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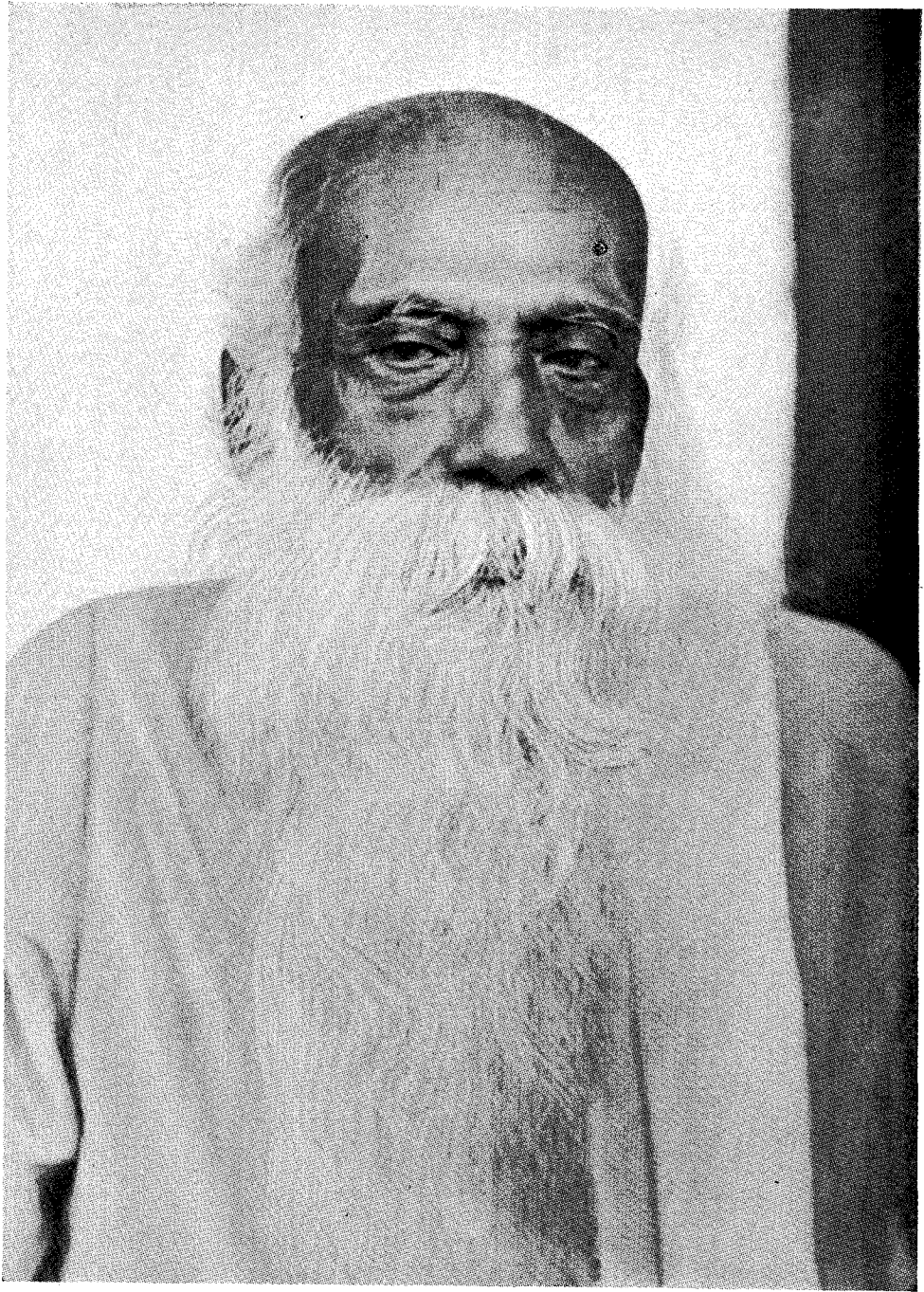
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ACHARYA BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL

DIED—DEC. 3 1938

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TO BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL—A TRIBUTE*

*Pilgrim, the highest peaks of knowledge, hard to climb, you've scaled,
Where rise before your eyes summits of man's endeavour's ranges;
Whence from caverns deep flow vocal streams through arid lands
Down towards the ocean, giving birth to pilgrim-cities;
Where, piercing illusion's mists, rise lofty peaks of vision clear
That read the morning's gloom-dispelling script; where Time Eternal
Appears in rosaries of fire, wheeling in stellar heavens
Incandescent; where One "whose hue is as the rising sun's"
Uncovers in mortal earth's far sunrise-gilded east horizon
The awakening of the deathless realm that rings in throats of seekers
Of Eternity: "Listen, immortality's children all!
That Person vast I've known 'whose hue is as the rising sun's'
Effulgent beyond the darkness"; where man hears the tongue of gods,
And suddenly a luminous vision he attains, and thus
Discovers anew the Infinite beyond earth's finite frontiers.
In the universe's hermitage where seekers congregate
An honoured guest you are, a seer of Truth; there in the skies
Of meditation, from age to age stars and planets greet
Each other, flashing into view from the deep unknown.
There, on imagination's canvas, in diverse tints and colours,
Is painted the invitation of Eternal Beauty;
The radiance white from there, garland of glory that is
The Goddess of Wisdom's caressing hand, plays round your noble brow.
Because you deem me friend, this poet has brought this verse's gift
Of my country's benediction, and my parting offering,
This thread, token of regard and love, I twine around your arm.*

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

* Translated by Shri Kshitish Chandra Sen.

FOREWORD

Hegel, who was the 'early master' and one-time hero of Acharya Brajendra Nath, has put it on record that the condemnation which a great man lays upon the world is to force it to explain him. Nowhere is the arduousness, if not hopelessness, of the task more acutely realized than in the attempt to 'explain' this mastermind, the myriadminded Brajendranath Seal. For, his was confessedly a greatness, an intellectual eminence and cultural refinement, that would always defy compartmental analysis and classification. Forsooth, it was the greatness of a genius *sui generis*, unique of its kind, whose versatility could only be matched by its profundity, both remaining unto the last incommensurable properties in the economics of our daily life. It is usual to find that the annual harvesting of greatness, in cases all and sundry, by way of memorial services, is subject to the law of diminishing return; but here is at least the typical case of a greatness assessed that yields fruitful results, subject to the law of increasing return. Accordingly, the prospect is not so hopeless as it seemed at first sight. Above all, appraisal of greatness of the kind, we are contemplating here, does not consist in the reproduction of what the great man in question has actually said in his own time, but in the divination or consideration of what he would lead us on to say in the passage of time that makes history.

To a compromise then. Explain him, we cannot. At the summit of his missionary career as a world-teacher, Swami Vivekananda (the Acharya's colleague and associate "Naren") is reported to have deplored that he had not another Vivekananda, as his comrade and compeer, to interpret, to the world at large, both at home and abroad, his reformist faith in modernising the National and nationalising the Modern (Spirit) ! Being the Universalist and Humanist, in theory as much as in daily practice, Acharya Seal though 'out-topping knowledge' like 'the loftiest hill that to the stars uncrowns his majesty,' would yet spare 'but the cloudy border of his base to the foiled searching of mortality' ! Knowing, therefore, all shortcomings or failure in this edifying context to be but a triumph's evidence, a proof positive, of the crowning achievement of the towering genius in the world of thought and culture, the present reviewer proceeds to the professedly modest task of delineating Acharya Seal's greatness, drawing as far as possible on the Acharya's published writings, his class-room sayings, his conversational remarks in homely surroundings, replete with autobiographical hints,

overt as well as covert, that have been garnered by the present writer during the last twenty years of Acharya Seal's span of earthly life.

What has, after all, proved to be the abiding source of inspiration to the present writer in the prosecution of his task is a long-cherished conviction, secretly entertained but seldom expressed in public. It is no other than the growing conviction that Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal's portrayal of "Rammohun Roy: The Universal Man" is *ipso facto* a projection or portrayal of himself ! Far be it from my intention to exalt the one at the expense of the other—to confer an inflated importance upon the one and belittle the accredited greatness of the patriarch and prototype. But any one, who brings an open mind to bear on the situation, would endorse this contention on the strength of the cumulative effect of appreciative references to (Raja) Rammohun Roy by Acharya Seal ever since the conception of "New Essays in Criticism" in the eighties of the last century right up to the publication of an excursus on "Rammohan, Keshabchandra and Ramakrishna" (in *Modern Review*, April 1937)—references with a recurrent emphasis and an acquired momentum, amenable to the law of geometrical progression, as it were. And in this portrayal Acharya Seal has employed all the resources of sympathetic imagination which, as the poet has it, "half-sees, half-creates the thing it loves". Finally, the fact that in the execution of his portrayal of Rammohun Roy, he has *unconsciously* drawn himself lends to the contention an added plausibility, all its own.

II

It is perhaps in the fitness of relations to demarcate his breach with Hegel and Hegelianism, in some of its misplaced accents, as a landmark or jumping-off station for further creative advance along diverse, divergent routes. Before we proceed to develop these lines of reflexion, it will be worth our while to acknowledge that it requires no mean courage on the part of a neophyte, initiated into the world of philosophic thinking with its high-water mark in Universalistic or Encyclopaedic knowledge and scholarship, to challenge the compelling authority and domination by Hegel, at all respectable seats of learning in Great Britain, America and other countries of Europe. As a matter of fact, Hegel, with his omnipotent 'dialectic of opposites' and the triadic stock-in-trade of 'Xthesis-Antithesis-Synthesis,' was a name to reckon with, in all academic circles of the West, and Hegelianism had proved, by then, a snare and a scare. Young Brajendranath, hardly out of the period of apprenticeship in the world of scholarship and creative thinking, had the courage of his conviction to stand up to that Colossus bestriding the intellectual world of his time, and point out, as early as in the eighties of the

When, again, we have no theoretical system in view but only seek to satisfy our instincts of practical activity, we have Art and Religion. Re-capitulating our findings, as collected heretofore, we find that interpretation of facts is the business of Science and Philosophy alike. From interpretation as the first milestone in our onward march, we proceed to valuation and values. Finally, this leads to the higher realm of choice and self-determination—which is the proper sphere of Art and Religion, with their different modes and schemes of values.

Here, if anywhere, we come across the ultimate ground of distinction between what is known in philosophical parlance as the two schools of Realism and Idealism. The former, as generally understood, takes its stand upon facts and their interpretation, while the latter on valuation of facts. On closer scrutiny, it will be found that Valuation, implied by Art and Religion, is relatively more elastic, more free, more imaginative and creative than scientific and philosophical interpretation and systematisation.

Into this chart of a renovated *globus intellectualis*, finer and fuller than what the original author could make it out to be, may be fitted up, Acharya Seal's concept of a struggling and 'suffering God'—which he had been defending with personal ardour and reasoned consistency since the days of his tract on *Vaishnavism and Christianity*. He makes no secret about it that he would prefer such 'a God of Sorrows and Suffering' to the ever-realised and ever-fulfilled God of orthodox theology and religion, in as much as the former caters more satisfactorily to the needs of a reasonable fulfilment of the aspirations of the individual. For, although the individual dies, the race lives evermore until the final dissolution of things. Moreover, the concept of such a 'suffering God' is more in consonance with the idea of progressive realisation of world-values, to which the facts of history lead us.

IV

It is in the context of an intellectual globe or World-Order, of which the essence is a 'total perspective', that the age-long conflict between Science and Philosophy as further accentuated by the Hegelian system, has been re-oriented, and re-modelled by Acharya Seal. It is too late in the day to dwell at length upon the standing criticism of Hegelianism that it enforced psychological and *a priori* categories upon the objective text of Nature and History, where the verdict of study and research is to be returned only *ex post facto*. If the facts in either of these realms do not fit into the moulds of pre-conceived categories, so much the worse for them. Hegel would not hesitate thereupon to twist and torture the facts to stretch them upon the Procrustean bed of his inexorable and imperious categories of high *priori* thinking. As a matter of principle, Hegel would look upon Nature as the home-land of the particular and the alogical, and thereby justify the step-

motherly treatment accorded to her. This veiled contempt for the merely factual and individual accounts for the premature synthesis and 'anticipations of nature', with which Hegel's Philosophy of Nature abounds. And the sins of omission and commission in this regard were sought to be somehow covered up with an elaborate scheme of thought-relations or categories, representing the passage of events in Nature and History as "the unearthly ballet of bloodless categories"! In all fairness to Hegel it must be admitted, however, that 'Categories' must needs in a sense, be 'bloodless' and it is no discomfiture of theirs that "they no more *make* the Whole which commands our devotion than some shredded dissection of human tatters is that warm and breathing beauty of flesh which our hearts found delightful." The *raison d'être* of the categories, be it remembered, is *not to make*, but to *understand* the whole, in all its inter-relations; and when all is said and done, the fact remains that Methodology, old or new, is not Metaphysics or Philosophy.

Any way, Nature, as thus treated by Hegel, had her revenge in the steady rise of the special sciences, in their evergrowing ramifications from early nineties of the last century, jutting into the mid-stream of twentieth century specialization in Science. Acharya Seal confronts the new turn in the tide, with the characteristic sanity and sobriety of a philosopher in the line of the Platonic "spectators of all time and existence", who would, by training and temperament, discern in time "the moving image of eternity" and thereby "see life steadily and see it whole". Bertrand Russell, however, as the spokesman of the new set-up, characterises 20th century philosophy as being dominated by two-fold tendency: first, to make Philosophy useful by propagation of errors; second, to make Philosophy look respectable by incorporation in Science. The first reading has a distinctly Russellian stamp and got to be treated as such. Taken even at its face value, the half-truth as posed herein may be successfully opposed by Acharya Seal's famous statement in a relevant context, *viz.*, "every error detected as such is directive of the way to truth. Indeed, errors present but the obverse side of truth". The other reading which is veridical up to a certain limit, confers a redeeming grace on his two-fold assessment of twentieth century philosophy.

Admittedly, ours is an age of Science, and it goes without saying that all human institutions should seek to enhance their prestige by seeking alliance with the party in power. The word 'incorporation' in the context is, however, unfortunate, if not misleading; it violates, for aught we know, the sanctity of every system of philosophy, worth the name. As early as in 1912, in his Herbert Spencer lecture, Russell tells us that it augurs well for Philosophy to be inspired by Scientific, rather than ethical or religious motives, which have so far proved harmful to the cause of philosophical thinking itself. But the inspiration is seized on the *wrong*

side, if philosophy allows itself to be preoccupied with the *results* of the special sciences instead of their *method*. For, *specialization*, that is to say, unceasing progress or advancement is the *soul* of Science and, for the matter of that, no finality can be claimed in this sphere. Accordingly, philosophy that seeks to incorporate itself in Science or to generate itself by synthesizing first the results of the special sciences, would be reduced to the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water until he had learnt to swim on land !

It is rather unfortunate that, rightly or wrongly, the stigma of "Synthetic Philosophy", of the long-exploded mid-Victorian Spencerian model, has been grafted on Acharya Seal's philosophical position or his self-styled 'Comparative Studies in Philosophy', or even 'Comparative Philosophy'. As against the incidence of this imputation we may profitably refer to the much-advertised label of "Scientific Method in Philosophy", by which Russell understands the typical method of *analysis* and abstraction. No one is more watchful than Acharya Seal to the use as much as to the abuse of Analysis which, though possessing a methodological use and importance, becomes an abstraction and error, so far as it forgets itself and lays claim to a philosophical status in-and-for itself. Again, no one has inveighed more vehemently and persuasively than Acharya himself against 'premature philosophising' of Scientific results on the part of present-day 'philosopher-scientists', whom he has named 'part-philosophers', so far as they are found building their philosophical systems on generalisations which apply to particular fields of experience only, and not to whole of it. They may thereby acquire the glamour of a *pose*, but not the gravity or serenity of a philosophical *position*. Well might 'his early master Hegel' be quoted in Acharya Seal's defence: "Philosophy as the thought of the world does not appear until reality has completed its formative process and made itself ready. . . When philosophy paints its grey in grey, one form of life has become old, and by such painting it cannot be rejuvenated, but only known. The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering". (*Preface* to "Philosophy of Right").

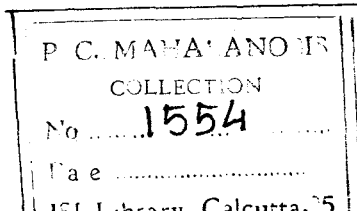
We can do no better than close up the ranks of Acharya Seal's supporters, on this point of basic importance, by quoting the full and frank testimony of Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya, (then) George V Professor of Philosophy, Calcutta University, than whom probably no one could speak with greater authority as his contemporary and compeer¹:—"I met Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal for the first time towards the end of the year 1915. He received me very kindly, spoke appreciatingly of some of my writings and made me feel at once as though we had been working together in the same plane of philosophical thought. It was a wonder to me, for I had known him by repute as a Gargantuan scholar and a bafflingly abstruse thinker. I found out later in conversation and in listening to his discourses

before the Philosophical Society that his scholarship in Philosophy—I cannot speak of other subjects—was not only very comprehensive and precise but thoroughly organised and grouped round living nucleuses of thoughts, each with a promise of magnificent growth. I found too that his thinking was mainly of a synoptic type, which baffled me not because of his abstruseness—for he was no introvert in logic like Kant—but because of the rapidity with which it gathered momentum and because of the volume of the material it had to synthesise—material that was already a multitude of syntheses, not yet familiar to his audience. He himself used the term ‘Synthetic Philosophy’ to characterise his system of thought, though he confided to me that his real interest was in the abstract analysis of a logic and epistemology in which I was interested.” No further comment need be made on this personal testimony; for, it itself is a commentary, as much instructive as it is illuminating !

Making due allowance for possible abuses and aberrations, our rallying-point and the very theme of this *Foreword* may, therefore, be styled: “Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal: A Study in Philosophical Synthesis”. It is pathetic to recall what he once confided to us (about the time of the “Jayanti” celebrations) that he had been acquiring a mastery over the different sciences, Physical (or Physico-chemical), Biological, Psycho-sociological as the prelude to, and preparation for, a meta-physical synthesis, and to reserve the last few years of his life, by way of a supreme act of self-limitation and self-denial, commensurate with his life-long “passion for Perfection,” for the eventual publication of his system of philosophy, when he was struck down by a tragic fatality—viz., the apoplectic stroke due to the rupture of certain blood-vessels in the brain. The words of that pathos-laden strain, in which Acharya Seal rounded off the tragic history of this period, a still stick to my memory and deserve quotation *in extenso*: “But this was not all. A double fatality has struck me down. I had preserved brief notes of my developing views and system, but some of my caretakers (‘undertakers’ as they proved to be !) destroyed the damp, worm-eaten manuscripts to preserve the valuable printed books of the library from the depredations of white ants !

“I have had two strokes and am patiently waiting for the third (and probably the last). It is now a race between me and Fate. No, not a race, for all is quiescent and holy—‘Shantam,’ ‘Shivam’ ” !!! Involuntarily, do we repeat—“*Requiescat in pace*,” and close on the high-pitched key of a *crescendo*. For, who could conceive of a more appropriate *finale* of an epitaph, of ‘a Conclusion that concludes nothing’ on the mental history of Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal who was, from first to last, a votary of Truth, *non pareil*—Yea, a pilgrim of the *Quest Eternal* ?

SAROJ KUMAR DAS



ACHARYA BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL—A LIFE SKETCH

Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal was born on Sept. 3, 1864 at Ram Mohan Saha Lane, Calcutta. He was the second son of his father, Mahendra Nath Seal, who was a distinguished Vakil of the Calcutta High Court. Mahendra Nath was a follower of Compté's School of thought. He knew many languages. He was a mathematician and also a philosopher. Sir Rashbehari Ghose was a great admirer of Mahendra Nath Seal. Mahendra Nath never pleaded for any case which was not based on truth. The then Chief Justice Peacock used to respect Mahendra Nath for his love of truth. Brajendra Nath inherited many qualities of his father.

Brajendra Nath's father died in 1872 at the age of 32. Brajendra Nath was only seven at the time. His mother Radha Rani died long before, leaving two sons and two daughters. Jagannath Seal, the grand-father of Brajendra Nath died only ten days before the death of his father Mahendra Nath. It was a double tragedy. Brajendranath and his elder brother along with their two sisters were left helpless. Kishori Mohan Nun, their maternal grand-father came to their rescue at this difficult time. He took them to his house and looked after them. Kishori Mohan Nun had not sufficient means to maintain them, so that they had to undergo great hardship. Brajendra Nath himself stated that often he used to read at night under the street lamps. His elder brother Rajendra Nath who was only two years older had to give up his studies and had to take some job to maintain the family.

Brajendra Nath was sent to a *Pathshala* at the age of four. After he had finished his primary education, he was admitted to the General Assembly's Institution (now known as Scottish Church College) in Calcutta. In 1878 he passed the Entrance Examination from this Institution. As a student Brajendra Nath showed his mathematical talent and his reputation as a mathematician spread among the professors and teachers who came to him for solving difficult mathematical problems. In 1883 Brajendra Nath passed the B.A. Examination in 'A' Class. There was no Honours Course in B.A. in those days.

In 1881 Brajendra Nath was introduced to Narendra Nath Dutta (who was later known as Swami Vivekananda) by a common friend. Both Brajendra Nath and Narendra Nath were members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. They became very intimate friends. Brajendra Nath was one year senior in class and one year

junior in age to Narendra Nath. They used to discuss and spend time in reading philosophical and religious books. At that time Narendra Nath's heart was burning with a passion for Truth and Narendra Nath sought the help of his friend Brajendra Nath to guide him to realize the Truth. About this time Brajendra Nath went to see Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakhineswar with Narendra Nath.

