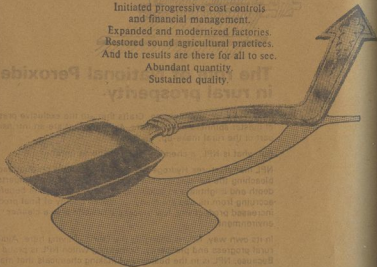


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# Manthan

Vol. X No. 3

MARCH 1989

**Spiritual Roots of  
National Integration**

**Roots of the Malaise  
in Present-day India**

**Importance of Bats  
to Tropical Economies**

**Rushdie-Khomeini  
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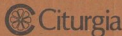
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## CONTENTS

	Page
The Spiritual Roots of National Integration in Indian Culture : A Philosophical and Psycho-cultural Study —Dr. Moazziz Ali Beg	9
and	
Dr. Mohd. Ilyas Khan	
2. Roots of the Malaise —Sailendra Nath Ghosh	41
3. Importance of Flying Foxes to Tropical Economies —Dr. Marty Fujita	57
4. Discussion on the Issues in Rushdie-Khomeini Controversy	64
5. Letter to the Editor	67

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This issue covers a wide spectrum. The first article, by Dr. Moazziz Ali Beg and Dr. Ilyas Khan brings out the distinctive features of Indian culture. India's message of essential unity of religions, unity of all life, and unity of organisms and the environment are the most potential to unify mankind. Yet, India of today, is not integrating even nationally. Evidently because the communities here are keen on practising *not* the religions but religio-communalism. There are the alleged followers of some faiths who say "they cannot love this country or any country : they can only love their fellow-religionists globally". The authors show that love of the country is an inalienable part of the faith.

In the next article, Shri Sailendra Nath Ghosh—who had, in the November issue, sought to reconcile different viewpoints thrown up in DRI's Nagpur Seminar by providing a new perspective and by pleading for a five-tier federalism—traces the roots of the malaise in our socio-political-economic system. He has raised many questions which are in people's minds and sought to answer them. We would welcome comments on these.

The third article is devoted to explaining the importance of "flying foxes", i. e. bats, to tropical economies. Realization of the importance of tropical forests for the survival of life on this planet is now growing. The crucial importance of bats to the forests and orchards in tropical countries and for combating diseases needs to be noted. We need urgently to ban the killing of bats, an endangered species.

The discussion of Rushdie-Khomeini controversy will be of interest to our readers.

Editor

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## The Spiritual Roots of National Integration in the Indian Culture : A Philosophical and Psychocultural Study

By : Moazziz Ali Beg, Ph. D. & Mohd. Ilyas Khan, Ph. D.  
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

*Shall I not inform you of a better act than fasting, alms and  
prayers ? Making Peace between one another : enmity and  
malice tear up heavenly rewards by the roots.*

—Prophet Muhammad

*And he, who uniformly sees all beings even in himself and  
his own self in all beings, does not feel repelled therefrom  
(i.e. from beings)*

—Isavasya Upanishad

**A**N INQUIRY into the philosophical and spiritual aspects of our cultural heritage would bring it to fore that the concept of national integration can be meaningfully related to its ethos. Our spiritually-oriented perspective of life is actually the psychological nexus for holding together the diversities that constitute our national life. It tends to create an impelling sense of mutual acceptance and understanding and a genuine regard for the sentiments of people adhering to different religions. This historically ingrained sense, to which we are presently desensitized, carries within it the governing spirit of our national character.

It is true that this spirit has been eroded under the sway of communal hatred which has now taken a pathological turn, but it will be a mistake on our part to think that the cult of hatred alone is responsible for driving it out of our hearts. The fact is that this spirit has now been overlaid by a spiritually-void culture, which erupted from the womb of a sensate-materialistic civilization and sporadically flooded into a land whose spiritual philosophy has the buoyancy to push this gasping civilization out of its existential imbalances and its present imbroglia. This fake culture caters to the swift and vulgar libidinal involvements of a value-blind generation that has become indifferent to its own identity and is apathetic to anything sober and thoughtful. This ersatz culture is not in accord with a spiritual heritage which called for serious thinking about life and disapproves those trivialities to which this generation is addicted. Perhaps we have not done enough thinking about the ultimate fate of this self-alienated generation.

However, the global materialist civilization has reached a point of exhaustion and its intellectual vigour has certainly yielded before its thwarted spiritual yearnings; and under the dissolution of its technocratic values, the human race is awaiting the final verdict of its destiny as regards its further continuation on this planet. We as a nation have become a part of this civilization, which is against our heritage. Due to our chaotic life and a rapid dismemberment of the nation which has followed in the wake of a sullen mentality, we, despite our immense spiritual potential, are unable to pave the way for an ideological break through which alone can possibly avert the apprehended global disaster. Nevertheless, it is now a matter of national urgency that we spare no efforts to create an awareness of nationhood, reinstate the governing spirit of our national character, and clearly bring to the fore the meaning of National Integration which is embedded in our *empirically-based, pragmatically-oriented and spiritually-developed Bharat Sanskriti*. We may, therefore, turn to an examination of the above statements.

The ethos of Indian culture rises from the Vedas and reaches its peak of excellence in the Upanishads. The Upanishads contain those universal truths that have been endorsed successively by the great religions

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**Our spiritual heritage has been eroded not merely by the cult of communal hatred but also by a sensate-materialistic civilization whose tide has engulfed us too.**

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of the world. These holy scriptures, i.e., the Upanishads, take us out of the duality of the subjective and the objective and give us a sense of oneness of the reality within and without. We thereby get into an abiding feeling of an ethos which is neither inimical to our composite culture nor creates an obsolescent mentality refusing to accommodate patterns of a fast-changing life within itself. The Upanishads teach us that religion is a unitive power and not a destructive force and a truly religious life aims at those human attributes without which there can be no elevation of the human spirit. Hence, the absence of human attributes in a truly religious life is a contradiction *ipso facto*. It is therefore possible to capture the meaning of national integration in the context of our spiritual background because it is quite evident that national integration calls for mutual understanding and acceptance and hence elimination of such mentality on a conscious plane which makes us fall apart. This mentality tends to spring forth from the pernicious sentiments of hatred which have no place in a spiritually motivated life; rather it is the negation of an authentic spiritual life. The overt counterparts of hatred are physical expressions of aggression and hostility—violence, destruction and genocide. Likewise, the menace of communalism is the forthright negation of universalism. They are contradictory attitudes and cannot exist together. In the context of our spiritual background, as aforesaid, the concept of national integration.

we believe, assumes an *ideal* and an *operative* content which we may now proceed to examine.

The ideal content allows us to have a common perspective for visualizing the indispensable national interests and national goals, and the operative content tells us how to manage our affairs as a sober and dignified nation of the world. It also tells us how to surmount our existing social afflictions and stop the ongoing dismemberment of the nation and the country. These two contents are interdependent and derive their meaning from our spiritual background; and taken out of it, the concept of National Integration is otiose. It is therefore necessary to explicate the primary meaning of the word '*spiritual*' and understand its implications at the outset.

The irreducible meaning of the word '*spiritual*', as it exists in the Upanishads and other scriptures, and also in the scriptures like the Holy Quran and the Guru Granth Sahib, creates lexical difficulties in comprehending it through the English language. It can only be expressed perhaps through a kind of second-order semantic concatenation which may only be taken as approximations in terms of diction, to an experientially arrived-at datum. However, the empirical content of this datum is

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**True Religion is Unitive Power.....when all desires are cast away, mortals become immortal.**

---

substantially different from datum of the empiricists like Locke and Hume and it would throw us into a very serious epistemological confusion if we mistakenly take them as identical. Similarly, the experiential substratum is also quite different from the subjective idealism of Berkeley. The substratum of the aforesaid experientially-arrived-at datum is the undifferentiated, ineffable and the immediately experienced, *aesthetic component* of the reality which is complementary to its *theoretic component*\*, the latter being apprehended within the determinate operations of our psyche and goes to constitute the proper subject of cognitive psychology. The theoretic component is actually apprehended through cognitive elements appearing in a serially-ordered consciousness and having a differential character, whereas the aesthetic component is apprehended as an epistemic whole in a state of pure duration when our focal awareness is released, perhaps, through an act of psychic transmutation, from the bondage of serial time. We shall discuss this point further at a later stage in the context of Shankara's epistemology.

It is evident from the discussion above that the apprehension of the undifferentiated reality in a single act of immediate experience is the focal point of the Upanishads' version of reality. This veridical experience of countless sages is absolutely incontrovertible because it has been repeated

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\* These terms are adopted from F.S.C. Northrop : (1947)



tedly brought back for refashioning our individual and collective life in a most effective manner

The heart of the Upanishads lies in the key concepts of *Brahman-Atman* that denote one and the same reality and are experientially identical at higher stages of our spiritual development. The *Katha Upanishad* teaches us that "He can be comprehended as 'It is' and also through the real nature of both. The real nature manifests itself clearly when it is comprehended only as 'It is'."\*\*\* "When all his desires which abide in his heart are cast away, then the mortal becomes the immortal. Here he attains Brahman".

The *Isavasa Upanishad* gives us the clearest version of this non-dual Reality: "By the Lord is encompassed all this, whatsoever there is in this changing (world). Through the renunciation of that (world) mayest thou enjoy: covetest thou not anyone's riches".

These teachings leave no doubt in our mind that the supreme destination of a purposeful and dignified life is the attainment of Brahman, the ultimate goal of human existence. *We are here at the very source of our Sanskriti and it will be the worst fatality of our national life if we wrongly treat this attitude as identical with a dreary asceticism.* In fact, it is a holistic attitude which gives us a unified view of life; one that does not split up our being and does not allow our inner resources to be swallowed up by an existential chaos. *And here again we are at the very core of the ideal content of the concept of national integration which leads us to a common perspective of national goals.* If we really have a sense of priority, as regards the integrity of the nation and of our own identity, and also of the supremacy of the cause of the well-being of our nation, then we must recognize the fact that we surely need an inwardly-existing base for an enduring sense of belongingness which definitely calls for something common in our hearts. This something common and inwardly situated in our hearts is the spiritually-oriented view of existence which permeates the deepest layers of our basic personality. We only have to discover it under the existing circumstances. Our imperishable scriptures provide us the route to this discovery. We cannot afford to be a debased people living in a state of ideological bankruptcy which is now at its peak, resulting in the dismemberment of the nation with an increasing threat to our territorial integrity.

The awareness of the supreme destination of existence opens up the quest for understanding the nature of the inwardly experienced self, rather

\* \* \* All citation from the Upanishads are taken from T.M.P. Mahadevan: UPANISHADS (The selections from 108 Upanishads), (1975)

the individual self. The individual self in the Upanishads is not taken as potentially a separate entity from the Brahman. Actually, the Self, the Person (in the Mundaka Upanishad) denotes the Immutable Brahman, the goal attained through the inwardly experienced self in a state of conviviality—in other words, the peak experience of our own self is experience of the Self which is the surest route to immortality. *This is exactly the keynote in the theme of Sufism as expounded by Ibn-e Arabi.* Hence, one who realizes the self, realizes the Immutable. The *Katha Upanishad* again teaches us: "The immature pursue the outward pleasures; they are caught in the far-flung snare of death. But the wise knowing immortality to be permanent, do not pray for anything here that is transitory".

It is certainly true that the integral vision of existence given to us by the Upanishad has much affinity, with the vision contained in the Sufi thought derived from the Holy Quran. What actually contains the meaning of life is the spiritual upthrust of Islamic religion; surrendering the 'self' to the Divine will and reaching into a concord with it through *Maarifat* is the supreme destination and the beginning of immortality. The Holy Quran tells it thus: But ah, thou Soul at peace: Return unto thy Lord, content

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**Both Upanishads and Sufism teach us that the inwardly experienced self is identical with the Absolute.**

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In His good pleasure, Enter thou my Garden". (30, 27, 28, 29, 30). This verse from the Holy Quran and especially its part "Return unto thy Lord" immediately reminds us how one proceeds to the Brahman. We reach the exquisite beauty of one of the passages of *Kausitaki Upanishad* which renders it pictorially: Five hundred celestial nymphs approach him, one hundred with garlands in their hands, one hundred with ointments in their hands, one hundred with powders in their hands, one hundred with garments in their hands, and one hundred with fruits in their hands, Him they adorn with the ornaments of Brahman. Having been adorned with the ornaments of Brahman, he, the knower of Brahman proceeds to Brahman" (I, 4).

The Sufis tell us that the "good pleasure" of the Lord is incomparable to any worldly pleasure conceivable by man. This is Anand; the bliss. "In the *Brahdaranyaka* and the *Taittiriya*", says Mahadevan, "a calculus of bliss is given, taking the highest human bliss as the unit measure. According to the former Upanishad, the bliss that is Brahman is a billion times that of the human bliss; and according to the latter, it is a hundred trillion times superior to the highest bliss of man. The implication of such teaching is that Brahman-bliss is unlimited and measureless". (Ibid; p. 29). The oldest Persian treatise on Sufism entitled *Kasf-ul-Mahjoob* describes the

highest stage of self-realization thus: "Gnosis is the life of the heart through God, and turning away of man's inmost thoughts from all that is not God". Since the true vision of an integral view of life requires the recreation of the inner self and the actualization of the spiritual potential of man, Sufism therefore calls for the deepest awareness of one's self and to the extent that the self is experienced as the Self. This is treated as the kernel of our spiritual existence within the transitory aggregates surrounding our worldly life. The author of *Kashful-Mahjoob* further says, "The Apostle said: 'If ye knew God as He ought to be known, ye would walk on the seas, and the mountains would move at your call'". "Gnosis of God is of two kinds—cognitive ('ilmi') and emotional (*hali*). Cognitive gnosis is the foundation of all blessings in this world and in the next, for the most important thing for a man at all times and in all circumstances is knowledge of God, as God hath said: 'I only created the genii and mankind that they might serve Me' (Kor. ii, 56), i.e. that they might know me. But the greater part of men neglect this duty, except those whom God hath chosen and whose hearts He hath vivified with Himself. Gnosis is the life on the heart through God, and the turning away of one's inmost thoughts from all that is not God. The worth of everyone is in proportion to gnosis, and he who is without gnosis is worth nothing. Theologians, lawyers, and other classes of men give the name of gnosis (*marifat*) to right cognition (*ilm*) of God, but the Sufi shaikhs call right feeling (*hal*) towards God by that name. Hence they have said that gnosis (*marifat*) is more excellent than cognition (*ilm*), for right feeling (*hal*) is the result of right cognition, but right cognition is not the same thing as right feeling i.e. one who has no cognition of God is not a gnostic (*arif*), but one may have cognition of God without being Gnostic."

