

INDIA IN TRANSITION

IT was bound to come sooner or later—the letter, that is, from a reader who, having read with some appreciation articles on India and Indian thought in these pages, felt impelled to remind us of the caste system, the treatment of the Untouchables, and the "child-brides" of Indian custom. He does not, we hasten to add, single out India for special censure; no ancient or modern nation, this reader realizes, is without similar abuses in its history. He rather poses an honest question: If, as you suggest, India has developed the most profound philosophical literature the world has known, why were such things possible there?

There is an obvious duty to note, at the outset, that Indian leaders of today have no more admiration of these oppressive institutions than Western critics. The setting apart of certain peoples as "Untouchable" was made illegal in India a few years ago, just as, in the United States, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation of Negro children from white children in the public schools is unconstitutional. In both lands, it will take time for the people to assimilate the moral validity of these legal decisions. Within the past month, for example, the intention of the state of Virginia to attempt to "get around" the desegregation rule was announced in the newspapers.

The question of the caste system as the basis of social relationships is worthy of serious investigation. We hardly plan its "defense," here, although there might be a value for those who are interested in reading Ananda Coomaraswamy's pamphlet, *The Religions Basis of the Forms of Indian Society*, as containing material which most critics of the caste system have never even thought of.

What is important to recognize, in any such investigation, is that *every* society is confronted by

the problem of human differences, and deals with it in one way or another. Philosophers like Plato offer one sort of analysis and plan of organization—as is found in the *Republic*; law-givers like Manu, who is said to have established the caste system in his *Institutes*, or Lycurgus, who devised the social system of the Spartans, develop what seem to them appropriate social schemes to stabilize human relationships in the community. Revolutionists who inherit the decaying systems of ancient theocrats and tyrants deny the fact of human differences for polemical purposes, and then institute the rule of a revolutionary elite like the Communist Party in order to maintain the power of those who claim to have made themselves responsible for the common welfare.

The socio-political system of the United States was a practical attempt by some sagacious men to strike a balance between freedom for all and orderly social processes. The American Constitution declares the principle of equality as applying to all men, and, by qualifying the scope of national legislation, attempts to leave free play to human differences within a broad area limited only by the general concept of the rights of others.

Implicit in the American political tradition is the idea that the best men will show the greatest sense of responsibility, that they will be recognized by their fellow citizens and honored by them with political power. In other words, the success of the American system depends upon the moral caliber of the American people.

How will the best men become known? By their capacity to elevate themselves to notice in a free society.

The other, older theory is that the best men will be born to certain parents—Brahmins, perhaps, or *Kshatriyas* (nobles or princes)—and

that since birth is itself an expression of a law of nature, nature can be depended upon to bring the right persons to positions of authority.

There are obvious hazards in both systems. How can you be sure that the best men will become popular? The Indian system, on the other hand, moved on the assumption that Nature herself is on the side of wise and just government—that the best men will be born under natural law into the castes which supply rulers and teachers.

A close parallel exists between the European "divine right of kings" and the theory of the caste system, the difference being that the Indian system has the advantage of being considerably more rational in moral justification. The men who were born to positions of authority, according to the latter view, had evolved as souls to the point where they could be trusted with power. The European king, on the other hand, was simply a "special creation."

It is this rational aspect of the caste system, perhaps, which gave it its enormous staying power. The greater the apparent rationality of a scheme of government or social relationships, the more difficult it is for human beings to reject it. Then there is the elaborate integration of caste with centuries-old customs and daily habits of life. The web of social relationships imposed upon India by this system of religious belief was so far-reaching that, even today, in the twentieth century, there are probably many who are unable to imagine human existence on any other basis.

One other comparison between East and West is pertinent. While the lives of the Indian masses were governed by the teachings of colorful, polytheistic religion, there have always been free-thinking philosophers in India who taught a higher meaning of the traditional faith. There has been very little religious persecution in India. For this reason, the motives which gave so much moral energy to the social revolutions of the West, bringing on a cycle of skepticism in connection with the rise of modern science, have

played very little part in Indian history. The "atheism" and dogmatic materialism of the West have no natural roots in India, but are rather an importation from other countries, along with other influences of European origin.

For these reasons, then, it may be argued that the release of the Indian people from the religious ideology of caste required the adventitious aid of European adventurers, although the emancipation, by no means complete, is no particular credit to the British, who came to India in the candid character of imperialists. The conquest of India brought a rude awakening to a proud but somnolent culture, eventually stimulating the reforms which came with Indian independence.