When he was a student of the First Year Class, Brajendra Nath one day approached Principal Haisty for the loan of a book of the M.A. Class. The Principal hesitated to lend him the book which was of a high standard, but he yielded to his earnest pleading and gave him the book on condition that he should give satisfactory answers to the questions put to him regarding the contents of the book after he had gone through it. Four days later, when Brajendra Nath came to return the book, the Principal asked him questions from the book and he was so delighted to hear Brajendra Nath's answers that he embraced him and blessed him with a prophecy that he would one day be a great scholar of the world.

After passing the B.A. Examination, Brajendra Nath was appointed a Professor at the General Assembly's Institution and was also elected a Fellow of the College.

At the time of the M.A. Examination Brajendra Nath Seal was in a dilemma. Gouri Sankar Dey, the renowned Professor of Mathematics in his College wanted Brajendra Nath to sit for the M.A. Examination in Mathematics and requested the Principal to give him the necessary permission. The Principal, however, insisted that he should appear at the M.A. Examination in Philosophy. Brajendra Nath, on the other hand, was busy at the time, reading Biology and Anthropology and spending his time in the Museum. There was hardly one month's time for the M.A. examination, when Brajendra Nath decided to take up Philosophy in deference to the wish of his Principal. It so happened that he was not able to answer the required number of questions for want of time, although he knew the answers of all the questions very well. He spent the whole time in answering only one question in each paper. He used four answer books for only one answer in each paper. Brajendra Nath did not expect that he would get even pass marks in the examination. But when the results came out, it was found that Brajendra Nath stood First in First Class and that no other student was able to get a First Class. It was indeed a great surprise for Brajendra Nath who thought that the examiner must have committed a serious mistake in assessing his answer papers. It was known later that Brajendra Nath wrote the answer of only one question in each paper in such a masterly way, showing his deep knowledge and profound scholarship that the examiner gave him very high marks. The matter was referred to the Senate and the members of the Senate agreed to place Brajendra Nath First in First Class as a very special case.

In 1884 Brajendra Nath married Srimati Indumati, eldest daughter of Joy Gopal Rakshit, who was a civil engineer of Naonga (Assam). Indumati was taught English well by her father. She could read and appreciate Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, Keats etc. Brajendra Nath derived many ideas from Indumati for the advancement of Indian womanhood. She died at the age of 28 in 1900, leaving four sons and a daughter. Of the four sons, the eldest who was in the Indian Educational Service in Bombay died some years ago, the second joined the Marine Engineering Dept. of the Govt. of India, the third died while studying in England and the youngest died in his infancy. The only daughter who was at one time known as a reputed writer is no longer living.

In 1884 Brajendra Nath joined the City College in Calcutta as a Professor of English. In 1885 he went to Nagpore as a Professor in the Morris College and later became its Principal. He was the youngest Principal at that time. In 1887 he came to Berhampur (Bengal) as the Principal of the Krishnath College. He was there till 1896. Professor Lalit Kumar Banerjee, Prof. Kali Krishna Banerjee, Prof. Satish Chandra Mukherjee (founder of the Dawn Society), Prof. Hiralal Haldar and other eminent professors served the same College at that time. At Berhampore many scholars of Bengal used to visit Brajendra Nath Seal at his residence.

In 1897 Brajendra Nath was offered the Principalship of the Coochbehar College by the Maharajah of Coochbehar. He accepted the offer and joined the Coochbehar College. While at Coochbehar, Brajendra Nath made many changes in the College. Maharajah Nripendra Narayan gave him a free hand in introducing reforms in the educational system of the Coochbehar College. He served this College till December 1912. During this long period of fifteen years he was idolized by the people of Coochbehar and respected by all teachers and students. In this period also we find him getting an international reputation. We shall mention here some of his activities during the period.

In 1899 Brajendra Nath Seal was invited to the International Congress of the Orientalists at Rome. He went there and participated in the Congress. There he read a paper on the Test of Truth. Other papers that he presented at the Congress were (a) Origin of Law and Hindu as a founder of Social Science (b) Foundations of Social Science in the Mythology of *Yask* and *Niruktas* with Greek parallels and (c) A comparative study of Vaisnavism and Christianity. All the delegates to the International Congress of the Orientalists were greatly impressed by his papers. He was indeed an outstanding figure in the Congress and his fame spread all over Europe.

In 1902 we find that Bepin Chandra Pal was closely associated with Brajendra Nath Seal. Brajendra Nath was an active member of the Indian National Congress

at the time. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Chitta Ranjan Das, Rabindranath Tagore, Hirendra Nath Datta, Sister Nivedita, Satish Chandra Mukherjee and many others used to visit Brajendra Nath Seal and discussed politics and other topics of national and cultural interest.

Brajendra Nath was a member of the Simla Committee for the educational reforms of the Calcutta University. Here he, for the first time, met Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, who was one of the members of that Committee. The then Governor-General Lord Curzon met this Simla Committee for the purpose of suggesting various reforms in the University.

In 1902 Swami Vivekananda wrote a letter to his friend Brajendra Nath, seeking his help for chalking out a plan and programme for social work. Brajendra Nath could not meet Vivekananda at the time but he sent a message through Vivekananda's second brother Mahendranath Datta who brought the letter from Vivekananda that he would chalk out a plan as desired by Vivekananda. Unfortunately Vivekananda passed away soon after. In this connexion Brajendra Nath told us that if Vivekananda were alive, he would have given a plan for social reform on the lines of Ram Mohan Roy and Vidyasagar. He further told us that his wife had given him a great impetus for the educational uplift of the Indian women.

In 1905 Brajendra Nath revisited Europe and stayed there for four months. He met the European scholars and discussed Indian Philosophy and Religion and convinced them that Indian Philosophy has its practical value and that it is based on reason.

While he was in Europe, there was an International Exhibition of birds held in Switzerland. It so happened the Expert Committee for the scrutiny of the birds could not make out the original home of one particular rare bird. The Committee had heard the name of Dr. Seal as a scholar of encyclopaedic knowledge and approached him for help in the matter. Brajendra Nath examined the bird and gave his opinion about the original home of the bird. The Committee made an investigation and found that Brajendra Nath Seal's opinion was correct.

On another occasion while Brajendra Nath was on board a ship on his way to London, the learned English Captain who knew the name of Dr. Seal, challenged him with a question: "Sir, can your philosophy find the speed of the vessel which is sailing in the opposite direction?" Brajendra Nath at once understood the oblique hint. He immediately started calculating the speed of the vessel, and within a short time gave the correct answer. The Captain was really amazed to get the correct speed of the vessel and he exclaimed: "I see your knowledge ranges from the Sea-Gulf to the Sun."

In 1911 Brajendra Nath was invited to inaugurate the first Universal Races Congress held in London. His inaugural address and his paper on the Race origin were very well received. Sister Nivedita was one of the delegates to the Congress. She reported that Seal's address was so learned that it made a profound impression on all the scholars present on the occasion. He visited Europe again in 1914.

In 1913 Brajendra Nath Seal accepted the King George V Professorship of Mental and Moral Science of the University of Calcutta at the request of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. Before he joined the University of Calcutta in 1913, he had written two chapters in the 'Life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy' by Nagendra Nath Chatterjee and had also contributed a chapter, entitled, 'An early chapter in the history of Vivekananda's mental development' in the biography of Swami Vivekananda. His remarkable book on the 'Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus' was written about this time. It is an outstanding contribution in which we find a profound knowledge of philosophy, a rare scientific outlook, a mastery of the Sanskrit language and a wonderful power of analysis and exposition. Brajendra Nath also wrote a comprehensive chapter in the 'History of Hindu Chemistry' by Acharya Ray. In 1915 Brajendra Nath Seal was awarded the honorary Doctorate degree by his *Alma Mater*. After joining the University of Calcutta in 1913, he had ample scope for his academic and scholarly activities. He served the Calcutta University in various ways, when Sir Asutosh tried to build up the University on modern lines. Brajendra Nath was a member of the Asutosh Committee and the Sadler Committee which were formed for the purpose of reorganizing the University. Sir Michael Sadler was much influenced by Brajendra Nath's scholarship and learning. In a letter, Sir Michael addressed Brajendra Nath as his GURU. When the Maharajah of Mysore had requested Sir Michael to be the Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University, Sir Michael wrote to the Maharajah of Mysore that Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal would be the fittest man for the post. Sir Mirza Ismail wrote to the writer that Brajendra Nath at first declined the offer but on further request accepted the post. Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherjee also induced him to accept the Vice-Chancellorship of the Mysore University.

Brajendra Nath Seal joined the Mysore University as Vice-Chancellor in 1921 and stayed there till 1930. During the period he brought about various reforms in the University. Impressed by his administrative ability, versatile genius and wisdom, the Maharajah of Mysore made Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal the Chairman of a Committee for the constitutional reforms in the State of Mysore. Brajendra Nath was able to frame a new Constitution for Mysore and the Maharajah was so pleased with his work that he honoured Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal by con-

ferring on him the title of 'Rajatantra Prabin'. He was also elected a member of the Legislative Council and introduced many improvements in the Mysore State.

In 1921 Rabindranath Tagore invited Brajendra Nath to inaugurate the Visva-Bharati. He accepted the invitation of his great friend and went to Santiniketan. There he delivered an inaugural address which was highly appreciated.

In 1926 he was knighted. Due to hard work in Mysore, Brajendra Nath's health broke down. He had to retire and came back to Calcutta. He had an extraordinary retentive faculty. This also began to fail. From this time he showed all the symptoms of old knowledge.

In 1935, the All-India Philosophical Congress organized a 'Jayanti' function on Dec. 19 to celebrate the 72nd birth anniversary of Brajendra Nath Seal. He delivered a speech on the occasion. Here he expressed his desire to publish his auto-biography which was completed by him at the time. His last public appearance was on the occasion of the Ramakrishna birth-centenary celebration at a meeting of the Parliament of Religions in the Calcutta Town Hall, where he presided. On Dec. 3 in 1938, while he was residing at 78 Lansdowne Road, Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal passed away peacefully. Thus ended the life of a great savant who brought light and lustre to the world of literature, philosophy and religion.

Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal was a great philosopher, a mathematician and a linguist and there is no doubt that he was one of the few distinguished philosophers who drank deep at the fountains of the wisdom of the East and by his rare genius, deep erudition and brilliant exposition raised Indian philosophy in the eyes of the world. He was indeed a pioneer in the field of comparative study of Philosophy and Religion. He was one of the rare persons in the intellectual world, who never confined his scholarship to one single branch of knowledge. He was a 'moving encyclopaedia'.

Like an alchemist, whatever Acharya Brajendra Nath touched was transformed into gold. He was a "seeker after a flawless full-orbed perfection" and in every subject, he had an indelible stamp of this perfection.

Acharya Brajendra Nath is also to be regarded as one of the pioneers in the science of Statistics in India. His two famous pupils, Prof. K. B. Madhavan and Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis will bear testimony to this. Few people are aware that his knowledge of music, both eastern and western, was profound. Late Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee, the eminent musicologist referred to his vast erudition in this subject in his reminiscences—"Mane Pare".

On the occasion of the birth centenary of Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal, we

pay our respectful tribute to the great preceptor and teacher and in the inimitable language of Tagore, we pay our homage to:

“The great pilgrim who soared so high in supreme majesty on the inaccessible heights of knowledge and in regions where ridges of self-realisation embrace the far-reaching vision.”

BIBHUTI BHUSAN SARCAR

OBITER DICTA*

In this very land of ours, which has always been the homeland of the “Atma-Vidya”, it is not self-denial or self-effacement but self-recognition or self-assertion—not, however, in the Nietzschean sense—that is to be the guiding principle of daily life.

It is one of the cherished ambitions of my life that I may found in this country a school of philosophical research, which will not merely carry on its work, in accordance with age-long ‘Tol’ tradition but would, by means of the critico-comparative method, avail of, and add to the world’s stock of knowledge. . . .

In our comparative studies of Eastern and Western thought, never allow yourselves to be carried away by the revelation of a fundamental similarity or an original kinship, into believing that one is the exact replica or echo of the other. On a closer inspection of the theme, on every such occasion, you are sure to find points of divergence and disparity, coming into relief against the background of fundamental similarity.

You see, I am always accused of reading an unconventional, ultra-modern meaning into the ancient texts of Indian philosophy, or of foisting an arbitrary interpretation upon them by twisting and torturing the texts in my comparative studies of the thought of the East and of the West. It is for you to decide, whether the authors of these texts did, in point of fact, anticipate in their own, lines of reflexion, on which modern thought of the West has proceeded. . . .

Ideas have no personal stamp, and consequently no question of violation of right of ownership can arise in this realm.

You see a good many persons have written about Indian philosophy but few have realised the *spirit* of Indian philosophy.

You see, I have been a seeker after flawless, full-orbed Perfection, throughout and in every walk of my life, and this my hankering after perfection, after a finished product everywhere and always has baffled me in all my endeavours to accomplish anything, worthy of mention. Whenever I have sat down to compose anything, I have been haunted by the fear that I may have thereby committed myself to the keeping of some closed system of truth and this is precisely what I am constitutionally incapable of doing.

* Compiled by Dr. Saroj Kumar Das from the Post-graduate Philosophy lectures by Acharya Seal.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS AND
SPEECHES OF
ACHARYA BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL

LITERATURE

Hegel's Classification of Stages of Art: How far correct

... Hegel's grand generalisation concerning the three stages of art, the oriental, the classical and the romantic, is one of the most luminous and fruitful that the comparative method has given to the world. . .

Yet it cannot be gainsaid that Hegel's doctrine of the three stages of art stands in vital need of such extension and correction in more points than one. Before advertent to these points, it is proper that we give a brief *resumé* of the fundamental teaching of Hegel's Philosophy of Art.

Art, like philosophy and religion, seeks to apprehend and realise the absolute. But each has a separate medium of reflection. The organ of art is the imaginative, or representative faculty, *i.e.*, the *Vorstellung*; that of religion (in its restricted sense), the faculty of feeling or emotion; that of philosophy, absolute cognition.

Every product of art is therefore analysable into three elements, the idea which is sought to be realised and which may be termed the soul or form; the representation or symbol, which is the body or matter; and the reflection of the idea by the symbolical or representative matter. This reflection is more or less truthful, more or less harmonious, more or less vivid. When and where the reflection is faint and obscure, and the ideal insufficient to regulate the huge disorderly mass of lawless or grotesque images, as in primitive architecture, and in mythopoeic allegories, analogies and symbolisms generally, the type of art is said to be oriental. In this primitive stage of art, the materials are pseudo-infinite in character and are illimitable and unconditioned, partaking of the indeterminateness and formlessness of the original chaos. In the higher developments of art, the representative matter loses its overwhelming predominance and its lawless grotesqueness; it becomes permeated and vitalised by the ideal or conception that is sought to be

expressed. This graceful symmetry and repose, this perfect harmony between conception and symbol is the essence of classic art, of which Greek sculpture and the Greek drama are the most finished specimens, and which, in its turn, is followed by the stage of romanticism. If classicism be the balance, the harmony, the reposeful inter-penetration of form and matter, of soul and symbol, romanticism on the other hand lies in the transcendence of the matter by the form, the overthrow of the symbol by the soul, or in other words, the hopeless inadequacy of all representative matter and symbol to reflect the ideal or conception.

The above is a brief *resumé* of Hegel's characterisation of the three types of art. . .

Several conclusions which considerably modify and enlarge the Hegelian doctrine, are clearly seen to follow:

(1) Art-criticism must mainly direct itself, not, as with Hegel, to the abstract character of the representation, but to the idea or regulative conception, on the one hand, and the representative matter, on the other *viz.*, the rhythmic and articulate embodiment of perceptions and images, feelings and ideas. These constitute the fundamental and distinctive features of a work of literary art, and are not necessarily given by assigning it to one of the three types. . .

(2) Another and even more important point is suggested. The question of historic genesis disentangles itself from that of classification. The stages of art must not be confounded, as Hegel seems to have done, with their types. In other words, the historic stages of art depend more upon the development of artistic ideals or regulative conceptions, the types more upon the relation between the ideals and the materials employed. . .

(3) A third conclusion of great moment evidently follows as a corollary. The classification of types of art which is simply logical and abstract, cannot exhaust the possible varieties of its concrete stages. So long as an abstract *fundamentum divisionis* is taken, such as the equipoise or disproportion of idea and material, the division of art into the oriental, the classical and the romantic types, will, of course, be exhaustive. But while this logical classification is final and stereotyped, the movement of history cannot be brought to a stand-still. The abstract classes of the logical text-book, as Goethe observed, may be labelled and numbered, but the individuals of nature are countless, and the stream of history is inexhaustible. The central ideas, or regulative conceptions, will move on in their orbits still, in endless progression, and pass through "numberless varieties of untried being". Again, the phenomena of life and consciousness, which serve as the material of literary art, have also a principle of growth latent in them; there is an evolution in the matter of consciousness, along with the development of regulative ideas. It is idle, therefore, to say, as Hegel says, that the romantic

type is final, and that Art, as a historic movement, culminates, after the romantic type, in religion and philosophy.

(‘The Neo-Romantic Movement in Literature’, *Calcutta Review*, 1890-91: included in *New Essays in Criticism*, 1903).

Later Observations on Hegel’s Classification of Stages of Art

The *New Essays in Criticism*—“Nouveaux Essais”—contained in the following pages are intended to exhibit the genetic method as applied to literary criticism from the philosophico-historical, the comparative and the psychological points of view.

The author is painfully conscious of the many characteristic defects of these youthful writings in style and execution, as well as in tone and temper. Besides, during the last twelve years, his view of genesis and the genetic method, has diverged more and more from the teaching of his early master Hegel, though in the direction foreshadowed in the ‘Essay on the Neo-romantic Movement’. Hegel’s view of historic development as a unilinear series, a position to which his dialectic of the categories commits him, can no longer be maintained. The Egypto-Babylonian, the Graeco-Italian, the Indo-Sino-Japanese art-series and culture-histories, cannot be evolved one from another, and are relatively independent in origin as well as development. In tracing the historic world-process, at whatever point we begin, and whether we proceed up or down, the genealogical line breaks up more and more into a network of relationship, so that the Hegelian conception of a punctual movement in a unilinear series is as obsolete from the stand-point of the philosophy of history and the historic method proper, as the Lamarckian view in the domain of biology.

At the same time, the recognition of the diverse origins and independent developments of the separate culture-histories is not inconsistent with the assertion of an immanent world-movement, in which they all participate, each in its own degree and extent; and it is the business of Dialectic to trace the outlines of this cosmic movement, to formulate its successive categories or regulative ideas, and to work out their rational and systematic filiation, without pretending to anticipate history, or seeking to close the vista of the future.

From this point of view, oriental and neo-oriental, classical and neo-classical, romantic and neo-romantic, are but categories in the dialectical development of the art-idea; categories which apply as much to the Indo-Sino-Japanese art-history as to the European. Hegel’s oriental, classical and romantic art are accordingly misnomers, and his characterisation, in each case, more or less narrow and provincial, or at best formal and jejune, being strictly limited

to the European section, and not drawn from a correct and comprehensive survey of the entire field.

A more fundamental divergence remains to be noted. The dialectical process has been conceived as a movement from aspect to aspect, from moment to moment, until it is completed in the Absolute Idea, or the Absolute Whole. The Law of Evolution has similarly been taken to imply a differentiation of parts, or organs and functions, which go on developing each in its own line, until they are reintegrated in a coherent whole. Both these conceptions require a radical correction. The real is always a whole; the abstraction of phases, aspects, moments, is unhistorical; and organs and functions evolve, never independently, but always as participating in and dominated by the life of the organism as a whole. Development must therefore be conceived and explained as a passage from the whole to the whole, from an implicit to an explicit, from a less coherent to a more coherent, whole. The earlier stages are as real, concrete and positive as the latter ones; anti-thesis as a mere negation is a mere logical fiction; the organic whole develops, and passes from a relatively *less stable* to a relatively *more stable* equilibrium and the balance of powers, which maintains the whole life, corrects undue emphasis in one direction by developing a counter-emphasis in a complementary (not opposed) direction.

The correction of these 'twin errors' implies an expansion of the author's mental out-look, but as the change of view relates to the systematic form rather than the matter of the Essays, and is besides in line with the author's divergences from his early master Hegel, which he has expressly noted in the Essay on the Neo-romantic Movement, he has finally decided to allow the publication (or republication) of these early writings, and must once more express his painful sense of their characteristic imperfections, if not crudities.

(*New Essays in Criticism, Preface, 1903*).

Genesis of the Neo-Romantic Movement in Literature and Art

I

It has been reserved for our age to apply the Cartesian canon of universal doubt to the criticism of the faculty of emotion in man. If the dualism of subject

and object in consciousness, as a faculty of knowledge, be the standing enigma, the sphinx's riddle, proposed to every system of philosophy, what shall we say of the more perplexing, more irreducible dualism that limits and conditions the personal and social emotions, the organ whereby one personality perceives and is related to another? If consciousness, in attempting to apply the subjective norm to the object-matter, is arraigned of illusion and deceptiveness, what shall we say of that organ of the mind which, be it intuition or perception, sympathy or emotion, makes believe to bridge over the gulf between different individuals? For, if subject and object be related as unit and irrational surd, one personality is as incommensurable with another as an irrational surd with an imaginary expression! And if the intuition, or perception, of another personality be thus purely subjective; if self cannot transcend its own plane of existence, what becomes of the great sacraments of religion and society, of the fellowship with God and man? What becomes of Love and Sympathy, of Faith and Hope, of Reverence and Dependence, of Prayer and Communion?

How like the many-coloured bubbles of childhood's play do they burst and vanish into the ambient egoism of the one isolated consciousness!

The question is not what are the constituent elements of our notion of personality—it is, how is our intuition of an *external personality* possible? Is it a case of unconscious transference, or projection, taking place under given conditions of perception, which would reduce it after all to subjective association, or a subjective necessity; or is it a distinct category which is objectively valid, as much as categories of the understanding, like substance and cause? If this latter be true, how is it deduced, how is it filiated, what is its place and position in the dialectical development of the categories?

