

SCIENCE AND THEOSOPHY*

THE four volumes under the suggestive and comprehensive title "Where Theosophy and Science Meet" edited by D. D. Kanga had been noticed from time to time in the columns of the *Current Science*, and the volume under notice that has been published as No. 21 of the Adyar Library Series constitutes a revised, reset, and enlarged edition of the previous volumes of which *two* are here presented, the other two being reserved for a second volume. Part the first under the title "Nature" describes or traces the movement from "Macrocosm to Microcosm", and the second part entitled "Man" sketches the progress from "Atom to Man". Within the limits of a critical review, it is neither possible nor desirable to undertake any detailed examination of the doctrines and theories expressed in the volume, and the facts and data on which these peradventure rest, that *do not* and *would not* admit of any laboratory testing under controlled conditions through the instrumentality of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Let me, therefore, direct my attention to the general lead given in the "Introduction" to the revised edition.

There is the inevitable reference to chaos and conflicts in the world and to the Atomic weapons of destruction. What is the diagnosis? All the troubles are due to "fundamental maladjustments which are due to lack of perception of the essential values of life". The author illustrates the maladjustment by reference to a correlation effected between *Body* of Man and Economics and Politics, *Mind* of Man and Science and Engineering, and the *Spirit* of Man and Ethics and Spirituality. Further elaborating the nature and characteristics of such a maladjustment, he points out that while the sciences and disciplines correlated with *Body* and *Mind* seem to be moving pretty fast, those connected with the *Spirit* move slowly with snail-pace.

What is the remedy or the prophylactic? It is suggested that World-order, Social-order, Governments *et hoc* should be reconditioned and readjusted on the basis of absolute primacy and pre-eminence assigned to Ethics and Spirituality correlated with the *Spirit*. *Mind* and its correlates would rank next. At the lowest rung of the ladder of the New Civi-

lization would stand *Body* with its correlates of economics and politics. The New Order must be built on the bed-rock of "right triune concept of man".

It has become an alarmingly infectious fashion nowadays for intellectuals dithyrambically to complain of maladjustments brought about by modern civilization and conditions of living grounded on the discoveries and inventions made possible by the advancement and progress of different positive laboratory sciences, but, whether a phenomenon like the World-Armageddon I or II is to be regarded as an adjustment or a maladjustment must depend in the last and final analysis on the definition of adjustment and maladjustment one may arrive at or formulate. When the reign of relativity is supreme, it will be always possible to argue that what is termed maladjustment from one stand-point may be really adjustment from another. The analogy pressed into service in the Gita must be of striking help. What the common folk including our best economists and politicians and so-called world-figures and personalities, leaders of world-thought and energisers of world-action regard as waking life and broad daylight, is really *night* to a genuine seer or saint. Likewise when the genuine seer or saint enjoys daylight, the common folk are in deep sleep immersed in cymmrian darkness (*Yanisa-sarvabhootanam....*, Gita, 2-69). What the Lord wills on a cosmic scale cannot be a maladjustment in biological or sociological connotation. This apart, is the author's diagnosis correct? Is the prophylactic proposed effective?

As far as I can see, the diagnosis to the effect that modern civilization grounded on science and scientific values stands maladjusted on account of its failure to have regulated life in the light of Ethics and Spirituality does *not* seem to be correct. For, one cannot convert mankind overnight into saints and spiritualists. Even in the maladjusted age, Ethics and Spirituality are bound to appeal to a small, microscopic minority. Such an appeal has elicited responses and aspirants patterned that way are even to-day leading higher life the details of which would never get into newspaper columns. When there is no demand, there is no supply. This rule of economics would apply to the economics of higher life as well. Throughout the world, the demand for Ethics and Spirituality is scanty, and you can-

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not describe that as a maladjustment. If, with eyes wide open, individuals, communities and nations mould their conduct on the motto "Evil! Be Thou My Good", urged on by the potential of their past *Karma*, such behaviorism or meta-behaviorism as American Psychologists would have it cannot be described as maladjustment.