For the record, it should be added that there are those who contend that originally the idea of caste was not hereditary—that the caste a man belonged to was the result of his own effort and feelings of moral responsibility, and not merely an outcome of his birth. Whether this claim can be justified from Sanskrit literature, we do not know, but the idea seems so sensible that it certainly ought to be true!

At any rate, it seems clear that the moral justification for the caste system died out with the moral responsibility of high caste Hindus, and that the "rationality" of the Indian social order received a mortal blow when Indian civilization and arms suffered serious defeats, first from the Moguls, then from the British. If, under the dispensation of Manu, Nature (Karma) rewards the good and punishes the evil, the disintegration and decay of India's ancient civilization left two possible conclusions: Either the Hindus deserted what happened to them—a view which was not pleasant to contemplate; or the expectation that righteous people always obtain their just deserts would have to be abandoned.

So far as we can see, both conclusions have been reached in India. Men like Gandhi have tried to renew the ancient Indian faith in Karma and the validity of the spiritual life, while others have sought to impose a more pragmatic morality,

borrowed from the West, on the Indian people. Fortunately, such efforts combine to work against a blind adherence to ancient custom. What sort of synthesis will ultimately be achieved remains to be seen.

As for the matter of child-brides, this, we think, is simply a special instance of the routine brutality which may develop in any tradition-bound culture. Theocratic tradition, as distinguished from philosophical religion, permits the gradual emergence of self-indulgent customs. The position of women, however, in ancient Hinduism, was considerably higher than it was in the West, until recently. As for cruelty to children, the psychic wounds inflicted upon their children by our Puritanical forebears, through the doctrine of their inherent sinfulness and the threat of eternal damnation, may have been considerably worse than the sexual cruelty of Indian custom. We just have never thought about it in this way.

Meanwhile, agreeably to the Law of Karma, in which Hindus believe, the worst part of the conquest of India by the British is still to be revealed, for now India is in danger of accepting of its own free will the delusions, not of imperialism, but of the standards of excellence and achievement which prevail in the West. The years to come will show how justified is the pride of Indians in their ancient sages and their profound religious philosophy. It remains for them to develop *inward* standards of moral excellence, to replace the external marks of caste and artificial determinants of status.

This is the task which the people of every democracy in the world have imposed upon themselves, by adopting a non-traditional form of government. It seems likely that the Indians will do at least as well as the other nations which are pursuing this difficult course. They may do better.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—Living and working in the heart of London and membership in a Club whose members are men whose work is with science, literature, art and music, may not confer on one a Dionysian Ear, but it does produce, as a general impression, current feeling on a national issue at moments of crisis or decision. When Sir Winston Churchill made the announcement of the government's decision to make the H-bomb, though the House of Commons heard him in awe, it did not react in hostility. When the Labour Party pondered the same terrible issue it did not, as some may have hoped, set its face against this project. Perhaps it could not, since Mr. Attlee bears the responsibility for England's first atomic plant, a circumstance of which the Prime Minister reminded him.

It was after the decision that a thing happened that bears the unmistakable imprint of passionate sincerity, perhaps of that sort of greatness which touched Lincoln when he rose to great moral issues. Sir Richard Acland, Baronet (who gave away a beautiful estate, saying he had no moral right to keep it!), announced his intention of applying for the Chilton Hundreds—that is the usual way of divesting oneself of membership—doing so with a view to offering himself to his constituency as a candidate opposing the making of nuclear weapons. Now, with a dramatic lead such as that, it might have been anticipated that the Church of England and the other Churches would have come out strongly in support of Acland's stand. But no. Only one voice was raised by the Church. It was that of the aged Archbishop of York, a very vigorous man much given to voicing his opinion upon lay matters. Here, perhaps, I should pause a moment to make clear to my American friends that in England a bishop and, it follows, the two Archbishops (Canterbury and York), are spiritual peers of the realm, with seats in the House of Lords. Dr.

Garbett, the northern primate, addressed the House of Lords in favour of the manufacture of the H-bomb. While expressing his detestation of all war, he yet gave the weight of his high office and of his personal prestige to this thing. He saw the H-bomb as a shield behind which we should work for peace. This seemed to your correspondent to be a rather dreadful thing for a leader of any religious body whatsoever to have said, since many simple souls, tortured by misgivings, may now feel that if so eminent a personage blesses the project, then it must be right, as national policy, and as religion in practice. Moving about London, your correspondent found, in general, two reactions, as expressed by casual talk. The first was resort to flippancy. "Carry on, old man, until the H-Bomb comes along," etc., these being, one feels, mere verbal masks for fear. The other reaction has been a sort of almost dumb feeling of impotence and despair, as of men and women floating helplessly towards the Niagara of some final vast calamity. Your correspondent has yet to hear a single voice raised in hope or praise for this policy, so that he feels justified in suggesting that were a referendum taken in the British Isles there would be no making of nuclear weapons here.