This is the crucial doubt, the great awakening of Buddha acted over again in the consciousness of our age: not the *reality* of this emotion or that, but the *possibility* of any *personal* emotion at all, is questioned. Here, in the region of personal and social emotion, in the realm of religion and society, as Descartes said of the sphere of knowledge, what is supremely needed is a fixed point like that of Archimedes, a solid and immovable basis on which man may plant his feet and communicate the much-needed initial movement.

(2) Over and above this Cartesian doubt, which is a universal solvent, and makes an infinite illusion of Love and Hope and Faith, there are antinomies of emotion, which reveal the internal self-contradictions and consequent unreality in the personal intuitions and emotions of the mind. Love has its antinomy, its element of self-contradiction and suicide, its necessary limit or condition of dualism, which it seeks, as necessarily, to transgress or transcend. Hope has its antinomy, its struggle towards the fulness of light, while it cannot inhabit any

other than the land of twilight, a perception of which truth made Spinoza say, that hope is impossible to the reason. The antinomy of Faith comes out well in that sentiment of Tertullian: The greater the impossibility or absurdity of the object of belief, the better for the faithful, for faith finds its fullest satisfaction or realisation, its highest subjective exercise, under such conditions! A little reflection will show that it is not the inherent dualism that constitutes the antinomy, but only the struggle towards infinity, towards the transcendence of all limitation or dualism, while such limitation is a necessary precondition,—a remark that may be made with equal truth of the Kantian antinomies of the pure reason.

Neo-romanticism, then, the badge of modernism in mind and art, had its origin towards the close of the last century in a "fine frenzy" begotten of doubt and despair. A sense of discordance, as has been already said, between the inner and the outer, between spirit and nature, between the ideal and the real has been from the first the distinguishing mark of modern life and culture.

II

Two conditions are necessary to the genesis of the neo-romantic stage of mind and art:

(1) A sense of discordance between the inner and the outer, between spirit and nature, the ideal and the real. The social environment is one of *sturm und drang*, of fret and fury, of ideal revolt or uprising of the human spirit. The movement takes its actual rise, however, not in an unhealthy ferment of dissolution, but in an inevitable process which transfigures the old order, and lifts it up to the absolute by raising it into self-consciousness and subjectivity. Thus a current of transfiguration sets in, of which the significance will shortly be seen.

(2) The second element is that of subjective egoism, which, arising in the passage from a mechanical subjectivity, sets up the gratification of the individual consciousness as the standard in questions of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness. No stage of mind or art, however, can subsist in an atmosphere of mere negation; and accordingly we find that, in the course of the development of the neo-romantic art and consciousness, the negative element—the deadly strife with doubt and despair, and the subjective egoism—tends to disappear, and critical and constructive elements come into play. At this stage there is a fusion of the two streams; the current of transfiguration of the old order mingles with the stream of positive reconstruction of the new. The confluence results in a mighty stir and commotion. An objective basis is sought for life, so as to lift it out of the plane of over-subjectivity and morbid self-consciousness. In the reconstruction, or new synthesis of life and consciousness thus attempted, novel ideas as to the

place and position of man in the universe, and his destiny, a new criticism of social life and relations, and new ethical and religious ideals, possess the minds of men. The function of neo-romantic literary art is to embody these regulative ideas and ideals in correspondent types and symbols, to invest them with appropriate emotions and images, to interweave them with the sympathies and affinities, the historic associations and the imaginative interests of the race, and thus to make them essential conditions of the conservation and solidarity of the social *regime*. The critical and constructive elements of neo-romantic literary art may be systematically analysed and methodically registered by the help of a convenient formula, or canon, of criticism, which takes note of three fundamental aspects:

- (1) The ideal content of consciousness, the regulative idea or central conception, which is here an objective criticism of life.
- (2) The mythopoeic process, or embodiment of this idea in a *Vorstellung*—which may be termed the mythology of literary art.
- (3) The crowning transfiguration, or the birth of a new emotion, as of a new tone or harmony, transfiguring the imaginative material.

(‘The Neo-Romantic Movement in Literature,’ *Calcutta Review*, 1890-91: included in *New Essays in Criticism*. 1903).

Early Poems of Rabindranath Tagore

I

If the neo-romantic metaphysical drama, in the hands of Babu Rabindranatha Tagore, does not transcend the individualistic stage of art; if the negative criticism of life, disappearing, gives place to a conflict between subject and object which does not go beyond the needs of an individual nature, and treats a question like that of the struggle between knowledge and love, Yoga, or Jnana, and Prema, not in reference to the objective requirements of social life, or of the ideal perfectibility of the race and the impulses of humanitarian enthusiasm, but solely from the stand-point of individual psychology, the same limitation characterises the author’s *Prabhata-sangita* and *Sandhya-sangita* (Songs of Sunrise and of Sunset). . .

In these songs it is that Bengali poetry rises to the pitch of the neo-romantic lyric. And what a type of the latter ! Two of the constituent elements, the criticism of life, whether negative or reconstructive, and the mythopoeia, are almost wholly wanting, and the third element, the transfiguration, is all in all. . .

II

The *Udbhranta Prema* and the lyrics of Babu Rabindranatha Tagore illustrate two broadly marked varieties of literary diction and harmony which it may not

be amiss to indicate. The lyrics are in what may be termed the elementary style, which employs elementary emotions and images, like the elementary lines and colours or the fundamental musical proportions in the sister arts, to effect the transfiguration. Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction was at bottom an inculcation of the truth that the fresh, simple, and original emotions and images of Humanity and Nature will suffice to produce startling and endlessly varied effects in poetic art. The simplicity of diction is only an external mark of the inner elementariness. Wordsworth's and Shelley's poems, for the most part, are written in this style, and in a higher field of art many of Browning's lyrics, romances, and even dramatic monodies illustrate the same diction. Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's lyrics display, in a very marked and emphatic manner, the capabilities of this elementary style, and, as a reaction against an exaggerated form of an opposite variety, appear to have effected quite a revolution in the diction and cadence of Bengali lyrical and dramatic poetry. The *Udbhranta Prema*, on the other hand, is one of the best examples in literature of the compound style, a style which employs, as its unit, starry clusters of associated images and feelings, "trailing clouds of glory", as they come, or rich trains of harmonious suggestion, with their many-coloured fountainplay and evanescent rainbow hues.

What is abundantly clear is, that the neo-romantic lyric in Bengali literature, while it has advanced beyond the negative criticism and the deadly conflict in which it first takes its rise, has just entered upon the second stage, that of the constructive synthesis of life and consciousness, and has not yet transcended its early subjective, or individualistic, character. A few aspects of Nature and not many more moods, situations, or emotions of individualistic life, are alone transfigured. Invention, said Keats, is the pole-star of poetry, imagination the rudder, and fancy only the sails. In the lyrical sea which the Bengali neo-romantic poet navigates, he is without guidance of star and rudder, and trusts only to the sails.

Of invention, of the creative or constructive imagination "which may be compared to Adam's dream that on awaking he found to be true," there is a total dearth; and of objective criticism of life, there is not the faintest prelude. An objective synthesis of life and consciousness through a regulative conception, or even a creative mythopoeic imagination, as in the *Apprenticeship*, and *Sartor Resartus*, is yet only the dream of a New World that lures on some bold but hapless navigator, here and there, out into the remorseless and trackless deep.*

("The Neo-Romantic Movement in Literature," *Calcutta Review*, 1890-91: included in *New Essays in Criticism*, 1903).

*Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's later works in prose as well as verse have carried the neo-romantic movement much further than is here depicted.

Transformation of Classical Mythology by Keats in his 'Hyperion'

In choosing Hyperion as his hero instead of Saturn, Keats was no doubt partly influenced by the thought of doing for the mythology of the Sun what he had already done for that of the Moon, but strong as was his feeling for the magic of Nature, or what may be called his elemental affinity,—the main reason seems to have been that Apollo, the protagonist of Hyperion, was, as the father of all verse, the fittest representative of that more subjective, that more human, order of deities, whose triumph he was to celebrate in his poem. A sound instinct therefore made him avoid the usurpation of the Red-armed Thunderer for his epic theme, and choose the later rise of Apollo as the point round which to concentrate the conflict of the Titanic and the anthropomorphic deities. As for the name of the Epic, "Hyperion" has a poetic suggestiveness and resonance wanting in the latter-day Apollo, and for the rest, Keats seems to have been animated by the spirit of the criticism that makes Satan the hero of *Paradise Lost* instead of Adam or the Messiah.

This treatment of the classical mythology was original, indeed, a startling revelation, so far as England was concerned. But the keynote struck so independently by Keats had been recognised in Germany since the days of Winckelmann; and Hegel, in his broad luminous survey of mythology and art, had incorporated it into the dialectical system of philosophy. Thus it was left to Keats, the "sensuous poet" to be, in virtue of a clair-voyant imagination, the pioneer in England of a new philosophy, the philosophy of mythology, a triumph the like of which few professed intellectualists can boast of.

(Essay written in 1882-83 and incorporated in 'Keats' *Mind and Art*, (1888); included in *New Essays in Criticism*, 1903).

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Development of Philosophy (or Stages in Culture History): Six Stages

Six stages usual in the development of a philosophical doctrine or thought—type, the second half (B) recapitulating the first half (A) on a higher plane (which may be called the "Spiral of Progress"):

- A. (1) Magic stage: Social instincts and postulates expressed in Ritual.
- (2) Myth stage: Mythopocia in forms of Myth, Folk-lore, Beast fable etc.
- (3) Symbol stage: Symbolisation and Sublimation of Myth and Ritual.

- B. (4) Dogma stage: Evolution of Dogma, *Vortellung*, Creed.
 (5) Rationalisation: Elaboration of Concepts—Critique and Dialectic—*Pūrvapakṣa*, *Uttarapakṣa* and *Siddhānta*.
 (6) Ultimate values: *Praxis*, *Sādhana*, Realisation. (*Syllabus of Indian Philosophy*. Based on the Lectures of Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, Bangalore, 1924.)

A Comparative Study of Vaishnavism and Christianity

[From Acharya Seal's "*Vaishnavism and Christianity*" Introduction— on the true conception of the philosophy of history, and a suggested correction of the historico-comparative method.]

Their [that is of the majority of western scholars] study of the history of civilisation has resulted in the conviction that all other races and cultures have been a preparation for the Graeco-Roman-Gothic type, which is now the epitome of mankind, the representative of universal humanity, the heir of all ages. . .

Indeed the historic method requires the same correction and extension that the doctrine of biological evolution received at the hands of Darwin. . .

The same correction and extension of the historic method is a crying necessity of our age, if it is to lay the foundation of a true philosophy of universal history, and not to give us mere European side-views of humanity for the world's panorama. . .

In speaking, therefore, of the social organism, as of social statics and dynamics, it must be borne in mind that the formulae of the science of organic life represent the truths of sociology, no more adequately or accurately than those of Kinematics. . .

Universal humanity is not to be figured as the crest of an advancing wave, occupying but one place at any moment, and leaving all behind a dead level. Universal humanity is immanent everywhere and at every moment—I will not say, a circle of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere, but at any rate, generically present in each race-consciousness, though each race may not have reflected the perfect type or pattern. . .

And a Congress like this fulfils a glorious mission in helping to realise the vision of universal humanity, a vision no less wondrous than the manifestation of the Universe body of the Lord in the *Gītā* to Arjuna's wondering gaze. The moral unity of the human race is fast taking the place of many of the out-worn creeds of the ancient or medieval world, and the vision of universal humanity, of which we get a tantalising glimpse beneath the Protean transformations of race and cult, is only the yet unrisen sun which looms in the horizontal mists on which it has cast its image. . .

Universal culture, therefore, in the abstract has had a history; and a comparison and collation of the several culture-histories, in which this has been more or less imperfectly, more or less meagrely, embodied and mirrored, is essential, if we want to lay the foundation of a true philosophy of history, and to rise to a vision of that absolute humanity, the true *logos* of God to which universal history testifies as its only authentic scripture and gospel. . .

Then tidal waves have failed us in Europe—we have been left stranded on the shallows and the flats. We have broken up the organic unity of life and consciousness into fragmentary and unreal abstractions. We abstract the subject from the object and both from the absolute. We abstract knowledge from practice, thinking from acting, reason from will. We abstract the moral order from the cosmic, and the idea of the beautiful from the world of sense and sensibility. We abstract from the absolute, from the ground, from the noumenon. With so many abstractions, we fail to realise the oneness, the wholeness of things. Synthesis is forgotten, and the analysis of abstractions leaves us only a *caput mortuum*. . .

The generalising, synthetic intelligence is now in quest; and in philosophical world-building, no original or disinterested work can be done without an enthusiasm of the infinite, a grasp of the absolute, a delight in the one and the universal. The speculative ardour, the metaphysical genius, the science of the absolute of the Hindus, are exactly fitted to infuse new blood into European philosophy, and to rouse its dormant activity. The Hindu sees the species in the individual, the essence in the appearance, the intelligence in the intelligible, the ideal in the real. Above all, he has a sense of cosmic unity which enables him to see the whole in the part. And connected with this is the Hindu's supreme gift of unifying thought and life, speculation and practice, philosophy and religion. . .

Religion originates in man's practical adaptation to environment, and as this last was from the beginning two-fold *viz*, nature and tribal organisation, all religions have a two-fold original basis: (a) propitiation of nature agencies, differing, according to practical needs, in the forest-clearing, the hunting, the nomad pastoral, and the agricultural stages and (b) the conservation of tribal customs and authority, the organisation of codes and institutes, in which the natural instinct of social continuity manifests. The Hindu emphasises both aspects: the speculative idea must be supplemented in a religion by the practical philosophy and the social institutions and sacraments; and, in the Vedas, the two classes of the *Devas* and the *Pitris* correspond to the natural and the tribal basis of the early Aryan Religion.

(—*Comparative studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity* etc. 1899)

Ram Mohan's Universal Humanism

In the panorama of modern culture and civilisation three peaks stand out prominently. The first is represented by Rammohan Roy. He was the harbinger of the idea of universal humanism. Though Voltaire and Volney had a glimpse of the rising sun of humanism, they distorted the view by pitting the East against the West, and minimising and traducing Christian culture. Theirs was a militant humanism, as opposed to the Raja's synthetic and Universalistic point of view. It is interesting to note here that a third stage was reached on this line in the creed of Neo-theo-philanthropy conceived as a new love of God and man. The second peak is represented by Tolstoi and Gandhi with their gospel of passive resistance and non-violent non-co-operation. The third peak in this panorama is represented by the modern movement of scientific humanism leading to Cosmic humanism. . .

He strove to reconcile opposites. In the sphere of speculation he sought to reconcile opposites. In the sphere of speculation he sought to reconcile individual reason with collective wisdom and scriptural authority, while in the sphere of social construction he aimed at the reconciliation of the good of the individual with the good of the greatest number. Thus he tried to harmonise individualism with socialism. This harmonisation, which is a necessity of life, has been attempted in different cultures in different ways. I may mention, *en passant*, that this balancing of what may be termed, in a general sense, individualism and socialism, was a fundamental note of certain early civilisations, for example, the Dravidian and the Aryan. . .

Here also it may be noted that the Raja's survey of religion can find an easy place for all these varieties of belief and experience.

But Science is not the whole of life; other phases—the emotional, the socio-ethical and the spiritual—must also be given a proper foundation and structure in the organisation of life. Thus, scientific humanism is only the vestibule of the cosmic humanism of the future.

Such would be the outcome of the Raja's survey of human history. And it was Rammohan Roy who had a glimpse of this rising sun. It was he indeed who viewed from dizzy heights the procession of universal humanity in universal history.

And in the end. . .there came to this prophet of humanity on his death-bed the vision of a free, puissant and enlightened India, the civiliser and enlightener of Asiatic nationalities, a golden link between the Far East and the Far West, a vision as emblematic of the past, as it was prophetic of the future history of humanity.

But the old order changes, the race grows ever more. Yet Rammohan shall be honoured as the prophet and precursor of universal humanism."

(‘Ram Mohan Roy: The Father of Modern India,’ *Commemoration Volume of the Ram Mohan Roy Centenary Celebrations*, 1933)

Parliament of Religions

Ramakrishna was thus a cosmic humanist in religion and not a mere nationalist. He gave the impulse and initiative and this must be completed in our age.

One such characteristic note of our day, derived from Christianity, is faith in a 'suffering God', the faith of the dispossessed millions as well as of the outcasts of humanity. And not in religion only, as religion is ordinarily understood. Humanism has now various new phases and developments. Leaving out Comte's positivistic humanism with its worship of the '*Grand Etre*' ("Great Being") and *Babism*, with its offshoot, *Bahaism*, the religion of human brotherhood,—we may turn to later phases, such as, the new concepts of religion without a God (as in Julian Huxley and many others of our day). This is not all. Impersonal ideals of truth, beauty and goodness have sometimes replaced the old faith in a personal God. And it is not merely the religious sentiment which claims its own pabulum in our day. A passion for science, for philosophy or for scientific philosophy, a passion for art or for *rasa* (aesthetic sentiment) in general is the badge of modernism in our culture, and seeks to displace much of the old religious sentiment. Herbert Spencer's agnosticism, Darwin's characteristic impassiveness which is only the Baconian 'dry light' of old, and John Stuart Mill's atheism which would conserve the value of religion without its beliefs, with agnosticism and Zoroastrian dualism as occasional variants—all these are only examples in our day of the man in quest of a God.

Our present quest is for a Parliament of Religions, a quest which we seek to voice in this assembly. But this is only a stepping stone to a Parliament of Man or a Federation of World Cultures.

I have hitherto spoken of the Parliament of Religions, taking religion in the concrete, but I will now take religion and religious experience as a force organising man's life and history.

Religion in this broader sense, as distinguished from religions in the concrete, is a force that organises life and life activities. All cultures and all concepts, in fact, are dominated by the idea of religion at this stage. Food, sex-relations, the family, tribal life, and warfare are all regulated by the religious ideal. Empirical science and the folk-life are grouped round the central idea of the religion of a race or people. And, in the course of progress, the higher religions are evolved, and the Parliament of Religions is the apex of this ascending course of religious evolution.

But the religious expression is not only expression of the ultimate experience. We have also science, philosophy or (better) scientific philosophy, art or the aesthetic sensibility, *rasa* (sentiment) or *rasānubhūti*, or again mystical experience, all these being phases of humanism. and the consummation is to be found in

cosmic humanism which frees humanism from its limitation of outlook by finding Man in the universe and the Universe in man. And we must seek to be free not of this or that state but of the solar system, and the stellar systems and beyond, in one word, of the universe.

The Parliament of Religions is but the vanguard, and heralds the approach of a new order. The personal life which has hitherto been the centre of development, must make room for larger personalities, such as the masses, the community and the age and all this must consciously regulate humanity. In other words:

- (a) The mass-consciousness or the mass mind must be the ruling idea of the coming order of humanism.
- (b) The community life will seek its satisfaction as an intermediary between the individual and the State.
- (c) The next stage in this evolution will be the ruling idea of the age or the age consciousness.
- (d) And this is to be completed by the consciousness of the race (or humanity as a whole) as the dominant factor in our evolving life.

Our immediate objective to-day is a Parliament of Religions. But in my view this is only a prelude to a larger parliament, the Parliament of Man, voicing the Federation of World Cultures, as I have said, and what this will seek to establish is a synthetic view of life, conceived not statically but dynamically as a progressive evolution of humanity.

(“Paramahansa Ramakrishna, Saint, Mystic and Seer”, *Modern Review*, 1937)

SCIENCE

Ancient Hindus excelled in Chemical Industries

Early in the sixth century, Varahamihira in the *Vṛhat Samhitā* gives several preparations of cements or powders called Vajra-lepa, “cements strong as the thunderbolt”; and there was ample use of these in the temple architecture of the Buddhist period, the remains of which bear testimony to the adamant strength of these metal or rock cements. (प्रासादहर्म्यवलभीलिङ्गप्रतिमासु कुडचकूपेषु सन्तप्तो दातव्यो वर्षसहस्रायुतस्थायी । Chapter LVI., *ibid.*) Varahamihira also alludes to the experts in machinery (यन्त्रविदः, यन्त्रज्ञाः) and the professional experts in the composition of dyes and cosmetics (रागगन्धयुक्तिविदः Ch. XVI., also Ch. XV.). I would also refer to the interesting chapter on Perfumery (Ch. LXXVI.) where Varahamihira gives various recipes for artificial imitations of natural flower-scents, as of the essence of Vakula, Utpala, Campaka, Atimuktaka, etc., arranges compound

scents in a sort of scale according to the proportions of certain ground essences used in their preparation, and determines by the mathematical calculus of combination (लोष्टकप्रस्तार) the number of variations of the different notes in this scale. To these classes of professional experts were due three of the great Indian discoveries in the chemical arts and manufactures which enabled India to command for more than a thousand years the markets of the East as well as the West and secured to her an easy and universally recognised pre-eminence among the nations of the world in manufactures and exports: (1) the preparation of fast dyes for textile fabrics by the treatment of natural dyes like Manjistha with alum (तुवरी मंजिष्ठा रागबन्धिनी) and other chemicals (e.g. sulphate of iron) also cow-dung (cf. the "cow-dung substitute," Roscoe); (2) the extraction of the principle of indigotin from the indigo plant by a process which, however crude, is essentially an anticipation of modern chemical methods; and (3) the tempering of steel in a manner worthy of advanced metallurgy, a process to which the mediaeval world owed its Damascus swords. It was this applied chemistry much more than handicraft skill which gave India her premier position in the middle ages and earlier (indeed from Pliny to Tavernier) in exports and manufactures. . .

