ransom of the many". Poetry may not save us quite, but it makes us worth saving, gives us a higher destiny, higher than that dreamt of by Pater or Arnold. All men have a feeling of something above them. Poetry is one of life's ways for reaching out, from one level to another, "the sleepless Flame, dreaming of a mysterious beyond". To be or not to be, and what to be, is a question that poetry alone can answer. This does not mean any readymade recipe for "solving the universe".

Logos is more than logic and its final gift comes close to a mimesis of the original Mystery. Each man, said Holderlin, has his mystery. Only an enigmatising of the mysteries of Being and the greater self that "sleeps within us unseen" can retrieve poetry's lost fortune, prestige and function. Then, fire and rose become one, we may join the soul's cry "to bridge our earthhood and heavenhood, make deathless the children of Time". The secret of building that invisible bridge (*amritasya setuh*) has been given out in an

esoteric text that still speaks to us. The speaker is Christ, the mark of Him sacrifice, an old law :

*Thou hearest that I suffered but I
suffered not.*

Understand this riddle;

*The transfiguration of the Logos, the
Blood of the Logos,*

Know me as the praise of the Logos,

*The suffering of the Logos, the impa-
ling of the Logos,*

*The wound of the Logos, the hanging
of the Logos,*

The death of the Logos.

Through death to a greater birth. If man is a possibility, poetry is the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, the forever "promised dawn". Through an act of conscious sacrifice—since conscious is better than unconscious—if we had the knowledge that we have not, poetry offers a taste of the redeemed life, Paradise Regained here and now, *ihava*. For this to be real the Face must burn through the mask. Hu-neng's Koan: "Show me your original face before you were born" has its echo in Yeats' "I'm looking for the face I had before the world was made" and Wallace Stevens' "The poem refreshes life so that we share for a moment the first idea."

The faculty of the possible, "the first idea", helps us to realise or return to liberty as our ultimate concern. Simply, a home-coming. "My house is a house of freedom." Not a flight from time but its redemption. The creative mind is free and freedom the language of culture.

From Buddhism to the Beatniks, from Christianity to Communism, freedom has been the telos of the tribe called man. Where there is no vision people perish. The release of visionary powers latent in man has become the first step towards the restoration of what can be called a human society. But since the vision has been variously seen, the form and content are, understandably, many. But the yearning is the same, a joy for ever. The sound of wisdom's sea can still be heard. Recognition or re-cognition (*pratyavijnā*) is the poetry of poetry because, perhaps, it is more and other than poetry. According to the Tantric mysticism of Tibet, the royal road to Liberation is recognition that there is no being or object in the universe from which we stand apart. Bodhisattva's vow not to seek a personal salvation so long as a single creature remained in bondage is perhaps the final poem, as it is also the last word in wisdom, heroism, Passion and Compassion. Has not William Blake reported the same news, but in his own way?

*Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?...
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!*

Wisdom-bloom on the summits of being, liberation speaks through many voices. *Vipra bahudha vadanti*, the sages speak of it variously. The prime purpose of my writing, wrote Gary Snyder, is liberation *Siddhah svatantra bhava*, a Siddha lives in total freedom. As many

*From Buddhism to Beatniks,
Freedom is the badge of mankind*

Lamas as there are peaks. To each his own, the Real towards which our strivings move. Can there be a better justification for poetry than that spelt against death and "one'd with the One", it is a "praise of the Logos", spelt against death and therefore free ?

*In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountains start,*

*In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.*

As Rabindranath Tagore put it, *mul-tiye tobu shes durasha*, freedom is the last forlorn hope. Last and first. Or has freedom ceased to matter ? "No no! never can it be ! Never, never can it be!" □

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. Poverty is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds.

—Shelley

The her can be Poet, Prophet, King, Privest or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into.

—Carlyle

I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry ; that is, prose=words in their best order poetry=the best Words in the best order.

—Cleridge;

By the way, I heard an answer today to the platitude : "There's no money in poetry." It was : "There's no poetry in money, either."

—Robert Graesh

Wise poets that wrapt Truth in tales, Knew her themselves thought all her eils.

—Thomas Carew

*Poet and Saint ! to these alone are given
The most sacred two names of earth and Heaven.*

—Abraham Cowley

*The pearl is a disease of the soter.
A poem is a disease of the spirit
Caused by the viritation
Of a granule of Truth
Fallen into that soft gray biovale
We call the mind.*

—Christopher Morley.