One vignette may here suffice. Buying food in London is most wisely done—if that be possible for the buyer, for London covers 130 square miles—in Soho. There, most of the shops are run by Italians, with a sprinkling of French. They are friendly and talkative folk. In an Italian delicatessen an elderly Italian woman served me, her son standing by her behind the counter. I will not try to reproduce their actual speech, but it amounted to this. You are friendly, we are friendly; you have loved ones, we have loved ones. And it is the same with the Americans, the Germans and the Russians. It is the governments who set us on one another. Why cannot we be rid of governments that spend our money on atom bombs and talk always war, war, war?

This feeling of hopelessness, of helplessness and near-despair is a breeder of every sort of spiritual evil, for it induces that sort of mood in which the *Cui bono?* attitude leads to inaction and drift. What, then, can an ordinary citizen do, faced with these mighty world movements towards disaster? How can one do *something*, however small? For two days your correspondent pondered this, and the result was two forms of activity. The first was to write to Sir Richard Acland to sign up to help him regain his seat in Parliament as an Anti-Nuclear weapon Member. The second was to address to the Archbishop of York the letter here appended. That done, something, at least, worked in the world of thought and ideas, and maybe, in the right direction.

Your Grace, The German people are often reproached for their failure to repudiate Hitler's massacre of six million Jews. This reproach may or may not be just, for without the political technique of the referendum it is difficult to see how the ordinary citizen, even in a democracy, can register his disagreement with an evil government policy. I write this letter in great distress of mind if only to put on record my abhorrence of the present policy to make the H-bomb, and my dismay that an Archbishop of York has stood up in the House of Lords and endorsed that policy. How great an opportunity was missed when the Church failed to rally about the only noble figure to emerge at this moment of decision. I refer to Sir Richard Acland. If we make this bomb, we envisage its possible use, for otherwise to make it would be purposeless. If we are prepared to use it in so-called self-defence, then we are at the moral level of Hitler. For you, my lord, may I venture to suggest that there can be but one yard-stick: Would Christ have added His voice to the chorus of praise that greeted your speech? I do not think so.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

BUDDHIST SCRIPTURE

THE CUNNINGHAM PRESS, through whose facilities MANAS is produced, has recently brought into print a new rendition of *The Dhammapada*, best known of Buddhist scriptures. (Published at \$2.00.) This volume, a companion to the same publisher's *Selections from the Upanishads, and the Tao Te King*, also contains a good deal of pertinent explanatory material in respect to the present renaissance of interest in Buddhist philosophy. The Foreword begins by remarking that "throughout the past fifty years, the relevance of Buddha's perceptions to a 'science of soul' has become increasingly clear. This Indian sage, perhaps more than any other who has ever lived, provided a meeting-ground for all extremes of persuasion—gnosticism and agnosticism, belief and the skepticism of caution, appreciation of intuition, and devotion to logic. While the world of the mind is still quivering from abrupt change—transition from too much other-worldly religion to too much physical science—a man who recognized, as parts of a larger whole, the valid emphasis of each, is a man whose thoughts are worth knowing today."

Those currently involved in psychological study of any kind will be particularly interested in this analysis, also from the publisher's Foreword:

A student once under Freud's personal tutelage has reported that the "father of psychoanalysis" named Buddha as the greatest psychologist of all time. In any case, there are logical reasons for the favor Buddha has found among modern psychotherapists. Four sentences from the last two pages of "The Downward Course" in the *Dhammapada* provide sufficient explanation:

. . . A blade of kusa grass wrongly handled cuts the hand; asceticism wrongly practiced leads downward, to hell. . . .

They who feel shame when there is no cause for shame (as well as) they who feel no shame when they ought to be ashamed—both enter the downward path, following false doctrines.

They who fear when there is no cause for fear (as well as) they who do not fear when they ought to

fear—both enter the downward path, following false doctrines.

They who discern evil where there is no evil (as well as) they who see nothing evil in what is evil—both enter the downward path, following false doctrines.