(*The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, 1915)

Bhaskara anticipated Newton in Differential Calculus

... The Nyaya assumes that the unit of physical change (or the time occupied by any single antecedent step in a causal series before the succeeding step is ushered in) is equal to a *Kṣāṇa* or $\frac{2}{45}$ of a second). The astronomers were familiar with far smaller measures of time. The astronomical Truti of time measures about the thirty-four-thousandth part of a second. This is of special value in determining the exact character of Bhaskara's claim to be regarded as the precursor of Newton in the discovery of the principle of the Differential Calculus, as well as in its application to astronomical problems and computations. This claim, as I proceed to show, is absolutely established; it is indeed far stronger than Archimedes' to the conception of a rudimentary process of Integration. Bhaskara, in computing the "instantaneous motion" (तात्कालिकी गति) of a planet, compares its successive positions, and regards its motion as constant during the interval (which of course cannot be greater than a Truti of time, though it may be indefinitely less). This Tatkalika motion is no other than the differential of the planet's longitude, and Bapudeva Sastri claims that both the conception of the instantaneous motion and the method of determining it plainly show that Bhaskara was acquainted with the principle of the Differential Calculus. ...

(*The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, 1915)

The Hindus laid the Foundation of the Accelerated Motion

When a body is let go and falls to the ground, the force acting on it is gravity (गुरुत्व), which the astronomers ascribe to the attraction of the earth. Motion is produced in the first instance by gravity alone, and this leads to a *sanskāra* (impressed motion) in the same direction. But the force of gravity continues to operate, so that, in the moments following the first, the motion is due to gravity as well as *sanskāra*. The resultant motion is one, but both the causes must be conceived as contributing to the resultant. The reason for supposing this combined action is that both gravity and *sanskāra* (impressed motion or momentum) are seen elsewhere to produce motion separately.

In the case of the falling body, therefore, there is the composition of the two, gravity and *Vega*, acting in the same direction (उभयसमावेशः) from the second instant onwards. It is as if two motions coalesced and resulted in one.

Here a good foundation is laid for the explanation of the accelerated motion of falling bodies, but Galileo's discovery was not anticipated, as Galileo's observations and measurements of motion were wanting. . . .

(*The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, 1915)

The Ancient Hindus developed a Methodology of Science

A study of the Hindu Methodology of Science is absolutely essential to a right understanding of Hindu positive science, its strength and its weakness, its range and its limitations. Apart from this rigorous scientific method, Hindu Chemistry, for example, would be all practical recipe, or all unverified speculation. This, however, would be a very inadequate and indeed erroneous view of this early achievement of the human mind. . . .

This doctrine of Scientific Method, in Hindu Logic, is only a subsidiary discipline, being comprehended under the wider conception of Methodology, which aims at the ascertainment of Truth, whether scientific (Vijnana) or philosophical (Jnana) (मोक्षे धीर्ज्ञानम् स्यात् विज्ञानं शिल्पशास्त्रयोः, *Amara-Koṣa*); the latter being the ulterior aim. In the investigation of any subject, Hindu Methodology adopts the following procedure: (1) the proposition (or enumeration) of the subject-matter (Uddesa), (2) the ascertainment of the essential characters or marks, by Perception, Inference, the Inductive Methods, etc.—resulting in definitions (by लक्षण) or descriptions (by उपलक्षण); and (3) examination and verification (परीक्षा and निर्णय). Ordinarily the first step, Uddesa, is held to include not mere Enumeration of topics, but Classification or Division proper (विभागः उद्देशरूपानपायात्रु उद्देश एवासौ सामान्यसंज्ञया कीर्तनमुद्देशः प्रकारभेदसंज्ञया कीर्तनं विभाग इति) —Jayanta, *Mañjari*); but a few recognise the latter as a separate procedure coming

after definition or description. Any truth established by this three-fold (or four-fold) procedure is called a Siddhanta (an established theory). Now the various Pramanas, Proofs, i.e., sources of valid knowledge, in Hindu Logic, viz., Perception, Inference, Testimony, Mathematical Reasoning (सम्भव, including Probability in one view), are only operations subsidiary to the ascertainment of Truth (तत्त्वनिर्णय). And the Scientific Methods are merely ancillary to these Pramanas themselves. . .

What is characteristic of the Hindu scientific mind is that, without being content with the general concepts of Science and a general methodology, it elaborated the fundamental categories and concepts of such of the special sciences as it cultivated with assiduity, and systematically adapted the general principles of scientific method to the requirements of the subject-matter in each case. The most signal example of applied logic (or scientific method) worked out with systematic carefulness is the Logic of Therapeutics in *Caraka*, a logic which adapts the general concepts of cause, effect, energy, operation, etc., and the general methodology of science, to the special problems presented in the study of diseases, their causes, symptoms, and remedies (vide *Caraka, Vimānasthāna*, Chap. IV.; also *Sūtrasthāna* vide my Paper on Hindu Logic).

(*The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, 1915)

MISCELLANEOUS

Message to the Second All-India Unity Conference held on April 20, 1938, at the Albert Hall, Calcutta

My extreme ill-health disables me from taking any part at the present Cultural Conference. I will add only a few brief words relevant to the occasion.

There are characteristic expressions of culture embodied in each section of humanity.

Culture is either pure or applied. Pure culture is comprised in science and philosophy. Science emphasises the ascent from the particular to the general with a view to embodying such generals more fully, and philosophy emphasises descent from the general to the particular with a view to comprising the particulars more fully and systematically in the generals.

Applied culture has two main aspects, art and religion. The characteristic element in art is *Rasa* (the aesthetic sentiment or the aesthetic enjoyment) while

the characteristic element in religion is religious satisfaction which is essentially and ultimately a mystical experience.

Indian social life is adapted and adjusted to its own conception of culture. The relation of husband, wife and child and of different families to one another and finally the composition of these families into communities, nationalities and states have their own stamp and impress in each country. Fundamentally, the individual seeks to express himself and fulfil himself in these relations of social life. In India it is not merely the individual and the state that are the ruling factors, the community or social group has an independent life and value which sometimes overrides the requirements and ideals of the individual and the state.

There are two types. In northern India, the communal share is supplemented by the individual's own right and possession. In other words, communism is tempered by the recognition of the individual's share of property or land and wealth.

In southern India, individualism is tempered by the community's share of property or land and wealth.

In modern states, the same problems are tackled in other ways. In democracies proper, the individual, though recognised as master of his own wealth, has to pay taxes which increase in proportion to his wealth.

Before I deal with the question of political evolution, I want to point out that economics with statistics must furnish the basic ideas on which our political life has to be built. From this point of view, it is the organisation of wealth and of its consumption and production that is the main function of social life. Labour is the real and ultimate producer of wealth, and land and capital are only subsidiary. But the economic life is not everything. Equality and equity are the fundamental concepts which must be the ultimate ruling ideas and what must be aimed at is that each individual must count for one, and nobody for less than one or more than one. On this basis must be reared all political life of which the ruling idea is co-operation, though non-violent non-co-operation may be resorted temporarily as a corrective, but never as an ultimate end. But all this is subject to the recognition of every individual's ultimate, fundamental and inalienable right, that of civil liberty, which may be summed up under the five ultimate principles,—freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of press and the freedom of preaching (or prophesying).

As I have said, there are characteristic expressions of culture embodied in each section of humanity and it is the business of this Cultural Association to study and apply these basic forms of culture.

(Hindusthan Standard, December 3, 1938)

Inaugural Address at the Visva-bharati*

(বিশ্বভারতীর উদ্‌ঘোষন-সভায় আচার্য ব্ৰজেন্দ্রনাথ শীলের ভাষণ)

এই আশ্রমের গুরুত্ব অন্তর্জ্ঞায় ও আপনাদের অনুমতিতে আমাকে যে সভাপতির দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হল তাহা আমি শিরোধার্য করে নিচ্ছি। আমি এ ভারের সম্পূর্ণ অযোগ্য। কিন্তু আজকের এই প্রতিষ্ঠান বিপদ ও বহুশঙ্কায় পূর্ণ। তাই ব্যক্তিগত বিনিয় পানিহার করে আমি এই অনুষ্ঠানে ব্রতী হলাম। বহু বৎসর ধরে এই আশ্রমে একটা শিক্ষার কেন্দ্র গড়ে উঠেছে। এই ধরনের এডুকেশনাল একস্‌পেরিমেন্ট দেশে খুব বিরল। এই দেশ তো আশ্রম-সংঘ-বিহারের দেশ। কোথাও কোথাও 'গুরুদ্বকুল'-এর মতো দ্ব-একটা এমনি বিদ্যালয় থাকলেও, এটি এক নতুনভাবে অনুপ্রাণিত। এর স্থান আর কিছুতে পূর্ণ হতে পারে না। এখানে খোলা আকাশের নীচে প্রকৃতির ক্রোড়ে মেঘ-রৌদ্র-বৃষ্টি-বাতাসে বালক-বালিকারা লালিত-পালিত হচ্ছে। এখানে শৃঙ্খল বহিঃপ্রকৃতির আবির্ভাব নয়, কলাসৃষ্টির দ্বারা অন্তরঙ্গ-প্রকৃতিও পারিপার্শ্বিক অবস্থায় জেগে উঠেছে। এখানকার বালক-বালিকারা এক-পরিবার-ভুক্ত হয়ে আচার্যদের মধ্যে রয়েছে। একজন বিশ্বপ্রাণ পার্সনালিটি এখানে সর্বদাই এর মধ্যে জাগ্রত রয়েছেন। এমনিভাবে এই বিদ্যালয় গড়ে উঠেছে। আজ সেই ভিত্তির প্রসার ও পূর্ণাঙ্গতা সাধন হতে চলল। আজ এখানে বিশ্বভারতীর অভ্যুদয়ের দিন। 'বিশ্বভারতী'র কোষানুযায়িক অর্থের দ্বারা আমরা বুঝি যে, যে 'ভারতী' এতদিন অলক্ষিত হয়ে কাজ করছিলেন আজ তিনি প্রকট হলেন। কিন্তু এর মধ্যে আর-একটি ধর্নিগত অর্থও আছে—বিশ্ব ভারতের কাছে এসে পৌঁছবে, সেই বিশ্বকে ভারতীয় করে নিয়ে আমাদের রক্তরাগে অনুর্জিত করে ভারতের মহাপ্রাণে অনুপ্রাণিত করে আবার সেই প্রাণকে বিশ্বের কাছে উপস্থিত করব। সেই ভাবেই বিশ্বভারতীর নামের সার্থকতা আছে।

একটা কথা আমাদের স্মরণ রাখতে হবে—ভারতের মহাপ্রাণ কান্টা। যে মহাপ্রাণ লুপ্তপ্রায় হয়ে এসেছে তাকে ধরতে গিয়ে আমরা যদি বিশ্বের সঙ্গে কারবার স্থাপন ও আদানপ্রদান না করি তবে আমাদের আত্মপরিচয় হবে না। Each can realize himself only by helping others as a whole to realize themselves-এ যেমন সত্য, এর converse অর্থাৎ others can realize themselves by helping each individual to realize himself-ও তেমন সত্য। অগরে আমার লক্ষ্যের পথে, যাবার পথে যেমন মধ্যবর্তী, তেমন আমিও তার মধ্যবর্তী; কারণ আমাদের উন্নয়নকে যেখানে বন্ধ বেটন করে আছেন সেখানে আমরা এক, একাট মহা একো অন্তরঙ্গ হয়ে আছি। এভাবে দেখতে গেলে বিশ্বভারতীতে ভারতের প্রাণ কী তার পরিচয় পেতে হবে, তাতে করে জগতে যে পরিচয় ঘটবে তার রূপে আত্মাকে প্রতিফলিত দেখতে পাব।

আমি আজ ভারতবর্ষ সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলতে চাই। আজ জগৎ-জুড়ে একাট সমস্যা রয়েছে। সর্বত্রই একটা বিদ্রোহের ভাব দেখা যাচ্ছে—সে বিদ্রোহ প্রাচীন সভ্যতা, সমাজতন্ত্র, বিদ্যাবৃদ্ধি, অনুষ্ঠান, সকলের বিরুদ্ধে। আমাদের আশ্রম দেবালয় প্রভৃতি যা-কিছু হয়েছিল তা যেন সব ধূলিসাৎ হয়ে যাচ্ছে। বিদ্রোহের অনল জ্বলছে, তা অর্ডার-প্রোগ্রেসকে মানে না রিফর্ম চায় না, কিছুই চায় না। যে মহাবুদ্ধি হয়ে গেল এই বিদ্রোহের মধ্য দিয়ে তার চেয়ে বড়ো যুদ্ধ চলে আসছে, গত মহাবুদ্ধি তারই একটা প্রকাশ মাত্র। এই সমস্যার পূরণ কেমন করে হবে, শান্তি কোথায় পাওয়া যাবে, সকল জাতিই এর উত্তর দেবার অধিকারী। এই সমস্যায় ভারতের কী বলবার আছে, দেবার আছে?

আমরা এতকালের ধ্যানধারণা থেকে যে অভিজ্ঞতা লাভ করেছি তার দ্বারা এই সমস্যা পূরণ করবার কিছু আছে কিনা। যুরোপে এ সম্বন্ধে যে চেষ্টা হচ্ছে সেটা পের্মানেন্টকাল অ্যাডমিনিস্ট্রেশনের দিক দিয়ে হয়েছে। সেখানে রাজনৈতিক ভিত্তির উপর ট্রীটি, কন্ভেনশন, প্যাক্ট-এর ভিত্তর দিয়ে শান্তি স্থাপনের

* Pausa 8, 1328 (December 23, 1921)

চেষ্টা হচ্ছে। এ হবে এবং হবার দরকারও আছে। দেখাচ্ছি এখানে মাল্টিপল্ অ্যালায়েন্স্ হয়েও হল না, বিরোধ ঘটল। আর বিট্রেশন কোর্ট্ এবং হেগ-কনফারেন্স হল না, শেষে লীগ অব নেশন্স্-এ গিয়ে দাঁড়াচ্ছে। তার অবলম্বন হচ্ছে limitation of armaments। কিন্তু আমি বিশ্বাস করি যে, এছাড়া আরও অন্য দিকে চেষ্টা করতে হবে; কেবল রাষ্ট্রীয় ক্ষেত্রে নয়, সামাজিক দিকে এর চেষ্টা হওয়া দরকার। Universal simultaneous disarmament of all nations-এর জন্য নতুন হিউম্যানিজমের রিলিজ্যাস মড্‌মেন্ট্ হওয়া উচিত। তার ফলস্বরূপ যে মোশনারি হবে তা পার্লামেন্ট্ বা ক্যাবিনেটের ডিপ্লোম্যাটসির অধীনে থাকবে না। পার্লামেন্ট্‌সমূহের জয়েন্ট্ সিটিং তো হবেই, সেইসঙ্গে বিভিন্ন people-এরও কনফারেন্স্ হলে তবেই শান্তির প্রতিষ্ঠা হতে পারে। কিন্তু একটা জিনিস আবশ্যিক হবে—mass-এর life, mass-এর religion। বর্তমান কালে কেবল মাত্র individual salvation-এ চলবে না; সর্বমুক্তিতেই এখন মুক্তি, না হলে মুক্তি নেই। ধর্মের এই mass life-এর দিকটা সমাজে স্থাপন করতে হবে।

ভারতের এ সম্বন্ধে কী বাণী হবে। ভারতও শান্তির অনুধাবন করেছে, চীনদেশও করেছে। চীনে সামাজিক দিক দিয়ে তার চেষ্টা হয়েছে। যদি social fellowship of man with man হয়, তবেই international peace হবে, নয়তো হবে না। কনফারেন্সের গোড়ার কথাই এই যে, সমাজ একটা পরিবার, শান্তি সামাজিক ফেলোশিপের উপর স্থাপিত; সমাজে যদি শান্তি হয়, তবেই বাইরে শান্তি হতে পারে। ভারতবর্ষে এর আর-একটা ভিত্তি দেওয়া হয়েছে, তা হচ্ছে অহিংসা মৈত্রী শান্তি। প্রত্যেক individual-এ বিশ্বরূপদর্শন এবং তারই ভিতর রক্ষের ঐক্যকে অনুভব করা; এই ভাবের মধ্যে যে peace আছে ভারতবর্ষ তাকেই চেয়েছে। রক্ষের ভিত্তিতে আত্মাকে স্থাপন করে যে peace compact হবে তাতেই শান্তি আনবে। এই সমস্যা সমাধানের চেষ্টায় চীনদেশের সোস্যাল ফেলোশিপ এবং ভারতের আত্মার শান্তি এই দুই-ই চাই, নতুবা লীগ অব নেশন্স্-এ কিছ্ হবে না। গ্রেট ওঅরের থেকেও বিশালতর যে পবন জগৎ জুড়ে চলছে, তার জন্য ভারতবর্ষের পক্ষ থেকে বিশ্বভারতীকে বাণী দিতে হবে।

ভারতবর্ষ দেখেছে যে, রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে যে state আছে তা কিছ্ নয়। সে বলেছে যে, নেশনের বাইরেও মহাসত্য আছে, সনাতন ধর্মের তার স্বাভাৱ্য রয়েছে। যেখানে আত্মার বিকাশ ও রক্ষের আবির্ভাব সেখানেই তাহার দেশ। ভারতবর্ষ ধর্মের বিস্তৃতির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে এই extra-territorial nationality-তে বিশ্বাস করেছে। এই ভাবের অনুসরণ করে লীগ অব নেশন্সের ন্যাশনালিটির ধারণাকে সংশোধিত করতে হবে। তেমনি আত্মার দিক দিয়ে extra-territorial sovereignty-র ভাবকে স্থান দিতে হবে। এমনিভাবে Federation of the World স্থাপিত হতে পারে, এখনকার সময়ের উপযোগী করে লীগ অব নেশন্সে এই extra-territorial nationality-র কথা উত্থাপন করা যেতে পারে। ভারতবর্ষের রাষ্ট্রীয় দিক দিয়ে এই বাণী দেবার আছে। আমরা দেখতে পাই যে, বৌদ্ধ প্রচারকগণ এই ভাবটি প্রচার করেছিলেন যে, প্রত্যেক রাজার code এমন হওয়া উচিত যা শূদ্র নিজের জাতির নয়, অপর সব জাতির সমানভাবে হিতসাধন করতে পারবে। ভারতের ইতিহাসে এই বিধিটি সর্বদা রক্ষিত হয়েছে, তার রাজারা জন্মে পরাজন্মে, রাজচক্রবর্তী হলেও, এমনি করে আন্তর্জাতিক সম্বন্ধকে স্বীকার করেছেন।

সামাজিক জীবন সম্বন্ধে ভারতবর্ষের মেসেজ কী। আমাদের এখানে গ্রুপ ও কমিউনিটির স্থান খুব বেশি। এরা intermediary body between state and individual। রোম প্রভৃতি দেশে রাষ্ট্রব্যবস্থার ফলে স্টেট ও ইন্ডিভিজুয়ালে বিরোধ বেধেছিল; শেষে ইন্ডিভিজুয়ালিজমের পরিণতি হল অ্যানার্কিতে, এবং স্টেট-মিলিটারি সোস্যালিজমে গিয়ে দাঁড়ালো। আমাদের দেশের ইতিহাসে গ্রামে বর্ণাশ্রমে এবং ধর্মসংঘের ভিতরে কমিউনিটির জীবনকেই দেখতে পাই। বর্ণাশ্রমে যেমন প্রতি ব্যক্তির কিছ্ প্রাপ্য ছিল, তেমনি তার কিছ্ দেয়ও ছিল, তাকে কতকগুলি নির্ধারিত কর্তব্য পালন করতে হত। Community in the individual যেমন আছে তেমনি the individual in the community-ও

আছে। প্রত্যেকের ব্যক্তিগত জীবনে গ্রুপ পার্সনালিটি এবং ইন্ডিভিজুয়াল পার্সনালিটি জাগ্রত আছে, এই উভয়েরই সমান প্রয়োজন আছে। গ্রুপ পার্সনালিটির ভিতর ইন্ডিভিজুয়ালের স্বাধিকারকে স্থান দেওয়া দরকার। আমাদের দেশে দুটি রয়ে গেছে যে, আমাদের ইন্ডিভিজুয়াল পার্সনালিটির বিকাশ হয়নি, co-ordination of power in the state-ও হয়নি। আমরা ইন্ডিভিজুয়াল পার্সনালিটির দিক দিয়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছি, বৃহৎ শত্রুর হাতে আমাদের লাঞ্চিত হতে হয়েছে।