If, as I feel, the diagnosis is incorrect, the remedy, I am afraid may not be effective. (I had almost typed quack-remedy—as suggested by Leonard Wolfe's "Quack-Quack".) It is so easy to talk of Ethics and Spirituality. All the world-teachers have done that. Notwithstanding the appearance on the world-stage of Christ, Buddha, Krishna, and others, and the prevalence of their teachings and doctrines, you hear the loudest of complaints that science and science-built civilization have hurled the world into the abyss of maladjustment. What Srijiut Kanga and other good, and well-intentioned souls miss is the solid and stubborn fact that Ethics and Spirituality cannot be patented into powders and pills and administered to war-mongers and world-monopolists and cosmic capitalists. They are all urged by their self conditioned by *Prakriti* (*Prakritim-yantibhootani...*, Gita, 3-33). Patented peace-pills now sought to be sold by the UNO, UNESCO and other world-organizations may find salesmen and saleswomen, but, they would have little or no effect on the patients themselves.

I hasten to submit that I have no desire either to belittle or underrate the value and significance of the magnificent work in the direction of humanization and spiritualization of mankind that is being attempted by Srijiut Kanga and others who have collaborated and co-operated with him. Nevertheless, in the interests of impartial and disinterested research and investigation it must be pointed out that a mere academic call to ethicize and spiritualize behaviorism will never be competent or sufficient to save mankind.

With many other *dicta* or *obiter dicta* of the author of the "General Introduction" it is impossible to agree. For instance, it is said that "The present is a mind-dominated world". It is *not*. It is throughout dominated by mind, body, and spirit, *tria juncta in uno*. Those who are at the helm of national and international affairs to-day are guided and dominated by a particular pattern of mind, body and spirit. You may discern direst disaster in the pursuit of the pattern. Whatever the condition in Western Psychology, in Indian Psychology intellect, emotion and will,

the cognitive, the emotive, and the conative are *never* separated from one another. A "pure" and "unconditioned mind" is of no use in solving the problems of war and peace, because, when *unconditioned*, as in strict Vedantic connotation, the mind becomes or gets centred on eternal verities that bear no relation to the myriad-faced and hideous hedonisms of economics and politics.

It is neither here nor there. The problem posed by Sankara, to mention but a single classic instance, is still awaiting solution. In describing the affairs and concerns of the world, Sankara has used *two* key-terms. They are "Anartha" and "Prahana". The world and its affairs (*Lokavyavahara*) are *not* yet evaluated as demanded by the Acharya. They involve, one in colossal disaster. The root-cause of that disaster must be eradicated. The indispensable preliminary to all spiritual outlook is the sharp and poignant perception that the values of the world, economic, political, etc., must be superseded and transcended (*Prasankhyana*, as Vachaspathi Misra puts it with unerring and downright effect).

Does Theosophy counsel such a course? Perhaps it does. If so, I can categorically assert there is *no need* for Theosophy to meet Science at all. There is a section in the volume on "Scientific corroborations of Theosophy". I would like to question—who is so anxious to get such corroboration? For whose benefit do Science and Theosophy meet? Is it for the benefit of modern Science? Arrogant and supercilious modern Science that has been responsible for the Atom-Bomb is *not* anxious as far as I can see, or as far as collective judgment of the Scientists itself would indicate. Or, is it for the benefit of Theosophy? A Theosophy that stands in need of corroboration from laboratory sciences that are *per se* incompetent to deal with such subject-matter as God, Transmigration, Karma, and so forth has to be pronounced nervous and lacking in self-confidence. They may after all meet as the *Prakriti* and *Purusha* of the San'chya system are reported to have met. But, nothing would come out of the meeting that must eternally remain *barren*.