In this brief passage we may well feel that the essential key to Buddha's outlook stands revealed: to speak of those whose trouble arises from failing to "discern evil" where there is evil—this is also the talk of church and temple. To speak of those whose trouble arises from "discerning evil" *where there is no evil*, who feel shame where there should be no shame—this is the language of psychotherapy. Clinicians of our time are still encountering warped psyches influenced by distorted conceptions of sin; Buddha had his own backlog of priestly distortion to face, and his "point, counterpoint" method of instruction, in perfect balance itself, encouraged balance in those who listened.

A twenty-four-page essay following the text discusses other dimensions of Buddha's balanced philosophy. After pointing out that the ethics taught by Gotama were identical with those of Jesus, it is noted that Buddha was not only a "radical"—a revolutionary in respect to a then decadent Brahmanism—but must also be regarded as a purifier and resuscitator of the religion of the Hindus. Rather than denying the philosophical assumptions of essential Hindu doctrine, Buddha labored to separate *philosophy* from mere ritualism, taught devotion to thought and self-investigation rather than worship of symbols and rites. Precisely because Buddha represented both "skepticism" and "religious affirmation," entirely different lines of persuasion of belief have developed from the same source, with Northern and Southern Buddhism serving as contrasting historical examples. Two things, however, are clear: Gotama refused to endorse a specific doctrine of immortality, and refused also to perpetuate belief in particular personal deities or to accede to the alternative of monotheism.

Buddha, in other words, desired above all else that men learn to think for themselves. The essay on Buddha's thought observes:

In the case of Buddha, there is reason to think that, like Jesus, he taught an inner, higher doctrine to his immediate disciples. What may be called

"popular" Buddhism is generally conceded to have been preserved by the Southern or Ceylonese School, and it is from the scriptures of Southern Buddhism that Western scholars have gained the impression that Buddha denied the possibility of immortality.

Northern Buddhism, on the other hand, while exuberantly metaphysical in form, is said to have preserved the teaching given by Buddha to his *arhats*, or initiated disciples, and here one finds unmistakably taught the doctrine of a permanent identity which unites all the incarnations of a single individual.

The connection between a doctrine of initiation and Buddha's injunction that each man must learn to rely upon his own individual judgment may not at once be apparent. However, we must bear in mind that the initiation with which Buddha is concerned is self-instigated, not a matter of temple mummery. To claim that real knowledge in respect to man's ultimate nature and destiny exists and is attainable is not to say that it may be gained by devotion to a creed. Buddha spoke of himself as if he were but one among many *partial* initiates, and, knowing that he had had to find his own way to the truths he ultimately possessed, refused to confuse disciples by letting them feel that the Buddha could do their work for them. Thus he speaks in terms of general psychological principles, declining to compound dogmas.

Finally, upon reflection, it seems to us that "the doctrine of initiation," as suggested by Gotama, is but another way of emphasizing the inalienable spiritual strength and worth of every individual. Yet man does not, on this view, exist only for himself, for he exists in order to learn, and the very process of learning requires his identification with the natures and the needs of others. The wisdom he finally acquires is both uniquely his own and the common property of all others who have similarly persevered in the quest. Thus a Buddha, a Christ, a Lao Tse—perhaps a Gandhi—may all be regarded as members of one fraternity, the common bond between them being a special sort of knowledge each human being can make his own.

We quote further from "Perspectives on Buddha's Thought":

Today, in a world frightened by the ugly harvest of its own materialism, it may be possible to arrive at a juster estimate of Buddha's views in regard to the immortality of the soul. Since the scientific polemic against all metaphysical conceptions and mystical or transcendental teachings has about worn itself out, we should now be able to give a fair hearing to the proposition that Buddha took very much the same view of immortality that is found in Plato, and that his caution in expounding this teaching is duplicated in the words of Socrates.

One of the reasons for current interest in Buddha among the philosophers is his avowal that neither "God" nor a system of many Gods is necessary to support a doctrine of ultimate reward and punishment—so long as that law be conceived in terms of natural "karma." Also, the question of the survival of the soul is left an open one in Buddhist scripture, ensuring, at the very least, that Buddhists would not, as have so many Christians, come to regard the existence of God and any affirmation of immortality as mutually dependent.

Our own reaction to the study of Buddhist writings occasions a measure of wonderment at the extremely close parallels between the Buddhist and Platonic methods of instruction. Buddha, too, was a theosophic eclectic who believed that each one must carry his quest of truth beyond the confines of constricting creeds, using the tools of analysis and reason, while yet listening with the inner ear to the voice of intuition. Hence he is primarily a psychologist, only secondarily the source of a religious "faith," a philosopher more than an author of revelation.