আজকাল যুরোপে group principle-এর দরকার হচ্ছে। সেখানে political organization, economic organization, এ-সবই group গঠন করার দিকে যাচ্ছে। আমাদেরও এই পথে সমস্যাপূরণ করবার আছে। আমাদের যেমন যুরোপের কাছ থেকে স্টেটের centralization ও organization নেবার আছে, তেমনি যুরোপকেও group principle দেবার আছে। আমরা সে দেশ থেকে economic organization-কে গ্রহণ করে আমাদের village community-কে গড়ে তুলব। কৃষিই আমাদের জীবন-যাত্রার প্রধান অবলম্বন, সুতরাং ruralization-এর দিকে আমাদের চেষ্টাকে নিয়োগ করতে হবে। অবশ্য আমি সেজন্য বলছি না যে, town life-কে develop করতে হবে না; তারও প্রয়োজন আছে। কিন্তু আমাদের ভূমির সঙ্গে প্রাণের যোগসাধন করতে হবে। ভূমির সঙ্গে ownership-এর সম্বন্ধ হলে তবে স্বাধীনতা থাকতে পারে। কারখানার জীবনও দরকার আছে, কিন্তু ভূমি ও বাস্তুর সঙ্গে individual ownership-এর যোগকে ছেড়ে না দিয়ে large-scale production আনতে হবে। বড়ো আকারে energy-কে আনতে হবে, কিন্তু দেখতে হবে—কলের energy মানুষের আত্মাকে পীড়িত অভিভূত না করে, যেন জড় না করে দেয়। সমবায়-প্রণালীর দ্বারা হাতের কলকেও দেশে স্থান দিতে হবে। এমনিভাবে economic organization-এ ভারতকে আত্মপরিচয় দিতে হবে। আমাদের স্ট্যান্ডার্ড অব লাইফ এত নিম্নস্তরে আছে যে, আমরা decadent হয়ে মরতে বসেছি। যে প্রণালীতে efficient organization-এর নির্দেশ করলাম, তাকে না ছেড়ে বিজ্ঞানকে আমাদের প্রয়োজনসাধনে লাগাতে হবে। আমাদের বিশ্ব-ভারতীতে তাই, রাষ্ট্রনীতি, সমাজধর্ম ও অর্থনীতির যে যে ইন্সটিটুশন পৃথিবীতে আছে, সে-সবকেই স্টাডি করতে হবে, এবং আমাদের দৈন্য কেন ও কোথায় তা বুঝে নিয়ে আমাদের অভাব পূরণ করতে হবে। কিন্তু এতে করে নিজের প্রাণকে ও সৃজনশীলতাকে যেন বাইরের চাপে নষ্ট না করি। যা-কিছু গ্রহণ করব, তাকে ভারতের ছাঁচে ঢেলে নিতে হবে। আমাদের সৃজনশীলতার দ্বারা তারা coined into our flesh and blood হয়ে যাওয়া চাই।

ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতির স্কীম অব লাইফ আছে, কিন্তু তাদের ইতিহাস ও ভূপরিচয়ের মধ্যেও একটি বৃহৎ ঐক্য আছে, এই বিভিন্নতার মধ্যেও এক জায়গায় unity of human race আছে। তাদের সেই ইতিহাস ও ভূগোলের বিভিন্ন environment-এর জন্য যে life values সৃষ্টি হয়েছে, পরস্পরের যোগাযোগের দ্বারা তাদের বিস্তৃতি হওয়া প্রয়োজন। এই লাইফ-স্কীমগুলির আদানপ্রদানে বিশেষ তাদের বৃহৎ লীলাক্ষেত্র তৈরি হবে।

আমাদের জাতীয় চরিত্রে কী কী অভাব আছে, কী কী আমাদের বাইরে থেকে আহরণ করতে হবে? আমাদের মূল দুটি হচ্ছে, আমরা বড়ো একপেশে—ইমোশনাল। আমাদের ভিতরে will ও intellect-এর মধ্যে, সব্জেক্টিভিটি ও অব্জেক্টিভিটির মধ্যে চিরবিচ্ছেদ ঘটেছে। আমরা হয় খুব সব্জেক্টিভ, নয়তো খুব ইন্ডিভিজুয়াল। অনেক সময়েই আমরা ইন্ডিভিজুয়ালিজমের বা সাম্যের চরম সীমায় চলে যাই, কিন্তু differentiation-এ যাই না। আমাদের অব্জেক্টিভিটির পূর্ণ বিকাশ হওয়া দরকার। প্রকৃতি-পর্যবেক্ষণ ও অব্জার্ভেশনের ভিতর দিয়ে মনের সত্যানুভূতিতাকে ও শৃংখলাকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে হবে। আমাদের intellect-এর character-এর অভাব আছে, সুতরাং আমাদের intellectual honesty-র প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখতে হবে। তা হলেই দেখব যে, কতব্যবোধ জাগ্রত হয়েছে। অন্যদিকে আমাদের moral ও personal responsibility-র বোধকে জাগাতে হবে, Law, Justice ও Equality-র যা লক্ষ্য

হয়ে গেছে তাকে ফিরিয়ে আনতে হবে—এ-সকল বিষয়ে আমাদের শিক্ষা আহরণ করতে হবে। আমাদের মধ্যে বিশ্বকে না পেলে আমরা নিজেকে পাব না। তাই বিশ্বরূপকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করে' আমরা আত্ম-পরিচয় লাভ করব এবং আমাদের বাণী বিশ্বকে দেব।

এদেশে অনেক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, অনেক প্রতিষ্ঠান আছে, কিন্তু সেখান থেকে cast iron ও rigid standardized product তৈরি হচ্ছে। শান্তিনিকেতনে naturalness-এর স্থান হয়েছে, আশা করি বিশ্বভারতীতে সেই spontaneity-র বিকাশের দিকে দৃষ্টি থাকবে। য়ুনিভার্সিটিকে জাতীয় প্রতিষ্ঠান বলা যেতে পারে। এশিয়ার genius য়ুনিভার্সাল হিউম্যানিজ্‌মের দিকে, অতএব ভারতের এবং এশিয়ার interest-এ এরূপ একটি য়ুনিভার্সিটির প্রয়োজন আছে। পূর্বে যে সংঘ ও বিহারের স্বারা ভারতের সার্থকতা-সাধন হয়েছিল, তাদেরই এ-যুগের উপযোগী করে, সেই পুরাতন আরণ্যককে বিশ্বভারতীরূপে এখানে পত্তন করা হয়েছে।

Reply to the Felicitations on the Occasion of Acharya Seal's Seventy-second Birthday

Dear friends, out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. This may be so but when the heart is overfull, silence is its only expression. I will not, therefore, attempt to express the inexpressible. I can only, with bended head, accept your kindly greetings in all human fellowship, and indeed in all reverence. I bow to you all, and to that spirit of love and sympathy which has brought you together. I will not speak of my weakness or decrepitude to-day in the presence of an all-sustaining love, which wins strength from weakness and life from death itself.

My last days are embittered by one thought—the wranglings of those who as the children of India should be bound by ties of brotherhood and friendship. Remember that Hindu or Moslem, Christian or Sikh, you can fulfil the best in your religion by a spirit of give-and-take, by giving out of your abundance and taking in a spirit of sincere amity and goodwill. All that is merely sectarian and communal must yield to the spirit of a common brotherhood of man in universal humanity. And I will not attempt to express my own sense of unworthiness in the presence of a love that out of its own abundance makes up for my own poverty of spirit, in my present physical and mental condition.

This is, perhaps, my last appearance in public and I am, therefore, overwhelmed with a sense of solemnity in which I must betake myself to that silence which is the best expression of the inexpressible.

From this personal aspect I will proceed to certain impersonal reflections on the nature and meaning of that human sacrament, 'Jayanti' which has called us together. I will however preface my remarks with one personal note which I cannot avoid on this occasion.

In my case it so happens that this 'Jayanti' coincides not with the triumph of life but of that other great master of our fate, death and its companions, weakness and suffering. If fate has denied to me fruition in my life, it cannot deprive me of that other fruition, which is the last and greatest, the heritage of silence, the mystery of mysteries, Death the revealer and the consummator.

I will now turn to that observance, 'Jayanti' which calls us together to-day. Our national heritage and culture has nothing more characteristic or more beautiful than this observance of 'Jayanti'.

Let me speak of certain Jewish, Greek and other national rituals which are so cognate and yet so disparate. The Jews in their "Silom" had a conception of individual immortality but their exclamation of triumph "Hallelujah" emphasises the triumph of the Lord Ya, Yovah, sinking the personal in the national or tribal aspect. Similarly, the Greek cry of "Is Paean" misses the personal aspect and with the Romans also the State was all-in-all, and personal immortality was only a shadow-life in Hades, and birth, equally with death, lost much of its personal significance.

Christ indeed had a heart to bless all human festive occasions like feasting and marrying. He sympathised even with lots of publicans and sinners. But theology with its 'original sin' and its doctrine of 'damnation' turned Christ's *religion of love and sympathy* into one of despair. But human nature finally triumphed over theological dogma and in the end birthday greetings and festivities had their due place in Christian society.

In this history the Hindus have a distinctive note in their observance of 'Jayanti'. At first 'Jayanti' was a solar festival connected with the return of the Sun in spring. This gave rise to the legend of the *Suras* and *Asuras*, and the victory of the former over the latter which was commemorated in the 'Jayanti' festival. The hymn of triumph was now 'Jayanti Divash'.

This was as far as the Vedic Hindus reached; but in Buddhism 'Jayanti' took on a cosmic human significance, in the triumph of the Buddha over Mara, in other words of humanity over darkness and death. This was what was first commemorated in 'Jayanti' and when 'Jayanti' became a birthday greeting what is meant to the Buddhist and later on to post-Buddhistic Hindus was the triumph of powers of light over those of darkness, which was symbolised afresh in each birth. Indeed it was a promise of the ultimate redemption in 'Moksha' or 'Nirvana'.

Apart from its cosmic significance 'Jayanti' has a deep human meaning and import. The individual is born but once but the annual observance of 'Jayanti' (the birthday) confers a sempiternal and recurrent character to what occurs but once in reality. As human device, the birthday is annually renewed, and we, thus,

win a sort of perpetual life for the temporal and occasional. It is thus that we win immortality and rejuvenescence from the Heavens.

With these words of immortal hope and greeting you, in the name of Universal Humanity, I bow to you again, taking refuge in that Silence which is the first and Yea ! shall be the last.

LETTERS

From Rabindranath Tagore to Brajendra Nath Seal

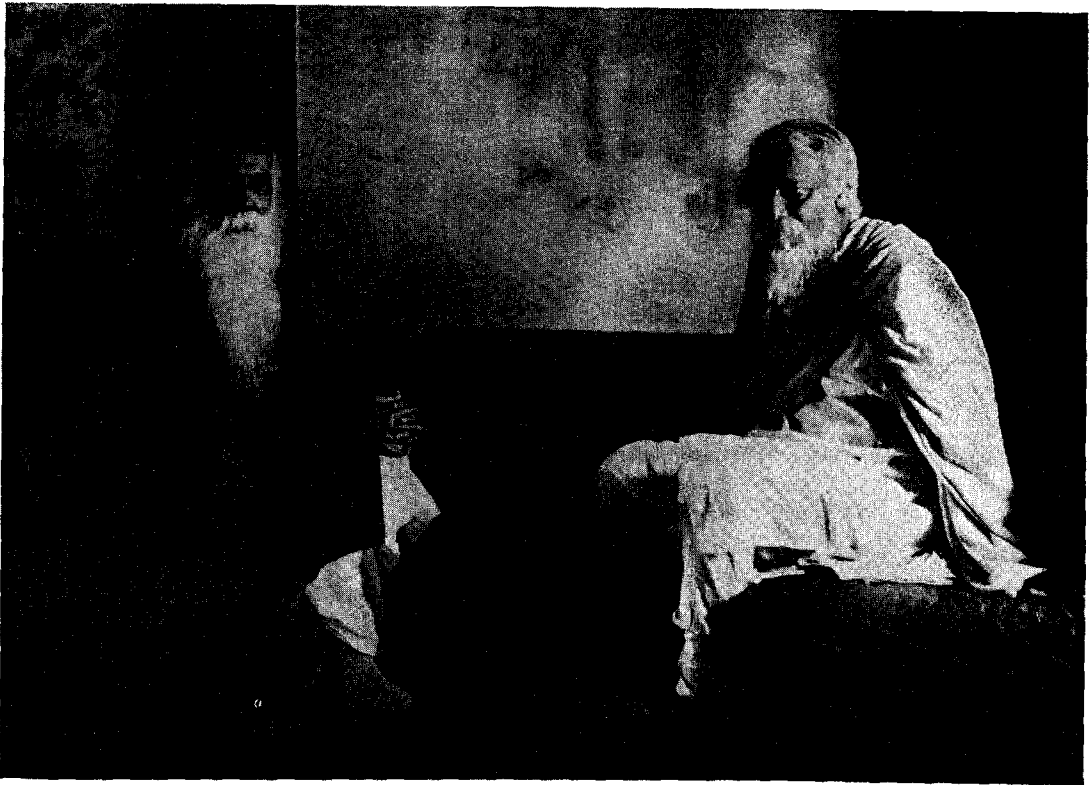
শান্তিনিকেতন

শ্রদ্ধাস্পদেব,

মৈসূর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে বার্ষিক সভায় আপনি যে বক্তৃতা দিয়াছেন তাহা পড়িয়া আমি বড় আনন্দ ও সন্তোষ পাইয়াছি। বিদ্যা সম্বন্ধে দেশের লোকের মনে সম্প্রতি যে ভেদবুদ্ধি জন্মিয়াছে তাহাতে মনে বড় বেদনা পাইয়াছি। কোনো কালেই বিদ্যাকে খণ্ডিত করিয়া দেখা উচিত নহে—বর্তমান কালে তাহা আরো অন্তর্ভুক্ত। কারণ, বর্তমানে সকল জাতির মানুষ পরস্পরের গোচরে আসিয়াছে—এই ইন্দ্রিয়ের গোচরতাকে ভেদবুদ্ধির তিরস্করণিকার দ্বারা আবৃত করা, বিধাতার অভিপ্রায়কে ব্যর্থ করিবার চেষ্টা। মহাশূরের ছাত্রদের মনকে সত্যের বিরুদ্ধে বিশ্বেষ হইতে আপনি রক্ষা করিবার জন্য দাঁড়াইয়াছেন ইহা আপনারই যোগ্য কাজ হইয়াছে, আমিও এইরূপ কাজেরই ভার লইয়া চেষ্টায় প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছি কিন্তু বড়ই বাধা। নিজেকে বড় একলা বোধ হয়। চিরকালই আমি যে কোনো কাজ করিয়াছি তাহা একলাই করিতে হইয়াছে। সঙ্গী সহায় আহ্বান করিবার শক্তি আমার নাই। তাহাতে অনেক সময়ে কাজের বিশুদ্ধ রূপ রক্ষা করিবার সুবিধা হয় কিন্তু মানুষের সঙ্গ ও সঙ্গিতর অভাবে হৃদয় ব্যথিত ও শ্রান্ত হইতে থাকে। এরূপ অবস্থায় আমার মধ্যে যে কবি আছে সে আমাকে তিরস্কার করে। সে আমাকে বলে, “কোনো Institution গাড়িবার জন্য তুমি কি সন্দেহ লইয়া আসিয়াছিলে? সে তোমার কাজ নয় বলিয়াই সে কাজের স্বার্থ সহায় তুমি পাও না। বিধাতা তোমাকে বঞ্চিত করিয়াই পথ দেখাইতেছেন।” বস্তুত institution অনেকের সহকারিতা ব্যতীত হয় না—কিন্তু কবির নিজের কাজটি বিনা সহায়ের কাজ। কালের পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গ সঙ্গিই institution ভাঙে গড়ে এবং পরিবর্তিত হয় কিন্তু গান জিনিষটি কালতরঙ্গের উত্থানের পতনের আঘাতে ডোবে না, তার উপর দিয়া ভাসিয়া চলিয়া যায়। সৃষ্টিকার্যের সেই চিরকালীন ভাসান-খেলায় আমার নিমন্ত্রণ ছিল। আমি কিন্তু আমার বাঁশী ফেলিয়া হঠাৎ এঞ্জিনিয়ার সাজিয়া কালস্রোতের মাঝখানে একটা দীপস্তম্ভ গাড়িবার চেষ্টা করি কেন? সে কাজটা ভাল এ কৈফিয়ৎ পাকা কৈফিয়ৎ নহে। ভালোর বহুধা-রূপকে প্রয়োজনের খাতিরে নষ্ট করা ত ভাল নহে। ভালোর কোন রূপের ভার আমার উপর ছিল? ক্রান্তির সময়ে এই সব তর্ক কেবলই মনের মধ্যে মথিত হইয়া উঠিতেছে। টমসন তাঁহার কেতাবে¹ আমাকে আমার বারমুণ্ডল হইতে ছিন্ন করিয়া আনিয়া দাঁড় করাইয়াছেন। ইহাতে কাজ সহজ হয়—রেখার স্পষ্টতা পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু মানুষ সম্বন্ধে সেই অতিস্ফুটতাই সত্যের অসম্পূর্ণতা। মানুষের কেবল যে ব্যক্তিত্ব আছে তাহা নহে তাহার সম্বন্ধ আছে—সেই সম্বন্ধ দূরব্যাপী এবং তাহা অতি-নির্দিষ্ট নহে। আমার সেই সম্বন্ধের সত্যটি টমসন দেখিতে পান না। তাঁহার সঙ্গ কথ্য কহিয়া দেখিয়াছি যে তিনি ঠিকমত জানেন না যে, বৈষ্ণব সাহিত্য এবং উপনিষৎ বিমিশ্রিত হইয়া আমার মনের হাওয়া তৈরি করিয়াছে। নাইট্রোজেনে এবং অক্সিজেনে যেমন মেশে তেমন করিয়াই তাহারা মিশিয়াছে। আমার রচনায় সীমা ও অসীমের স্বন্দ্ব নাই, মিলন আছে তাহার কারণটি কেবলমাত্র আমার ব্যক্তিত্ব প্রকৃতিতে নাই আমার চারিদিকে ব্যাপ্ত হইয়া আছে; সাম্প্রদায়িক বুদ্ধির বেড়ার ভিতর দিয়া ইহা বুঝা যায় না। আমার পিতার হৃদয়ে হার্মফজ ও উপনিষদের এই সঙ্গম ঘটিয়াছিল—সৃষ্টির পক্ষে এইরূপ দুই বিষয়ের মিলনের প্রয়োজন

আছে—সৃষ্টিকর্তার চিন্তের মধ্যে স্বামী ও পুরুষ উভয়েই আছেন নহিলে একভাবে সৃষ্টি হইতেই পারে না।
কিন্তু কবির পক্ষে এ-সকল তর্ক যদি ধৃষ্টতা হয় তবে মাপ করিবেন। ইতি—

আপনার
শ্রীরবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর



Brajendra Nath and Rabindranath
(Through the courtesy of the Visva-bharati)

अनुवाद आदि Macmillan को निम्न
मार्गदर्शिका।

वि
१

Thompson द्वारा Macmillan
को निम्न अनुवाद प्रकाशक को इतिहास अनुवाद
को प्रकाशक (अनुवाद) द्वारा।

आदि Macmillan को निम्न
को प्रकाशक प्रकाशक द्वारा। प्रकाशक
प्रकाशक प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक प्रकाशक, को प्रकाशक
निम्न। को प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक
अनुवाद को प्रकाशक translation
को प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक English translation
को प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक Macmillan द्वारा
अनुवाद को प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक प्रकाशक।

Macmillan को प्रकाशक द्वारा
प्रकाशक प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक प्रकाशक

प्रकाशक Rothstein प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक
प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक

प्रकाशक प्रकाशक प्रकाशक प्रकाशक
translation प्रकाशक प्रकाशक को प्रकाशक
प्रकाशक प्रकाशक प्रकाशक प्रकाशक प्रकाशक
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Cambridge

29th May 1914

শ্রদ্ধাভিলাষী,

শ্রদ্ধাভিলাষী হিসাবে প্রার্থনা করিতে আসি। (স্বাক্ষর)
কর্তৃক প্রেরিত হইবে। আমার পত্নী ও আমি
Rotham Street ৩০ নং নম্বর মাঝে মাঝে পুস্তক
আমি পাই। সৌভাগ্যে উইস্টার্ন County residence-এ
আমি আসিতে পারি।

এবার প্রার্থনা Mr. Thompson-এ করি।
প্রার্থনা করি। বস্তু-পুস্তকটি পড়িয়া
হইলে, তিনি আমার পুস্তক প্রার্থনা করিতে
করেন, ও প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা করি। প্রার্থনা
করিতে পারি। Marcellus-এ প্রার্থনা করি।

● প্রথম প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা (rough translation) প্রার্থনা
আমি। বিলাস প্রার্থনা ও আমার প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা
প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা।

● Mr. Thompson-এ আমার প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা
prairie-এ Mr. Macmillan-এ আমার প্রার্থনা
প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা ও প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা
প্রার্থনা প্রার্থনা, ও Mr. Thompson-এ

किन्तु शासनवादी (बोरोन ग्रीक) विद्वानों द्वारा
 दिये गए शासनवादी (बोरोन ग्रीक) विद्वानों द्वारा
 प्रेषित कविता २२/३३ ३ मिनट का (बोरोन ग्रीक)
 उद्धरण mystic कविता literary art or art
 २२/३३ - गणना शासनवादी कविता २२/३३, और
 mysticism २२/३३ २३/३३ २३/३३
 मॉडर्न ग्रीक २३/३३, और Psalmist २३/३३
 मॉडर्न गणना कविता २३/३३। Myriad
 as dicit, Underhill २३/३३, विद्वानों द्वारा
 २३/३३ कविता।

शासनवादी कविता ३३/३३ ३३/३३ -
 गणना ३ India (Kajali) students or
 कविता ३३/३३ ३३/३३। गणना शासनवादी
 कविता ३३/३३ ३३/३३। ३३/३३ ३३/३३
 शासनवादी गणना (गणना ३३/३३ ३३/३३)
 ३३/३३ ३३/३३ - कविता।

श्री
 श्रीवत्सलदास जी।

विरक्त शक्ति (Profession of Philosophy) प्रसिद्ध
 माधु मीरप्रदान " प्रसिद्धा काव्य
 यदि मूलक worship काव्य रूप । प्रसिद्धा काव्य
 वाचकाव्य भावना काव्य रूप । - एत एत
 noble dignified calm atmosphere - which
 irresistibly draws one's homage".