*Dhru-Nim* the Egyptian says: "Gnosis is in reality God's providential communication of the spiritual light to our inmost hearts," i.e. until God, in His providence, illuminates the heart of Man and keeps it from contamination, so that all created things have not even the worth of a mustard-seed in his heart, the contemplation of Divine mysteries, both inward and outward, does not overwhelm him with rapture; but when God has done this, his every look becomes an act of contemplation (*mushahadat*). Abu Bakr Wasiti says: "He who knows God is cut off from all things, nay he is dumb and abject (*kharisa wa-nqama'a*)," i.e. he is unable to express anything and all his attributes are annihilated." The *Katha Upanishad* brings it thus: "Superior to the Great is the Unmanifest; Superior to the Unmanifest is the Self. Superior to Self there is nothing. This is the goal, that is the supreme destination" (I, iii, 11) To the best of our knowledge, the said *Upanishad* here draws our attention toward the states of inner transformation as they are experienced by the Self in

its own quest. Hence the *Mandukya* comes out with an absolute clarity in this regard. "For all this is Brahman. This self is Brahman. That self of this nature consists of four parts": The highest is then reported to be; "Not cognizing the internal objects, not cognizing the external objects... the essence of the knowledge of the oneself, that into which all phenomena get resolved, tranquil, blissful, non-dual—such they consider as the fourth (part). He is the self, He is to be known."

The teachings of Guru Granth Sahib in the same manner lead us into the vision of an All-pervading, Non-dual Reality which is described as Timeless and Formless. In the *Rag Gauri Guareri* we find under *Ashpadla*: "The mind is contaminated by Duality. And strayed by doubt, one comes and goes. Of the egocentric the contamination goes not, till he is imbued with the Lord's name, through the Word. All that seems is contaminated by attachment, and (so) one is born to die, again and again. Imbued with the Lord's name is the mind purified. Serving the true Guru the contamination goes and then one dies not, nor one is re-born. Look thou into the Shastras or the Smritis; Without the Lord's name emancipation is attained not. In the Japji we find the opening lines of the

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**Guru Nanak's teachings forbid religious pride and straying into sects. Debasement of his teachings has led to wholesale neurotic involvement with rituals.**

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Mul Mantra: "He is One Indivisible Supreme Being; Reality Eternal; Creator-Immanent; Without Fear; Without Rancour; Timeless Form; Unborn; Self-Existent; Realized by the holy Preceptor's grace." In the *Chacari Chhand* we find thus: "Beyond comprehension, beyond understanding, Above time, unnsured by *Maya* art thou. ...Of innumerable manifestations, Yet Sole art thou.

Pauri XIV of Japji says unequivocally that the supreme destination of the spiritual existence is returning to Him. One with faith shall meet no obstacle on the path of God-realization; and shall proceed to his abode with God with his honour universally proclaimed. One with faith shall not stray into sects and byeways, but be fixed in true Religion. The great immaculate name of God shall be realised by one who in faith is firm-fixed."

It is evident from the scripture and also from the observations of a great authority on Sikh religion—namely, W. Owen Cole, that the thrust of Guru Nanak's teachings takes us into the heart of the question of attaining spiritual enlightenment. And above all, these teachings disqualify, without reservations, religious pride, bigotry, egotism and ostentations. It is true that the debasement of a genuine and sincere religious attitude has

led to a wholesale neurotic involvement in the rituals that have nothing to do with spiritual enlightenment.

The hatred which has now degenerated into communal hatred must be taken as something pathological and we must abandon the habit of ascribing it to the true spirit of religion because such a view is quite untenable and seems to be based upon reactionary tendencies which have no rationale. Communalism arising out of religious affiliations cannot be counteracted through adopting a perverted view of religion because substituting a greater perversion for removing a perversion is an absurdity. Communalism has entrapped us in a vicious circle of hatred and just as fire cannot be extinguished by fire, we cannot do away with communal hatred by adding more into it. Differences between religions, even those that appear to be of a fundamental nature, do not warrant inculcation of hatred in our hearts. It is a folly to think that we cannot love each other while adhering to different religions. Such thinking is most perverse and we must abandon it in the higher interest of the nation. The teachings of all religions tell us conclusively that the spirit which creates feelings of affinity for the fellow-beings has an unbroken continuity and that alone is

**Love for the country is a part of faith. Those who believe in the primacy of communal interests over the national cause are untrue to their faith.**

the basis for a common perspective of reality. Our goal of national integration first of all implies deep feelings of affinity with members of different communities and the ability to sink those differences that hurt the cause of the nation and thereby degrade us in the eyes of others. The act of hatred and its consequences are damaging the cause of the nation : it is in a sin condemned by the spirit of religions.

The other immediate implication of the said ideal content of national intergration is *love for the nation and the country as a part of faith, with an unqualified reverence for the cause of the nation*. We are custodians of national wealth and we alone are responsible for the well-being of the nation. The nation is not an abstract metaphysical concept; it consists of our fellow-beings born on the same soil which carries a sanctity, and we are taught to love our fellow-beings by the religions, and, as such, the scriptures lay down no conditions for loving our fellow-beings. We must realize that the well-being of the nation has no other meaning except its overall and balanced progress—material as well as spiritual. We have to disapprove and disavow the enemies of the nation in a forthright manner, irrespective of their community. *Those, who worship the cult of hatred are surely the enemies of the nation, and those who believe in the supremacy of the communal interests over the national cause, too, are its enemies. Such is the common perspective that arises out of the ideal content and that we must share for the well-being of the nation.*

We may now proceed to examine the meaning of the operative content of the concept of national integration.

Having determined the irreducible meaning of the word 'spiritual' and having gone through its implications we may now turn to a discussion of the mode of awareness which captures the Ultimate Reality in a single act of pure duration and renders its immediate experience into the core of the being, the inner self. The Holy Quran says : We are even nearer (to man) than his jugular vein". The Sufi thought does away with dualism through obliterating the polarity of the subjective and the objective. It is therefore the most profound subjective experience of the objective which marks the beginning of the mystical experience. The seat of this experience is said to be the *Qalb* (literally meaning heart), and awareness is the capturing power of the *Qalb*. The notion of *Qalb* carries very subtle connotations in the sufi thought but the most significant fact about *Qalb* is that it is potentially a mode of awareness undergoing transformations in the course of spiritual development which reaches into *Maarifat* (gnosis). All inner experiences derive their meaning through different stages of transformation. Concerning the highest stage, i. e. *Maarifat*, the *Mandukya* tells us that "all

**"Mind attached to objects leads to bondage.. Upanishads and sufis call for experiencing the Brahman (i. e. all of existence) within,**

phenomena get resolved", "tranquil", "blissful", "non-dual", "He is to be known". This is exactly the quest of the Sufis. However, the *Qalb* being a propensity of awareness, tends to experience a state of 'unawareness', thereby transcending the mode of apprehending the objective reality in its ordinary sense. Here we may recall the Upanishads in conveying to us the sense of the negation of "cognizing the internal objects" and "external objects" alike.

The concept of the *Qalb* is most clearly expounded by the *Taittiriya* thus : "He who knows Brahman as real, as knowledge, and as the Infinite, placed in the cavity of the heart, in the highest heaven realizes all desires along with Brahman the intelligent". (II, i, 1). Thus, the *Qalb*, in actuality, captures the Brahman in immediate experience and not through the intermediate action of awareness. This action of the *Qalb* carried through in immediate experience definitely transcends the cognitive functions of the determinate order that are tied down to apprehending the external particulars, the sensibilia. The determinate function of the psyche pulls back the focal awareness through the subsidiary awareness and thereby it keeps awareness entrenched in its relationship of acquaintance with the external objects.

The Upanishad describes two aspects of mind in this regard—the pure and the impure. "The mind is said to be of two kinds, the pure and

the impure, the impure mind is associated with desire, the pure is devoid of desire". "The mind alone is the cause of bondage and release of man. Mind attached to objects leads to bondage, and free from objects it leads to release" (20, 1-2).

Concerning the impurities of mind and its bondage with the internal objects the Sufi thought brings us the very heart of its teachings. This state of mind is occupied by the i.e. *Vasanas*, the hidden persuaders that surreptitiously prompt us to indulge in evil deeds—worst of them is causing harm to others and hurting the feelings of our fellow-beings, may be through disparaging their religious sentiments. These hidden persuaders lead us astray in Karma and cause sufferings here and in the life to come. These persuaders spring forth from the *Nafs-e-Ammara*, the seat of those impulses that lead us astray. Such impulses first of all create nescience and then drive us into vagrant thoughts. This state of affairs gives rise to unbridled desires and to passions of morbid nature; anger, lust, greed, coveting, envy, jealousy, and hatred. *Nafs-e-ammara* is the worst enemy of our spiritual existence and entraps us in the vicious circle of what is termed as *Rajas* in the Bhagwad Gita. It attacks the *Qalb* in a manner which often renders our being into a state of spiritual death. The *Nafs-e-Amma* never allows us to reach the heights of *Sattwa* which, to the best of the knowledge of the authors, is an open system of energy and the surest route to the attainment of the Brahman. The Guna described as *Sattwa* in the Holy Gita gives us the *Nafs-e-Mutmainna*, i.e. the state of our spiritual being which enables us to have communion with God. This relationship of man with his Creator transcends everything that is observable in a formal religion, and there is thus a conflation of meanings in this regard between different religions.

It is therefore the pure mind alone which captures the Brahman through transcending the determinate functions, i.e. the channels of mediate knowledge. Concerning what we have just said, the *Yoga Upanishad* never fails to tell us that Brahman cannot be captured by the mediate knowledge. Hence, "If one knows 'Brahman' exists", that is only mediate knowledge. If one knows 'I am Brahman' that is called immediate experience" (98, ii, 41). This, in their doctrine of *Fana*, is exactly the position of the mystics of Islam including Jalaluddin Rumi, who talks of transcending mediate knowledge.

The Holy Quran is quite explicit as regards the conditions which are prerequisites for communion with the Ultimate Reality. The person who craves away his desires and holds his self from attachments shall find his abode in heaven. The Holy Gita too is most explicit in this regard. "He who has faith, who is absorbed in it (i.e. wisdom), and has subdued his senses, gains wisdom; and, having gained

wisdom, attains quickly the supreme peace" (IV : 39) "But the man who is ignorant, who has no faith, who is of doubting nature, perishes. For the doubting soul, there is neither this world nor the world beyond, nor any happiness". (IV : 40) And thus is expressed communion with God in the Holy Gita as it comes forth from the mouth of Arjuna to whom Lord Krishna reveals himself. "Therefore, bowing down my body before Thee, adorable Lord, I seek Thy grace. Thou, O God, shouldst bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to a friend, as a lover to his beloved" (XI : 44). This experience of the revelation and communion has cognation with the immediate experience because of the identical nature of awareness.

It is therefore evident that the determinate order of our cognitive functions is only a fraction of the totality of the awareness whose indeterminate character transcends mediate knowledge—a point most systematically elucidated by one of the mightiest sages of Bharat, namely the great Shankaracharya, our master of Vedantic epistemology.

In his exposition of Shankara's theory of knowledge, Devaraj (1972) writes : "The pure awareness is designated by the Vedantists as *Saksijnana*

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**Dualism is characteristic of Western thought. Like Shankara, Sufi thought does away with it.....  
The most dangerous aspect of our state of affairs is that we have lost the sense of nationhood.**

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while knowledge in its changing aspects is called *Vrittijnana*" (p. 95). He further writes; "Shankara is at pains to show that there exists besides the changing modes of the internal organ which constitute experience, a pure *Cit* or awareness, an over-shining light, of which those modes are objects and without which memory, recognition etc. would be impossible.

"The burden of all this is that the objective world is experienced only when illumined by the light of the *Vrittijnana* or the *Buddhi-consciousness*. The pure *Cit* is known as *Vijnanamaya* when conditioned by without being distinguished from *Buddhi-consciousness*" (Ibid; 97-98).

Admitting the aforesaid view and also admitting that *Cit* is beyond *Vritti* we are led to ascribe a two-fold function to *Cit* whereby it assumes a binary character, i.e., (1) acquaintance with the order of events as transitory aggregates or *Vijnanamaya* (2) acquaintance with the total realm of possibilities of experiencing reality beyond the subjective-objective polarity that is inaccessible to *Vrittijnana*; the highest of such possibilities being the experience of the Immutable Brahman. "That is what is to hit (i.e., aimed at knowing) the beloved one, hit it" says the Mandukya Upanishad. Hence *Brahman-as-Cit* is, according to the Sufi



thought a most intimate and profound experience in pure duration. This, according to Mohammad Iqbal (1934) is the experiential datum of "Appreciative self" in moments of profound meditation. In such moments, the inner centre of the self, namely the appreciative self becomes capable of experiencing states beyond the passing states of consciousness—the Vritti of the Vdeantic epistemology.

Thus, like Shankara, the Sufi thought does away with the epistemological dualism, a characteristic of western philosophico-psychological thought.

The Guru Granth Sahib takes Ego to be the seat of vagrant thoughts and impelling desires; and one who is emancipated of its snaring power attains God, but that alone through transcending the appearances. "He who turns God-wards, finds his honour and kinship in the Glory of the (Lord's) name. And by him, Maya, the 'daughter' of the sea is slain. Nanak: false is cleverness without the (Lord's) Name. In the eleventh canto of Japji we find: "Adoption of holy teaching brings knowledge of deep spiritual truths. By absorption of holy teaching may one attain to states of Supreme holiness;"

The above discussion brings to fore the irreducible meaning of the concept of the spiritual as it exists in the Indian systems of thought and also the mode of apprehending the truth contained in the irreducible meaning. This constitutes the ethos through which arises a common perspective of visualizing and understanding the realities and the existential truths. The social realities therefore cannot be isolated from it, and if we perceive our fellow-beings born on the same soil in some other manner, then, that is not ours. And if we search for the ideal content of the concept of national integration elsewhere, that too will not be ours. The common perspective which arises out of our ethos gives us, in fact, a *single set of meaning* for perceiving the reality. What is most conspicuous in this single set of meaning is the element of 'universalism' within which is contained everything which can be brought under its 'operative content'. By operative content we mean the actual working through of a programme for managing our social affairs under the existing circumstances. Under the existing circumstances, our nation is in a state of dismemberment: we have become chaotic; we are indifferent to our own identity: we have become incapable of loving, caring, and respecting each other in a genuine manner; worst of all, we are disintegrating, rather than integrating a social order through which we can act as a worthy and effective nation in the world affairs. The most dangerous aspect of this state of affairs is that we have lost the sense of nationhood and under this process of rapid disintegration it will be a mistake to think—rather a fatal mistake—that we can sustain our gains for a long time. *We are therefore disintegrating and not integrating as a nation.*

The single set of meaning in which is embedded the ideal content of the concept of National Integration also contains the entire burden of its operative content. We must therefore understand what the single set of meaning implies with regard to the same. The fact is that we have an aesthetic-intuitive character of our culture which according to Northrop, is not restricted to Indian civilization alone; it permeates all the "Far-Eastern" civilizations and acts as a unitary ethos, and as the source of their identity.