COMMENTARY

A COUNTRY OF VILLAGES

WHAT with last week's Letter from India, conveying the feeling of difficult if not insoluble problems, and the question from a reader quoted in this week's lead article, it seems appropriate to take notice of India's very low crime rate. The figures we have for quotation are for the year 1952 and were prepared by the secretariat of the International Criminal Police Commission. They are reported in the *Hindu Weekly Review* for Feb. 21:

According to the statement, India has only 165 cases of cognizable crime per 100,000 of population. Other countries in the order of least criminality are: Turkey 246, Italy 408, the U.S.A. 1,322, U.K. 1,322, France 1,484, Japan 1,605, and West Germany 1,992.

In the category of "serious theft," India's figure of 46 is again the lowest in the world. The corresponding figure for France is 65, for Italy 187, for the U.K. 259, for West Germany 268, and for the U.S.A. 325.

Under the heading "simple theft" as well, India's figure of 69 is the lowest. Figures for other countries are: Italy 126, France 366, the U.K. 911, West Germany 935, and the U.S.A. 986.

The figure for "wilful murder" in India is 2.9 per 100,000 of population, which is better than all countries, except the U.K.'s figure of 0.8 and West Germany's 2.0.

When you consider the rapid changes through which India has passed during recent years, this record is impressive. What is the explanation? The rural sociologists would probably call our attention to the fact that 82 per cent of India's population lives in villages—villages in which the ancestral pattern of life still prevails and the traditional moral restraints and customs supply the principle of order.

For the past twenty years or so, men like Arthur Morgan (see *Frontiers*) have made a study of human relationships and attitudes in small communities. They all agree that the "face-to-face" relationships of village existence, its

immediate duties and obligations, and the difficulties of "pretense" and hypocrisy under these conditions contribute a moral tone which is usually lacking in the mass society of the cities.

Years ago, Max-Muller, the famous orientalist, took note of the fact that an Indian youth, brought before a British magistrate, might lie in claiming his innocence of some offense, whereas at home in his village, before the elders of the community, he would be completely unable to tell anything but the truth. Something of this stabilizing influence doubtless remains in the village life of India today, and the Indian Government, in endeavoring to perpetuate the *Panchayat* rule of the villages (by a council of elders), shows general recognition of the importance of this aspect of Indian life.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

LAST WEEK'S communication from a teacher and Curriculum Supervisor focussed on a recent report by a California Senate Investigating Committee on Education which dealt with grade cards, etc., opening up several important subjects for discussion. The four types of "reporting to parents" considered by the Committee included:

- (1) The parent-teacher conference.
- (2) The individual ability report card.
- (3) The competitive grade card—comparing the child to others in his class.
- (4) The fixed-standard card.

Our correspondent asked some basic questions about these now controversial methods of grading:

Does a competitive situation necessarily allow recognition for individual ability?

In what sense does a parent-teacher conference or an individual ability report card promote socialistic theories?

Can the problem of mental ability or disability ever be handled in reporting to parents?

Since each of these queries is sufficient basis for a separate consideration, we will begin, somewhat at random, with the third, which provides special opportunity for making use of material on the subject of mental and physical incapacities in the young culled from Lillian Smith's recent book, *The Journey*. Concerning this book, a writer in the *Saturday Review* noted that "it is not surprising to find one who wrote *Strange Fruit* shuddering at our cruelties, big and little." One of the cruelties with which Lillian Smith is concerned—a monstrous one, even if thoroughly understandable—is found in the typical emotional rejection by parents of a seriously retarded or handicapped child. Because this topic cannot be separated from the question of "various types of report," due to the common reluctance of parents to admit mental lack in *their* children, we reproduce a short section from *The Journey*, in

support of "type one" and "type two" reports to parents. It is clear that such parents may learn to appreciate a teacher's preference for avoiding fixed or comparative standards. All children's handicaps can seem spiritual challenges rather than affronts to parental pride, and the best sort of "reporting to parents" may ease the transition described in *The Journey*:

A strange and lovely thing it is that we are learning to accept the body's vast potentialities by learning to accept its brokenness and differences; and in finding ways to bind the fragments into a whole life we are finding a common ground where people of the earth can meet in understanding and sympathy.

I have seen it on this journey.