आशा ३ श्री feeling; किन्तु प्रसिद्ध
 भाव भावना, यदि भावना काव्य भावना
 प्रसिद्ध English translation प्रसिद्ध भाव भावना
 प्रसिद्ध भाव भावना ।

Gitanjali मूलक भावना काव्य
 भावना काव्य, किन्तु भाव भावना भावना
 एत mystic भावना काव्य । भावना - एत भावना
 भावना । भावना mysticism भावना काव्य
 भावना, भावना ३ भावना भावना काव्य
 भावना काव्य: भावना काव्य भावना काव्य ।
 भावना काव्य, poetry, interpretation of life प्रसिद्ध
 भावना काव्य काव्य भावना काव्य भावना काव्य ।
 भावना काव्य काव्य भावना काव्य, Poetry, Drama
 भावना काव्य काव्य भावना काव्य Gitanjali भावना काव्य
 भावना काव्य काव्य (from the point of view of art
 as the representation of life). भावना काव्य
 भावना, Gitanjali भावना काव्य भावना काव्य
 भावना काव्य काव्य - भावना काव्य भावना काव्य

From Brajendra Nath Seal to Rabindranath Tagore

মহীশূর

২৪শে নভেম্বর ১৯২১

শ্রদ্ধাঙ্গপদেষু,

আপনার পত্রের উত্তরে প্রথমেই বলিয়া রাখি যে ডিসেম্বর মাসে খ্রীষ্টমাসের ছুটিতে আমি দেশে যাইয়া কলিকাতায় হটক বা বোলপদুরে শান্তিনিকেতনে হটক আপনার সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিব। আপনার প্রবাসসময়ে শান্তিনিকেতনে একবার যাইয়াছিলাম—আপনার উপস্থিতিতে একবার যাইতে পারিলে নিজেকে কৃতার্থ মনে করিব।

Sylvain Levi মহাশয়ের সহিত লন্ডনে একবার আমার সাক্ষাৎ হয়। তিনি মহোদয় লোক—তিনি শান্তিনিকেতনে আসিতেছেন শুনিয়া নিরতিশয় প্রীত হইলাম। তিনি শান্তিনিকেতনে যথার্থ শান্তি আনিবেন ও পাইবেন। আমি শান্তি লইয়া যাইতে পারি নাই, কিন্তু তথাপি মহতী শান্তি লাভ করিয়াছিলাম। আপনাকে সেদিন নূতন করিয়া পাইয়াছিলাম। তাহা কখনও ভুলিবার নহে।

আশা করি আমাদের দেশের মনীষীগণ বোলপদুরে Sylvain Levi মহোদয়ের সহিত মিলিত হইবেন। তবে আমি নামজাদা মনীষীদের প্রতি বেশী ভরসা রাখি না। অনেকেই দূর হইতে বুদ্ধিব্যবহার যত সুযোগ হয় নিকট হইতে ততটা হয় না। আমার ভয় হয় পাছে অধ্যাপক লেভি আমাদের আগন্তুক-তুচ্ছতা ও কার্পণ্যবিকার দেখিয়া ভারতবর্ষের মাহাত্ম্য সম্বন্ধে সন্দিহান হইয়া পড়েন। তবে আপনি আছেন.....আর ভারতের চাষা আছে। আর আছে বণ্ণজননী।

Heritage of India Series-এ Thompson¹ যাহা আপনার সম্বন্ধে লিখিয়াছেন তাহা পড়িয়াছি। সে বিষয়ে তাঁহার সহিত আমার লেখালেখি চলিতেছে।

আমার মতে Europe-এ সমালোচকের দল ভারতীয় সাহিত্য বা কলাবিদ্যা সম্বন্ধে সত্য ধারণায় পশ্ছাদ্ধিতে শীঘ্র পারিবে না। এক ধাপ অগ্রসর হইয়া দুই ধাপ পিছাইয়া যাইবে। ভারত একটা মস্ত challenge to the rest of the world (অবশ্য ভারতের Moplah বা Nankhana Sikh মোহান্ত বা political agitator নহে)। এই challenge সম্মুচিতভাবে গ্রহণ করা সময়সাপেক্ষ।

এখন উহাদের সমালোচনার সময় নহে, বুদ্ধিব্যবহার সময়।

দুইটি ভারতপন্থীর একটিকে সহজে গ্রহণ করিবে আর অপরাটিকে হেয়ালি বলিয়া ত্যাগ করিবে ইহা সত্য হইতে পারে না। দুই জনেই ভারতবর্ষের সাধিত 'life elemental', 'life universal', প্রচার করিতেছেন। বহুদূরপী বহুভোগী মানুষ ইহাতে তৃপ্তি আশ্বাদ করিতে পারে না। বলে ইহা অপ্ৰাকৃত—অথবা monotonous and empty, শূন্য ও একঘেয়ে।

Thompson একবার translation করিয়া দেখিতে চায়, দেখুক। কিন্তু শুধু translation-এর কর্ম নয়—transvaluation চাই।

Europe ও America-র প্রাকৃতজন—masses-রা—আর defeated peoples যাহারা ভোগপথের শেষে ফাঁকিরী বা কপূনি গ্রহণ করিয়াছে—তাহাদের পক্ষে life elemental, life universal যতটা নিকট, ততটা Renaissance-এর উত্তরাধিকারী সমাম্বস্ত সাহিত্যিকদিগের পক্ষে নহে।

আমাদের পক্ষে কিন্তু Renaissance-এর বিচিত্র ভোগ নিতান্ত বিচিত্র নহে! ভারতে কত অগণিত ধারা আসিয়া মিলিত হইয়াছে, স্নাতরাং বহুদূরপে বহুদূরসে আমাদের রসভোগ হয় না। তবে আমরা সেই খন্ডরূপ ও খন্ডরসকে বিশ্বরূপের একরসে পরিণত করি—সেইটা life elemental, life universal। ভারত এই মধু বিতরণ না করিলে কে করিবে। তবে যাহাদের জীবন অতান্ত তিস্ত ও বিস্বাদ, তাহারাই মধু আশ্বাদে মধুময় হইবে। মধু কিন্তু সকলের জন্য।

কিন্তু বহু সামগ্রী আহরণ না করিলে—বহু চয়ন না করিলে—আমরা এই একরসে পরিণত করিব
কোন অ-বস্তু? আর আমাদের ভাণ্ডার শূন্য থাকিলে বিতরণ করিব কি?

সুতরাং সমস্যা যেমন উহাদের, সমস্যা তেমনি আমাদের। সত্যই ইহা একই সমস্যা—সমগ্র মানব-
জীবনের বিষম হেয়ালি।

কেহ কাহাকে ছাড়িলে—স্বপ্নায় হউক অবিশ্বাসে হউক বর্জন করিলে—এ সমস্যার পূরণ হইবে না।

Thompson বঙ্গসন্তানকে বর্জন করিয়া বঙ্গের ঠাকুরকে লইতে পারিবে কি—ভারতপন্থাকে
ছাড়িয়া ভারতপন্থীকে চিনতে চিনাইতে পারিবে কি?*

আপনার
শ্রীরাজেন্দ্রনাথ শীল

¹ E. J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore—His Life and Work*. The Heritage of India Series, Association Press, Calcutta, 1921. This book was dedicated to Acharya Seal. Thompson's other work on Tagore was *Rabindranath Tagore—Poet and Dramatist*, Oxford University Press, 1926.

*The first and the last letter appeared in the *Visva-bharati Patrika*, 14 No. 3, Vaisakha-Asadha, 1880 Saka and are published with the kind permission of Visva-bharati.

These two letters, as explained in the foot notes of the *Visva-bharati Patrika*, were made available through the courtesy of Sri Suhrud Kumar Mukherjee, a former pupil of Santiniketan. He preserved the originals of Acharya Seal.

REMINISCENCES

I met the late Dr. Sri Brajendra Nath Seal for the first time towards the end of the year, 1915. I had occasions to see him in connexion with the Calcutta Philosophical Society of which I was then the Secretary. He received me very kindly, spoke appreciatingly of some of my writings and made me feel at once as though we had long been working together in the same plane of philosophical thought. It was a wonder to me for I had known him by repute, as a gargantuan scholar and a bafflingly abstruse thinker. I found out later in conversation and in listening to his discourses before the Philosophical Society that his scholarship in Philosophy, I cannot speak of other subjects, was not only very comprehensive and precise but thoroughly organised and grouped round living thoughts, each with a promise of magnificent growth. I found too that his thinking was mainly of a synoptic type which baffled me not because of his abstruseness—for he was no introvert in logic like Kant—but because of the rapidity with which it gathered momentum and because of the volume of the material it had to synthesise—material that was already a multitude of syntheses, not yet familiar to his audience. He himself used the term 'Synthetic philosophy' to characterise his system of thought though he confided to me that his real interest was in the abstract analysis of a logic and epistemology, in which I was interested.

I will remember now a series of discourses in Indian Philosophy which he gave before the Calcutta Philosophical Society, in his room, in the south-east corner of the Senate Hall. As Secretary of the Society, I had to take elaborate notes of them and I freely confess that it was an enormously difficult task for me. I regret very much that I have lost the notes, which recorded not only much that was new to me but also suggestions that have powerfully influenced my whole manner of thinking. I learnt a good deal in conversation with him but what specially impressed me was not his scholarship, of which in fact I was secretly afraid all the time—but the suggestions that seemed unwittingly to trickle out from his mind which he sometimes jocosely called his 'intentions', when I drew attention to them.

Many of us regret that he has not left as much in writing that might be regarded as a testament of his rare mind. But, after all, high thinking is a life influencing life and need not coin itself before its time into an impersonal behest to posterity.

I am immensely thankful to him for all that I have learned at his feet and for his many acts of personal kindness. What, however, I to-day remember with the liveliest gratitude is that he gave me confidence when I needed it most to pursue my fool-hardy ventures in unchartered seas, to which I was being led in my endeavour to adjust modern thought to the old-world Indian standpoint.

KRISHNA CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA,
(Formerly George V Professor of Philosophy,
Calcutta University.)

* * * *

My recollections of Dr. Seal date back to a period about which there must be very few to speak today. I believe I first saw him in 1899 when I was a student in one of the lower classes of Jenkins School which was attached to the Victoria College of which he was the Principal. I am not going to try an assessment of his philosophy which will be, I fear, a sacrilege, but simply to recount some of the impressions made on a young student's wondering mind by the gigantic intellect which was Brajendra Nath Seal.

One day the school and college bells were ringing continuously and on coming out of the class room we saw the great figure alighting from a carriage and walking away with unsteady hurried steps. We came to learn in a vague way that he had just returned from Europe where he had gone, on invitation, to the first of his international conferences.

So my first impression was of his large physical build and of that peculiar gait which was more a running than a walking. Long afterwards when an accident or two had occurred I once asked him why he did not walk with controlled steps and he said that he could not owing to an underdeveloped medulla. He had been, as he said, an only child in a big family and the elders, not patient enough to wait for his natural growth, must have made him stand on his legs and walk before his time, thus permanently damaging the medulla. However, that might be, to my mind the underdevelopment of the medulla was more than compensated by an over-developed cerebrum.

There were memorable occasions when he came to see us at work in the top classes. He particularly tested our mathematical powers and would be visibly delighted if we could show some intelligent manipulation of figures. One with mathematical acumen was sure to earn not merely his notice and interest but also his indulgence. In our B. A. Test Examination, a fellow student was detained for very poor marks in English. When, however, Dr. Seal noticed that this student

had secured very high marks in Mathematics, he was visibly moved and pleaded with the Professors of English to waive their objection, himself undertaking to polish up his English. Everyday thereafter he spent some hours on this student's English composition with the result that he passed the B. A. that year. It may not be out of place to recall in this connection that Dr. Seal's eldest son, Benoyendra was a boy-wonder in Mathematics. When we were in the F. A. or First Arts classes, we had a brilliant young Professor of Mathematics preparing for P.R.S. In his difficulties, I often found him consulting Benoyendra whose valuable help was enthusiastically spoken of by him in my presence. Benoy was then only about 13 years of age, but subsequently at Cambridge he went in for Mental and Moral Science Tripos.

When in the B. A. classes, I began to get more of him first because he took many of our classes in English Prose and Philosophy Honours and also because all through this time I had many out-of-the course studies with him at his house. One undying thing about him which I still remember with wonder was his uncanny memory born of unlimited power of concentration. My Honours class with him was in the last period, 3 to 4 P.M., and more often than not the class went on till an hour or so after dusk. The room was all dark, only a dim figure was there—or was it there at all?—all that I can say with certainty is that I listened on to a “disembodied voice”. Suddenly he became conscious of time and space and would blame me for not reminding him of the hour, as if that would have helped! I must refer to at least one case to show how he could easily glide to oblivion on the wings of concentration. His house was very near to mine and on the same road. It was a few weeks before our B.A. Examination when in the very early winter morning—it was only “leaden-coloured east”—I was taking a brisk walk along the road, I happened to look towards his house and was surprised to see him standing at the door of his sitting room with his college dress, ‘Choga’ and ‘Chapkan’ on and looking bewildered and confused. To my question as to where he might be going at that hour, he could only babble out “Going? No, what has happened?” Then I gathered that on the previous day as he returned from college he found a parcel of books which came from Thacker Spink in the course of their occasional supplies. He had the box opened and wanted just to take a glance. From the glance, he dived into the books and so the night passed, the books were finished, and there he was without changing his clothes, without food and sleep and without a sense of environments. He was then living alone with his old servant, Ratan, to look after him in his honest ineffective way.

William James has spoken of “wax memory”, things once read get fixed up without any chance of dropping out of his mind. When he took our class on Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, where here and there poetry lines from many

an unimportant poet were given, he would, in filling in the picture, quote from memory many previous and subsequent lines. I once asked him how he could possibly do it as I never saw these books with him. The astonishing reply was that he had read these poets in his B.A. classes, that is some 26 years ago. And he complained that he found it ever so difficult to forget !

He had not merely this kind of capacious and ready memory, but also what I can only call a freak of memory. We read Burke's *French Revolution* with him and once on the concluding day before the summer vacation as he was reading out a long sentence and was only half way through it a message was brought in and he closed the book, handed it over to the library peon and left the class room. When he came to our class after the long vacation and the book was placed before him by the peon, he turned the pages very rapidly, as was his wont, and began to read from the word in the sentence where he had left off so long ago. Our pencil mark was our indicator while in his case it was a sheer freak of memory that enabled him to store up even unimportant details. They stick, as he said, like a burr.

All this, however, was only a small part of his life at Cooch Behar. In those days, Cooch Behar College had a galaxy of teachers. They used to read and read hard the subjects they professed and were eager to know of the wider world of letters. Thus on Sundays and holidays, Dr. Seal used to have at his house classes of the Professors, the subject being, if it is to be given a name, universal culture. I was not discouraged if sometimes I made bold to listen from a side-room. There was Professor Shyama Charan Chakraborti of Philosophy whose rational and analytical approach to philosophical problems was often commended to me by Dr. Seal; Professor Joy Gopal Banerji who later on came to occupy the University Chair in English, and others.

The lure of these classes sometimes attracted stalwarts from Calcutta. Bepin Chandra Pal, for example, the celebrated political thinker and writer was a visitor to Dr. Seal's house at this time, 1908-09. He used to come and stay at a stretch for weeks. The result could be seen in many of his subsequent articles and notably in his *Soul of India*.

Maharaja Nripendra Narayan of Cooch Behar was very proud of Dr. Seal's connection with his State. When Dr. Seal was invited to represent India at the Universal Races Congress, the Maharaja from London wired to his Dewan that all Dr. Seal's expenses should be borne by the State. But the Superintendent of the State, always an I.C.S. Britisher, put up this and that objection, till the Maharaja sent out a peremptory order. I remember the occasion when Dr. Seal contracted malaria of a rather bad type. One morning the Maharaja was seen at the gate of Dr. Seal's house surveying the low-plinthed house and the grounds

along with the Chief Engineer. The order was given then and there to construct, in rapid time, a high-plinthed two-storeyed house in the grounds for Dr. Seal to live in. In the meantime, at Maharaja's request, Dr. Seal went on a long sea-voyage at State expense. The Maharaja was fully aware of the fact that it was Dr. Seal who had placed his geographically small principality on the map of the world.

I left Cooch Behar and after two years was away from Calcutta where Dr. Seal came later on as King George V Professor of Philosophy. But this day he occupies my mind not so much as a Professor amongst Professors or as a savant amongst savants, but as a sublime wonder with dimensions beyond one's comprehension.

KUMUD BONDHU CHAKRABORTI
(Formerly Principal, Ananda Mohan College),
Mymensingh.

* * * *

I am not sure whether my reminiscences of Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, which are serappy and disconnected, will be of any particular interest. I cannot pretend to have met him long enough to be able to record any significant details of his life.

I first met Dr. Seal in 1909, shortly after I had taken my B.A. degree in English Hons. while he was staying in his house in North Calcutta during a vacation of the Coochbehar College. I had heard stories of his encyclopedic learning and had been told that he had inspired a number of scholars in their research work in various fields e.g. Radhakumud Mukherjee and Benoy Kumar Sarkar, had helped Dr. P. C. Ray to write his History of Indian Chemistry and used to help Bepin Chandra Pal in editing his weekly paper *New India* in which brilliant political articles used to appear. I had also heard that he sympathised with the struggles of the political revolutionaries of Bengal. When I saw his massive figure with a lofty forehead, penetrating eyes and large flowing beard surmounted by a contemplative smile playing about his lips, I felt the presence of a striking personality. He had a habit of lying prone on a *farash* (wide divan), with numerous books scattered around him while he quickly turned over the pages of the book he happened to be reading. Once he wanted to show me a certain passage in a book in his library; he called out to one of his sons and asked him to take down the book from a particular shelf in a particular cupboard, giving approximately the place on the shelf where the book would be found; this is an instance showing his prodigious memory. Being

a student of literature I had read his book on the romantic movements in literature, written about twenty years before. He once read to me, with great enthusiasm and high appreciation, a considerable part of his daughter Sarajubala's "Basanta Prayan". We discussed Tagore's poetry, though in a somewhat desultory fashion. I remember his saying that Tagore's special province was a region of strange lights and dim shadows, whose laws were peculiar to themselves. He was probably referring to the delicate meances and mystic insights which were to surprise and disturb Tagore's readers in Europe a few years later when his *Gitanjali* appeared in English.

In 1911, when I was in England, Dr. Seal went to attend an International Anthropological Conference in London. Either then or in 1912, when he again went to Europe, I met him again at a house at Hampstead in London. He was having his dinner with several other people when I called, a fact which embarrassed me; but he left the table to greet me and talk to me. I insisted on his returning to the table but he declined, saying that he had finished dining. When I called on him again on another occasion, I found him reading some Italian book; and I remember we talked about the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, who had participated in the first World War.

I passed the I.C.S. Examination in 1912. He sent me his congratulations, hoping that I would do "yeoman's service" to the country.

About 1921, when he was Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University, I went to spend some time with him at Mysore. Dr. Radhakumud Mukherjee was also there. I remember our going to a picnic, to which Dr. Seal had invited us, on the bank of a small rivulet. He seemed to enjoy the outing greatly, happy and relaxed like a child. He said that if he wanted he could write some passable short stories based on incidents which he himself had witnessed. I particularly remember the story he told us of his travelling once to Europe with a European for his cabin mate, who suffered from an incurable disease and was journeying to die in his native land. This man was an atheist and a misanthrope, and fiercely objected to Dr. Seal's ministering to his material needs. "Are you Tolstoy?" he had shouted at him. Gradually he had got reconciled to Dr. Seal's ministrations, and finally his whole temper had changed to affectionate gratefulness when they parted. Later, before his death, he had sent to Dr. Seal a lock of his hair or some such memento.

At Mysore I used to see him poring over book of Jaina philosophy. Jaina Philosophy, he said, had been much neglected in our country; I remember his approving reference to the doctrine known as *Syad-vaad*.

Besides his work as Vice-Chancellor of the University he had much other work. He was practically the author of the Mysore constitution and for a time he was a member of the Council of the Government. Only his immense mental

stamina could cope with all his multifarious duties, but at the end they told upon him, and he had to leave Mysore in a state of indifferent health.

His eldest son Benoy joined the Elphinstone College in Bombay some time later as professor of philosophy. Once during the summer holidays he hired a house at Lonavla (between Bombay and Poona), and Dr. Seal stayed with his family; I used to go there during week-ends. Dr. Seal used to tell me that all his life he had contemplated constructing a comprehensive philosophy—I believe that he had started as a Hegelian but had also been influenced by the neo-Hegelians as well as by the realist philosophy of England—but that he found it impossible to rise above a certain barrier which he felt was pressing down his thoughts. He often used the word “universal”, showing that the framework of the contemplated philosophy was idealistic. His son, however, as was natural to one brought up on the Cambridge outlook, revelled in Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein; but the father would rarely condescend to cross swords with the irreverent flippancies of his son. About this time I read a long English poem written by him many years before, setting out his ideas on the progress of humanity towards a many-sided consummation.

The air was thick in those days with new of Gandhiji's *satyagraha*, which I thought was derived mainly from Tolstoy, Thoreau and Ruskin. But Dr. Seal made me bring from Bombay a copy of *Visnu-purana* which depicts Prahlada's *satyagraha* against oppression, and read the Sanskrit verses to show the Indian roots of the doctrine. He once contrasted the character of Tilak and Aurobindo, somewhat to the latter's disadvantage, on account, particularly, of his flight from British India, a thing which he thought would have been foreign to Tilak's nature.

Some time later he came to Calcutta, where he lived till his death. Unfortunately I lost touch with him, but used to hear stories of his privations, illness and growing isolation. I did not often come to Calcutta, and got little news of him from his sons. He left in me a lasting impression as of some superman surveying mankind and its history from a great height in a synoptic vision which, however, omitted no significant detail, co-relation or contradiction and represented an effort at a synthetic understanding of the problems that have vexed philosophers and the serene insights reached by the seers of the world in all ages.

KSHITISH CHANDRA SEN

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I have received an invitation to be present at a memorial service for Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, who died a month ago. In my judgment, Brajendra

Nath Seal, was one of the greatest intellects of his time in India, a man in some ways unsurpassed.