Let us now see through the vision of Sri Aurobindo what is latent in the aforesaid single set of meaning. He tells us in an unequivocal manner that "Our inner nature is the progressive expression of the eternal spirit and too complex a power to be tied down by a single dominant mental or moral principle. Only the supramental consciousness can reveal to its differing and conflicting forces their spiritual truth and harmonize their divergence". Through his vision concerning the religion of humanity, Sri Aurobindo teaches us that "Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune

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**Indian and all "Far-Eastern" cultures have aesthetic-intuitive character..... "Man must be sacred to man, whatever the distinction" said Sri Aurobindo.**

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from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventible death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted, The heart of men is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression from mechanization, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organized in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or a pious sentiment but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind. This, broadly speaking, is the idea and spirit of intellectual religion of humanity. Sri Aurobindo considers egoism to be the worst enemy of a real religion, be it the egoism of the individual or the nation. Only the casting away of this egoism can enable us to attain the earthly aim of all religions "Love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, a living sense of human oneness and practice of human oneness in thought, feeling and life, the ideal which was expressed first some thousands of years ago in the ancient Vedic hymn and as must always remain the highest injunction of the spirit within us to human life upon earth". Concerning this universal element of the single set of meaning containing the operative content of the concept of National Integration which must guide our National Policy in this regard for setting aright the

deplorable state of affairs in the country, Shri A. K. Banerjee writes in his 'Discourse on the Hindu Spiritual Culture': "The spiritual realization of great saints has for hundreds of years exerted such an influence upon the Hindu mind in general and it has claim to exercise a similar influence upon the human mind of all countries... All differences between men and men, between communities and communities, between nations and nations, can be dissolved or harmonized by the dynamic consciousness of the essential identity of all. Active love for and benevolent service to all men, individually and collectively, would then become the natural self-expression in practical life of this sense of universal unity". (PP 137-138) He further writes: "A man's conception of society should pass from the family to the particular community to which he belongs, and from the community to the nation and from the nation it should march on to include the entire humanity... He has to train himself to cherish an attitude of love, regard, and friendliness towards the entire human race and consequently towards all individuals, families, communities and nations included in it, and not to bear any feeling of envy, malice, hatred or fear toward any. The play of his altruistic thoughts, emotions and activities should not meet any barrier anywhere within the human society". Thus, according to Banerjee, the Hindu spiritual culture aims at the destruction of the element of sorrow in the individual's life through the "contemplation of the inner unity of the apparently diversified universe and the essential identity of one's own self with the Self of the Universe—the mental discipline to view all the phenomena of the human society as well as of the physical world as the expressions of that one Self and as occurring in accordance with some universal plan and purpose and ideal, which, though inscrutable to our finite understanding, is none the less real—a systematic endeavour to feel that our own being is a particular embodiment of that one infinite and eternal, all-pervading Self of the universe and to look upon all others also in the same light—this is the greatest weapon for the destruction of sorrow in human life." (Ibid : 233).

This is surely the spirit which is embedded in the single set of meaning we have discussed above and under this single set of meaning the operative content of the concept of National Integration surely leads to the development of peculiar mentality representing the value-attitude-meaning system originating from the same. This system admits the necessity of spiritual needs whose fulfilment is indispensable to our overall growth, as of the biological and psychological needs. The necessity of the fulfilment of our spiritual needs has already been recognized by one of the greatest psychologists of the present century, namely A. H. Maslow in his theory of the hierarchy of needs.

Concerning the operative content which requires a mentality and an ethics of conduct, Mahadevan describes three imperatives of the philo-

sophy of ethics as enunciated in the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*. These are: "Cultivate Self-control", "Be generous" and "Have compassion".

The Holy Gita whose teachings emancipate us from the unbridled egoism is quite explicit as regards the nature of the Godhead—the character required for sustaining the value-attitude-meaning system essential for managing our individual and collective life in any age or period of human development. In the sixteenth canto of the Bhagvad Gita we find it thus: "Fearlessness, purity of mind, wise apportionment of knowledge and concentration, charity, self-control and sacrifice, austerity and uprightness" (1)

Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault finding, compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty and steadiness (absence of fickleness) (2).

Vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from malice and from excessive pride—these, O Pandavas (Arjuna) are the endowments of him who is born with the divine nature (3).

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**Collective life in any age demands forgiveness; purity of thought; wise apportionment of knowledge and concentration; charity; self-control; sacrifice; austerity; uprightness; non-violence; truth; freedom from anger, pride, malice and covetousness; renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault-finding, compassion, gentleness and modesty, steadiness, vigour, fortitude—says the Gita.**

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The Holy Quran prefers those who are not vengeful, express compassion, grateful to the Lord, have control over their anger and desires—most preferable are the ones who relinquish desire for seeking the will of God; they are nearest to Him.

The Sufis treat certain characteristics as spiritual afflictions; worst of them are envy, jealousy, hatred, hostility, pride, greed, anger, agony, dejection, and anxiety. As we shall see, they surely make up the demonic nature described in The Bhagvad Gita. However, the Sufis consider unselfish love, and the ever deepening love of God as vital aspects of spiritual character. Love for our fellow-beings is inseparable from the love for God. The great Sufi Jalaluddin Rumi said, "I have visualized God in human appearance; I have seen Him manifest". The aforesaid statements should leave no doubts in our mind as regards the immediate pragmatic significance of the operative content in view of our national character, and from the standpoint of nationhood—a sense we are continuously losing under a disturbed social life. If we do not want to succumb to the present circumstances we have to express an unyielding attitude against communal hatred, violence, outrage, aggression, distrust, stupid reactions toward the adherents of different religions, and more specifically against tendencies which are causing the dismemberment of the nation.

Since it is evident that we cannot isolate our national goals and interests from the rest of the world and since at the same time, our concept of national integration cannot be isolated from its spiritual background and from the element of universalism inherent in our spiritual culture, we must look into certain facts concerning this spiritually-uprooted civilization for making our own policy viable through a kind of *pragmatic universalism*. This concept had definitely existed in the mind of Sri Aurobindo who visualized the creation of a world-state based on the idea of the spiritual oneness of mankind. Sri Aurobindo was quite clear about the fact that a perfect world would not be created by men who were themselves imperfect. By a perfect world he meant a world-civilization of different order from the existing one.

The present-day civilization is essentially technocratic and its philosophy denies categorically the truths related to our spiritual existence; rather it treats spiritual existence as something meaningless and void of any substance. It refuses to admit any psychic activity beyond the determinate and asserts the duality of the subjective and the objective. Its scientific word-view therefore rests upon an unqualified determinism whose creators—Laplace, La Matrie, Locke, Hobbes, Descartes, Freud and many other materialists—were satisfied with the scientific *Weltanschauung* that psychologically arose out of the consequences of Newtonian physics. They considered materialism to be the all-embracing principle. On the plane of its highest intellectual achievements it created the analytical philosophy propounded by Russell, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Reichenbach and a host of others who practically banned all thinking outside their tenets which resulted in a wholesale application of the much-adorned positivistic thought of Comte in all psycho-social disciplines.

The worst came to psychology. Its real content was amputated, because, as Mannheim (1936) has observed, the interpretative schemes derived from mechanics was applied to the inner experience of man. "The aim here was not so much to comprehend as precisely as possible the inner content richness of experiences as they coexist in the individual and together operate towards the achievement of a meaningful goal: the attempt was rather to exclude all distinctive elements in experience from the content in order that, wherever possible, the conception of psychic events should approximate the simple scheme of mechanics (position, motion, cause, effect)". He then writes, "A psychology without a psyche cannot take the place of an ontology" (p. 23). A pseudo-psychology was therefore substituted for the real psychology which, as Elisio Vivas (1960) has observed, opened the door for an absurd quantification of the non-quantifiable. Sorokin (1956) has aptly named it as "Quantophobia".

The immeasurable spiritual aspect of human existence was therefore relegated from the realm of scientific inquiry. However, it is worth recalling here that this pseudo-psychology is now giving way to real psychology precisely in the manner in which Sri Aurobindo had predicted it. "Psychology is necessarily a subjective science and one must proceed in it from the knowledge of oneself to the knowledge of others. The Vedantic psychology was aware of other depths that take us beyond this formula and in relation to which the mental being becomes in its turn as superficial as is our waking to our subliminal mind. And now once more in the revolutions of human thought these depths have to be sounded; modern psychology will be led perforce, by the compulsion of the truth that it is seeking, on the path that was followed by the ancient."

"These ideas will first declare their trend in philosophy, in psychological thinking, in the arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, in the main idea of ethics, in the application of subjective principles by thinkers to questions of sociology, such as education, criminology, etc., even to politics and economics and in the new departures of science or at least of research ..... to extend it into the psychological and

**Technocratic values have swept away human attributes from human heart. Hopefully, the materialist-positivist philosophy is giving way to a new concept of physical reality and nature of man.**

psychic realms with a realisation of the truth that these have laws of their own which are other than physical—and finally, in a tendency in religion to reject its heavy weights of dead matter and revivify itself in the fountains of the spirit."

Eventually, of course, under the impact of Darwin, the Zeitgeist characterizing the temper of scientism led to the obliteration of every distinction between man and animal with immediate consequences for ethics and the spiritual life of man. It was believed under false assumptions that evolutionary process ended with the development of human cerebral cortex, the development of speech, erect posture, and the use of thumb. That was all about man. This false assumption left no place for understanding the ultimate meaning of evolution. Worst of all, it gave us a very perverted view of progress—an illusion which has driven nations after nations to accept on unquestionable grounds the lop-sided view of human attainments. Consequently, we are now entrapped in a framework of technocratic values of life that have undermined the very meaning of spiritual existence and have swept away the human attributes from the very core of human heart. We are so overwhelmingly tempted by this illusion that we are prepared to throw away everything that is spiritually worthwhile in our own culture. But, unfortunately we have utterly failed to realize the fact that this illusion is dying out with the same rapidity with which its technology is developing and now, along with it, its empiri-

cal-materialistic-mechanistic-positivistic philosophy is giving way to an altered conception of physical reality and the nature of man. One of the authors of this writing has fully dealt with the philosophical consequences of the altered conception of reality which has followed in the wake of post-Newtonian physics of the present century.

While observing this aspect of the technocratic civilization the Belgian scientist LeComte Du Nouy (1949) writes: "The human progress, which can be linked to evolution and which prolongs it, consists only in perfecting and ameliorating man himself and not in improving the tools he employs, nor in increasing his physical well-being. This last attitude is that of materialism and is insulting to man because it negates systematically the noblest human qualities which alone are capable of assuring him a happiness worthy of him and superior to that of a ruminating cow. Man can aspire to joys higher than those of his animal ancestors, and men who are convinced of the contrary—or who pretend to be convinced—are to be pitied if they are simple citizens, and to be dreaded if they are leaders. They work against evolution, against the divine will, they do evil."

And now we have to choose the source from which we intend to derive the meaning and the substance of the concept of National Integration—either from our own spiritual heritage which binds this concept with universalism or from those philosophical systems that are the negation of universalism. Should we develop into a unified and dignified nation in the world through an ideological orientation—one that can save human race from becoming extinct on this planet, or should we continue in a state of existence which is ultimately a negation of existence itself? The choice is surely ours. *Can we then attain national integration without universalism? If we are not to be historically in abeyance as a nation*, then we must heed the warning of Sri Aurobindo who could visualize most clearly the fate of this dehumanized civilization advertising vulgarity and popularizing that which is most meaningless and absurd. Sri Aurobindo says: "Therefore, in commercial age, with its vulgar and barbarous ideal of success—vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession—the soul of man may linger a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest. If persisted too long, life would become clogged and perish of its own plethora or burst in its straining to a gross expansion. Like the too massive Titan, it will collapse by its own mass, *mole ruest sua*." 1

The concept of National Integration cannot be excluded from the psychosocial discipline and its underlying assumptions, irrespective of whether we choose one or the other. The eminent anthropologist, Irwing Hallowell has caught this point in its utmost clarity. He writes; "All the

social and psychological disciplines must make some assumptions about the nature of man, society, culture and personality, no matter what areas of specialized research are undertaken. Among other things, some attitude must be adopted toward man's position in the natural universe and the necessary and sufficient conditions or prerequisites of a human existence as compared to a sub-human existence"

It has been established beyond doubt that our attitude concerning man's position in the universe rotates on the spiritually meaningful concept of self-awareness, and this point too has not escaped the attention of Hallowell, who takes it up without any reference to our standpoint in this regard.

While making a highly significant remark on the views of the social anthropologist, Evans-Pritchard, concerning the nature of a harmonious social system, Hallowell writes: "It is evident in this passage that the writer is assuming that the human individual is capable of self-awareness, is aware of self-other relations, and consciously relates traditional values to his own conduct. What is assumed without comment is a level of psychological functioning that is characterized by self-awareness, one basic fact of human nature and human personality. Self and society may be considered as aspects of a single whole". (Hallowell 1950 a).

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**India's greatest strength is its heritage of universalism. She needs to place before the world the technology of man, against the technology of robots.**

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"The attitude of self-awareness, which involves man's capacity to discriminate himself as an object in a world of objects other than himself, is as central to our understanding of the prerequisites of man's social and cultural mode of adjustment as it is for psycho-dynamics of the individual. A human social order implies a mode of existence that has meaning for the individual at the level of self-awareness. A human social order, for example, is always a moral order. If the individual did not have the capacity for identifying the conduct that is his own, through self-reflection, appraising it with reference to values and social sanctions, how would a moral order function in human terms? Hallowell therefore concludes that "self-awareness is as inherent in the human situation as are social structure and culture".

These remarks are quite consequential in the context of our existing circumstances. We seem to have become alienated from an ethos which gives a definite meaning to self-awareness. This alienation has caused the dissolution of our identity. The most painful fact is that we are psycho-culturally dislodged from the very core of a value-attitude-meaning system which alone has the potential to bring us back into a state of



recovery and restore our true and genuine identity. Only this recovery can now enable us to visualise national goals and interests in a common perspective.

If we can consciously and actively share the planning and policy of the non-aligned nations on ethical grounds for putting an end to nuclear insanity which is also the product of a widespread psychosis of nihilism characterizing this civilization, we can still more consciously feel that our cultural heritage has an imperishable element of universalism owing to its spiritual underpinnings.

This element of universalism can enable us to respond to the challenge of the spiritual darkness which is calling for a final opportunity to bring back the truly human attributes of man. The element of universalism embedded in our spiritual heritage is probably the greatest potential of our nation through which we can respond to its challenge, and place it before the people of the world for seeking a global consensus concerning the fact that without it the human race shall cease to exist if it falls back upon barbarism through its advanced technology, and through employing its present means of destruction. Nothing short of a universal spiritualism can possibly come up for a direct ideological intervention for halting the unabated rise of the barbaric spirit of man.