There was a morning when I heard a mother say, as I slipped in and sat down with the group:

"That moment, I saw it: I was demanding of my child that he be normal, like a little animal. But the very fact of his being human makes it impossible for him to fit a 'normal' pattern. I saw this. I did not think it in these words, then I couldn't. It was later—after I had read and studied and tried to learn more about it all—that I found words for it. One day, in a book titled *Evolution in Action*, by Julian Huxley, I read these words:

"Man's individual development. . . continues throughout his life, and it can take place in all sorts of directions; while in animals there is only one normal pattern to be realized. . . . Animal types have limited possibilities, and sooner or later exhaust them: man has an unlimited field of possibilities, and he can never realize all of them."

"They opened the door for me. Perhaps this eminent biologist would be surprised to know that a handful of his words could bring to a woman with a retarded child the answer she had sought for months. But they were the words I needed to hear.

"But this day when I changed, I was feeling—not thinking. I had been ashamed so long. I had wished, for months, that he was dead. I did not say so. I cheated. I said, 'If God would only take him!'"

A quick smile passed from face to face of the mothers listening.

"It was an experience I wanted to cut myself loose from and forget. Look at all my friends, I'd say to myself: what *they* have brought forth. Then look at what—

"You see, I missed the whole point: Bearing a child, carrying it around in our bodies, that is not motherhood. We are only the instruments of life during that part of the process. Of course our bodies and feelings play a positive role then, but it is happening on a deep level beyond our conscious control—most of it. But afterward, then motherhood begins. The real job. And there I was, mourning my failure as a mother because of an accident of genes and chromosomes and chemistry and all the rest of it about which science still knows so little. The prologue is written out by ten thousand ancestors—mine and my husband's—and my own metabolism, maybe, and the hundred possible accidents, like viruses—so much we don't know yet—that can occur during those nine months a child is growing. But when *my* scene opened—well, I am afraid I did not know the rudimentary meaning of being a mother.

"It does not matter what we are, or what they say—if we only change. That is why I said my story is not a sad one. Because one day, I saw what I was doing. I was preparing dinner that evening, and my little son was sitting there on the floor, lumpily playing with his toys. I looked at him, and I knew I couldn't let him down.

"We signed a pact with each other that day. Once you do that, the rest is easy. Because it becomes a challenge to you on every level of your life. Your brain, heart, values, your imagination, sense of humor—everything gets involved as you begin to help your son find *his* life, different from the others, but *his*. It becomes exciting and you like doing it. There is no more conflict inside."

It seems quite certain that this mother would favor "individual ability" report cards of the parent-teacher conference over competitive or fixed-standard cards—regardless of whether or not *her* child was capable of attending public school. The reason would be that she has learned, graciously, a lesson few of us can claim to have mastered—learned that fixed expectations in respect to a child are apt to destroy or at least seriously impair whatever capacity that child has for developing confidence and "a sense of belonging" in his own right.

One might say that the essence of the ancient Buddhist teaching called *Karma* is assimilated in this way, from time to time, by mothers throughout the world, and it may not be

altogether a matter of chance that Pearl Buck's story, *The Child Who Never Grew Up*, was written by a woman who had profound sympathy for the point of view of Oriental philosophy. From the perspective of *karma* and *dharma*, for instance, one recognizes that the path of the soul is subtle and unpredictable, each needing to take upon itself innumerable types and qualities of experience some of them, perhaps, to be gained only while suffering what appear to be grievous shortcomings of the bodily or mental instrument.

It may seem that these remarks are but remotely connected with debate concerning different types of report cards, but what Lillian Smith has said surely calls attention to the fact that the real world of human beings, young or old, is psychological rather than physical. No mathematical standard can possibly evaluate the progress of any individual, which requires its own unique set of reference-points. The best that one man can do is not, either qualitatively or quantitatively, the best that any other can manage, and until we recognize this fact we leave unfortunate room in our minds for unfair judgments in respect to all varieties of human differences.

FRONTIERS Science and Value

[The following article is a condensation of a chapter from a forthcoming book, *Search for Purpose*, by Arthur E. Morgan. This book is being published by the Antioch Press, of Yellow Springs, Ohio, and may be ordered from Community Service, Inc., also of Yellow Springs, at \$3.00.]

I AM not assured that man, in his pursuit of values, has any help outside the processes of nature. We learn about values by experiencing them at first hand, and otherwise by the same processes as those by which we acquire other knowledge. *Value is experience which those who have it realize that it is better to have than not to have, and anything which contributes to such experience.*

We value money, land, goods, influence, because we believe they will help us to have experience which it is better to have than not to have. In love, friendship, patriotism and other group affection one becomes part of a larger self, and the same definition holds. Experience which it is better not to have than to have is the opposite of value.