The late Sir Patrick Geddes used to say that Seal's was the greatest brain functioning in this planet. While his Indian friends are mourning his passing, will you let me speak for his friends in England?

The roots of his life were profoundly religious. He was a member of the Brahmo Samaj, I believe by choice and not by inheritance. But he knew the Hindu and Muslim and Buddhist and Christian Scriptures from beginning to end. The difficult Epistles of St. Paul, for example, had been taken by him and wrestled with until the heart of their innermost meaning had been seized and understood.

In 1890, *The Calcutta Review* published a series of astonishing essays on "The Neo-Romantic Movement in Literature" written by a young man who had only just ceased to be an undergraduate. This young Indian student, in page after page of majestic English, with rarely the slightest hint of a false idiom or faltering rhythm, put Bengali literature without apology and without nationalist strutting—alongside of other literatures—and discussed it gravely and seriously. "My son Cartwright," said Ben Johnson of a young poet, three centuries ago, "writes all like a man." Brajendra Nath Seal, a student of Calcutta University, wrote all like a man; in him, Indian literature stood erect and claimed a place in the world. His knowledge was already encyclopaedic. In these pages the great litterateurs, ancient or modern—of both East and West—the great critics, great philosophers—are handled with the ease of familiarity. His judgements are always decided, always independent. If he thinks an Indian poem is bad, he says so; if he thinks an Indian leader is silly or mischievous, he says so. Throughout his life, Brajendra Nath Seal, was without fear; and he was incapable of intellectual dishonesty. He was an Aryan indeed, in the original meaning of that word, which is *noble*. The East has been given a reputation for subtlety, and the English and Americans like to think they are very simple straightforward people. I cannot of course express any opinion about this—but I do know, and know it by experience, that among Indians, as among other nations, you sometimes come across a man or woman whose character is so crystal clear that you can look right through it. Seal had such a character. To him nothing mattered beside truth.

I remember he was half regretful to me on one occasion because he had criticised Mrs. Annie Besant with great severity. But he said, "she had been praising Indian things which we know are bad and which we are striving desperately to get rid of." Can you sympathise with him? I know this, that when some kind-hearted foreigner begins praising English social customs which I think loathsome, I am miserable!

Let me give you an example of this young Indian student's independence and

courage. Sixty years ago, Bengal, then the intellectual centre of India, was feeling very depressed and discouraged. Aggressive nationalism came to its help. Bankimchandra Chatterji, the famous novelist, Nabinchandra Sen, the poet, turned their gifts to the glorification of everything Indian. Vivekananda presently helped, in his own powerful fashion. An orator called Sasadhar Tarkachuramani went round moving audiences to ecstasy; he taught that in the time of the ancient Vedas all the knowledge of modern scientific Europe was known. It was natural that after decades of humiliation, people should respond to teaching that built up self-esteem. What had the young student in Calcutta got to say about it? He wrote, in his essays:

“A hopeless sterility, a blank stunned stare, an incongruous mysticism, a jellyfish structure of brain and heart, are the characteristic features of this hybrid literature of impotence, as we may call it, in distinction from the literature of power and the literature of knowledge. . . this great sink of national imbecility, over which may well be inscribed, as its motto, “Abandon Hope, all ye who enter here”. . .

After that example of Seal’s courage and decision, let me try to indicate the sweep and colour of this Indian student’s English prose. This is his description of the legendary India of the *Mahabharata*:

“A dim prehistoric vista—a hundred surging kingdoms, in that dim light clashing and warring with one another like emblematic dragons and griffins on some Afric shore—a dark polytheistic creed and inhuman polytheistic rites. . . the Kshatriya’s star, like a huge comet brandished in the political sky, casting a pale glimmer over the land. . . the non-Aryan Nagas and Dasyus crouching in the hilly jungles and dens like fell beasts of prey. . .”

It is probably true that some of the Indian poems which he examines are overpraised by him. That does not matter. The point is, they are never overpraised because of mere nationalist and patriotic enthusiasm. From the first, this man was free of the least touch of any inferiority complex; and without resentment or rancour he assumed that India and her writers had their place alongside of other civilised lands and their writers.

In later years, when Seal had become a famous scholar, and all over India was accepted as the greatest Indian scholar, his style became so stiff and latinised, that some of his learned publications are very hard to read. But his private talk and private letters were entirely different, their style was that of the most clear and nervous English. He was rather like our own Dr. Johnson. Do you remember how on one occasion Johnson said hastily of a book, “It has not life enough to keep it sweet!” That sentence is good clear vigorous English. Then Johnson saw he had slipped into talking simply, and he amended the statement. “It has not

sufficient vitality to preserve it from putrefaction." The difference between Seal's published books and private talk and letters is like that difference !

Professor Patrick Geddes used to tell of his first meeting with Seal. Seal was to dine with Geddes and a friend. When Seal arrived and began talking, Geddes and his friend listened spellbound. They had not known that such talk existed, so majestic, so vigorous, so weighty with knowledge, so quick and enthusiastic ! Presently the servants were seen approaching to bring in dinner. Geddes waved them away lest they should interrupt so wonderful an experience; and kept on waving them away. They did not dine till it was nearly midnight.

My own first meeting with Seal bears this story out. In June, 1914, I journeyed from Calcutta to Bombay. At Allahabad, two Indian gentlemen entered my carriage. After a while, the elder of them began to eat an orange. Oranges are excellent things, but what dreadful after-effects they have in railway carriages ! I thought to myself, "Now the floor is going to be made all messy ! The peel and pips will be thrown everywhere !"

But I noticed that this gentleman was putting carefully into a paper bag every scrap that he did not eat. Not a speck fell on the carriage floor. Presently we began to talk, and like Geddes I had never heard such talk. When night came, we were each trying to persuade the other to take the comfortable lower berth, and when we reached Bombay we were fast friends. I said, "I am not going to ask your name. There is only one man in India who you can be. You are Brajendra Nath Seal."

During the War his wonderful letters came to me regularly in Mesopotamia and elsewhere. After the War, our friendship persisted unabated, until a friend persuaded him to accept the Maharaja of Mysore's pressing invitation to take charge of the University in that great State. Seal, with sound instinct did not want to go. We thought it was too big an opportunity to reject, and one evening we made him write a letter of acceptance, which I posted. In Mysore, this simple-hearted scholar and saint was very unhappy, and things went wrong for him. Then I published my small earlier book on Rabindra Nath Tagore. He disliked the tartness of some of its criticisms of Indian customs and Indian nationalism.

I said in surprise, "But you yourself have often expressed to me your agreement with far severer criticisms made by Rabindra Nath Tagore himself." He replied, "Yes, but he has a right to criticise us, he has been a nation-builder." I was struck by the fairness of this remark. Tagore had been a nation-builder; I was merely an outsider. My thoughts went back to a day in 1907, when I was standing with an older man in Greyfriars Cemetery, in Edinburgh, beside the place where lie buried many Covenanters, men whose bodies were broken by rack and thumb-screw, men who were hanged for the sake of freedom and religion. I

then made a cheap and obvious remark, as young men often do. I said, "Yes, no doubt they died for their religion, but it was mixed up with politics." The older man said, "It is very easy for us to talk. We have never known what it is to feel the rope round our necks, or the cold steel force its way into our flesh."

That was in 1907, and in 1920 my mind at once linked up the earlier rebuke with Seal's. The right to criticise has to be earned, and a price must be paid to earn it. It is now 1939; I now know something of fear and danger; I have seen men killed, and—what is worse—have seen their bodies maimed. This is not the comfortable easy world of 1907 or even 1920. And I have learnt that before a European criticises an Indian he must earn the right to do this. He must prove himself not a patronizing outsider but a nation-builder.

So our friendship came to an end, until two years ago. I was then back in India and was persuaded to see Seal again. I went unwillingly; to be frank, though I understood his annoyance, I thought he had been a bit unfair, and now I did not know how he would receive me. The old man was helpless after a series of paralytic strokes, and without telling him I was coming, another Indian friend opened the door and I came in. I shall never forget what happened. He sprang up with a cry and burst into tears. In a moment the years of estrangement were ended, and our friendship came back in all its fullness and with an emotion whose memory will always be sacred to me. In Brajendra Nath Seal, an epoch of Indian history has almost come to its end.....

I have not been able to be present at the Memorial Service in Calcutta, but across the seas and air I send my tribute to one of the noblest minds and characters that I have known.*

EDWARD THOMPSON

★ ★ ★ ★

I took up Logic as one of my subjects in the Intermediate Examination, and in one of the early lectures the teacher discussed the relation between different subjects in Arts and Science. After referring to Physics, Chemistry, Botany, History, Philosophy and Literature, etc. he observed that there was a general impression that we had only one man in our country who was versed in all these subjects, and he was Brajendra Nath Seal. It made a deep impression on our minds and we had a sort of awe and reverence for him. But he was then the Principal of the Cooch Behar College and we had no opportunity to meet him.

*Broadcast talk from London: Empire Transmission III—Jan. 26, 1939 at 4.20—4.35 p.m.

About eight or nine years later I had the first occasion to meet him. I had been awarded the Premchand Roychand scholarship and according to the terms of the award I had to submit, for three years, an annual report of the research work done by me during the year. The topic which I selected was the political history of the Andhra-Kushana period in ancient Indian history. It was a period during which a large number of small dynasties ruled in different parts of Northern India, and their history could be reconstructed only with the help of coins. So a constructive picture had to be drawn with great care and difficulty, and as the evidence was very meagre, there was enough scope for doubts and uncertainties. I made an attempt to reconstruct a general picture in which the various foreign ruling dynasties—the Greeks, Sakas, Parthians and Kushanas—and a number of indigenous tribes ruling over minor principalities played the dominant role. The report was sent to Brajendra Nath Seal for adjudication and report. As a substantial portion of the scholarship was withheld pending the report, I often made inquiries of the Registrar whether the report was received. One day he told me that Dr. Seal had sent a long Report discussing the thesis submitted by me, but the Syndicate could not understand what exactly he meant to say, and particularly whether he recommended my thesis or not. In particular, he spoke to me of a passage in which Dr. Seal had compared the various ruling dynasties with the moving figures on a chess board, and made elaborate observations on the rapid changes in the political scene. The Syndicate, the Registrar told me, could not follow his arguments and looked, in vain, towards the very end to find out whether he had approved of my work or not. So they were in a fix. The Registrar asked me to see Dr. Seal, as he wanted to meet me, and take the opportunity to explain the situation to him with a request to send a single line intimating to the Syndicate whether he approved of my work or not. So I went to Dr. Seal's house, somewhere near the Hedua tank, not without some trepidation of heart at the prospect of coming face to face with such a profound scholar. But when I met him, all my fears were over. He was so simple and generous, and talked with a young man like me in such a genial and courteous manner, that I was overwhelmed by his wonderful personality. He expressed surprise that after his elaborate disquisition on the knotty problem which I had so successfully handled, the Syndicate should have any doubt on the merit of my work. However, he agreed to write a brief recommendation, and he did it. I was so charmed with his talk and profound knowledge of ancient Indian history that I asked for permission to meet him now and then, and he said that he would be very glad if I did so. I met him several times and every time profited by his talks on a variety of subjects.

Not long afterwards I was appointed a Lecturer in the Post-Graduate classes

of the University of Calcutta, and Dr. Seal was the George V Professor of Philosophy. I often saw him in the University, and not unoften heard his views on various subjects. On one occasion, he was appointed the Chairman of a Committee of which I was a member. I do not exactly remember today the subject-matter discussed by the Committee, but it was concerned with some aspect of Post-graduate Studies. We met many times and it was always a great delight to hear Dr. Seal expounding his views in an elaborate manner. The sessions of this Committee brought me closer to the learned scholar, and I consider it to be my very good fortune that he was always very kindly and even affectionate to me.

It is beyond my power to form an idea of the scholarship of Dr. Seal. But this much I can say that his knowledge was very wide and all-embracing. He discussed Bengali literature and ancient Indian history with equal ease and mastery, and was ready to answer any question on any subject that occurred to his listeners. In doing so he was never ill at ease. At the same time he was very simple—almost childlike—in his habits. He has not written much and some of his books are difficult to read. I once told him that we found it difficult to understand his *New Essays in Criticism*, because he takes for granted many things known to his reader which the latter does not possess. He laughed and said that others have made the same complaints. I and a few others present requested him to write a book on Bengali literature more suitable to an ordinary intellect. He did not do so. I have a shrewd suspicion that he was incapable of bringing himself down to the level of an ordinary man when he wrote on a subject. But it was quite different with his conversation which was charming and erudite, but not difficult of comprehension.

The one thought that saddens the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing Dr. Seal personally is that the writings that he has left do but scant justice to his really wonderful talents and scholarship. It will not be long before those who knew him would pass away, and posterity would have no means of judging correctly the worth of this great son of Bengal.

RAMESH CHANDRA MAJUMDAR

APPRAISEMENTS

BRAJENDRA NATH'S "QUEST ETERNAL"

The stanzas of the *Gita* are well known in the history of culture as doses of philosophy in verse. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal's *Quest Eternal* (London, 1936) bids fair to be appraised as such by students of poetry and philosophy. The work formally aims at being a versical summary of philosophical outlooks, ancient, medieval and modern. But its merits are likely to carry it beyond the range of a mere versification of three different types of philosophy. Seal has succeeded in creating a number of artistic situations and clear-cut characters, and these are well-calculated to furnish poetic delights to readers such as care to ignore or forget their history of philosophical ideas.

The *milieu* that created the ancient ideal as conceived by Seal is half gnostic, half Neo-Platonic. The hero is a Greek priest who has travelled as far East as *Taxila* or *Mathura* in India and spent quite a long time in Bactria. In the course of his world-travels he has made it a point to study the philosophy, god-lore and fine arts of the Hindus.

The humanism of Seal's ancient hero finds expression in the following invocation:

*"Thee nothing human doth displease,
For thou hast not disdained to wear the human face!
Thy Muses, Graces, Charities
Are human mysteries;
Thou tastest of the cup from which
Thou freely serv'st man's race!"*

This cycle of hymns is encyclopaedic enough to comprise new forms of the God-head,—intelligential essences and fair humanities, *the Maid Eternal*, *the Child Eternal* and *the Mighty Mother*. The apparitions of the God-head as the terrible and the demoniac are invoked as much as those of the raptures and rhythms.

The hymn rises up to the final conception that the "Great Illusion knows no love nor hate." And, further,

*"Thy human mysteries,
Thy Dance of Love,*

*Thy Dance of Death,
Thy Graces, Pities, Charities,
Are as the desert Sphinx impassive, Implacable as Fate !”*
(I. 296—302).

To works like Harrison's "New Calendar of Great Men", the student goes for history, biography and bibliography. But the verses, as those of Seal's, present the lover of poetry with fine literary forms. While watching the progress of the human mind, one is not forced to inquire about the dates and localities, the chronologies, geographies and ethnologies of the "cosmic waves' progression". The ideology is concrete and yet universal enough to rise to the level of pure poetry.

Seal has shown diversity of creative power as regards form and matter. If the ancient ideal has been given out in the form of a hymn coming from a Greek priest, the mediaeval ideal has found expression in and through a ballad.

The hero of the mediaeval ideal is the Wizard Knight. He is a product not so much of the Catholic *Weltanschauung* as of the three mystical brotherhoods of the age, namely, Platonic, Syrian and Magian. Indeed, the *psyche* of this Knight-errant is definitely in conflict with the Catholic type. In his mental *Gestalt* ("form-complex") have entered such rationalistic world-views as those of the *Mutazilas* and *Ikhwanus Safa* ("sincere brethren"). The revived Neo-Platonism of Syria, and to a certain extent, the ideas of the Magi-lore have likewise contributed to the making of Seal's mediaeval hero. Students of history as well as philosophy will feel how Seal has dug deep in order to discover forces more profound than Catholicism, which as a rule covers the canvas of conventional historiographers of the Middle Ages.

The mediaeval hero of Seal is an uncompromising Titan, a daredevil pilgrim of truth, a veritable *satyagrahi*.

*"It was an unearthly glare
Rapt him as he told his deed weird and bold,
How to the Fates his life he had sold,
During the curse, pronounce of old
On him who would see Truth bare !”*

(II. 109—113)

The Satanic pride of this Truth-seeker finds expression in the following lines:

*"For to Church or Empire
as liege or umpire
Or to Turk who scales
the Byzantine rampire,
I owe no fealty;
Their rule is treason to the*

Commonwealth of Reason
(*The Cosmic order*
star-writ in Heaven)
Universal free!"

(II. 148—1953).

The peace of Catholicism is the furthest removed from the *psyche* of Seal's medieval hero. He disparages the gifts of the Virgin Mother, thus,

"*The Lady of Sorrows,*
from Death she borrows
the snowy pall of Peace;
of weeping Weakness,
of praying Charities
Are hers, the Mother's;
her children she gathers,
And folds them blind in bliss."

(II. 199—204).

It is not a "blind bliss" that he craves for, the bliss associated with meekness, weakness, prayers and tears. His is a sterner peace, the peace of the struggling, combative, creative souls. He declares his *credo* as follows:

"*I'd rather burn than*
renegade turn,
The right to Peace and
Hope thus earn,
And Truth and
Freedom miss!"

(II. 205—207)

He is a votary of truth and freedom and is not bent on peace and hope at any price. He wants to be one of the "seers",

"*Whose eye the ideal firmament clears;*
No longer Destiny's minions
but co-workers free."

(II. 213—215).

The work is not marred by '-isms' and abstractions as the versification of philosophical systems or even philosophical poetry generally is. Indeed, one doubts if Seal is dealing with any system at all. We are reminded easily of Brownings's *Paracelsus* in Seal's elucidation of both the mediaeval and the modern ideals. The two tragedies conceived by Seal are superb and are fine contributions to the progress of the modern spirit. He has furnished the twentieth century with two remarkable exponents or rather embodiments of the cosmic struggle.

Seal's modern hero is Humanity itself in its simple universality. The problem of civilization *vis-a-vis* the primitive and the pagan constitutes the fundamental *elan vital* of this hero. *Psyche*, the Soul's vision of deathless love, as well as Prometheus, the Deliverer from the spiritual back-ground of the strife, that is being waged in the modern setting against the savage ritual of the omophagic sacrifice. The hero's ambition is to be a *mṛtyunjaya*, a conqueror of death, *i.e.*, to attain mastery over the evil forces which seek to frustrate all ideal strivings.

Seal has conceived thereby a new Faust for the twentieth century. The modern hero's quest of immortality is gradually transformed from the ambition of an individual into that of all mankind for redemption. But the redeemer dreamt of is neither an external nor a universal force but the individual soul itself purified and illuminated. The hero passes through the tribulations of the ages and undergoes the tragedy of the human race since the earliest times. It is by recapitulating vicariously the tragedy of entire mankind that he frees himself from his own passion, and finds himself on the road to freedom and immortality. The situation is described by the hero thus:

"By slow unconscious steps,
I move
To the central cosmic light,
in which I'd see
Transfigured, in the heart
of things, my story.
The individual passion
of my life
As world passion of
Creative Deity."

Like Browning's *Paracelsus*, Seal's modern hero lays bare his soul in the following words:

*Beautiful dreams of
renovated Man
I dream undaunted still:
I'd overcome
As with forgotten notes
of a lost, lost lyre,
The Powers of Darkness
and Unreason old
Throned in the Deep*
(III. 390—394).

Seal has contributed to the modern world:

*The just man militant!
He is the Way,
A New Prometheus,
universal man!
Himself he frees
from the revolving Wheel
Of Law, the blind
Necessity that binds
Tyrant and victim
to one doom. Outlaw,
An inner peace
beyond the Fates he seeks,
In soul-war against
an iron Universe.*

(III. 470—476).

In this grand epic of the march of the human personality through the ages we hear very often the 'strains of Creation's choral song' which come "bursting with the uproarious roll of Aeons". (III. 961—962).

It is the poetry of the cosmic voice

*"Chanting the law of man's
deliverance,
Wisdom to master Death,
the Power of Life!"*

(III. 971—972).

Those readers who do not know that Seal is a philosopher, or was a professor of philosophy, will not take long to enjoy these dignified verses as some very brilliant and beautiful creations of our own times in the realm of poetry.

BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

(From 'Hindusthan Standard', Sept. 3, 1938)

ACHARYA BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL— A TRIBUTE*

I feel greatly honoured in being able to pay my sincere homage to the memory of Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal, a rare intellectual of renaissance Bengal, on the occasion of the Centennial Celebration of his birth anniversary. Dr. Seal was a philosopher of international reputation, a successful educationist and an eminent exponent of cultural humanism. Though he was not a prolific writer, yet as one goes through his writings and addresses, one is overwhelmed by the depth of his scholarship and profundity of his universal and original outlook. In the field of philosophy he wanted to build a system of Comparative Philosophy. Comparative Philosophy, according to him, must give due weight to all philosophic thoughts of the world. Again the empirical basis of each philosophy must be traced and studied. He prefaced his book—*The positive sciences of the ancient Hindus*¹—by saying that “philosophy in its rise and development is necessarily governed by the body of positive knowledge preceding or accompanying it. Hindu Philosophy on its empirical side was dominated by concepts derived from physiology and philology, just as Greek Philosophy was similarly dominated by geometrical concepts and methods. Comparative Philosophy, then, in its criticism and estimate of Hindu thought, must take note of the empirical basis on which the speculative superstructure was raised.” The Philosophical thought of a particular nation is based on certain scientific concepts and the philosophical methodology cannot run counter to the scientific methodology. As a professor of philosophy he drew up a syllabus for Indian Philosophy. This syllabus which bears ample proof of his originality is also oriented towards a comprehensive and comparative study of Indian Philosophy.