Our identity, our sense of nationhood, and any viable basis of national integration lies in our universalism, and nowhere else. The heart of the philosophy of national integration lies in the indivisibility of the concept of *Rashtra-Dharma-Sanskriti* and this indivisibility drives its meaning from a spiritually-based universalism. Shri Aurobindo had a great vision: the vision of a subjective age—the coming of the spiritual age. He had said: "Therefore the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age will be those who will recognize a spiritual evolution as the destiny, and therefore the great need of human being is an evolution or conversion,—it does not greatly matter which figure we use or what theory we adopt to support it,—of the present type of humanity into a spiritualized humanity even as the animal man has largely converted into a highly mentalized humanity".

If we can possibly arrive at a national consensus as regards having a programme of National Integration within the framework of a spiritually-based universalism, our next step might be easier in terms of the operative content which provides the roots for any programme or policy at the national level. This step must direct us into efforts for taking our technology out of the technocratic values; in other words we have to learn

and teach at the same time what it means to have technology for man, as against having robots for technology. Our technological progress immediately calls for a synthesis between *Bhartiya Sanskriti* and the rapidly changing modes of life induced by "nature-conquering" technology. The psychosis created by the technocratic values which has completely dislodged the spiritual aspect of our life has now appeared on the surface of awareness because it has unleashed forces that are dialectically leading human life into an existential chaos. And now it is the moment to realize the fact that we are quite capable of creating the synthesis. In the absence of this synthesis, history shall throw us adrift in the midst of an existential crisis and we may sink into it sooner than others.

We must, therefore, heed the writings of those thinkers of our age who are well aware of the development of this psychosis which has taken human attributes out of the very being of man. Among such thinkers we come across the builder of integral sociology, the great Professor Sorokin, and the founder of a holistic-humanistic psychology namely Professor Maslow. Sorokin, like the German speculative philosopher Schopenhauer, was an admirer of Indian thought and in his epoch-making "Social and Cultural Dynamics" he tells us very clearly that the existing civilization is under a process of dissolution due to its bleak materialism and its worship of the senses. He calls it 'senske': he

**The great need is the conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, much as the animal man was converted into a highly mentalised humanity.**

writes: "Thus we truly live in the age of the truth of senses, of a magnitude, depth, and brilliancy hardly witnessed in other cultures and periods. Scientism is in truth the most prominent and most important mark of our mentality..... Just as in the age of the truth of faith, God's name was everywhere, so in our time science is on everyone's mind and lips, from quacks and salesmen to scientists and scholars themselves. If something is qualified (as) 'scientific', (then) even soap, face powder, car grease, or dog biscuit sounds to us as great as the word 'orthodox' in an age of faith. 'Unscientific', on the contrary, sounds as bad as the words 'heretic' 'sacreligious', and 'blasphemous' in the period of the early middle ages..... Just as the mentality dominated by faith feels the sensory world as a kind of illusion, so the empirical mentality feels the supersensory world as a mere delusion".

Sorokin observes that the sensate mentality "materializes" ('reduces to materialistic terms') everything, including even the spiritual phenomena, e.g. the human soul; and the sources of this mentality lie in such trends as empiricism, materialism, mechanisticism, and determinism. He believes that empiricism and other cognate approaches to reality happen to be amoral, areligious and even asocial with the result that such morally

irresponsible science as has developed under these perspectives is a threat to the future of mankind, and even if nuclear explosion be the greatest triumph of science, it will be the greatest disaster for the mankind.

As it was mentioned earlier, this mentality in our country has assumed its most vulgar disgusting expressions which, in the estimation of Sorokin, is its passive sensate expression which characterizes the "Passive Epicureans". According to him "This is characterized by the attempt to fulfil physical needs and aims, neither through the inner mortification of "self" nor through efficient reconstruction of the external world, but through a parasitic exploitation and utilization of the external reality as it is viewed as the mere means for enjoying sensual pleasures. "Life is short"; "Carpe diem"; "wine, women and song"; "Eat, drink, and be merry"—these are the mottoes of this mentality".

Concerning this mentality which is heading its way in India, one of the authors of this writing had mentioned it as far back as 1974 that it has made the younger generation spell-bound, and has infatuated their mind so completely that they are rapidly losing their selfhood, their dignity, their character, and even their cultural identity. They certainly abhor high thinking, sobriety, discipline, serious deliberation, and austerity—and are heavily enchanted by trivialities, jesting, fads, crazes, and vulgarity. They are rapidly turning into an unorganized mass addict to intellectual morbidity, aimless persuasions, debased thinking, anti-social tendencies and destructive actions. Moreover, they are being systematically de-Indianized under the spell of modernity. "This state of affairs can be called deplorable. This mentality seems to be the debased expression of what Eric Fromm has described as the "marketing orientation". "The marketing orientation developed only in the modern era. In order to understand its nature one must consider the economic function of the market in the modern society as being not only analogous to this character orientation but as the basis, and the main condition, for its development in modern man.....In our time the marketing orientation has been growing rapidly, together with development of a new market that is a phenomenon of the last decades.....the "personality market". Clerks and salesmen, business executives and doctors, lawyers and artists all appear on this market.

He further points out: "Like a handbag, one has to be in fashion on the personality market, and in order to be in fashion one has to know what kind of personality is most in demand. This knowledge is transmitted in a general way throughout the whole process of education, from kindergarten to college, and implemented by family". Fromm observes that even the thinking and feeling of the market-oriented personality are determined by the market itself. "Thinking assumes the function of

grasping things quickly so as to be able to manipulate them successfully. Furthered by widespread and efficient education, this leads to a high degree of intelligence, but not reason." It is quite evident through repeatedly verified facts of human psychology that if sentiments of hatred and hostile attitudes are inculcated in the formative period of personality they become well-grounded in the basic personality; and a generation that is far away from reason and the ethos of a true and genuine culture, carrying the mentality described above, would be worst afflicted if hatred is inculcated in the formative period.

We must understand it very clearly that hatred, aggression, hostility and destructiveness, given the human potentiality to develop them, are all acquired. The great authority of psychology, A. H. Maslow pointed out that "If one looks at a healthy and well-loved and cared-for infant, let us say up to the age of one year and perhaps later, then it is quite impossible to see anything that could be called evil, original sin, sadism, malice, pleasure in hurting, destructiveness, hostility for its own sake, or deliberate cruelty... one of the reasons that babies are loved and wanted so much must be just this—that they are without visible evil, hatred, or malice in the first year or two in their lives". It is evident from the

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**The youth are losing their selfhood and are enchanted by trivialities. The orientation now is to marketing Everything, from goods to personality, trained towards market value.**

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is observations of Maslow that hatred and aggression, since they are acquired, can be eliminated through a conscious planning. Consequently, any policy or programming for national integration which disregards this unquestionable psychological truth is without foundation.

Concerning the nature of the existing technical mass order which has become world-wide, the Existentialist philosopher, Karl Jaspers draws our attention toward its bizarre and chaotic nature. He believes that human life is reduced to mere functioning and "Being is objectified, for positivism would be violated if individuality remained conspicuous. The individual consciousness is absorbed into the social so that, in exceptional instances, the individual has joy in work without any tinge of selfishness. Essential humanity is reduced to the general; to vitality as functional corporeality, to the triviality of enjoyment." Pointing out the consequence of this perversion of human life Jaspers says: "Imminent seems the collapse of that which for millennia has constituted man's universe. The new world which has arisen as an apparatus for the supply of necessities of life compels everything and everyone to serve it. It annihilates whatever it has no place for. Man seems to be undergoing absorption into that which is nothing more than a means to an end, into that which is devoid of purpose and significance". These

close range observations of the foremost thinkers of this century must impel us to do rethinking about what we are doing. Our thoughts are in fact moving in the reverse direction and we are unable to assess the very simple fact that technological progress would give us diminishing returns if it accelerates the pace of a dehumanized life and destroys selfhood. Jaspers mentions it quite explicitly that "to render the world of technique-absolute would be destructive of selfhood, and therefore our sense of the value of technical achievement must be permeated with a new significance".

It will be the worst fatality of our nation if we are unable to rediscover this new significance in our spiritual heritage which is calling for an awakening. *This awakening on our part must be integral to any programme of National Integration.*

The concept of universalism has been elucidated with utmost clarity by the founder of psychological sociology, Charles Abram Ellwood: his writings being consonant with the operative content of the concept of National Integration deserve our attention. Ellwood writes "The web of intercommunication among the individuals of a group, in the form of social tradition which they accept, controls their social behaviour and gives rise to customs, institutions, and methods of living together. The animal nature of man merely forms a background for this higher social development that is brought about by culture". Certain patterns must be followed by human groups in their development. Some of these have come from nature, but for the most part they have come from the experience of group life. These experiences were found originally and primarily in the face-to-face groups of men. As culture is a group of traits, there must be human groups which are the special bearers of all the essential cultural patterns. These are especially the "primary groups" or the groups which involve face-to-face relations and intimate personal acquaintance".

Since Ellwood believes that human societies are predominantly the creations of human mind, he places a unique emphasis on the psychic factor which we may also assume as the psyche of the nation in our context. This psyche of the nation is the vehicle of the value-attitude-meaning system; and so far as our nation is concerned, it is definitely the vehicle of the aforesaid single set of meaning. To this effect Ellwood writes: "The culture that controls human groups in their organization and behaviour is, however, at first built up largely accidentally and unconsciously by the working out of the desires and purposes of individuals; but it is capable of being transformed by intelligent collective action. Therefore, there is possibility of future improvement in human relations or social progress; but this can be made certain only through the develop-

ment of the social sciences and of sociology in particular. But such value-judgements, pointing out possible means of amelioration, are relative to the general ends of human society, such as unity, continuity and rational change".

Unlike other sociologists such as Tarde, Simmel, and Durkheim who adopted a limited psychological point of view in formulating their theories, Ellwood comes forth as a world sociologist through his epoch-making article "What is The Matter With Sociology" published in the American Sociologist of February 1943. In this article he writes: "Long ago a great teacher taught me that, in final conception, 'society is humanity viewed from the standpoint of its reciprocal relationships'.....Natural science, by revealing new means of communication and transportation, has made the physical interdependence of mankind beyond question. The spiritual interdependence of all human societies has been, moreover, strikingly revealed by war. Those who would limit human relations to merely the relations which can be observed between existing individuals and groups will now have to shut their eyes or at least deny commonsense. If sociologists are to function in the present world they must think in terms of the spiritual unity of mankind. They cannot afford to overlook

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**India's cultural diversities, her message of essential unity of religions, and integral view of reality and human existence are the greatest endowments to rescue the strife-torn world. But she must first achieve national integration through mass education.**

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any human relationship; the integration, not simply of the city or the local community or the nation but of the whole human world is their concern. Any society that fails to see the functional unity of mankind and the need of world-wide social adjustments is hardly abreast of developments in our human world. Such problems may be too difficult for scientific solution. That is another question. But they should not be ignored if we wish sociology to function in the present human world—to have even a little say about world-wide human relations".

Ellwood reaches into the very heart of the problem we have raised through this discourse. The single set of meaning yielding an integral view of reality and a unified view of human existence is an endowment of our spiritual heritage. This bestows upon us a vision across the time and the territorial boundaries of nations and societies, and its universalism embodies the spirit of our nationhood on the one hand, and of the unity of the world-wide human relations on the other. *We are, therefore, fully equipped with an ideology which can enable us to come out for an ideological intervention in the world affairs.* Our heritage contains a well-developed pattern for National Integration and relieves us from the compulsion of searching it elsewhere. It urges us to gear our material progress and technological advancement with the single set of meaning and to make it subject to the higher spiritual ends of existence. Human

spirit is indivisible and the philosophy that turns our attention for its realization and towards the settled truths of human nature is surely a living philosophy and its kernel embodies the unitive character of the spiritual content of all religions. Within this spiritual content lies the route to the attainable goal of National Integration.

We are neither required to do away with the diversities of our existing culture nor are we entitled to engross them, and thereby create a false plea for denying the essential unity of religions and the unitive character of human spirit; we only have to do away with the pollution of human spirit which has arrested its growth, and along with it, has thrown the civilization off the track of human evolution. The immediate implication of the operative content of the concept of National Integration is a forthright expression of disapproval of acts of violence and immediate administration of the policy of developing mass consciousness through the available media of mass communication as regards the true spirit of National Integration within the perspective of our spiritual heritage which rules out violence, aggression, destruction and genocide. Our indulgence in such acts is virtually the denial of religion and amounts to committing the cardinal sin. *The cardinal sin on our part is a conscious dismemberment of the Nation; The dissipation of our energies in acts creating disunity, and allowing the continuation of anything which is actually or potentially a threat to our Territorial Integrity. The true religious spirit warns us against these sins.*

*We have to reject that religion which allows hatred, disregard for our fellow-beings, and does not allow a sense of belongingness and national dignity to find access to our hearts.*

Pragmatically, however, the unitive character of the element of universalism gives clarity of thought as regards the social conduct; and as regards our mind and heart, it tends towards purity of both. It leads to communal love, mutual acceptance, deep feelings of unqualified regard for the "being" of others, besides our individual self, a sincere and genuinely motivated reverence for all religions, and, above all, 'a deep-seated sense of respect and affinity for the great sages. This is the beginning and end of altruism, and this is the mentality which is required for fostering the spirit of national unity and paving the way for National Integration. Without its spiritual meaning the concept of National Integration is otiose. This sober mentality cannot allow the sporadic fake culture to swallow up our spiritual heritage by creating a counter-mentality inimical to sobriety, thoughtfulness, contemplation, purposefulness, inner tranquility, self-awareness, spiritual love, unselfishness, simplicity, involvement of the psyche into spirituality elevating experiences—all handed down to us with our spiritual heritage.

This counter-mentality springing out of a vulgar counter-culture divides *Rashtra-Dharma-Sanskriti* through its confused sensate interpretations—sometimes "progress", sometimes "modernity" and sometimes through a most shameful expression of nihilism expressed through an obstinate refusal to accept a moral basis of life and the world. This is sheer mortification of human spirit and an outright debasement of human attributes which amounts to systematic dehumanization.