There are many kinds, degrees and qualities of values as to unalloyedness, intensity, duration, harmony or disharmony with other values or the values of others or the values of the future, etc. Of experiences which are good in themselves, some are casual, superficial, trivial; some are enduring and deep. Intelligent purpose is necessary to distinguish, both in thought and in action, between values that are transient and those that are enduring, between those that are superficial and trivial and those that are deep, those that conflict with or eliminate other values, and those which harmonize with the whole of a good pattern of life.

Sometimes the values we experience have complex relationships. Take opium, for instance. After a dose of opium the heavens open and the addict has a period of ecstasy, of near perfect

happiness. Such happiness is a real value. But then it is paid for by a terrible experience of depression, illness, and discomfort. The addict is in hell, after having been in heaven. We have many values in life that are not worth the price. The art of living, and ethics, morals and religion, originated largely in efforts to guide men in distinguishing and in choosing between the greater and the less, between the better and the worse, of experiences which men realize to be good. Their function is to encourage ways of life which will lead to the selection of the more enduring and significant values.

To this definition of value, as experience which one realizes it is better to have than not to have, some people will cry "hedonism." I have tried to understand what the great religions of the world promise; that is, what they present as values; what would they keep men away from, and what would they draw men to. Almost universally the great religions claim to point the way to increase of a sense of well-being, to an increase of felicity or happiness. Consider the "Sermon on the Mount." It promises "blessedness." "Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are the merciful, the peacemakers." "Great is your reward in heaven." We think of the Christian ethic as being as high as any. Yet the Christian ethic presents this as the proper human aim. "Blessed are ye," that is, if you act in a certain way you will have a desirable sense of having experience which it is better to have than not to have. When I think of what it is we desire when we search for a way of life, when I observe what great religions have promised us, I do not find anything more than that the amount, quality, intensity, and duration of desirable experience shall increase, and that their opposite shall decrease.

The generalizing and idealizing impulse which is characteristic of all life operates in the field of values. We crave values that will justify our sustained loyalty and interest. Man takes his imperfect values and idealizes them by trying to see them as they would be fully developed and

without blemish. He is not free to complete them in any way fancy leads. To be true to himself and his values he must idealize them and complete them according to their nature. Max Planck, the originator of the quantum theory, wrote in discussing "Hypothesis": "It must be free from everything in the nature of logical incoherence. Otherwise the researcher has an entirely free hand."

We may illustrate from the inorganic world. Quartz crystals have certain characteristics in common. Between two similar (homologous) sides of any such crystal the angle is always the same; but the similar sides are not always the same length or width in different quartz crystals. There are endless shapes and sizes, yet every one follows the same laws of crystallization. Nearly all quartz crystals are imperfect. The need for a base on which to rest or by which to be supported usually means that one side or end blends with the surrounding rock, and so the crystal is marred. From our knowledge of the nature of quartz crystals and from our capacity to generalize we may picture to ourselves what a perfect one would be like. As scientists we are not free to complete that crystal in our minds in any way we will; as for instance, to visualize it as completed after the nature of a garnet or a diamond crystal. Responsible idealizing or generalizing will lead us to complete the design in our minds according to the nature of quartz crystals.

Is such an idealization a fancy or a myth, or has it certain elements of faith? If no complete, unmarred quartz crystal ever had been found, the ideal pattern of a complete, unmarred crystal might have been termed a fantasy, a myth, a hypothesis, a fiction, a generalization, an archetype, or by some other similar name, depending on the philosophical pattern of the person speaking. A seemingly reasonable dogma might be developed to the effect that since gravity is universal, and since a quartz crystal must of necessity have a support during its formation, therefore it is inevitable that every one should be

marred on one side or end, and that a complete, unmarred specimen is a practical impossibility. In tramping over the mountains of southwest Newfoundland, in exploring small cavities in a rock face, I came across some complete quartz crystals, whole and unmarred. Similar perfect specimens have been found in Herkimer County, New York. Evidently some kind of mineral was present during the formation of the crystal which was dense enough to support it while it was growing, but of a character which did not interfere with its perfect formation. The actual finding of such perfection gives a sense of assurance of its possibility which no theorizing would provide, at least for the average man.

Men take fragments and rudiments of values which they see functioning around them in society, and by disciplined, creative imagination they achieve great and fine patterns of value, which may become their most highly treasured possessions. The "Sermon on the Mount" of Christian literature, and similar expressions of other faiths, are examples. We may call these ideal, dreams, revelations or hypotheses. If they truly picture the unmarred realization of innate potentiality it may not be far amiss to call them truths.