An Eye-witness account of India in the days of Mahmud Ghazni

"THE Hindus differ from us in every respect," wrote Al-Beruni almost a thousand years ago.

Who was Al-Beruni ?

Al-Beruni was a scholar who had been taken prisoner by Mahmud Ghazni, when the latter invaded Khiva. He never fancied Mahmud. Indeed he and Firdausi, the great author of Iran's 'Shahnama,' thought pretty poorly of him. However, when Mahmud repeatedly invaded India, Al-Beruni came here, stayed on for long years, learnt Sanskrit and studied the Gita, the Puranas and many other texts.

Although himself a Muslim, Al-Beruni was never anti-Hindu. His object in writing the book 'India' was that Muslims, who would be dealing with Indians, must know India, its people, its culture, its thought. For he found that Muslims were thoroughly hated in India because of what Mahmud had done to India. Wrote Al-Beruni : "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims."

To Mahmud, the Hindus were infidels, to be dispatched to hell as soon as they refused to be plundered. To Al-Beruni, the Hindus were excellent philosophers, good mathematicians and astronomers, though he naively disdains to be put on a

level with them. He does not always agree with them, but he duly appreciates their mental achievements, even such as could not be of any use to him or to his readers, e.g. Sanskrit metrics; and whenever he hits upon something that is noble and grand, both in science and in practical life, he never fails to lay it before his readers with warm-hearted words of approbation.

Apart from the aggressive Islam of Ghazni, there was another, older reason for Indian allergy to West Asia. "Another circumstance which increased the already existing antagonism between Hindus and foreigners," wrote Al-Beruni, "is that the so-called Shamaniyya (Buddhists), though they cordially hate the Brahmans, still are nearer akin to them than to others. In former times, Khurasan, Persis, Iran, Mosul, the country up to the frontier of Syria, was Buddhistic, but then Zarathustra went forth from Azarbaijan and preached Magism in Balkh (Baktria). His doctrine came into favour with King Gushtasp, and his son Isfendiyad spread the new faith both in east and west, both by force and by treaties. He founded fire-temples through his whole empire, from the frontiers of China to those of the Greek empire. The succeeding kings made their religion (i.e. Zoroastrianism) the obligatory state-religion for Persis and Irak. In consequence, the Buddhists were banished from those countries, and had to emigrate to the countries east of Balkh. There are some Magians up to the present time in India, where they are called Maga. From that time dates their aversion towards the countries of Khura-

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Here pearls and dung are found mixed up together

san. But then came Islam; the Persian empire perished, and the repugnance of the Hindus against foreigners increased more and more when the Muslims began to make their inroads into their country."

The author was very keen that Hindus should be studied objectively. He was equally keen that Hindus should not view the rest of the world with prejudice. He, therefore, began with the warning that Hindus are very different. First of all he said, "they differ from us in everything which other nations have in common."

Secondly, "they totally differ from us in religion, as we believe in nothing in which they believe, and vice versa. On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves; at the utmost, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property on religious controversy. On the contrary, all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They call them *mleccha*, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them."

"In the third place, in all manners and usages they differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our dress, and our ways and customs, and as to declare us to be devil's breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper. By the by, we must confess, in order to be just, that a similar depreciation of foreigners not only prevails among us

and the Hindus, but is common to all nations towards each other."

The author also thinks that Hindus are very proud and self-righteous. "The Hindus believe that there is no country like theirs, no kings like theirs, no nation like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited, and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar."

His own assessment of Indian science and learning was: "I can only compare their mathematical and astronomical literature, as far as I know it, to a mixture of pearl shells and sour dates, or of pearls and dung, or of costly crystals and common pebbles. Both kinds of things are equal in their eyes, since they cannot raise themselves to the methods of a strictly scientific deduction."

This is the honest opinion of a keen observer of the Indian scene a thousand years ago. He sees many practices and institutions peculiar to Hindus. But he does not go about ridiculing them. He

states, as a matter of fact, that the sun is the object of Hindu worship (Qibla). He is not shocked by the caste system. He says that Iran and Khurasan also had a similar social organisation. Likewise he is not surprised by idol worship. "It is well known that the popular mind leans towards the sensible world, and has an aversion to the world of abstract thought, which is only understood by highly educated people, of whom in every time and every place there are only few. And as common people will only acquiesce in pictorial representations, many of the leaders of religious communities have so far deviated from the right path as to give such imagery in their books and houses of worship, like the Jews and Christians, and, more than all, the Manichaeans. These words of mine would at once receive a sufficient illustration if, for example, a picture of the Prophet were made, or of Mekka and the Kaaba, and were shown to an uneducated man or woman. Their joy in looking at the thing would bring them to kiss the picture, to rub their cheeks against it, and to roll themselves in the dust before it, as if they were seeing not the picture, but the original, and were in this way, as if they were present in the holy places, performing the rites of pilgrimage, the great and the small ones."