The moral basis of our life of the world is already set forth in our heritage, and those who create doubts in it are surely the ones that are described as having demonic nature in the Bhagvad Gita. If we have not become deaf, we can still hear the most clearly audible voice of Lord Krishna in this age when we are anxiously waiting for the turn of this century. This imperishable voice reaching our ears, one thousand, nine hundred, and eighty nine year after the departure of Jesus Christ, says thus: "They say that the world is unreal, without a basis, without a Lord not brought in regular causal sequence, in short caused by desire" (XVI : 8)

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**There is affinity between Lord Krishna's message and the Quranic philosophy of history. Divine will reveals the destiny of the cosmos to those whose self reaches the heights of *Maarifat* and apprehends the Brahman (the totality all existence).**

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"Holding fast to this view, those lost souls of feeble understanding, of cruel deeds, rise as enemies of the world for its destruction" (XVI : 9)

"Bewildered by many thoughts, entangled in the meshes of delusion and addicted to the gratification of desires, they fall into a foul hell" (XVI : 16)

"Given over to self-conceit, force and pride and also to lust and anger, these malicious people despise me who dwell in bodies of themselves and others. (XVI : 18).

"These cruel haters worst of men, I constantly hurl only these evil doers into the wombs of demons in (this cycle of) births and deaths" (XVI : 19).

These cruel haters have never been confined to any specific time or place; they appear again and again, but their fate is always and invariably determined by the Divine verdict pronounced thus by Lord Krishna;

"Whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, I come into this world (create incarnate) Myself. (IV : 7)



"For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age". (IV : 8)

These fragments which can be ordered through a *metaphysically-based Philosophy of History*, carrying a sort of inherent affinity with the Hegelian thought in their metaphysical overtones, bear a deep relationship with the Quranic philosophy of history. And thus we find it in the Holy Quran :

"If you have suffered from a wound, say did the enemy. We alternate these vicissitudes among mankind so that Allah may know the true believers and choose martyrs from among you—For he does not love the evil-doers. (Alo-Imran : 4 : 140).

"The unbelievers say 'why has no sign been given him by his Lord?' But your mission is only to give warning. Every nation has its guide". (Al-Raad : 13:7)

"When we resolve to annihilate a town, we first command those that live in luxury (to obey us). But they transgress therein. Thus the sentence is justly pronounced against it and we utterly destroy it." (Bani-Israil : 15;16).

"By God's will they routed them and David slew Goliath; and God gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever else he willed. And if God did not check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief : But God is full of bounty to all the worlds". (Albaqarah : 2 : 251).

The divine will unfolds time; and time reveals the secrets of the cosmos and its destiny to those whose inner-self, the core of their 'being' reaches the heights of Maarifat and apprehends the Brahman. The universe within us comes into encounter with the universe without, and casts away the duality of the objective and the subjective. Thus are laid down the foundations of a humane civilization. According to Rumi, the end of a civilization draws near when it loses its hold on the transcendental direction of our collective existence; consequently, its spiritual and material components fall apart and a chaos arises which, in turn, brings disaster in its wake. The individual consciousness sinks in the chaos, opening the *gateway to hell* and—in the expression of The Holy Gita—to lust, greed and anger. However, if the Compassionate Lord so desires, he sends his guide for the nation (or the civilization) and "O son of Kunti (Arjuna), the man who is released from these, the three gates to darkness, does what is good for his soul and then reaches the highest state" (XVI : 22).

Our nation is in the midst of a global existential crisis which is about to swallow the gains of over four hundred years of arduous scientific thinking and technological advancements that have brought mankind to a state of readiness for the spiritual evolution which marks the next phase of human destiny. Hence our experiment in building up a spiritually awakened nation, capable of striking a synthesis between the human spirit and technology and equipped with those human attributes that can safely replace the dehumanized technocratic values. This would be the singular and most decisive experiment in transforming a social order unknown to the world since the dissolution of mediaeval synthesis.

A nation consciously acknowledging the supremacy of spiritual values and actualizing the meaning of spiritual existence in this century can rightly and professedly challenge the very basis of nuclear insanity that lies in the bleak and false materialistic versions of reality which are quite obsolescent and have already forfeited their authenticity—rationally, ethically and also politically.

The true meaning of national integration in its ideal and operative contents is ultimately contained in the spirit of universalism and if the World-State of Sri Aurobindo is the visualized *Rashtra*, then a predomi-

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**The universe within comes into encounter, with the universe without and casts away the duality of the object and the subject.**

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nantly *Sattawic* orientation of life is the true *dharma*—the *Insan-e-Rabbani* of Islam—and then, of course, the true spirit of *Sanskriti* (the essence of culture) would consist of the purity of mind, self-awareness, love and *unqualified reverence for man*. The same spirit would repel hatred, morbid communal sentiments, vulgarity of thought and action, violence and aggression, egoism, pride and arrogance.

It is quite evident from the above discourse that our national interests and national goals supersede all communal interests and such interests and goals lead into the overall well-being of the nation, and the meaning of an overall well-being definitely includes the spiritual aspect of existence. Hence, the element of universalism cannot be taken out of it. However, it requires deliberation on the part of the esteemed National Integration Council to arrive at a consensus for accepting the integral view of national integration as presented above. In the event that this consensus is upheld by the National Integration Council we would be required to present a well-grounded programme under the national policy containing methods of child-centered education and Adult Education for changing undesirable attitudes and perspectives in inter-communal relations, and for building up value-attitude-meaning system with a single set of meaning pertaining to the overall well-being of the nation.

But before the esteemed members of the National Integration Council choose to bring up the aforesaid proposals for their deliberations, let them turn their ears to the voice of Lord Shiva which comes to us through one of the most beautiful sets of verses of Sir Mohammed Iqbal which are contained in his famous Persian composition "*Javednama*" which is akin to the "Divine Comedy" of the Italian poet, Dante. In the mystical celestial journey he performs in the guidance of his beloved master Jalaluddin Rumi, Iqbal arrives on the surface of the moon where he is led into a dark cave which suddenly gets illuminated with the divine light where every stone could be seen wearing the holy string (Janeoo) and there appeared under a tree the great and timeless Lord Shiva who inquired about Iqbal from Rumi, his master. Having accepted his presence there, Lord Shiva, considering Iqbal worthy of address, uttered something which deserves thinking on our part.

*Thus spake Lord Shiva to the God-loving Rumi and his faithful disciple :*

"Blessed is the Nation that has retained its potential to recreate itself through its own heritage".

And now, we only have to put one final question so ourselves : Are we really those blessed people, worthy in the eyes of Lord Shiva, who can rise up as an integrated and unified nation in this world and recreate ourselves through our own heritage for saving mankind from an almost inevitable disaster which will turn this earth into a reeking hell and add another lifeless planet in this desolate solar system ? □

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## Roots of the Malaise

By : Sailendra Nath Ghosh

In my Epilogue to the proceedings of the Nagpur seminar on the Indian Political System, published in the November issue of the *Manthan*, I limited myself to the fundamentals and did not raise certain questions. Since these exist in people's minds, these need to be faced squarely.

Before we raise these questions and seek their answers, let us pick up the connecting thread and briefly state the previously stated conclusions in the Epilogue.

1. That there can be no genuine democracy unless the system of governance by elected representatives at the national and state levels is extended to the district level and supported by a system of governance by people's direct participation at the block and village (or cluster-of-villages) levels.
2. That without a shift from concentrated-energy-based, mechanistically oriented development to one which is based primarily on ecological resources—i.e. on biological resources and renewable forms of energy—neither democracy nor equitable (nor sustainable) development is possible; and that for this, the basic philosophy has to be simple living, with minimum needs consistent with the demands of radiant health for all.
3. That a State modelled on the western modernist state is bound to drift towards a military-power-cum-merc-GNP-oriented State flaunting the aggregate national income but hiding the wretched conditions of the people. This also hides the relative proportions of the life-oriented and the life-destruction-oriented "assets" which comprise the Gross National Product.
4. That once the ideal of a nation-state, with a central role for the Government in spearheading the development, is accepted, it is bound to lead to absolutism of power and corruption.
5. That the system of political "party system", which breeds irrational partisanship, divides the people and sets them working at cross-purposes, needs to be changed. With the introduction of "five-tier" federalism, comprising (i) governance by participation upto the block level and (ii) governance by representation at the district, state and national levels, it will be possible to change from rigid, negativist

multi-party system to flexible, creative, formations and movements. Five-tier federalism is "the widest sharing of power and *utmost plurality conceivable*. This will dispense with the need for plurality of parties with vested interests in political power at the national level and in the states—parties which have little to do with principles. In their place will grow "discussion clubs, non-formal associations and issue-based and idea-based movements in response to the needs of the times and the spaces."

Now, the questions that exist in the people's minds are many and varied. These are as follows :

- \* Is it really possible to conduct the affairs of a country without any political party ?
- \* Is not the presidential system likely to be more talent-oriented, less corrupt, with less scope for horse-trading and whimsical shuffling of holders of offices ?
- \* Is it not true that the concentration of power in the hands of the Indian Prime Minister is much more than in the hands of the Presidents of the U.S.A. and France and the Prime Minister of the UK, so far as deciding the fate of one's own nationals is concerned ? Our Prime Minister can dismiss duly elected state governments through the instrumentality of the President. He also replaces the Chief Ministers (and thereby the council of Ministers) of the states ruled by his own party. In the United States, the elected governors of states have their independent jurisdiction and no federal fiat can change them. The congressional committees there have very substantial powers, including the power to reject the Presidential nominees for cabinet posts or federal judgeship. The Congressional committees' proceedings in the U.S.A. are quasi-judicial : false evidence before them involves risks of perjury. None of these checks exists in India. Should a Prime Minister in a federal set-up have such overriding powers ?

- \* Why is sycophancy so rampant and so brazen in India ?
- \* Why is corruption so widespread in India ? \* Although there is corruption in other countries, this does not affect the level of common people's everyday living. In India, it causes harassment even in matters of basic amenities. In spite of the limitations of bourgeois democracy, the UK can claim that judicial corruption is virtually

\* At lower levels, the corruption is on such petty scales that it looks like demanding rewards (*bakshis*). Yet the coercion is there.

unknown in that country. How could the UK achieve and sustain this ? In the UK the evidence of traffic policemen is, even now, considered by the general public to be truthful and decisive. Why cannot the same be said of our policemen ?

- \* Why, in this country, do the rank-and-file members of the ruling parties, *en masse*, turn into middlemen of business deals and beneficiaries of state-funded projects ? Why has the phenomenon of "party politics as a wholetime profession", i.e. as a means of livelihood, emerged in India ?
- \* Why do our politicians—whoever come to rule either at the Union level or at the state level—indulge in double-talk to *bluff particularly our own countrymen* whereas the leaders of governments of other countries seek to hoodwink mostly other peoples ? (In foreign policy matters, we have a relatively open and ready-to-be-outwitted approach).
- \* Why this distinctiveness of India—in corruption at all levels of officialdom, in adulteration of food, in sycophancy and hypocrisy ?<sup>1</sup>

### Democracy Needs to be Purged of Party-mongering

We have shown that five-tier federalism is *utmost plurality itself* and that in this system, there would be need for vigorous idea-based and issue-based debates and movements in every nook and corner of the country but no need for rigid amoral loyalties which political parties demand of their members.

Yet, since the idea has sunk deep in our belief-system that "democracy is inconceivable without a multi-party system", it may be worthwhile to discuss the arguments that are advanced in its favour. It needs to be pointed out that none of those who stand for partyless democracy stands for one-party state which the Soviet Union and the East European states represent. Nor do they advocate the kind of system of governance which General Zia of Pakistan stood for. General Zia had no concept of democracy, leave alone five-tier federalism. While forbidding elections under political party labels, he bolstered a conglomeration of obscurantist elements. That was a solid bloc of fanatics, as in a one-party dominated State.

<sup>1</sup>Manifestation of hypocrisy has been extended to a new field during the last two decades. In talks about ecology and conservation of Nature, our rulers are the world's greatest champions. In actions, they are among the worst offenders.



Those who have come to accept a mere two-tier federalism in a large country as sufficient condition for a genuine democracy, are under a compulsion to seek some plurality somewhere. In conventional systems of democracy, plurality is provided by multiple political parties. This has made them think that the very stability of the political system depends on the existence of plurality of political parties. "Functional differentiations and specialisations are inherent in a modern society : hence it is the multi-party system, which gives scope for articulation and ventilation of views of these different interest groups and secures their accommodation in a pluralist culture. It is the multi-party system that ensures orderly succession"—thus runs the argument.

But how many parties are to be there to constitute the desirable multiple ? Does "multiple" necessarily mean "limited to two"? What would have happened if, in the USA or the UK, there were more than two major political parties ? How vibrant is Italian democracy with its multiple parties ? Is not instability of government a permanent feature there ? Without a presidential system, would not the French democracy with its multiple-party system, have plunged into chaos ? Should we not deduce from this that where more than two national parties exist, the presidential system would have to be a must ? Is it not obvious that without a president as the fulcrum of the system, a democracy with a multiplicity of parties would become direly unstable ?

Again, functional differentiation and specialization are inevitable and even desirable up to a point. But in the name of modernism, should this specialism go to such watertight compartmentalism and to the erection of such barriers as would require a separate party for each specialized interest ? Are these interests so vastly different as to require separate political ideologies ? If not, why would they require rigidly differentiated political formations ? Does not multiplicity of parties in today's India represent various specialist or functional interest groups ? Are they not based on unprincipled personal-cum-group interests ? Does democracy mean exercise of *power over* the people—*or service to* the people ? Why, then, do we have to have political parties oriented to power ?

The need for plurality is unquestioned. But plurality for what and how ? Plurality is needed to enable each interest group to find its immediate, medium-term and longterm interests and to find their correlation with those of other interest groups to optimise the wellbeing of the whole society—i.e. of each interest group and each individual. Plurality is also needed for the groundswell of the emotional and intellectual energies of all people and their flow into creative channels.

The present-day pattern of political parties in India and elsewhere defeats this very purpose. They promote insularity. "My party right or wrong"—this is their inbred attitude, which is a blight on fresh thinking. The political parties' concern is to grab power. Power interest makes them blind to realities. This is everywhere in the world. But in India the rot has gone so deep that the political party members have been permeated by crass selfish interests. There is hardly any debate on fundamental questions : the goals of the society, the implications of the present pattern of science and technology ; the philosophical implications of the latest findings in physical, biological, anthropological and psychological sciences and their messages for organisation of life and society, are not discussed in any political party. Nor are there any debates over policy issues that belong to lesser levels. In ages past, social and political leaders were philosophers as well. Today's political parties obscure the thinking on basic issues. They live in a world of their own excitation.

But why this conspicuous counter-productivity in India, which was traditionally known for the fertility of its ideas ? When thick milk rots, it stinks. Where a high ideal is made to rest on a fragile frame of hotchpotch—which Nehruvian ideology undoubtedly is—it is bound to produce an anti-climax.

The plurality based on multiple political parties has outlived its utility. Substantive plurality can now be assured by (i) the masses sharing in the decision-making process at grassroot levels and (ii) by the widest possible spread of "discussion clubs, non-formal associations and issue-based and idea-based movements", in which socio-political ideas and all questions of life would come up for debate. As pointed out earlier, under five-tier federalism, participative democracy is the foundation and the pillars. Hence all groups—religious, linguistic, ethnic—will wield power at some level or the other. Plurality reaches its zenith in this concept.