In the field of education and cultural humanism his ideas were similar to those of Gurudev Rabindranath. Rabindranath and Brajendra Nath were great friends. They held similar views on various subjects and were united by a common spirit of fellowship. When *Visva-bharati* was formally inaugurated in the year 1921, Rabindranath invited his philosopher-friend Brajendra Nath to preside

*Through the courtesy of Dr. Sudhi Ranjan Das, *Upacharya*, *Visva-bharati*.

¹ *The positive sciences of the ancient Hindus*, by B. N. Seal. (Motilal, 1958)

over the inaugural. On that memorable occasion Brajendra Nath delivered a lecture which reflected his views on education, world-culture and humanism. He explained the significance of the word, *Visva-bharati*, thus: India will warmly receive culture from all parts of the world. She will assimilate it according to her own genius. She will further inspire and enrich it by her own ideals and present it again to the world. This was also his own ideal of education. Education is a great unifier of minds. Education is futile, if it does not help mankind to ensure permanent peace by the establishment of free communication of ideas and values. Proper education eschews all narrowness, conservatism and bigotry. Brajendra Nath laid emphasis on the universal outlook of education. According to him "each can realize himself only by helping others as a whole to realize themselves. The converse of this proposition also is equally true. Others can realize themselves by helping each individual to realize himself."² Realization of truth which is the goal of education is hardly possible in an atmosphere of antagonism and hatred. Scholars can seek and realize truth only in a spirit of common fellowship and sincere co-operation.

Like Rabindranath, Brajendra Nath too became very much pained at the utter devastation of life, moral degeneration and bankruptcy of human values that came as consequences of the first world-war. Like Rabindranath he too thought of some secure conditions for ensuring permanent peace. He reiterated the path of peace laid down by the ancient sages of India. It is path of Ahimsa, Maitri and Santi. We must realize the unity of Brahman in every finite individual. And this realization alone will bring peace to all mankind. The West tried to ensure peace by treaties, conventions and pacts. But Brajendranath had little faith in political means. Like Rabindranath he too wanted to inculcate a new humanism which is based on the universal principles of religion. True internationalism is religion-oriented. By religion Brajendra Nath did not mean any particular religion of the world, living or dead. He meant the universal truths that lie embedded in all religions. There was a time when Rabindranath became disgusted with the evils of nationalism. Brajendra Nath shared his friend's feelings and said that Rabindranath had denounced the two evils of nationalism, viz. Commercialism and Militarism. But the poet did not deny the merits of nationalism. A true nationalism can never eschew the exalted values of individuality and personality. Again when nationalism grows into internationalism, its worth should be assessed in terms of cosmic value.³ Brajendra Nath deeply thought over the ideals of nationalism and internationalism and realized that the two

² See *Visva-bharati*, by R. N. Tagore. Appendix (Address given by B. N. Seal at the formal inauguration of the *Visva-bharati* in December, 1921).

³ See *Rabindra Jivani*, by P. K. Mukherjee, Vol. II, p. 455, (1st Ed.).

ideals ultimately converged towards the religion of Universal Humanity. While replying to the felicitations given to him by the Indian Philosophical Congress at Calcutta the Acharya said: "Remember that Hindu or Moslem, Christian or Sikh, you can fulfil the best in your religion by a spirit of give and take, by giving out of your abundance and taking in a spirit of sincere amity and good will. All that is merely sectarian and communal must yield to the spirit of a common nationality and nationality itself must be fulfilled in one common brotherhood of man in Universal Humanity."⁴ In this respect his ideas were greatly influenced by Rabindranath's 'Religion of man'.

Brajendra Nath had a message for the social life of Indians. In ancient India the community life expressed itself through the institutions of Varnashrama and Dharma-sangha. Varnashrama laid stress on the truth of the community in the individual. But in present-day India we also need the truth of the individual in the community. The individual has to be resuscitated. Our great defect has been that we cannot unify our will with our intellect, our sense of subjectivity with our sense of objectivity. Each one of us has to build a balanced personality, an integrated personality and a harmonious personality. We shall endeavour to realize the universe in us and thus we shall realize our true selves.

On this solemn occasion of centennial celebration I offer my salutations to the great thinker and savant. And I close with the words of Rabindranath which the poet uttered while felicitating Brajendra Nath as the philosopher completed the 72nd year of his life.

Thou noble guest ! Thou seer in the penance forest of humanity,
Where in the heavens of meditation, in the interval of aeons, the stars
greet one another, emerging from the deep,
Where on the canvas of imagination the adoration of Eternal Beauty is
painted in diverse tones and colours.
The ineffable white radiance of that region, like a garland of glory from the
gracious hand of the Goddess of speech, bedecked thy lofty forehead !⁵

BENOY GOPAL ROY

⁴ See *Modern Review*, Jan., 1936.

⁵ *Ibid.*

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ACHARYA BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL

- 1864 : Born on Sept. 3 in Calcutta.
- 1879 : Passed the Entrance Examination from the General Assembly's Institution, (now known as Scottish Church College), Calcutta.
- 1882 : Acquaintance with Narendra Nath Dutta (later known as Swami Vivekananda) at the College.
- 1883 : Passed B.A. with 'A' class from General Assembly's Institution, Calcutta.
Appointed a Professor of the same College.
Went to see Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakshineswar with Narendra Nath Dutta (Swami Vivekananda).
- 1884 : Married Sm. Indumati Rakshit, eldest daughter of Sri Joy Gopal Rakshit.
- 1884 : Passed M.A. in Philosophy, standing First in First Class.
- 1884 : Appointed a Professor in City College.
- 1885-87 : Professor and later Principal, Morris College, Nagpur.
- 1887-96 : Principal, Krishnanath College, Berhampore (Bengal).
Acquainted with Satish Chandra Mukherjee (founder of the Dawn Society), Sashi Sekhar Banerjee, Janakinath Bhattacharya, Lalit Kumar Banerjee and Hiralal Halder.
- 1896-1913 : Principal, Coochbehar College.
- 1899 : Inaugurated the International Congress of Orientalists in Rome.
Acquaintance at Coochbehar with Joy Gopal Banerjee, Kokileswar Sastri and Sisir Kumar Bardhan.
- 1900 : Indumati Debi died, leaving four sons and a daughter.
- 1902 : His intimate association with Satish Chandra Mukherjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Chittaranjan Das, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sister Nivedita, Jagadis Chandra Bose, Rabindra Nath Tagore and other great intellectual and political leaders.
- 1905 : Member, Simla Committee for the University Reforms. Close association with Sir Asutosh Mukerjee and Lord Curzon.
- 1906 : Visited Europe for four months.
- 1911 : Inaugurated the 'Universal Races Congress' held in London.

- 1913 : Appointed King George V Professor of Philosophy, Calcutta University.
- 1914 : Revisted Europe on the eve of the World War I.
- 1915 : Publication of 'The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus', (Ph.D. Thesis.)
- 1915 : Conferred D.Sc. (*Honoris Causa*) by the University of Calcutta along with Sir John Marshall.
- 1916 : Member, Asutosh Committee on the Calcutta University Reforms.
- 1917 : Member, Sadler Committee for the University Reforms.
- 1921 : Inaugurated the Visva-bharati at Santiniketan.
Appointed Vice-Chancellor, Mysore University.
- 1922 : Chairman, Mysore Constitutional Reforms.
Presided over the ninth Panchama Conference, Mysore.
- 1924 : Member, Executive Council, Mysore Government.
- 1926 : Knighthood conferred on him. Convocation Address at Bombay University. President of the Mysore Economic Conference.
- 1930 : Awarded the title of "Rajatantra Prabin" by the Maharaja of Mysore.
- 1935 : The 'Jayanti' Celebration on the occasion of his 72nd birth-day under the auspices of the All-India Philosophical Congress held at the Senate Hall, Calcutta University.
- 1937 : Presided over the Parliament of Religions on the occasion of the Ramakrishna birth-centenary celebration in Town Hall, Calcutta, Address at the Indian Cultural Conference.
- 1938 : Death at 78 Lansdowne Road, Calcutta on December 3, at the age of 74.

**LIST OF BOOKS, ADDRESSES AND ARTICLES
BY ACHARYA BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL**

- 1885 : Notes on Ben Jonson's 'Every man in his humour'.
1891 : Memoir on the Coefficients of Numbers.
1899 : Vaisnavism and Christianity: International Congress of Orientalists, Rome.
1901 : Speech on Vidyasagar at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta.
1902 : University Reform: New India March 31 to May 1.
Ram Mohan Roy: New India, Oct. 9.
Ram Mohan Roy: The Dawn.
1903 : New Essays in Criticism: Calcutta Review.
Neo-Romantic Movement in Literature: Calcutta Review.
1907 : On Vivekananda: 'Prabuddha Bharat'.
1911 : Inaugural Address on 'Race Origins' at the Universal Races Congress, London.
Closing Address at the Universal Races Congress, London.
A Chapter in P. C. Ray's 'History of Hindu Chemistry'.
1914 : Lecture on War at the University of Calcutta.
1915 : Indian Theistic Movement and its Problem. Indian Messenger, (Supplementary) December 8, (1915).
The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus: Longmans, London.
1917 : Evidences before the Sadler Committee, Vols. 7, 9, 10 & 12.
1919 : The Equation of Digits: Bull. Cal. Math. Soc. Vol. 1. No. 2. p. 24 (1919).
Article on 'Hindu and Greek contribution to Mathematical Science'.
1921 : Address in Bengali at the Inauguration function of the Visva-bharati (8th Paus 1328)
Convocation Address, Mysore University, Oct. 14.
1922 : Address at the Mysore Sanskrit College, Feb. 4. Presidential Address at the Ninth Panchama Conference, Mysore, Sept. 28.
1924 : Address on 'Ram Mohan Roy' at Bangalore.
Syllabus of Indian Philosophy, Mysore University.
Speech at the Anniversary Function of the College of Engineering, Bangalore, December 3.
Speech on Ayurvedic and Unani Teaching at the Mysore University.

- Speech on Indian Medicine before the Far Eastern Association of Indian Medicine.
- Presidential Address before the Mythic Society, Mysore.
- 1925 : Mysore Constitutional Reforms—a speech at the Mysore Legislative Council, April 17.
- Report on Constitutional Development in Mysore—General Survey.
- Article on Hindu-Moslem Unity: 'Bengalee', Oct. 14 (1925).
- Article on 'Epidemic decease in India': 'Bengalee' (1925).
- Introductory Speech on the Report of the University Reorganization Committee, Mysore University.
- 1926 : Address at the Mysore Economic Conference, October.
- Convocation Address, Bombay University, Aug. 17.
- 1927 : Speech while presenting the Report of the Board of Education, Mysore.
- Speech at the Anniversary of laying the foundation stone of the Intermediate College Building, Mysore, Aug. 8.
- 1930 : Article on 'Gita—a Synthetic Interpretation', Modern Review, July. (1930).
- 1931 : British India and Indian States: Modern Review, Jan. (1931)
- 1933 : Ram Mohan Roy Death Centenary Address on 'Ram Mohan Roy—the Universal Man', Sept. 27.
- 1935 : The 'Jayanti' Address on December 19, at the Senate of the University of Calcutta on the 72nd birth anniversary of Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal, organised by the All-India Philosophical Congress.
- Auto-biography (unpublished)
- 1936 : The Quest Eternal, Longmans, Calcutta (written in 1882).
- Ramakrishna Paramahansa Birth Centenary Address on March 31, (Presidential Address at the Parliament of Religions, Town Hall, Calcutta).
- 1937 : Article at the Indian Cultural Conference (Indian Research Institute).
- Three Ideals, Calcutta Review, (1937).

Other Articles

The Birth of the Boy Scout.

Chips from an Indian Workshop

Address before the All-India History Congress, Presidency College, Madras.

Preface to Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherjee's 'History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Enterprise.'

Article on 'Rejuvenation', 'Lancet', London.

Articles in Bengali:

হিন্দুর প্রকৃত হিন্দুত্ব—‘নারায়ণ’-পত্রিকা, ১ম বর্ষ, ১ম সংখ্যা।

সেবা-ধর্ম—বঙ্গীয় হিতসাধন মন্ডলীর অধিবেশনে পঠিত। ‘প্রবাসী’

জগন্নাথের মন্দির—বিপিনচন্দ্র গুপ্তের ‘বিচিত্র প্রসঙ্গ’।

মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ধর্মজীবনের ক্রম-পরিণতি—অজিতকুমার চক্রবর্তী প্রণীত মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের জীবনী-গ্রন্থের পরিশিষ্ট।

রামমোহনের ধর্মমত—নগেন্দ্রনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের রামমোহন রায়ের জীবনচরিত গ্রন্থে সন্নিবিষ্ট।

বিশ্বভারতীর উদ্দেশ্য-সভায় ভাষণ, ৮ই পৌষ, ১৩২৮, শান্তিনিকেতন।

APPENDIX

An Extract from the Annual Number of *Navajivan*, 1961 relating to the Autobiographical Record (unpublished) left by Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal.

A Letter to a Friend

My dear P.,

A Scaliger, once exclaimed,—“I have taken all knowledge for my province”. Another and a finer spirit, the first of humanists declared,—“I am a man, nothing human is alien to me.”

I lived in the spirit of these sayings but now I stand among the rejected ones and my address will be found among the rejected addresses.

But in truth, nothing is rejected, not even the spirit of rejection which is, in reality, as affirmative as affirmation itself.

As was the case with Kepler's twenty and odd rejected hypotheses, every error detected as such is directive of the way to truth. Indeed, errors present but the obverse face of truth.

BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL

P.S.—I shall be terse, alike by choice and by necessity of my physical condition.

I reserve the story of my personal life and relations for another volume and deal here with my mental history so far as it relates to ideas and ideals.

Part I—My Mental History

Section 1. (a) Childhood and infancy, (b) My father, (c) My first lessons.

Section 2. Mathematics.

Section 3. Logic.

Section 4. Philosophy and Psychology.

Section 5. Literature and Art.

Section 6. My scientific interest.

Section 7. My plan of self-education.

Section 8. Two remarkable personalities.

Section 9. Berhampur.

- Section 10. (a) My literary studies and interests, (b) An interesting episode.
 (c) My special interest, (d) My special studies.
- Section 11. (a) Cooch Behar, (b) Other spheres of work, (c) A miscellany.
- Section 12. Prose and Poetry.
- Section 13. The world religions.
- Section 14. (a) Calcutta, (b) Average mental ability of the examinees in relation to the examination, (c) My work as George V, Professor of Philosophy, (d) Indian origin of Wheat and Flax.
- Section 15. Mysore.
- Section 16. My Universalism.
- Section 17. (a) The three origins of existing culture, (b) The Aryan Indian ideal as opposed to the Greek, (c) History and Nature, man's two main interests—a new calendar of humanity.
- Section 18. India's demand for social reforms.
- Section 19. Statistics.
- Section 20. Other topics of interest which engaged my attention at the time.
 (a) Animal experience as the origin of both instinct and reason, (b) Prohibition of cow killing among Hindus, (c) My experience and experiments as an amateur hypnotist, (d) Occult Phenomena.
- Section 21. My Philosophical activities.
- Section 22. (a) A conclusion that concludes nothing, (b) Philosophy.

Part II—My Views, Values and Ideals

- Section 1. (a) Man and woman, (b) Methods of social reform, (c) Principles of social organisation, (d) Marriage and inheritance legislation in India, after transfer from the Company to the Crown, (e) The coming economic order, (f) The economic problem in terms of Physics, (g) The coming order, (h) Alternative forms of polity in the coming order, (i) Wages—how to be regulated and determined.
- Section 2. (a) War fever, (b) A place in the sun for all peoples—a beginning to be made with Germany, Italy and Japan, (c) The World situation as I see it, (d) The five powers, (e) The Jewish problem, (f) India's political future—various schemes, (g) The future constitution of India.
- Section 3. (a) Evolution *vs.* Revolution—The story of Prahlad. (b) New methods of resistance, (c) Buddhist *versus* Hindu view.
- Section 4. (a) The fine arts—Occidental and Oriental ideals, (b) Janmastami and other rituals, (c) Birthday observances, (d) The beginnings of the Krishna cult—brief notes, (e) The Krishna cult in latter-day Vaishnavism.

Section 5. Mating and Marriage—course of evolution.

Section 6. One outstanding achievement of Hindu culture and civilisation.

Section 7. Languages.

Section 8. (a) The destiny of the individual soul as conceived in Christianity and other religions, (b) Divine personality, (c) Catholic and Protestant Christianity—main lines of their reaction on modern thought, (d) The question of immortality.

Section 9. The question of design in Nature.

Section 10. Practice as the only test of Truth and Reality.

Section 11. (a) Culture, (b) Population and its rate of increase—the question of birth-control, (c) Sexual evolution, (d) Educational reforms, (e) Four different attitudes towards Religion, (f) Fundamental administrative reforms, (g) The evolution or unfolding of pure thought.

Section 11. A. (a) Patriarchate *versus* Matriarchate, (b) Non-Aryan history in India.

Section 12. (a) The question of a common Hindu-Muslim literature in Bengali, (b) The question of linguistic division of provinces in India.

Section 13. General views—(a) New concept of Art, (b) Theism and Atheism—Types and Antitypes, (c) New Theism, (d) The World order in time, (e) Various entities and orders of relation, (f) Free will and determinism, (g) Development of Philosophy—six stages, (h) Creation conceived as a cyclical process.

Part III—The World As I Conceive It

Section 1. History, Science, Philosophy, Art and Religion.

Section 2. History of evolution of man.

Section 3. Animal evolution in nature followed by man's progressive differentiation in history.

Section 4. (a) Art and artefacts—stages of development, (b) Subsequent stages of evolution, (c) Some special developments in the secondary stages, (d) Further developments, (e) Another advanced (tertiary) phase of culture.

Section 5. (a) The quarternary stage, (b) Development from secondary to tertiary and quarternary stages.

Section 6. Historic backgrounds of existing culture and civilisation.

Section 7. The historic chain from Egypt to Mahenjodaro.

Section 8. Other notable groups in cultural history—(a) The Sumerian culture, (b) The Caucasus mountains and table-lands, (c) The code of Hamurabbi, (d) The intermediary cultures—Cretan, Minoan etc., (e) The Phoenicians,

(f) The Aryan races or people, (g) A new spurt in culture history (600 B.C.—450 B.C.), (h) Mongolia, (i) Buddhism and Tibetan collectors and commentators—Lamais.

Section 9. (a) The Moslem scriptures from 7th century downwards, (b) Moslem contributions, (c) Modern Persia and Afghanistan.

Section 10. (a) The Dark ages in Europe—the Crusades, (b) The Middle ages in Europe,—The Holy Roman Empire and Papacy, Roger Bacon, Vesalius and Leonardo da Vinci, the three precursors of Universalism, (c) Modern History.

Section 11. The coming order: Races that are destined to arrive—Island cultures.

Section 12. Real beginnings of Modern History in the Far East.

Section 13. National cultural histories in the East. (a) India, (b) China, Mongolia and Japan.

Section 14. Section on history concluded—fundamental canons. (a) Chance, (b) Statistics, (c) Probability, (d) Causality, (e) Interpretation of the historic record.

Section 15. A general Philosophical Scheme—the dimensional theory.

Section 16. Transition from quantitative to qualitative distinctions. Protons, Electrons and Neutrons. Faraday and Maxwell to Rutherford. Formation of the elements by the bombardment of Carbon and Colloids. Heisenberg and Dirac. Einsteinian and Planckian Schemes. Ninety and odd chemical elements. Question whether life appeared once and once only, or whether it can be repeated.

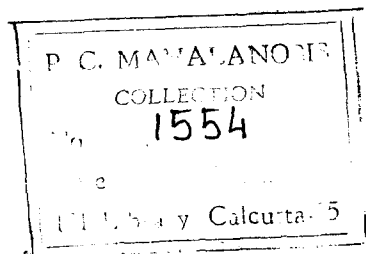
Section 17. Entire course of evolution.

Section 18. Recapitulation—(a) Art—*aesthetic satisfaction* (or *Rasa*) various composite arts—Imagism, Scintillism, Cubism, Naturalism, (b) Religion, (i) Religion as objective magic, (ii) Religion as occultism, (iii) Nature Religion, (iv) Religion as the worship of historic gods, (v) Religion as worship of a universal principle, (vi) Religion as mystical realisation, (c) Pluralism and Monism.

Concluding Sections:—

The future, near and far—A. The near future: (a) The League of Nations, (b) The problem of war—How to end war, (c) Place and meaning of war in any natural economy, (d) The coming world-order, (e) Length of a normal labour day, (f) Nationality—its coming displacement, (g) The question of *lingua franca*—the position of the mother tongue, (h) The law of diminishing returns, how to be counteracted, (i) Marriage and Motherhood—their future, (j) Other habitable worlds.

B. The distant future.



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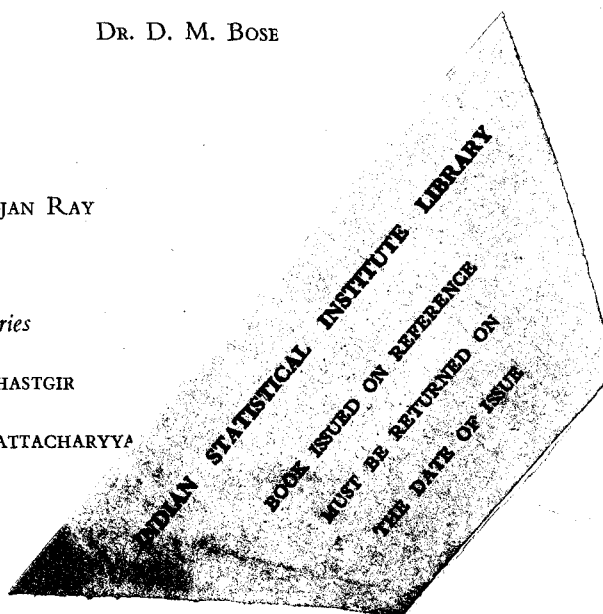
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