He adds: "For those who march on the path to liberation, or those who study philosophy and theology, and who desire abstract truth which they call sara, are entirely free from worshipping anything but God alone, and would never dream of worshipping an image

manufactured to represent him." He even applauds the Khalif Muawiya for having sold the golden gods of Sicily to the princes of Sindh, for money's worth, instead of destroying them as heathen abominations, as bigoted Muslims would probably have liked him to do.

Al-Beruni thinks that aversion to beef followed the age of Sri Krishna, and he points out that Al-Hajjaj of Iraq had also banned cow slaughter, to save that country from becoming a desert. He also finds that Hindus put cow-dung to good use—and even keep cattle in their bedrooms in winter, to help warm it, with their body heat. He also notes that before the king of Afghanistan embraced Islam, he had laid down two conditions, viz. that he will not indulge in beef or sodomy, obviously practices then common among the invading Muslims.

Al-Beruni deals at length with Hindu sciences and arts, scriptures and stories, although he is sorry that he could not visit Kashmir or Varanasi, the two best centres of Hindu learning. He even tells you of the infinite and infinitesimal Hindu measures of time and space, weights and measures.

He is pleased to note that Hindus write on papyrus, and not hides, which latter can always be tampered with. He notes that good Brahmins have sex only once a month. They take two meals and three baths a day, washing their feet first. "In all consultations and emergencies, they take the advice of women."

An understanding view of caste and image-worship

The Hindu scholars, he says, enjoy the help of God

He is ecstatic about Indian ponds. "In every place to which some particular holiness is ascribed, the Hindus construct ponds intended for the ablutions. In this they have attained to a very high degree of art, so that our people (the Muslims), when they see them, wonder at them, and are unable to describe them, much less to construct anything like them. They build them of great stones of an enormous bulk, joined to each other by sharp and strong crampirons. And these terraces run all around the pond, reaching to a height of more than a man's stature. On the surface of the stones between two terraces they construct staircases rising like pinnacles. Thus the first steps or terraces are like roads (leading round the pond), and the pinnacles are steps (leading up and down). If ever so many people descend to the pond whilst others ascend, they do not meet each other, and the road is never blocked up, because there are so many terraces, and the ascending person can always turn aside to another terrace than that on which the descending people go. By this arrangement all troublesome thronging is avoided."

Al-Biruni finds many Indian scholars too verbose. He doesn't fancy the princes' obsession with alchemy, to convert base metals into gold. He disapproves of many Hindu customs. But he is always quick to add that Arabs (those holy cows of Islam) also had many bad habits. Indeed he is perceptive enough to see that Hindus and Greeks are very much like each other.

The author has nothing in common

with the Muhammadan Ghazi who wanted to convert the Hindus or to kill them, and his book scarcely reminds the reader of the incessant war between Islam and India, during which it had been prepared, and by which the possibility of writing such a book had first been given. Says Dr. Edward C. Sachau, translator: "It is like a magic island of quiet, impartial research in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns and plundered temples. The object which the author had in view, and never for a moment lost sight of, was to afford the necessary information and training to "any one (in Islam) who wants to converse with the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science or literature, on the very basis of their own civilisation."

He sometimes takes an occasion for pointing out to the reader the superiority of Islam over Brahmanic India. He contrasts the democratic equality of men with the castes of India, etc. With all this, his recognition of Islam is not without a tacit reserve. Writes Sachau: "He dares not attack Islam, but he attacks the Arabs. In his work on chronology he reproaches the ancient Muslims with having destroyed the civilisation of Iran, and gives us to understand that the ancient Arabs were certainly nothing better than the Zoroastrian Iranians. So too in the 'Indika', whenever he speaks of a dark side in Hindu life, he at once turns round sharply to compare the manners of the ancient Arabs, and to declare that they were quite as bad, if not worse. This could

ghazi who wanted to kill them, finds the reader between Islam and has been prepared, possibility of first been given. Chau, translator: of quiet, impar- of a world of rning towns. The object in view, and sight of, was to information and (Islam) who wants us, and to dis- ons of religion, he very basis of

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only be meant as a hint to the Muslim reader, not to be too haughty towards the poor bewildered Hindu, trodden down by the savage hordes of King Mahmud, and not to forget that the founders of Islam, too, were certainly no angels."