### Illusions About Presidential System

Some people nurse the idea that a switch to the presidential system will be more efficient and less corrupt. During the high tide of Indira Gandhi's rule, when no political personage in India had a comparable stature, some individuals close to the seat of power had propounded the idea. The obvious intention behind this proposal was that if the presidential system could be adopted, then, she could have been free from even the little constraint which the President in our system could at times present. This was intended as an insurance against slippage of power from her hands in the event of a cleavage within her own party. In these days of declining image of Rajiv Gandhi, when doubts

have assailed his supporters' minds about his capacity to win in a nationwide straight contest, no such proposal is mooted any longer by his party members. But aspiring technocrats and persons with long administrative experience continue to indicate their preference for presidential system.

The arguments that they advance are as follows. In such a system, the President would have the power to induct into the cabinet persons whom he regards as talented without requiring the latter to stand for elections, provided the congressional bodies do not find anything unsavoury about them. *Secondly*, the President would not need to maintain party cadres continually to get their support to remain in power and would not, therefore, need to resort to unfair means to build party funds; and in any case, no President would have the scope to serve more than two consecutive terms. Hence no scope of ambition for permanent power, no need for "personality cult", no need for cadres owing personal allegiance. Since the calibre of elected representatives in the country has been going down and the cult of "cadre the grabber" has been spreading among parties ruling in the federal and the State levels, the concept of presidential system has been gaining in appeal.

But the presidential system is *not* more democratic than the parliamentary system of governance. There is considerable amount of literature to show how the President of the USA has to see and hear through the eyes and ears of the military-business-bureaucratic Establishment. The masses in the USA have hardly any scope for participating in the decision making process except casting a vote once in four years. As for the induction of non-vote-seeking talented people in the nation's top decision-making positions, there are other aspects than are dreamt of by the technocrats' and intellectuals' philosophies. For people's welfare, certain virtues such as integrity, pure heart, love for the people and the capacity to feel their pulse are more important than high intellectuality. This definition of the prime requirement would not be easily acceptable to technocrats or to people who think that high technological complexity in all aspects of the society's activities is to continue to be the order of the day. Besides, the high costs of electoral battles for presidencies and the consequential obligation to money bags are often underestimated.

### Sources of Centralist Autocracy

Now, let us explore the sources of centralist autocracy and corruption in our country.

*First*, wherever there is a combination of parliamentary democracy and state-led pattern of development, it becomes a haven of corruption.

Nehru had thought that this combination formula would give us the best in both the worlds—the benefits of political democracy as in the West *plus* the benefits of economic democracy which potentially existed in the East European states. In reality, it can only yield the worst in both the worlds.

*Secondly*, in our system of "modified federalism", the constitutional power of the Union Government to dismiss the State Governments had led to utmost centralisation of power in the hands of the leader of the party which forms the government at the Union level. If there had been (i) a system of popularly elected governors as the head of the State as well as of the government in the constituent states and (ii) the powers of committees and subcommittees of the legislative bodies at both the Union and the State levels had been substantial, the scope for autocratic functioning could have been restricted. Elected governors as the chief executives of the States, unalterable by any amount of machinations by groups of MLAs within the State or by the whims of the Union-level big boss, would have lent greater substance to federal democracy. Such a system at the State level was possible without prejudice to the existing relationship between the Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the President at the Union level. Only the power of dismissal of State governments by the President on the advice of the Union's Council of Ministers needed to be ruled out.

*Thirdly*, centralism is inherent in nature-conquering science and technology, which we adopted in imitation of the Western nations in the mistaken belief that there is no superior alternative to this pattern of science and technology. This science is machinist. For everything, it seeks mechanical or manufactured-product-oriented solutions. Hence it is inherently capital-intensive. Its increasing capital-intensity keeps dislodging increasingly large proportions of people from access to it. In private enterprise system, it leads to increasing corporate centralism. In state-led system—i.e. the system which allows the political and the economic power to be concentrated in the same hands—the machinist science and mega-technology reinforces the centralist grip. The exercise of control by centralised planning further tightens this grip.

*Fourthly*, our culture, which is heavily encrusted with *gurunad* (obedience to the preceptor, to the head of the clan and to the wielder of temporal power), tends to promote hereditary rule which, in turn, is promotive of autocratic behaviour.

*Fifthly*, the existence of too many parties creates an environment of three-or four-cornered electoral contests, in which it becomes possible for

a party polling merely 30 percent of the votes to form a government and to maintain a defiant attitude, placing more faith in manipulative skill and diversionary populist slogans than in serving people's interest.

*Sixthly*, the combination of party chief's post and the Prime Minister's post in the same hands and the use party whips to compel the ruling party members to vote even against their conscience has strengthened the personal dictatorship of the Prime Minister<sup>2</sup>. This will continue as long as the personality of the Prime Minister is able to catch people's votes. The exploitation by the ruling party of the name of the Indian National Congress (which had led India's struggle for freedom) even after most of the surviving heroes deserted it and the massive occupation of Congress by opportunists without any record of public service who, therefore, count for little in the public eye and depend wholly on a god-father, and (iii) the feuds between the proliferating parties have created a peculiar situation which strengthens the basis for autocracy.

*Seventhly*, the restricted powers of parliamentary committees in the Union and the States are designed to maintain the centralism of power.

There are yet other factors favouring dictatorial tendencies which will be discussed below.

### Mechanics of Autocracy and Corruption

Let us now see exactly *how* the juxtaposition—of (i) parliamentary democracy and the Soviet model of centralised planing and state-led development, and (ii) a pattern of mixed economy, in which the State sector takes up long-gestation, high-risk industries and the private sector runs the high-profit, consumer goods industries under permits and licences—makes corruption endemic. Further, when this is combined with the lopsided concepts that “economy of scale favours the mega-industries” and that these large and heavy industries are the foundation for both “industrial power and people's welfare”, it becomes the breeding ground for utmost centralisation of power on the one hand and immiseration of the masses on the other.

State enterprise, whether in India or in the Soviet Union or any other ‘socialist’ country, is in reality bureaucratic enterprise: *It is the ruling political-cum-bureaucratic elite's “free enterprise”*. Without a spirit of service to the common people and without the scope for people's

<sup>2</sup> Shri C. Rajagopalachari used to say that the use of party whips to coerce the party members' voting behaviour was inimical to parliamentary democracy.

direct participation in decision-making and control, no enterprise deserves to be called public enterprise. But that is beside the point for our present discussion. Our purpose here is to see how the juxtaposition (of parliamentary democracy and Soviet model of planning) works.

In some socialist countries, there is greater autonomy for individual enterprises in matters concerning day-to-day management (though not in decisions regarding the product-mix and the pattern or level of investment). There the shopfloor committees and the local units of communist parties seek to review the management's decisions. But in a parliamentary democracy, there are hardly such local watchdogs, the review being left to the domain of ministerial bureaucracies and parliamentary committees, often without deep-enough knowledge or commitment. Since the Minister is answerable to Parliament for the performance of State enterprise—and also because there are no clear guidelines as to the inviolable sphere of the enterprise's autonomy and no precise industry-wise criteria for assessing the performance, the ministries keep the enterprise managements under tenterhooks. The answerability to Parliament becomes an excuse for exercising control in spheres in which the Minister and the bureaucrats are personally interested. Often these are spheres in which they ought not to be interested, while the spheres of policy guidelines—particularly the defining of year-wise objectives for each given unit—remain neglected. This vacuum, too, forces the managements to keep knocking at the ministry's door all the time. And in spheres where the managements themselves ought to have been subjected to industrial democracy, they remain free to be wasteful and to promote personal interest at the expense of national interest.

Even more sinister things happen. The heavy industries often require heavy imports of machinery into countries which are late-starters on the road to western type of industrialization. In xenophilic countries like India, where commission agents are entrenched in almost all political and administrative levels, the imports tend to be much more than are absolutely necessary. In the “free society” of a parliamentary democracy, a Minister is free to earn percentages on the value of the orders for supply of equipment and from private sector dependent on the government for permits and licences. The political executives “make hay while the sun shines” by using their discretionary powers. Thus, this hotch-potch of a ‘parliamentary democracy’ and a ‘mixed economy’ and ‘Soviet pattern of planning’ opens up multiple sources of profits for political office-holders. They can mint from their empire of State enterprises (by directing in particular channels their purchase orders and giving jobs to proteges) as well as from those private enterprises which are given preferential treatment.

Coteries of hangers-on aspiring for crumbs of these booties build up, mushroom fashion, around the holders of political offices all along the line.

Leaders of purely statist economies have much less scope for hiding such ill-gotten money within the country or in the foreign banks. And the leaders of "free enterprise economies" do not have such opportunity to profit from the issue of permits and licences. India's "mixed political system" wedded to "mixed economy" provides double-barrel scope for corruption.

Today, much controversy is raging on the issue of commissions from Bofors and other foreign suppliers. The practice of taking commissions was built into our system from the very beginning. Soon after I joined the Petroleum Information Service in 1961, a contract was signed for the import of certain petroleum products from Japan. The officers of the Indian Oil Company, during a private conversation, told me that it was customary for Japan to pay 3 per cent of the export value to the contract-giver, even without the latter asking for it. This was part of their business ethics. I started wondering since then whether the 3 per cent commission was deposited by the recipient with our national exchequer or was pocketed by individuals.

In 1972, when the decision was taken to import equipment for several fertiliser plants—their value was rated at about Rs. 350 crores—the then undivided Fertiliser Corporation of India had a Managing Director who was known as the father of catalysts in India and acknowledged as the key figure for the indigenisation of fertiliser technology. Every one expected that after his due date of retirement, he would be requested to continue to develop new catalysts and new processes as an emeritus scientist, with or without pay (for pay was never his concern). But to our utter bewilderment, we found that the Managing Director was asked to go on leave, prior to his retirement, even though he had not applied for leave. The purpose was to appoint a Managing Director in his place. And the wonder of all wonders, the new appointee was not even required to describe himself as "Acting Managing Director". He was given full pay and full powers of the confirmed Managing Director even before the incumbent's due date of retirement. This irregularity was committed even at the risk of inviting objections from the Audit Department. How this irregularity escaped the notice of the Comptroller and Auditor General's department is not known.

The then Chairman of the Fertiliser Corporation of India, seeing my bewilderment at this uncerecerimonious treatment to a highly creative scientist-cum-engineer, made a comment, which I often recollect. He said :

"It is a surprise that you feel surprised ! You had been in politics earlier. Don't you know that the Ministry has been calling the Indian agents of the potential equipment suppliers and telling them that they would have to pay 5 percent of the value to the party fund ? Now, 5 percent of Rs.350 crores is Rs. 17½ crores. Everybody knows that the Ministry would not place the order on the chosen party/parties. If there is no pliable person in the Managing Director's position, they would not be able to get the commission." This practice of getting commission was, even then, an "open secret" to all top politicians and bureaucrats. Over the years, this practice must have become more pervasive.

To return to the mainstream of our analysis. India's politico-economic system gives ample opportunity for talking socialism and obliging big business and reaping profits therefrom. While in political or administrative office, everybody becomes a great socialist because expansion of state sector expands his sphere of many-sided interference and domination. And the "mixed economy" provides golden opportunities for obligating tycoons for "spot gains" or rewards after retirement or loss of office.

A system that assigns to the Government the key role of directing and spearheading economic development does this in the belief (i) that this will help the society steer clear of plutocracy, and (ii) that the State, by covering the high risks of capital-intensive industries, will serve as a centrifugal force and diffuse entrepreneurial initiative among the people of modest means. But the outcome has almost always been disappointing. This is because statist dominance has led to bureaucratisation. The members of the Boards of Directors, not having any personal stake, can take arbitrary decisions. The employees come to believe that they have only "rights" and no obligations. The ministers and the ministry officials—i.e. the holders of powers—issue directives on the basis of their short-lived brainwaves. And the minority of dedicated managers and creative scientists who, believing their responsibility to be in the nature of sacred trusts, strive to serve according to their conscience and convictions, get crushed and squeezed out. (It must, however, be stated that due to this minority of dedicated persons, stirred by the appeal of the "public sector", the development of technical expertise in state enterprises has often been higher than in our sheer-profit-oriented enterprises which have constituted the bulk of the private sector in our hitherto sheltered market.)

### **Basis of Autocratic Power : Example from Life**

It has been pointed out earlier that the combination of political power and economic power in the same hands leads inevitably to an



autocratic system. This is because it reduces people to complete dependence on only a few persons, both for existence in a polity and for livelihood. An event in the present writer's life, which came to him as an eye-opening experience, will show how this concentration of both kinds of power affects societies. In 1956, when Life Insurance Corporation Bill was coming up for discussion in Parliament in the wake of life insurance nationalisation, the present writer was charged with studying the bill and suggesting the amendments to be raised in Parliament by the Communist members. This was also the time when this author was doing intense soul-searching. Dissatisfied with the Soviet leadership's glib explanation of Stalin's personality cult, he was trying to find out what exactly was the socio-political-economic-cultural basis which enabled the "personality cult" to appear and flourish.

At the end of the said Bill, there was a schedule of compensation, of which neither this author nor Shri Kamal Kumar Basu,<sup>2</sup> a qualified solicitor with experience in company laws, could make a head or tail. It was, therefore, decided to secure the services of an Actuary. The General Secretary of the Insurance Employees' Federation persuaded a ranking Actuary to come to our aid. He came to Delhi and virtually hid himself in my room. He would not come out to the verandah or the lawn, what to speak of the street beyond. One day I asked him: "You are one of the top actuaries of India. Why are you so afraid?" He replied: "Look here, Mr. Ghosh, in earlier days, if Cowasjee Jehangir of Oriental Insurance had sacked me, B.K. Shah of New India would have welcomed me. If he, too, sacked me, P.N. Talukdar of Hindustan Insurance would have welcomed me. But today, the situation is very different. Now, the owner is only one—the Government. The entire life insurance business is owned by it. The custodian of my unit is expected in Delhi. If he happens to see me in front of a communist bungalow, I would have no place anywhere in the life insurance business."

In a flash I got the answer to the question which was assailing me regarding personality cult. From my trade union experience, I knew that a person retrenched by the Bata Shoe Company could get a job in Flex. But a person retrenched by North-Eastern Railway would not get a job in any railway office in India. A person retrenched by Inchhapore Gun Factory would not get a job in Jabalpur or Kanpur ordnance factory. "If this happens in a country where the means of production are only partially nationalised, what can happen in a country where all means of production are nationalised?" I also realized that with industrialization, comes increasing specialization. "In our country, this Actuary, if he happened to have some savings, could study law or chartered accountancy

<sup>2</sup> Shri Kamal Basu happens to be the Mayor of Calcutta at present.

for five or six years and then begin a new career. But if the government comes to be in control of all avenues, then, the people cannot have freedom". The conclusion I reached was: "This concentration of political and economic power in the same hands must have laid the basis for personality cult. That is why Khrushchev had to perform 'gopak dance' before Stalin.