Such ideal values seldom take form by reason alone. They come by experience, teaching, aspiration, intuition, and by the seemingly sudden opening of the mind to new possibilities which often goes by the name of inspiration. They come to persons who, by favorable constitution and by consistent nurture of the spirit, are prepared for them. People attach their faith and hope to these patterns of value, even when they have been created from fragments of reality. Their faith and hope are greatly strengthened if they see actual embodiments of these values in people's lives. For that reason, examples of good living are among the most powerful influences among men.

Science Is Concerned with Values. It frequently has been stated, both by scientists and by men of "religion," that science is not concerned

with values, but only with facts and with conclusions drawn from them. Men of "religion," claiming to be especially ordained for the moral ordering of life, are inclined to order scientists out of their sacred domain. On the other hand, partly from a desire to be left alone, unmolested in their own field, scientists often are willing to make truce with the theologians on that point. I believe that is a false position. Dealing with values is, I think, the main issue of life, and a valid issue of science. When scientists agree to leave values to men of religion they are, it seems to me, surrendering their right to a share in the kingdom, and are settling for the administration of a province.

Science should be one of our major resources for the appraisal and definition of values even of their discovery. Yet how many scientists kneel before the present-day inquisition of public opinion, like the great Galileo, and meekly confess that the proper domain of science is the observing and recording of natural phenomena, and its interpretation, and that science has no concern with values, nor any effective means for dealing with them!

Values, I hold, are not metaphysical abstractions or revealed absolutes; they are experiences which those who have them realize that it is better to have than not to have, and whatever contributes to such experience. They are proper subjects for inquiry, appraisal and comparison by science.

A case will illustrate the way in which science can contribute to the definition of values. In the field of race relations there has been a seeming conflict between two authentic values. On the one hand has been the importance of keeping races strong, uncontaminated, and fit instruments for the fulfillment of human destiny. Many sincere people have believed that among the larger races of men there are some that are superior and some that are inferior, and that the mixing of these would result in endangering the welfare of humanity. Other people have held that all men are

brothers, that ethnic differences are minor as compared with likenesses, and that it is evil to bring upon the people of any race the humiliation of segregation and the lessening of social and economic opportunity. Science can give attention to this issue, and out of its greater loyalty to the truth and to the total good it can objectively and impartially explore the facts. In this field there are pressures and emotions which make it difficult but not impossible for the scientist to be scientific. The general trend of present-day judgment of scientists is that the supposed great differences of over-all quality of civilizations do not exist, and that segregation is not a value. In my opinion that inquiry has been somewhat emotionally (unscientifically) loaded on both sides, and final conclusions are not yet all in; but a scientific process is under way which deals with values, and which already is throwing significant light on the existence and the relative importance of certain values.

The scientific spirit is profoundly ethical. Its just requirement is that every interest it deals with must be measured by the truth. The operation of the scientific spirit may leave the priest without his rationalized justification for age-long, deeply entrenched prestige, and his unverified claim to be one of the elect of the Supreme Being. It leaves the economic exploiter without justification for his claim to the unearned product of other men's toil. It leaves the social revolutionist without adequate basis for his dogma that the weaknesses of men are chiefly due to economic exploitation, and may lead him to realize that he must be concerned with refining and disciplining his own life and purposes. These results may follow, not any confusing of science with propaganda, but the most objective examination of the data, and the most impartial conclusions from it.

At bottom, the extension of the scientific spirit is an ethical issue—one might almost say a religious issue. It is resisted chiefly because its acceptance would tend to the disclosure of the falseness of claims of special interests. Wherever

we look, whether at dogmatic religion, or at economic privilege, or at political oppression, we find that their perpetuation depends largely on avoidance of free, sincere, competent scientific inquiry. One might even say with a considerable degree of truth that the course of science itself would be more rapid but for the tendency of fallible scientists to hold to their own vested interests. Max Planck, in his autobiography, discussing opposition among scientists to his discoveries, wrote, "This experience gave me also an opportunity to learn a fact—a remarkable one in my opinion: A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it." Scientists are human, and like the rest of us must make constant effort to achieve and to maintain the scientific attitude.

The scientist must measure values, not only in his scientific field, but in his life. Just as in his thinking and in reporting on his research it is primary with him that he shall not dissemble, but shall report truthfully, so in his life, if it is to be consistent with his science, he must appraise values without prejudice, and must live by his appraisal. Few factors tend more to cloud judgment than habits of living that are inconsistent with the conclusions of critical, objective inquiry.

ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Yellow Springs, Ohio