In his chapter on solar and lunar eclipses, Al-Beruni even goes so far as to speak of Hindu scholars as "enjoying the help of God" which to a Muslim means as much as inspired by God,

guided by divine inspiration. He approvingly quotes Vyas as saying: "Learn twenty-five (elements of existence) by distinctions etc. Afterward adhere to whatever religion you like, your end will be salvation."

All in all it is an excellent contemporary account of eleventh century India. Here was perhaps the first and last—so far!—Muslim Indologist, who looked at Indian calmly, wisely and well.

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Truth about Somnath 'Idols'

School history text books say that when Mahmud Ghazni attacked Somnath, he found huge idols hanging in 'mid-air', above the ground, which could easily be the case if magnets were placed in appropriate places in the floor, walls and ceiling. It is further said that Hindus begged of him to spare the idols for any fee he may charge, but Mahmud is believed to have said that he was a butt-Shaken (idol-breaker) and not a butt-farosh (idol seller). He is then believed to have dealt hammer blow to an idol, breaking away part of it, as a result of which the idol lost its (magnetic) balance and began to tilt. He is then believed to have smashed up the idols, made of precious stones.

The 'butt-shakan-butt-farosh' report is the story of later historians. Al-Beruni, who was a contemporary historian, testifies that there was a shiva-linga—and not any idols, on the ground or above it. Reports Al-Beruni.

"In the south-west of the Sindh country, this idol is frequently met with in the houses destined for the worship of the Hindus, but Somnath was the most famous of these places. Every day they brought there a jug of Ganges water and a basket of flowers from Kashmir. They believed that the linga of Somnath would cure persons of every inveterate illness and heal every desperate and incurable disease. The reason why in particular Somnath has become so famous is that it was a harbour for seafaring people, and a station for those who went to and fro between Sufala in the country of the Zanj and China."

Another thing to note is that when Mahmud distributed his loot of Somnath back home, the Kazi of Ghazni refused to accept his "share"; he considered it immoral.

World Round-Up

The Centenary of an Indiane Gnius

The New York Times (July 15) has carried a special report on the mathematics genius of India, Srinivasa Ramanujan on the occasion of his birth centenary this year.

SR died in 1920, at the age of 32, leaving behind 4000 formulas in three notebooks.

Using a slate, Ramanujan jotted down formulas, erased them with his elbow, jotted down more, and then recorded a result in a notebook only when it had reached final form.

The intermediate results—the links of the chain—are lost. Unlike mainstream mathematicians, he felt no need to prove that a result was true. His legacy is simply a set of discoveries.

A University of Illinois mathematician, Bruce Berndt, has spent years editing Ramanujan's notebooks, tracking down sources and relationships, and above all, proving some of the unproved theorems. A mathematician at Pennsylvania State University, George Andrews, has been doing the same with the so-called Lost Notebook, 130 pages of scrap paper from the last year of Ramanujan's life. "The work of that one year, while he was dying, was the equivalent of a life-time of work for a very great mathematician," said Richard Askey of the University of Wisconsin, USA.

Ramanujan might have died in complete obscurity if he had not written a

series of desperate, bold letters to English mathematicians in 1912 and 1913. By then he was 25 years old, working as clerk for £30 a year after several years of unemployment.

His intellect stood out clearly. But in college at Madras he failed again and again to pass examinations in other subjects. In mathematics, he had no teacher, and he worked, as Godfrey J. Hardy, an English mathematician, later said, "in practically complete ignorance of modern European mathematics."

Mr. Hardy was not the first mathematician to receive a letter from Ramanujan, but he was the first to understand what it contained. "I had never seen anything in the least like them before," he said. "A single look at them is enough to show that they could only be written down by a mathematician of the highest class."

Mr. Hardy arranged for Ramanujan to visit Cambridge University; the Indian clerk arrived in 1913, leaving his wife behind, and stayed for nearly six years. The two men collaborated often.

Many mathematicians think Ramanujan was mining a deep vein of theory, the full outlines of which are not yet known.

Foreign debts killing countries

President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia last month ended an "economic recovery plan" that guaranteed Zambia hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign loans and grants.

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Mr. Kaunda said he did it because the repayment conditions attached to the money from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other Western donors were "intolerable."