This brought home the lesson that unless there is decentralisation of management, industrial democracy (i.e. workers' effective voice), a pervasive "work-is-worship" spirit, freedom of the press, and genuine independence of the judiciary, the concentration of both types of power in the same hands is bound to be dangerous in any country.

Subsequent researches have convinced this author about two other requirements for democracy. In the same manner as in a biological system, there are acids, alkalines and neutrals—or as in an atom, there are protons, electrons and neutrons—there has to be in a healthy socio-biological system a state sector, a private sector, and a cooperative sector. *The cooperative sector has to act both as a buffer and a cement.* Where this principle is violated, there is chaos and imbalance, sickness and corruption. The present writer who knew intimately the functioning of state undertakings in petroleum, fertilisers and steel, knew of the helplessness of the top executives of state undertakings. To stand firm against a minister's unjust or ill-conceived order is to invite constant pinpricks, if not early termination of tenure on some cooked-up charge. If a genuine and flourishing industrial cooperative sector had been in existence, this would have provided scope of mobility to those who seek to leave the state sector but dislike the ethics of the private sector. This opportunity would have ensured the freedom of the technocrats and elicited their frank and fearless advice in all the three sectors, thereby maximising consumer satisfaction and national welfare. In a system where there are only two sectors—namely, the state sector and the private sector—either the state sector comes to subserve the interests of the private sector, or the private sector comes to be infected by the bureaucracy of the state sector. Or both kinds of abuses reinforce each other.

Secondly, the production units need to be governed by what Mahatma Gandhi called "Human-scale technology". There has to be a limit on their size, because dinosaurian existence is not in accord with either ecology or democracy. *Within this overall limit*, again, there have to be different gradations. In Nature's kingdom, there are the big, the medium and the small: the largest are the fewest in number and the smallest are ubiquitous. Of course, this, again, is subject to the law of the necessary minimum size corresponding to the nature of its functions.

In a society where this natural law is subverted and consideration of overall productivity of the ecosystem is made to yield place to the consideration of "marginal productivity of capital", the choice goes to favour the concentrated-energy-based megatechnology and the highly complex and highly-capital-intensive nuclear or laser technology. Apart from their being unecological, they exclude most people from access and thus build the power base of the elite. The more complex a technology, the more prohibitive it becomes to common people's entrepreneurial initiative. When technology is allowed to assume such complexity, it becomes incompatible with democracy and promotive of corruption.

I think it was Galbraith who made the point that technologies of this nature promote business-military-bureaucratic oligarchy. Technologies of high complexity are *beyond the ken of not only the enlightened non-technical people but also the specialists of other disciplines*. Even where corruption may be strongly suspected in the choice of a particular technological process or product—each process and its related machinery costs crores—this remains a guess and cannot be proved, for each choice can be passed on as the consequence of a "value judgement" or at the worst, "error of judgement".

There are many investigative journalists who expose individual acts of corruption but few care to trace these to the system which breeds, and provides the ambience for, corruption.

### The "New Statesman's" Perceptive Analysis

About three decades back, the British journal "*The New Statesman and the Nation*" (previous incarnation of the *New Statesman*) explained why and how technologies of this nature promote technocratic dominance and defy democratic review and how, in matters relating to state enterprises, it ousts everybody from decision-making and places it firmly in the hands of the nation's chief executive. The substance of what the journal said was as follows. The high-complexity technology, being incomprehensible even to specialists of other disciplines, passes over the heads of the members of Parliament. It is just not possible for Parliament to let every inquisitive MP to engage, at the nation's cost, discipline-wise specialists of his choice for consultation. Nor is it possible for an MP to decide whose opinion is more trustworthy in which aspect. Moreover, the specialists themselves may like to keep at a distance from the probing MPs for fear of drawing ire from the heads of enterprises which can employ specialists from their own discipline. This being so, the parliamentarians lack the competence to have any definitive judgement. The Cabinet subcommittee, too, often feels uncertain. Finally, the Prime

Minister takes the decision in the light of the advice received from persons in whom he or she has the trust. In situations of such complexity where defence can be put up for almost everything without being effectively challenged or definitively proved wrong, either the holders of political power become the tools of technocratic interests or the technocracy works overtime to prepare justifications for the decisions in which the political bosses are interested. In this trafficking, the politico-business-bureaucratic vested interests gain and the people suffer.

### Conclusions

In view of the above analysis, we may conclude :

- i) That the Constitution needs to be overhauled to provide for five-tier federalism.
- ii) That the spheres of jurisdiction of the federal, the State and the district governments, the Inter-zonal and Inter-State Councils, and the block-level and panchayat-level governments be clearly demarcated and the principle be accepted that each level of government is autonomous in its functional sphere, none being superior to the other, none having the right to override the other. The principle of interdependence and holoco-noetic linkage as in the biological system would have to be accepted.
- iii) That the post of the President as the constitutional head of the Indian State and the post of Prime Minister as answerable to Parliament be retained, with modification of the federal government's jurisdiction. That the federal government's sphere be limited to foreign affairs, defence and defence industries, currency, foreign trade, space research and a few such matters.
- iv) That at the state level, the system of (i) elected Governor as the chief executive of the State government; and (ii) the State government i.e. the Governor-with-his-Council of Ministers as responsible to the State legislative body be introduced. That the principle be accepted that the State Governor is subject to recall by the people but not subject to dismissal by federal government.
- v) That the importance of State, private and cooperative enterprises as equally strong and mutually beneficial sectors be recognised.

- vi) That the guiding principle of all economic activities be that these are to be based on "human-scale" technologies.
- vii) That the economic and socio-cultural practices must be in accord with ecology of the region.

and

- (vii) That the principle be accepted that ecosystemic behaviours of the humid tropics and the arid/semi-arid tropics are vastly different from that in the temperate climatic conditions and, therefore, for economic purposes, nature-conquering technology must be banned. For defence purposes, such technology may have some uses in the transitional stage. But defence must have a moral dimension and has to be based primarily on people's solidarity at home and winning over the hearts of people of other countries, particularly the neighbours, by battles of ideas and ideals. Ideological encounters supported by (i) high moral-intellectual attainments, and (ii) a living example of universally shared prosperity resting on simple and healthful style of living, and (iii) practice of universal love blended with unmistakable firmness against all forms of bigotry can win all battles and stop all brews of war.

It is impossible for any individual to prepare the guidelines for an alternative socio-political-economic system. Committees of outstanding thinkers, whose heart-throbs are with those of the common people, should be set up and their views debated to reach a national consensus. Only then a new system, freed from autocracy and corruption, and conducive to national wellbeing can emerge. The Nehruvian vision has failed dismally. What is needed is the vision of an alternative civilizational order and its underpinnings in the transitional stage. □

## What Kind of Civilization?

When a man like Tolstoy, one of the clearest thinkers in the western world, one of the greatest writers, one who, as a soldier, has known what violence is and what it can do, condemns Japan for having blindly followed the law of modern science, falsely so-called, and fears for that country "the greatest calamities", it is for us to pause and consider whether, in our impatience of English rule, we do not want to replace one evil by another and a worse. India, which is the nursery of the great faiths of the world, will cease to be nationalist India, whatever else it may become, when it goes through the process of civilization in the shape of reproduction, on that sacred soil, of gun factories and hateful industrialism, which has reduced the people of Europe to a state of slavery and all but stifled among them the best instincts, which are the heritage of the human family.

—MAHATMA GANDHI  
November, 1909

## Importance of "Flying Foxes" to Tropical Economies

By : Marty Fujita

IN tropical forests, bats often comprise close to half of all mammal species, and many plants in these forests rely on nectar and fruit-eating bats for pollination or for the dispersal of their seeds. As a result of the extraordinary variety of plants that rely on these bats to varying degrees, nectar and fruit-eating species play a key role in determining how tropical forests are structured.

Throughout the Old World tropics, from Africa to Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, flying foxes (bats of the family, Pteropodidae) are also of great importance to plants that contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to national economies. Despite the value of flying foxes, their populations have been decimated by large-scale eradication efforts, habitat destruction and overharvesting for human consumption. It is believed that more than a dozen species of flying foxes already are either extinct or endangered. Vast numbers of these bats are required to ensure adequate reproduction and propagation of some rain forest plants, yet

**Numerous varieties of plants in tropical forests depend on bats for pollination and seed dispersal. Wild plant species, in turn, provide genetic reservoir for cultivar improvement in non-forest areas and for combating diseases.**

in many places too few remain to fulfill their vital role. So little attention has been paid to the plight of flying foxes that some have become extinct before they were even declared endangered, and the status of many more remains in doubt. Their loss could have significant consequences for many bat-dependent plants and the ecosystems and economies they support.

Protection for flying foxes is urgently needed, but misconceptions about them have made it difficult to convince governments and even conservation planners to provide necessary management and conservation initiatives. In some countries, all bats are officially listed as vermin, the status otherwise reserved for rats, mice and poisonous snakes. Documentation of the values of flying foxes to rain forests and associated economies is essential in order to gain protective legislation for declining species.

\* Reproduced from BAT, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1988

In 1985, Bat Conservation International received a grant [BATS, February 1985] to investigate and document the economic value of flying foxes in the Old World tropics. Because of my previous experience and special interest in these animals, I was chosen to carry out the study as part of my BCI-sponsored post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard University. The work was conducted in three stages, the first of which involved an extensive review of both botanical and zoological literature to compile a comprehensive list of plants by bats for fruit, pollen or nectar. The marketable products derived from these various plant species were then documented, and the countries which produce them, the origin of each plant species, and current distribution of the plant were noted. This phase revealed that the majority of reports of economically important products derived from bat-dependent plants were from Southeast Asia. Hence that area was chosen for the third stage of the study: onsite documentation of the economic values of these products. Economic botanists were consulted, and extensive interviews were conducted in markets throughout Southeast Asia during the summer of 1987. (Scarcity of such reports from other areas where flying foxes occur possibly reflects only a lack of field investigation.)

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**Bat meat is the best cure for asthma, kidney ailments and general malaise. Yet, they are being killed rather than preserved!**

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I documented over 300 plant species in Southeast Asia, tropical Africa, and the Pacific islands that rely, to varying degrees, on flying foxes for pollination or seed dispersal. At least 134 of these plants yield products that are used by humans. Most of these plants are not grown on large commercial plantations, and thus still rely on bats. More than 450 products, including medicinals, food, drinks, fruits, dyes, tannins, timber, fibre and fuelwood, are derived from these plants. Although most products are important only in local markets, a number of them are also valuable export items. The potential of the others, such as medicinals, has not yet been fully explored. The importance of bats to the future harvest of these products is substantial, and has largely gone unrealized or has been vastly underestimated.

Bananas, originally from Southeast Asia, are one of the best known tropical fruits and, perhaps, commercially the most important. Wild bananas are pollinated almost exclusively by bats, with at least 20 species of the plant known. Only a few kinds are cultivated, and these do not need to be pollinated to produce fruit. Nevertheless, wild plant species provide important genetic reservoirs for cultivar improvement and for

combating disease, such as fungal root rot. Their loss could seriously threaten the future of commercial banana production.

In Southeast Asia, the durian (*Durio zibethinus*) is known as the "King of Fruits." By some estimates, the durian harvest is worth \$120 million annually to producing countries. Durian flowers are pollinated by flying foxes, especially the Dawn bat (*Eonycteris spelea*). The large white flowers are perfectly adapted for bats. Clustered on the underside of sturdy branches that provide easy access, they exude copious amounts of nectar, opening only at night when bat visitors are most active, enticing them with a fragrant odour. The fruit is one of the most delectable delights of Southeast Asia.

Another "bat plant" that produces valuable export products is kapok (*Ceiba penlandra*). Although this species probably originated in Central and South America, it is now common in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and certain parts of Africa. Throughout its range, it is pollinated by bats, and its seed pods contain high-quality

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**Even though man knows that certain orchard plants are almost wholly the result of seed dispersal/pollination by bats, he tries to "protect" these fruits by killing the bats!**

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fibre used for insulation and as stuffing for life-jackets, cushions and mattresses. In Indonesia alone, 1986 statistics indicate that kapok fibre was worth over \$5 million in exports. The importance of kapok has diminished with increased use of synthetic fibres, but it is still valued locally, and kapok trees are commonly planted in villages. Other products derived from this plant species, such as oil and timber, are becoming more important.

Throughout the Old World tropics, timber from bat-dependent trees is used in many ways—for furniture, small carving, canoes, building materials, poles and fuel, to name just a few. Although economic statistics are not available for many of these products, tests on the various qualities of wood from bat-dependent trees indicate that many of them have the potential to be marketed profitably. For example, *Pajunella longifolia*, a Southeast Asian tree pollinated by flying foxes, is known for its dense, teak-like wood which is used for canoes, boats and house planking. Many of Australia's *Eucalyptus* trees, as well as brush box (*Lapostemum confestus*) black bean (*Castuioispermum australie*) and others, also are pollinated by bats and yield excellent, commercially important timber. In Africa, the wood of the iroko tree (*Chlorophora excelsa*) is highly valued because of its resemblance to teak. *Azadirachta indica*, introduced to West Africa



from India, is an important tree for fuelwood; its seeds are dispersed primarily by bats, which may have caused its rapid spread over large areas.

Statistics on products not exported were unavailable; so I conducted market surveys in Malaysia and Indonesia to assess the economic importance of some of these. One product, petai seeds, was found in every market I visited and appears to be a very popular food item. Petai (*Paritio speciosa* and *P. javanica*) are large leguminous trees (of the bean family), native to Southeast Asia. They are not grown commercially, but are found in small plantings around villages and are relatively common in native forests. The light-bulb shaped inflorescences of these trees are suspended from pendulous stalks, permitting easy access to bat pollinators. The long, green seed pods are collected mostly from forest trees and taken to local markets. The petai seeds are prized for their garlicky taste and are used to flavour curries and other traditional dishes. The Forest Institute of Malaysia estimates the local value of petai at over a million dollars annually in Peninsular Malaysia, not including its potential value as a timber tree, a use which is now being tried experimentally.

*Sonneratia* trees are also important on a local scale in Malaysia and Indonesia, comprising a major component of the mangrove flora of Southeast Asia and Australia. Their showy, nocturnal flowers are primarily pollinated by three small flying foxes, the Dawn bat (which also pollinates durian), the Common long-tailed bat (*Macroglossus minimus*), and the Lesser short-nosed fruit bat (*Cynopterus brachyotis*). Wood from these trees is used for poles, furniture, sandals, and in the production of charcoal. Mangroves also serve as the major roosting sites of two of the world's largest flying foxes, the Common flying fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*) and the Island fox, (*P. hypomelanus*). In addition, mangroves have incalculable value as fish and shrimp breeding grounds.