I carefully note what is said about the "True Democratic Way of Life", but, the expression is as good or as bad as *Rama-Rajya* about which so much noise is being made just now. With India (*Bharatavarsha*) politically and territorially cut or dichotomized into *two*, with ubiquitous, obnoxious controls of all necessities of life, with ominous food and cloth scarcity, with communistic and communalistic

troubles here, there, and everywhere, if under the urge of political sentimentalism, one were to claim that we are now living in *Rama-Rajya*, such a person must be dismissed as *non compos mentis*. The so-called True Democratic Way of Life seems to me to be neither True, nor Democratic, nor even a way of life, because, behind a facile and ringing terminology, no Reality is discernible. Paradoxically enough, one can talk of a True Democratic Life only when the values of life including political democracy and self-government, which certainly is no substitute for good government, are subjected to rigorous transvaluation on the criterion pointed out by Sankara and the great Acharyas. I am feeling guilty of having exceeded the space-limit set by the learned and talented Editor of *Current Science*. I shall conclude the notice with only one more observation.

Great stress is laid on what is called the "Occult Method," the "Occult Science" and so forth including "Occult Chemistry". The occult method may not differ from the elaborate and complicated methodology developed by Patanjali's Yoga-Darsana. Here again, it is impossible to hide or forget the fact that the occult method has *not* been used by any to relieve global distress and unrest. This is claimed to be supplementary to the scientific method and also superior to it. Its superiority

is yet to be demonstrated under controlled conditions. Neither the methodology of Yoga nor the occult method can be universalised for global consumption on a mass-scale.

Prof. Kanga and the monographists that figure in the volume must have the heartiest felicitations of the thinking section of humanity. The volume is stimulating and challenging. Prof. Kanga's narration of the story of the Atomic Bomb is really romantic and thrilling. When all is said and done, *Theosophy* should grow more and more *theosophical*. *Science* should grow more and more *scientific*. Neither should coquette with the other. The result of such coquetting would be final meeting in the Divorce Court on the supremest ground of temperamental incompatibilities. The Atomic Bomb is *not* a challenge to Man. It is a challenge from a man of some *knowledge* to another who is *ignorant* of the Uranium-transaction. A distracted author from America asks—Can Psychology save modern Civilization? (*New Frontiers of Psychology*—Nicholas deVore—Philosophical Library—New York). Readers are bound to ask—Can Theosophy and the Occult method save mankind and its civilization? For answer please see page 214 of the volume. P. 204 contains a misprint (Sanskrit text).

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BUILDING RESEARCH IN INDIA

A BUILDING RESEARCH UNIT was set up at Roorkee in 1947 to deal with problems such as construction of low-cost houses and utilisation of cheap construction materials. It is proposed to extend the activities of this unit and establish a Central Building Research Institute at Roorkee.

When the Institute starts working in full swing, the major Divisions would be further divided into sections to deal with subjects such as: (1) Studies on Puzzolanic Material, (ii) Preservation of Stones, (iii) Studies on Paints and Varnishes in relation to Building Materials, (iv) Ceramics and Heavy Clay Products in relation to Building Requirements (v) Studies on Soils, (vi) Studies on Corrosion of Metals used in the Building Industry, (vii) Studies on Fire Resistance Properties of Building Materials, (viii) Structural Acoustics, (ix) Physiological Studies on Inhabitants in Tropical Climate (x) Studies on Foundation Problems, etc.

There will also be an Intelligence Section in the Institute whose functions would be (i) collection of available information on the subject (ii) translation and co-relation (iii) dissemination.

The Central Building Research Institute will also have as one of its functions the co-ordination of all the work done on Building Research in the country besides the other functions already pointed out.

The Physico-Chemical Laboratories of the Unit are fairly well equipped. Some of the engineering testing equipment is also available and heavier testing equipment worth £1,300 has been ordered from abroad. The Library attached is well stocked with the latest volumes on important subjects, and subscribes to all topical Journals, besides posting itself with the latest technical bulletins and publications of kindred research stations in other part of the world.