For example, the total export earnings of Zambia are forecast to be about \$ 660 million this year. With this, the country was supposed to pay debts of about \$400 million to the IMF, about \$ 71 million to the World Bank and nearly all the rest to various donor countries.

Western economists in Lusaka who presided over the creation of "reform" package, agree with Mr. Kaunda that the foreign debt burden is, as one economist put it, "killing the country".

Western economists in Lusaka characterize recent large IMF loans, most of which are supposed to be paid back in full within three years, as "criminal", "illogical" and a mission "impossible from the start."

Writing off loans by paying less than 10%

Bolivia and its creditor banks have signed an innovative agreement that allows the country to buy back its \$ 1 billion of foreign bank debt at a fraction of the loan's full value.

The pact gives Bolivia four months to offer to purchase some or all of its debt in a kind of auction in which the country can offer any price for its loans. If the Banks reject the offer, Bolivia can raise it.

The agreement, signed in New York on July 10, is believed to be the first of

its kind. Bolivia owes \$ 600 million in principal and \$400 million in interest to about 125 banks.

Luis Paz, an official in Bolivia's consulate in New York who was one of those involved in the debt talks, said: "Maybe we can buy our debt for \$ 60 million. It is better (for the creditors) to have 60 million than nothing."

After Green Revolution— the Red Revolution ?

The Green Revolution helps the surplus farmers to become rich and thus increase inequalities between rich and poor (subsistence) farmers. This, it is feared, can eventually lead to Red Revolution, by the worse off farmers.

And now a new danger is looming on the horizon; it could ruin the entire agriculture of many Third World countries. This new danger comes from biotechnical revolution. Writes Giles Meeritt in 'The International Herald Tribune':

"Unless the Western industrialized countries radically restructure and streamline their own farm sectors, biotech will allow them to swamp Third World countries with huge quantities of farm exports, driving peasants off the land.

"The situation is alarming. Cheap food from America and Europe is destroying the developing countries' agricultural economies. Since 1960, their grain imports have quadrupled, and at \$21 billion a year, they are as much an economic headache as oil imports. The latest wave of subsidized U.S. and EC farm exports are creating a particularly vicious circle. They

undercut local farm prices and discourage local farmers, and that reduces local farm output and so further increases the need for imports. By the year 2000, the Third World's cereals imports are expected to double again to 200 million tons a year.

"Biotechnology may turn the Farm Support Systems of Europe and America from farce to tragedy. The crucial policies still to be devised will be those that keep Third World farmers on their land until the biotech revolution reaches them too."

Japan in Search of a Soul

"With the gods dead, and materialism supreme, Japanese are adrift on an uncharted sea, without a moral compass. We need the philosophy, vision and courage of Samurai. We will soon discover that earning a trillion-dollar GNP was child's play compared with creating a value system for post-industrial Japan" writes Nachiro Amaya, a former Vice-Minister of International Trade, Japan.

Writing recently in "Tokyo Shimibun", he said, "A hungry man naturally wants to fill his belly first. But the satiated person who calls for more, is a glutton or piggish, or both. It is time Japanese drew up a spiritual menu."

"Values are very hard to agree on. When religion was a vibrant force in people's lives, there were clearly defined rules. Today religious creeds have lost that compelling power."

He adds, "Affluence has eroded our sense of purpose and direction. As a nation we Japanese no longer have to

work hard to get ahead. We are already there. The question becomes, where do we go now, and why?"

"Japan has become an economic super power, but what our contribution to the world will be—our goals, values, commitment—is still unclear."

Hats for Cats and Dogs

The stratosphere's ozone layer, which screens living things from the damaging ultra-violet rays, has been thinning dangerously due to the emission of Chlorofluorocarbons, used in refrigeration, foam plastics and solvents. This could lead to large-scale skin cancer in humans and hurt even vegetation.

Last April 31, countries, including USA, agreed to freeze production of chlorofluorocarbons—and, progressively, reduce their use. But now the Reagan administration—and particularly its Interior Department—is out to scuttle the agreement, earlier worked out by its own State Department. The new line of argument is that men should use sun-glasses and skin lotions to prevent the adverse effects of weakening of ozone cover!

Herblock, a leading American cartoonist, has shown cats, cows, dogs and corn wearing hats and sun-glasses!

Obviously the manufacturers of these items have prevailed upon the government to wriggle out of its international commitments, in favour of the lotions-and-lenses lobby. □