Currently, vast mangrove areas in Sarawak and Sabah (the Bornean provinces of Malaysia) are being cut for paper pulp. The combined importance of mangroves to the ecology of flying foxes and their potential commercial value make a sound management plan essential.

**D**ESPITE the importance of flying foxes to the ecology of Old World tropical forests and their considerable contribution to local and national economies through the plants that depend on them, the few accurate censuses recently conducted indicate that many of these bat species are declining rapidly. In general, very little is known about the distribution, numbers and behaviour of Old World flying foxes. Most detailed studies on the ecology and behaviour of bats have concentrated on species found

in Europe or the United States. A few historical, anecdotal accounts from Southeast Asia, Australia, the South Pacific Islands and parts of Africa speak of vast colonies of flying foxes, far larger than most that remain today.

Although habitat destruction has played a large role in their decline, colony eradication by fruit growers, and unregulated hunting (for sustenance and sport) appear to be major causes of population declines in Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Indian Ocean islands, and increasingly in Africa and Australia. A number of Southeast Asian flying foxes, especially the smaller cave-dwelling species, are taken from their cave roosts. Some of these are already extinct, and others soon may be, if not protected.

To determine the degree to which hunting was affecting bat populations in Malaysia and Indonesia, I conducted interviews with sport and bounty hunters, market vendors and restaurant owners from many different regions of these countries. Although the majority of Malaysians and

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**Most hunting of bats takes place during the bats' reproduction season, which coincides with fruiting peak season.**

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Indonesians are Moslem and are not permitted to eat bats for religious reasons, the large Chinese and Manadonese populations of these countries consider bat meat a delicacy. According to many Chinese, bat meat is also the best cure for asthma, kidney ailments and general malaise. My interviews and my observations indicate that the only species traded to a significant extent in Malaysia and Indonesia is the Common flying fox; the Island flying fox may also be hunted to a limited degree. Many smaller species, such as *Cynopterus*, are not actively hunted for food, but they are shot when they visit fruit orchards.

Many orchard owners in both Malaysia and Indonesia consider flying foxes to be pests, especially of rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*), langsat (*Lansium domesticum*), and water apples (*Eugenia aquea*)—all important market fruits. I questioned a number of growers about bat damage to their fruit crops. Given the number of bats shot as pests, I was surprised when most told me that squirrels and macaques were a more significant problem than bats. The former take both ripe and unripe fruit and were, therefore, a threat during the entire growing period. Bats, on the other hand, take only ripe fruit and present a problem to growers only for a few days prior to harvest.

The owner of one of the largest langsat orchards in Peninsular Malaysia told me that if he did not protect his trees from bats during this period, 20% of his crop would be lost. However, if he took simple protective measures, such as shining bright lamps, lighting small fires below the trees or shooting to scare the bats away, the damage would be negligible. He also told me that almost all of the langsat trees in his village, which are harvested for sale in the local market, were the result of seeds dropped by bats.

During the fruiting and flowering seasons, many plantation owners employ bounty hunters to eradicate animals they consider to be pests. Bats, primarily the Common flying fox, command a bounty as high as two U.S. dollars. Typically, a group of three to five hunters patrol an orchard at night, locating bats with bright lights. As many as seven can be hit with a single shot, according to one hunter, and 100 or more taken in a night. Others, hunting only for sport, shoot bats at their daytime roosts, and it is not uncommon for a group of hunters to bag several hundred in a single outing. When bats are to be sold in markets, different hunting techniques are employed to capture the bats alive since customers prefer them fresh. The bats are then killed on-the-spot by the vendor.

The volume of bat meat traded is difficult to estimate. However, the figures reported by individual vendors indicate that the annual sales of a single merchant could eliminate several average-sized colonies (about 1,500 animals each) of Common flying foxes each year. In the Sunday market in Kuching, Sarawak, I found a vendor who sold this species exclusively, selling 150 to 200 every week for about three U.S. dollars each. Although only a few were found who specialized in bat meat, wild game vendors were found in many markets. On several occasions, these merchants (who displayed monitor lizards, freshwater turtles, squirrels and snakes) obligingly told me that bat meat could be easily obtained if I wanted to order it. Bats were also readily available in Manadonese restaurants in Indonesia, and one owner told me that she sells as many as 2,000 flying foxes each year.

Because no historical data on bat populations exists for these areas, it is difficult to assess the actual impact that commercial hunting of bats has had on the various flying fox species in Southeast Asia. All the hunters I interviewed, said that in the last 10 years or so, colonies of Common flying foxes have become increasingly difficult to locate, and the number of bats shot in orchards has decreased substantially.

One factor that may contribute significantly to flying fox decline is that the greatest amount of hunting occurs during the bats' reproductive

season. Many of the hunters and vendors interviewed stated that there was a definite "bat season" that coincided with the main fruiting peaks in the area, and that a number of the bats taken were pregnant or carried young. Many bat species in tropical regions are known to time lactation with fruiting peaks. Increased hunting during such a crucial period could severely limit a population's ability to recover.

Much more information is needed about the number of colonies and the population densities of flying foxes in Southeast Asia before their status and conservation needs can be fully determined. Available information strongly suggests that at least two species, the Common flying fox and the Island flying fox, are threatened. Although they both are protected in Peninsular Malaysia, the schedule on which they are listed only guards against their importation, exportation or hunting for trophies. It does not require that a licence be obtained for hunting or selling, nor does it limit the numbers that can be taken. This legislation applies only to Peninsular Malaysia, and not to Sarawak or Sabah. Furthermore, general legislation in Peninsular Malaysia concerning wild animals states that any animal which poses a threat to a resident, or to his or her crops, can be killed. Since bats are considered fruit eaters, they are hunted freely under the provision. No laws protect any bat species in Indonesia.

Increased awareness of the vital role that these bats play in the life cycle of commercially important plants can have very positive effects on conservation efforts. More research on the ecological impact of fruit and nectar-feeding bats is essential. With better documentation of the ecological and economic values of bats, we increasingly are able to alert governments and conservation organizations to the urgent plight of flying foxes. Protective actions must be taken immediately. Already the populations of bats are all too low to perform their essential role in the maintenance of tropical forests and the economies they support.

*Courtesies: Bat  
and*

*The Third World Network*

## Know Thy Own Religion

If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling.

*Mahatma Gandhi in 'Hind Swaraj'*

# Maulana Waheed-ud-Din Khan and Sita Ram Goel discuss Rushdie-Khomeini Issue

THE INSTITUTE organised a discussion on the 'Satanic Verses' controversy on Feb. 28. Shri Suman Mal Lodha, former Chief Justice of Assam High Court, presided.

SHRI MALKANI welcomed the distinguished participants and said that never before had a book caused so much international furore. The Press was full of report and comment but there was little informed discussion of the issues involved.

MAULANA WAHEDUDDIN Khan, Director, The Islamic Centre, New Delhi, initiating the discussion, said he was hundred percent opposed to Rushdie's book and also hundred percent opposed to Khomeini's *fatwa*. He had read the book and it was full of abuse, insult and innuendo. There were even some Raj Kapur songs in it: unlimited freedom could lead to anarchy. As a political philosopher has put it, the freedom to swing your stick ends where another man's nose begins. This book is not readable. The best reply to a book like that would have been to ignore it. Muslims had made the mistake of reacting to it.

TIME (US news magazine) of Feb. 13 had said that the book was based on history, that it was "rumination of history". Actually, this book only respects ancient rumours about 'Satanic Verses' and Ayesha. For example, Ayesha's alleged affair with Safwan was falsely circulated by one Abdullah Nabai, a jealous man, who had hoped to be appointed as leader No. 1 of Madina but who was now eclipsed by the Prophet.

Khomeini is not Islam. His *fatwa* is hundred percent un-Islamic. Islamic laws apply to Muslim lands only. And there is no punishment without trial.

It was unfortunate that Muslims had become a clamorous group. When dogs bark, one should not bark back.

SHRI SITA RAM GOEL, noted author, said that he agreed with Maulana Saheb that Rushdie's book is bad, trashy. Multinational corporations do not only sell detergents; they also wash our brains. Rushdie's book is also one such commercial enterprise of a publishing MNC. But it would be wrong to condemn a book without reading it.

March 1989

65

Way back in 1956, there was much uproar over the book 'Religious Leaders' published in India by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Actually, there was nothing derogatory to Mohammed in that book. But everybody went on the defensive and K.M. Munshi, head of BVB, went so far as to claim that he was a great admirer of Mohammed and that he celebrated his birthday every year. Such hypocrisy won't do.

There are three chapters in this book to which objection has been taken. Two of these objections are misconceived. The chapter 'Mahound' has nothing derogatory to Mohammed. And it has been named 'Mahound' only because mediaeval Europeans pronounced 'Mohammed' as 'Mahound'—even as the Portuguese pronounced 'Hindu' as 'Ghentoo'. In this chapter, Mohammed is businessman and messenger—which he was; and the villain is Abu Sufian, who long opposed Mohammed. Indeed Abu's wife, Hind, who opposed Mohammed till the end, has been depicted as a whore.

As for the controversial verses, even according to Islamic authorities like Tabari, Mohammed did get an *ilham* (divine inspiration) in front of Kaaba, when he said that goddesses Al-Lat, Al-Manaat and Al-Uzza were divine. Many Meccans liked this line and some of the people who had migrated to Abyssinia were happy to return to Mecca. It was only later that he said that these verses had been inspired by Satan and not by Allah, and the same were kept out of the Koran.

The chapter 'Ayesha' has nothing to do with Mohammed's wife Ayesha.

The third chapter objected to is 'Return to Jahilia'. (Mohammed had described Arabia before his day as 'Jahilia'). This chapter is in bad taste and quite obscene. There are brothel scenes, with the prostitutes giving themselves the names of Mohammed's wives. However, there is not one word against Mohammed.

However, it is a fact that Mohammed got his literary critics murdered. One of them was the poetess Asma bin Marwan, while she was suckling her child. Another was Abu Afak, an aged poet. Anybody giving up Islam is considered fit for being stoned to death. These things go counter to all accepted canons of ethics. Indeed this intolerance is common to all the three semitic religions. The only difference is that while most Christians have acquired a modern mind, many Muslims have not.

If I understand Rushdie aright, he is writing from the angle of men who opposed Mohammed and his teachings. These people were violently

put down and many of them resented it. Rushdie is voicing their feelings. Religion should not be viewed as a candle-stick which can melt away under the fire of criticism. At the centre of Islam is Mohammed, and not Allah. Hence the Persian warning: "Ba Khuda Diwana, bash, o ba Mohammed Hoshiaar" (You can play with Allah; but beware of Mohammed!)

Rushdie is writing as a "Kafir", giving expression to the feelings of the defeated non-Muslims of Mohammed's time. Persian and Urdu Poetry has long taken such liberties.

In this situation, Khomeini has behaved like a village autocrat. He has tangled with Western writers. I should not be surprised if these people come out with more controversial books to make both, name and money.

Muslims should abide by Gandhiji's advice and sheath their sword. They must accept universal ethics, and accept Reason. The old thinking of Jeziya, Jihad, Jimmis and Jahibya won't do.

### A QUESTION-ANSWER session followed.

One friend asked Maulana Saheb : if the court gave Ayodhya monument to Hindus, would Muslims accept it ? He said they should. The best thing, he said, should be to leave these matters to historians and abide by their findings.

Another friend asked why Muslims had not accepted the Supreme Court verdict in the Shah Bano Case. Maulana Saheb said that that was a different matter since it concerned only Muslims and their Personal Law.

When a third friend asked about Imam Bukhari and Shahabuddin, he said he did not consider either of them really educated.

IN HIS PRESIDENTIAL remarks, Justice Guman Mal Lodha (Retd.) said that we should all be true to our religion. It was a matter of regret that many Muslim leaders had not condemned Khomeini's incitement to violence. Also, he said, it was dangerous to agitate against the verdict even of the Supreme Court particularly when many of the pre-existing codes of the Hindus had been changed with the idea of making a common code.

Later, much questioning—and answering—continued over cups of tea.

## Letter to the Editor

The uncharitable remarks of Shri Dharampal about Vivekananda Kendra make it appear as if we are enamoured of an alien culture because of use of English in our Training Centre, Exhibition and Vidyalaya. Are we then to conclude that whoever uses English in his transactions is so and in that case, is he also guilty of the same ? He has written the book "The Beautiful Tree" in English and when he declared open our new school building on 11th June 1987, he chose to address the audience in English only.

English is destined to play a role in our national life for a very long time to come and it has long ceased to be the language of English people only. Late Shri Ramesh Thapar in "Seminar" of May 1986 pointed out : "Many nations—and certainly the most populous like China, the USSR and Japan, together with India—have given it a status second only to the national language or mother tongue". It is wrong to conclude that those who use it are "westernised".

Our Training Centre conducts Yuga Shiksha and youth camps attended by participants from different parts of the country and all do not know Hindi and few know Tamil. Naturally, we should use a common language known to all. In the Exhibition, even though the words under each exhibit, are in English, we have books in different languages giving explanations to all the exhibits for the benefit of those who do not know English. Our Kendra Vidyalaya follows the three-language formula, teaching English, Tamil and Hindi and also Sanskrit. The majority of parents of our school children have correctly wanted to have English as medium of instruction without any "fancy" for it but realising that it affords their children better chance to move up in their academic career. Our Rural Development Programmes in Tamil Nadu, which attract thousands of people round the year, are conducted in Tamil. Our Vidyalaya children derive their morals and inspiration from our great Epics and the Upanishads, the lives and teachings of our great savants. But at the same time we do not shun "Alice in the Wonderland" or "Gulliver's Travels" or "Snow White" stories as unsuitable for our children. We accept the dictum : Let knowledge come from all sides.

Even if Shri Dharampal found any mistakes in us, he could have sought a clarification before he concluded that we are enamoured of an alien culture. It is unfortunate that Shri Dharampal should make sweeping remarks like he did in the article.

A. Balakrishnan  
General Secretary,  
Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari.



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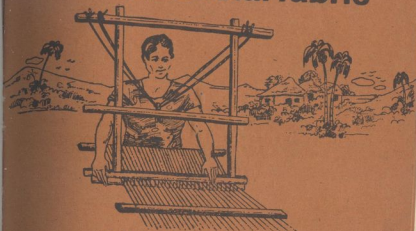
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I, K.R. Malkani, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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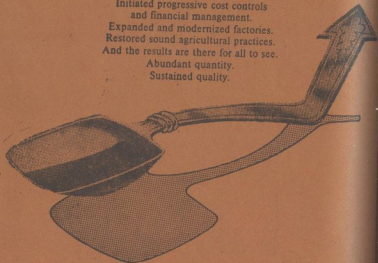


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**Special—I**

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